

Local Child Poverty Action Report for East Ayrshire 2019/20

Foreword

This is our second Local Child Poverty Action Report for East Ayrshire, which has been developed in the context of **the Covid-19 pandemic**. This public health crisis has impacted on all of our lives and we are already seeing more families being drawn into poverty as a consequence.

Our partnership work to tackle child poverty has never been more important.

This partnership approach is central to everything that is included within our LCPAR, and has also been an essential part of our Covid-19 response and recovery work to date. Our communities have been at the heart of this and we have in recent months seen **unprecedented levels of community resilience and mobilisation**, and new alliances have been formed. This strength is something that we will continue to build on for the future.

While I am delighted that we have been able to share, within this report, some of the good practice that is already taking place **to mitigate, prevent and undo the consequences of child poverty** in our communities, we have also recognised that our combined efforts to tackle child poverty must now be recalibrated and redoubled, to ensure that we **continue to meet the emerging challenges** associated with the pandemic in the months and years ahead.

As Chair of our CPP Board, it has been my privilege to engage with partners in these discussions. There is passion and there is innovation; there is commitment and there is ambition. This is reflected most strongly in our engagement with local children and young people themselves, who are the most important stakeholders in this, our work to address child poverty.

It is their life chances that are affected - in health, wellbeing, education and employment – and it is their futures that we are working together to make better. 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 Community Planning Partnership

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Introduction

Under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, 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**.

This report builds on our previous Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) 2018/19, which set out in detail our strategic partnership approach to tackling child poverty and the governance arrangements which remain in place to support this.

This LCPAR is presented as part of our partnership's wider suite of Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) reporting materials, within the context of the Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing Delivery Plan updates. Across this suite of reports, a comprehensive picture of our wider partnership activity over the last year 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**.

Within this LCPAR we will take the opportunity to highlight some of the good practice that we have seen across our partnership during 2019/20 – the things that **local people tell us have made a real difference to their lives**.

We will also begin to reflect on our initial experience of the **Covid-19 pandemic** and our partnership response to supporting our most vulnerable children and families at this critical moment in time.

We recognise however that the full impact of the pandemic is still emerging and will continue to be seen in the months and years ahead; and that our response to child poverty must continue to evolve to allow us to meet these future challenges.

This will be reflected in the 'forward looking' aspect of this report, which will highlight our commitment to ensuring that child poverty is at the heart of our emerging partnership Covid-19 recovery and renewal agenda; and **the role that our children and young people themselves will play in shaping this work** going forward.

The challenges that we face in relation to child poverty are in no way diminishing, and **our partnership approach to this work is more important than ever**.

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.

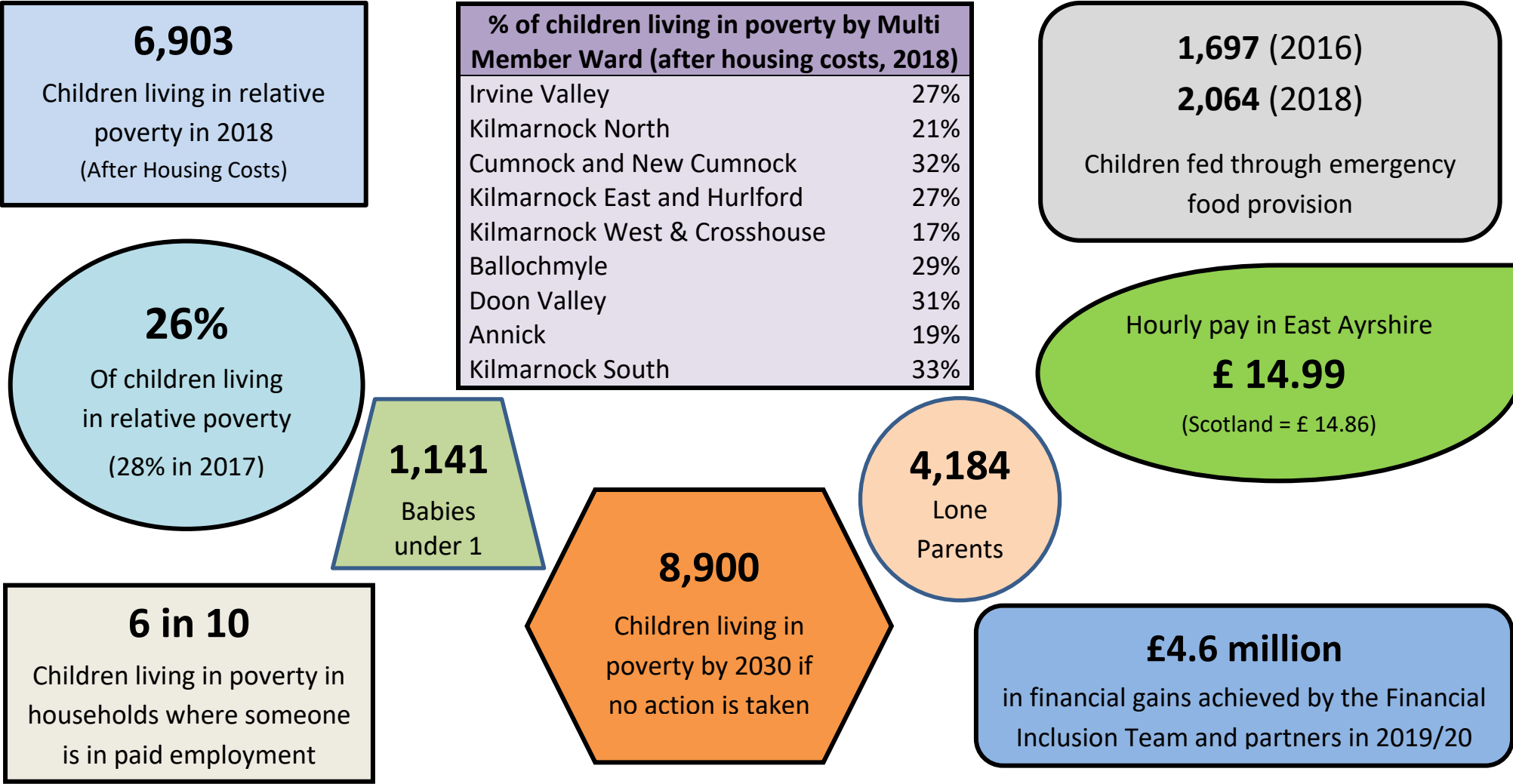
The governance arrangements are set out in the diagram below.



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.

Understanding Child Poverty in East Ayrshire



East Ayrshire has a level of relative child poverty of 26 per cent in 2018. 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 2017 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 2018.

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 and 19 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 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 percentage of people in employment in East Ayrshire, at 72.1, remains below that of Scotland as a whole, which stands at 74.5. Hourly pay rates for full-time employees are slightly higher than the national average at £14.99 compared with £14.86. The claimant count rate for East Ayrshire is 8.2 per cent compared with 6.4 per cent for Scotland (source: www.nomisweb.co.uk, July 2020).

In terms of population, the latest estimates show that there are more than 1,000 babies under the age of one in East Ayrshire; and we also know that there are over 4,000 lone parents.

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.

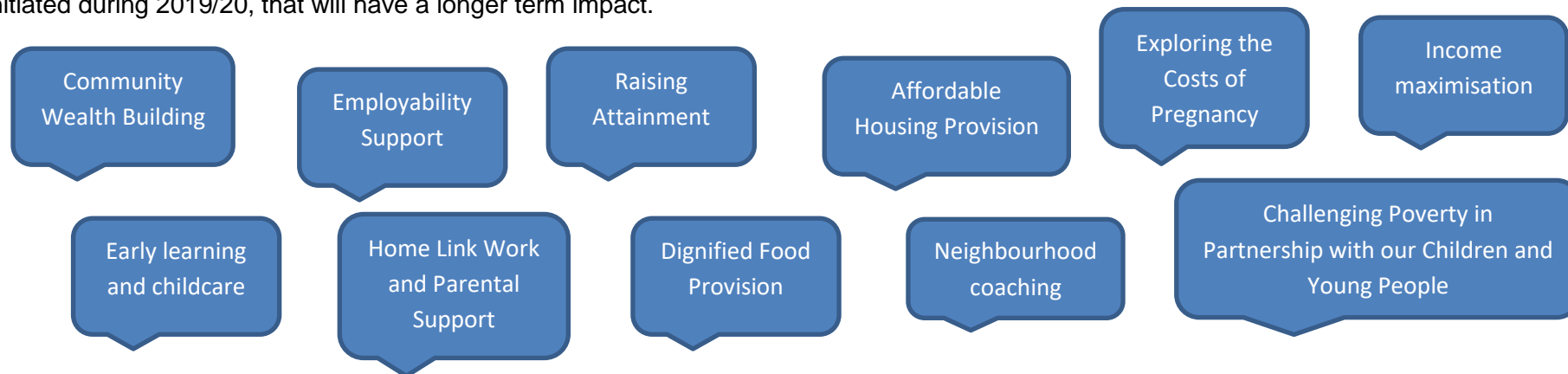
Nationally, child poverty levels are forecast to continue to rise over the next few years. Research commissioned by the Scottish Government on forecasting child poverty suggests that relative child poverty, after housing costs, will increase from the current level to between 35-38 per cent by 2030 depending 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.

Working to Address Child Poverty in East Ayrshire – 2019/20 Activity

In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its anticipated impact on our most vulnerable children and families, it is important that we take time to reflect on the work that we have already done to address child poverty; that we learn from experience; and that we build on this understanding of ‘what works’ as we plan for the future.

Our wider activity to address child poverty is set out in our thematic Delivery Plans and Children and Young People’s Services Plan; and our progress during 2019/20 is reflected within our annual LOIP performance report. Progress updates on the particular actions set out in our 2018/19 Local Child Poverty Action Report are presented at **Appendix 1** of this report.

This report also provides an opportunity for us to draw out and highlight some of the work that we have seen making a real difference to children and families here in East Ayrshire over the last year - the things that they are telling us work well, as well as some more strategic pieces of work that we have initiated during 2019/20, that will have a longer term impact.



The good practice examples which follow will focus on work taken forward during 2019/20. However we will also stray into our initial Covid-19 pandemic response, recognising that no meaningful assessment of our current position in relation to child poverty can be made, without reflecting on the last few months and the unprecedented partnership response necessitated by the pandemic. For ease of reference, each update has also been linked to the most appropriate driver of child poverty, in terms of the impact of the work: **Income from Employment; Costs of Living; or Income from Social Security/Benefits in Kind.**

AYRSHIRE GROWTH DEAL: COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING [Income from Employment]

Since the signing of the Ayrshire Growth Deal Heads of Terms in March 2019, considerable work has been taken forward to progress the deal to implementation stage. One key element of this, in relation to our longer term work to address child poverty by increasing income from employment, is the establishment of a regional **Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Commission**

This has been made possible by the inclusion, within the Ayrshire Growth Deal, of a £3 million fund for an Ayrshire approach to Community Wealth Building (CWB), which will represent Scotland's first regional approach to CWB. This funding will make a significant contribution towards the rebuilding of the local economy and to the creation of a more inclusive society.

The CWB approach is underpinned by five pillars: procurement, employment, land and assets, financial power and democratic ownership of the local economy. The project in Ayrshire will be predominantly focussed on the first two pillars (**procurement and employment**). All Ayrshire Growth Deal projects will require to capture and demonstrate the **community benefits** of their procurement spend.

On 22 June 2020, the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board and Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee agreed to expand the current North Ayrshire Council Community Wealth Building Commission to become a regional Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Commission. Activity under this banner will sit at the heart of future **economic recovery and growth** across Ayrshire.

The principles of **Fair Work** (including **No Zero Hours Contracts, Tackling the Gender Pay Gap, Workforce Development and Trade Union recognition**) will also be important to the overall success of our Community Wealth building initiatives. Work had commenced prior to the current Covid-19 pandemic to enshrine the principles of Fair Work in community planning in East Ayrshire, and the new CWB Commission will build on this existing commitment.

Community Wealth Building, like everything else that we do, will be taken forward on a partnership basis and the wide a range of **social enterprises**, voluntary organisations and community groups that have proved so essential in building capacity across East Ayrshire and in driving forward **community-led regeneration**; will be essential partners in our future community wealth building activity.

The Ayrshire-wide Community Wealth Building Commission is expected to yield significant benefits for communities across East Ayrshire and represents just one strand of the economic renewal and recovery activity that will now be taken forward, providing future employment opportunities for local residents. **Ensuring that parents and carers have access to good quality job opportunities is an essential element of our work to address child poverty.**

Further detail on our progress towards implementation of the Ayrshire Growth Deal is included in the 'Employment' updates presented at Appendix 1. The Deal represents a significant strategic development for Ayrshire, offering significant longer term opportunities for us to address the key drivers of child poverty on a regional basis.

EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT [Income from Employment; Income from Social Security and Benefits in Kind]

East Ayrshire Works brings together a range of agencies in a multi-agency approach. Our Employability pipeline providers support residents so they can feel confident and make progress in the workplace through Careers information; health and wellbeing support; Skills Development; Redundancy Support; and Self-Employment Support. Our Partnership provides wage subsidies and volunteer placements with employers, which gives opportunities for those taking part to enhance their CV's and broaden their search for work. The EAC Employability projects secured **£1,498,082.00 in employability support funds** to assist East Ayrshire residents. A total of **717** people received support from the partnership employability pipeline in 2019/20, including 477 men and 240 women.

The **Financial Inclusion** project within the **Employability Pipeline** provides dedicated 1-2-1 support for **welfare benefits, debt and money advice**. This service applies a preventative approach looking at financial circumstances and other key areas to prevent escalation of issues and upskill households on entitlements and rights. The **Supported Employment Service** provides advice and information to households affected by health or disability issues. This includes support across the employability journey from establishing vocational profiles and to liaising with employers and providing ongoing support within workplaces. The service also helps facilitate **East Ayrshire Council's Positive Recruitment HR policy** that aims to support more individuals with protected characteristics into jobs or MAs within the council, by offering priority interviews to those being supported, who match the minimum criteria for a post. To date 7 individuals with disabilities have been supported into jobs or MAs within EAC through this process and work is ongoing to continue to support this policy and maximise opportunities for disabled clients.

All provision delivered by the council's Employability Service is targeted **at individuals with multiple barriers to employment**, including those with disabilities. The work of the service is committed to **closing the disability employment gap** and recognises in particular the employability challenges which face those affected by **learning disability or Autism**, who are significantly under-represented in employment. The service delivers dedicated Supported Employment provision for those individuals, **successfully supporting those furthest from the labour market into meaningful paid employment**. Activity to attract and support people with protected characteristics, and specifically those affected by disability, includes close working with partners including **DWP, SDS, Third Sector organisations** and other council services such as Education or Social Services, to promote our services and encourage referrals.

The council's recently awarded **Parental Employability Support Fund** supports parents across East Ayrshire with the ethos: Engage - Support - Progress. PESF funding is provided by the Scottish Government, in response to research which indicates that, during the current pandemic, female-led households have been especially hard-hit and vulnerable and are in need of employability support. Many lost their source of income through cuts in working hours or through losing their jobs entirely and many have little or no savings. The new service, starting June 2020, will provide **holistic ongoing support to parents to overcome number of complex barriers such as poverty, isolation and poor mental health**.

In relation to child poverty, we recognise the importance of employability work to support parents and carers to access education and employment opportunities, and the particular support that we can offer to some of our priority groups, who face additional barriers to accessing those opportunities which are available.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE [Income from employment; Costs of Living; Income from Social Security/Benefits in Kind]

ELC provision plays a key role in our child poverty work, in terms of providing the best start in life to our children and also, in economic terms, supporting parents and carers, and in particular mums and parents without wider family support networks, to access the employment market. Wider activity to encourage families to access the full range of benefits and supports available to them, and to help with everyday living costs, is also taken forward through the established relationships that early years practitioners are able to build up with families.

There are 36 Early Childhood Centres, 6 Funded Providers and over 170 childminders in East Ayrshire.

Ayrshire's Early Years expansion was planned for 3 phases in 2018-19, 2019-20 with universal roll out across academic and financial year 2020-21. **Phase 2 between August 2019 and March 2020 added 11 ECCs and 2 Funded Providers, taking the total to 26 services providing 1140 hours.** 34 childminders offered the Blended Model, a mix of childminder and ECC.

The final phase of expansion was planned for April 2020 to January 2021 however the Coronavirus pandemic has halted this. In March 2020 the Scottish Government took the difficult decision to delay the full rollout and has suspended the statutory duty to deliver 1140 and thus the entitlement remains 600 hours. On this basis the 15 ECCs and 2 Funded Providers not yet phased in will continue to deliver 600 hours until the revised 1140 implementation timescale is announced.

Funding allocated for the expansion was to be directed to supporting families flexibly over the pandemic and in particular to providing critical childcare for vulnerable children and those of key workers. **Critical childcare was provided free at the point of delivery to all children.** 4 local independent sector services were part of the critical childcare infrastructure during this time and the local authority funding supported sustainability and continued employment for the predominantly female workforce

Increasing the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible 2 year olds has proved challenging, both locally and nationally. In recognition of this, in September 2018, a local multi-agency group came together with a focus on improving the uptake for eligible 2 year olds residing in the North West Area of Kilmarnock (NW).

The group liaised with members of the public and with parents and carers attending Early Learning and Childcare settings. This consultation led to the development of a new application process and the introduction of a centralised admission's process. Parents and carers advised that these new processes has resulted in increased flexibility, reduce stigma and a more timely way for families to access full entitlement.

The initial data collected identified that within the NW, **24% of entitled children** were accessing a 2 year old funded place of whom **45%** were accessing full entitlement of 600 hours. In September 2019, **uptake among those entitled had increased to 43%**, of whom **100%** were accessing the full 600 hours.

Early learning and Childcare Practitioners (Community): A team of 16 community practitioners also offer individual support to children and families in their homes, community facilities or early childhood centres. During the period of 1 April 2019 and 30 March 2020, **145 families** across East Ayrshire

have been supported by a community practitioner. An additional **98 families** have accessed support at drop in visits within the Early Childhood Centres. 39 of the families have required **support with the benefits process**, 23 families have been **supported with housing** and 67 families have been able to **access food bank vouchers**.

The team support applications to the **Buttle UK** charity and have accessed white goods and beds for a number of families. They also work in partnership with the **Hillhouse** charity based in Kilmarnock, ensuring that children have access to clothing and footwear. During this reporting period, 4 families have received support with applications to the Holiday project and all families were nominated to receive assistance from West Sound Christmas Toy Appeal and Cash for Kids.

From March 2020 in the period of COVID 19 lockdown, 71 families received **support to access school meal deliveries** and 8 families have been **supported to access energy grants**.

TRANSPORT

Access to **affordable transport** was identified as a priority for us in our first LCPAR, 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.

Our focus during 2019/20 has been ensuring **a consistent strategic approach** across our partnership to **lobbying for effective transport solutions** for East Ayrshire. A spotlight session on transport was convened with a wide range of community planning partners. During this session, the Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance outlined key local developments in relation to transport and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and East Ayrshire Council Economic Development colleagues shared valuable insights, linking the transport agenda into the Local Development Plan and Ayrshire Growth Deal.

A briefing outlining the partnership position in relation to strategic transport developments, referencing transport as a local driver of child poverty, was subsequently developed and circulated to partners; and this shared agenda continues to be taken forward through all appropriate forums. An options appraisal in relation to a municipal bus service is also in progress and will be concluded during 2020/21.

RAISING ATTAINMENT [Income from Employment; Costs of living]

The Scottish Government confirmed East Ayrshire Council Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding for financial year 2019/20 at £3.762m. During this period the EAC SAC programme delivered **eighteen interventions across our educational establishments and communities** to mitigate against the poverty related attainment gap, with a focus on excellence in Literacy and Numeracy; working together with our families and communities; and delivering bespoke leadership opportunities for all.

Throughout the 2019/20 session we increased the pace and reach of the SAC programme to achieve our goal **of 100% of educational establishments** trained and supported in either the Literacy or Numeracy learning and teaching techniques, with 88% of establishments trained and supported in both. It is anticipated that we will achieve 100% coverage for all establishments by September 2020. The current public health crisis has presented significant challenges to this goal, however we have adapted our training and support mechanisms to digital platforms to ensure full participation levels.

Developing partnerships across services and across the regional collaborative has enhanced the design and delivery of the SAC programme. Our connections with **Vibrant Communities** (VC) and their extended access to external community partners is supporting progress within this strand. VC colleagues have engaged in literacy, numeracy and HWB training and engage with our local authority planning tools as they plan inputs with children and families in our communities. This has improved confidence of practitioners working in our communities to support family learning and understand progression. **Youthlink Scotland** and **Education Scotland** have recognised this partnership and collaboration as good practice and are keen to share our practice nationally.

Our original five year school engagement programme has become more targeted, increasingly flexible and needs based. . EAC has a fully embedded primary tracking system supporting development in 'use of data' which has supported our **targeted and data driven approach** to this work. Further evaluation work in relation to the programme will be taken forward over the next year.

The impact on attainment has seen increases across all thirteen Scottish Government measures of Primary School Literacy and Numeracy Levels along with a **closing of the poverty related attainment gap** of up to 11% in some instances. No data was gathered June 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 crisis - these figures reflect data gathered June 2019. Nationally East Ayrshire is closing the gap towards the mean of all Local authorities in these measures.

Pupil Equity Funding is allocated directly to schools and has been utilised with a clear focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap by raising attainment, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy, and improving the health and wellbeing of young people. Plans developed by schools continue to identify additional supports, including reading resources and digital technologies to enhance home/school reading programmes and to enhance learning; increased breakfast club provision to support children and young people; school counselling to support the development of mental health programmes; and a parental empowerment programme.

HOME LINK AND PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT [Income from employment; Costs of Living; Income from Social Security/Benefits in Kind]

Significant progress has been made across all 8 Education Groups with the Home Link Workers (HLW) supporting a total of **656 children**, young people and their families during 2019/20, with 438 of those families now no longer requiring Home Link support. A range of different supports have been provided as part of this work:

Young persons group work includes positive choices programmes, intergenerational sessions, breakfast clubs, friendships groups, chess club, and REST (Respect, Empowerment, Support and Team work). In total there have been **5,530 attendances** by children and young people from August 2019 to March 2020.

The Ilunch school holiday programme was delivered in 9 primary schools across EAC. Over the summer programme in 2019, the Home Link team delivered 6 sessions each across all 9 schools with 172 parent and 332 children and young people attendances. This was supported by 3 parent volunteers who accumulated 51 volunteer hours. In the October 2019 school holidays, two sessions were delivered across all 9 schools with 75 parent and 152 children and young people attendances, with a focus on family learning and addressing holiday hunger. In order to embed sustainability, 6 parents from St.Xaviers and 5 parents from Hillhead primary school have achieved their REHIS food hygiene certificate and assist at current programmes as parent volunteers.

Parental Engagement (Authority Wide) is embedded within the Home Link ethos and includes supporting parents to attend parents' evenings, family drop in sessions, swap and drop (clothes swapping initiative), family learning programmes, ilunch, breakfast blether, food and fitness programme, with total **parent attendance of 1,845 and 1,899 for children and young people**. To build sustainability Parental Engagement sessions and a GLOW tile for staff and parents have been provided, which challenge the participants to embed the good practice their schools.

The Parent in Partnership (PiP) programme has grown from strength to strength with one programme delivered in 2017/18, three programmes in 18/19 and 8 programmes offered in 19/20, which covers all Education Groups. Relationships are critical, linking with schools and speaking to parents in order to co-construct the programme. The **Parental Engagement Framework 2019 – 2021** was launched in December 2019 as part of a Health and Wellbeing Head Teachers Networking Day, to provide support and guidance for all practitioners, in order to ensure that parents in East Ayrshire are empowered and engaged with their children's' education.

Between March and June 2020, during 'lockdown' 6 **Home Link workers continued to support 92 of our most vulnerable families directly**, then over the summer holiday period the Home Link team focused on supporting our 11 **Emergency Childcare Hubs**. In particular families were supported to access dignified food provision, learning packs and support available from the Scottish Welfare Fund, Children in Need and the Connecting Scotland Digital Programme.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION [Costs of Living]

The **Affordable Housing Supply Programme** (AHSP) continues to deliver a mix of homes across sizes and types, in response to aims and objectives set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house condition across all tenures. During 2019/20, site completions were achieved for the delivery of 134 Council homes, with 66 completions also achieved by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners.

The Council's **Housing Options** service has continued to support vulnerable individuals and families who are, or are at risk, of homelessness. In response to COVID-19, all residents of St Andrews Court Hostel were relocated to furnished temporary accommodation in March to allow for physical distancing to be maintained whilst still being provided with support. Allocations for those on the Homeless Group resumed on 15 June, with robust risk assessments in place, to ensure a flow of applicants into settled homes. In addition, the Council's updated **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan** (RRTP) and Funding and Activity Monitoring Report for 2019/20 was submitted to the Scottish Government on 30 June to ensure further support continues to be provided to those at risk of homelessness.

Work continues to review the number of lets to homeless households and the time spent in temporary accommodation and this will face scrutiny for the foreseeable future as we look to reduce the number of units of temporary accommodation, while being mindful of the rise in homeless presentations, the demand for temporary accommodation, a potential second wave of the virus and any subsequent reintroduction of restrictions to our operational activity.

Further to analysis on **domestic abuse** cases and the introduction of our Domestic Abuse Policy in 2019, a new staff procedure has been introduced for all Housing colleagues to provide guidance and direction when dealing with disclosures of domestic abuse. The procedure aims to ensure that survivors are kept safe and receive person-centred support and that a holistic approach is taken to ensure survivors receive optimum support should they wish to move home or remain in their home, without signposting to Housing Options. The procedure was developed in collaboration with **East Ayrshire Women's Aid** and our Legal Services team and outcomes will be monitored throughout the year.

We continue to work with the **Centre for Homelessness Impact** on their **What Works Community of Practice Pilot Challenge**, in collaboration with our key stakeholders. Following a series of online design sessions in July and August, the key insights and proposals from this work will be presented to our senior leadership and the Centre for Homelessness Impact at our Final Pitch and Celebration event in September 2020. Thereafter we will carry out further consultation which will inform the design and implementation of our identified solutions with the aims of **promoting the private rented sector as an accessible, affordable and sustainable housing option** for people experiencing homelessness, and a number of informed interventions to mitigate crisis occurring in these tenancies which currently can result in a homeless presentation.

NEIGHBOURHOOD COACHING [Costs of Living; Income from Social Security and Benefits in Kind]

Neighbourhood Coaching is an innovative Housing approach which seeks to redefine and reimagine the traditional relationship between social landlord and tenant within East Ayrshire, 're-programming' Housing Officers into Neighbourhood Coaches to deliver three innovations. Firstly, the approach seeks to shift the emphasis to the customer's strengths and potential, rather than defining their relationship with East Ayrshire solely in terms of need and weakness. The Neighbourhood Coaches are not there to dip in and out "fixing" problems: their role is to **focus on the positives in people, build trusting long-term relationships and equip people for success**. This requires effort from both sides, unlike a typical service provision relationship.

Secondly, the Neighbourhood Coach is more than simply a customer service manager who seeks to ensure that customers are happily using East Ayrshire's own services. Rather, the coach seeks to **connect customers to all local services and assets that might help them thrive and grow**.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Coach's role is to connect customers to each other and build community. It's the Coach's job to know if a customer is good at preparing meals on a budget, has good budgeting skills or is good with computers, and whether they might be able to share those skills with a neighbour or the wider community. In other words, customers can help the Neighbourhood Coach to help other tenants, **building a network of mutual support that becomes freestanding and sustainable**.

We know that people get frustrated if they are passed from pillar to post and have to deal with different officers to get the support that they need. The neighbourhood coach model builds on existing relationships, makes the connections that need to be made and proactively supports our tenants, helping them to **maintain their tenancies**. Benefits of this approach can be seen in the **reduction of tenant evictions**, with them falling by almost half over the past three years. In 2017/18, there were 82 evictions; this fell to 52 in 2018/19 and fell further to 40 in 2019/20. In response to COVID-19, Housing Services has suspended its rent arrears recovery processes and introduced an amended contact and support procedure, with Neighbourhood Coaches continuing to be available to tenants whilst working from home.

This initiative ties into our wider activity to support **community resilience, place-based working and community empowerment**. The benefits of this approach have been demonstrated during the recent pandemic response, which saw **Vibrant Communities, Health and Social Care** colleagues and our wider partners, a large number of **third and independent sector organisations, primary and secondary care clinicians**, together with an overwhelming number of **community groups and volunteers**, come together to create **a holistic response within our communities**. This local response included proactively contacting people to review their necessary health and social care supports, locally provided free food packages, medication collections and deliveries and connection into local community resilience groups, weekly befriending telephone calls and financial inclusion services. This place-based approach to support wellbeing has demonstrated the resilience of our communities in supporting our response to this crisis, and we will seek to build in this in our future work to address child poverty.

DIGNIFIED FOOD PROVISION [Costs of Living; Income from Social Security/Benefits in Kind]

East Ayrshire's Dignified Food Programme was established in April 2017, creating a network of collaboration and communication through close partnership working across council departments, partner organisations and local communities, to achieve the common aim of **reducing food poverty** whilst maximising the access to food within East Ayrshire. Supporting vulnerable families and children remains a central focus of this activity.

The Holiday Food Programme was set up to address the issue of children not having access to a nutritious meal during the holiday periods. This programme is run in partnership with the Catering Service, Vibrant Communities and Education, providing a range of free sporting and other activities along with nutritious lunches for children and young people in areas of multiple deprivation and by the end of 2019 **over 40,000 lunches** were provided over Easter Summer and the October holidays. At Christmas 2019 the group expanded their support, working in conjunction with Home Link Workers and Education, providing over **500 meals to 39 families** over the two week holiday period alone.

Through this work, the aim is to ensure that all children who need it will receive one healthy meal a day during all holiday periods.

In addition, during term time, where **surplus food** is left over from school lunches, this is now put in take away containers, labelled and placed in a specified area for young people to pick up and take home.

A Food Education programme has been introduced to deliver cooking skills classes, not only teaching parents to learn to cook, but how to budget and cook low cost healthy nutritious meals. Four week programmes for 8 classes saw 86 parents attend. The pupil classes taught basic skills such as peeling potatoes, with cooking demonstrations and talks from local food producers.

Food Larders were an additional proactive initiative to support the broader wellbeing agenda for all East Ayrshire residents, working with third sector organisations and community groups to provide food larders in the local communities where needed. The ethos of these larders is about ensuring that any provision is sustainable and "ownership" lies with the communities rather than the Council being seen as providing a service – **empowering communities to access food in a dignified way, deciding and responding to what works best for them.**

With a commitment from several partners to work with communities to implement 10 Food Larders within their local areas, it was agreed that the Council would provide training for volunteers to manage the larders, and support them to become more involved in decision making within their communities. Financial support for equipment including fridges and freezers, would also be provided.

COVID-19 saw plans accelerated, with 12 food larders across the Authority established in days rather than months.

As part of this model the Council is working closely with **FareShare**, supplementing food and distributing incoming food deliveries. The Council's catering service utilise many of these ingredients to make frozen meals for families to receive in addition to groceries such as bread and milk, providing support to **over 5,000 vulnerable families and residents per week**. This ensures we can make the produce last longer, but also helps meet the need for nutritional meals where families might lack cooking skills or facilities to cook.

This model is supported by the Council's **Vibrant Communities** Team, who work to identify those in need and ensure they are engaged in the programme. With **90 plus community groups and over 1,000 volunteers**, linked into local resilience hubs these provide a strong local network to ensure no-one misses out. The hubs bring together groups including **CVO, Christian Fellowship, and local community and voluntary organisations**, ensuring a range of pathways to access food for some of the most vulnerable groups in East Ayrshire. All larders are also now operating a delivery service to support social distancing through these local volunteer networks.

Emergency Family Meals were also provided on a daily basis for families with children in receipt of free school meals or changed circumstances, including 120 homeless people, who were temporarily rehoused. The first day saw them provide nearly 2,500 freshly prepared meals and this increased to almost 7,000 meals a day delivered out to families (3987 children and 2849 adults) across the Authority.

In just short of seven weeks of lockdown over 170,000 meals were provided from 18 production kitchens, averaging 30,000 meals a week, delivered to over 1700 homes every day by over 60 volunteer drivers made up of both council employees and the third sector.

Over the Easter holiday period, we delivered **1442 Easter Weekend parcels** to the families and this was repeated to ensure that families had additional supplies for the May public holiday too. The food parcels also contain other essentials such as sanitary products and toilet rolls. Further plans have been made to expand our **free sanitary provision** during 2020/21, with the launch of an on-line ordering facility which will widen the reach of this provision even further.

East Ayrshire's Dignified Food Programme is well on course to reaching its goal of ensuring there is a **dignified food provision** within easy reach of any East Ayrshire resident. The strength of partnership working, and the programme's effectiveness, enabled an outstanding response to COVID-19 whilst establishing **a longer term solution for community food, relieving pressure on our most vulnerable families.**

INCOME MAXIMISATION [Income from Social Security/Benefits in Kind]

The **Financial Inclusion Team**, together with its partners, has continued to support East Ayrshire residents with money advice and to achieve financial gains over the last year. During 2019/20, the EA Money Team assisted with **2,458 referrals**, an increase of 174 from the previous year, achieving additional benefit income totalling **£3,819,743** on behalf of service users in East Ayrshire. Over this period, the **In Court Advice project** also supported **405 tenants** with **rent arrears totalling £297,582.38** and the **Macmillan project** generated financial gains of **£466,433 for people living with cancer** in East Ayrshire. The **total financial gains** made on behalf of service users dating from November 2013 now stands at **£28,092.299**.

The Financial Inclusion Team primarily assist vulnerable clients through the benefits maze, dealing with and challenging all aspects of the social security system from general advice and making a claim through to providing representation at appeal tribunals. The majority of the referrals received by the **EA Money** team are from **social work** but an increasing number are now also being made from **health colleagues** and **neighbourhood coaches**. The team provide a **home visiting service** to support service users with any benefits issues.

The **In Court Advice service** is based in Kilmarnock Sherriff Court, providing support and representation for clients involved in Summary Cause or Simple Procedure cases. The vast majority of their work is in summary cause cases where **tenants are facing possible eviction due to rent arrears**. In some cases rent arrears figures can be over £3,000, making it extremely difficult for tenants to remain in their tenancy. This project maximises tenants' and others family members' income, supports the client to make arrangements to pay off their arrears at affordable levels, negotiates on their behalf with landlords and legal departments; and provides representation during court proceedings.

The **Poverty and Social Inclusion** project is designed to help people into employment or training by breaking down the barriers that may be preventing them from moving along that next step in the employability pipeline. These barriers can include benefits issues, particularly for those who have been long term unemployed, debts, disability and childcare issues. The project works closely with partners such as the Council's Economic Development team and their work coaches, DWP and other Employability programmes and organisations to assist their clients along their employability journey. The project has recently appointed a new co-ordinator who will lead this project through to December 2022.

THE LIVING WAGE

In April 2020, **East Ayrshire Council** secured **accredited living wage status**. As a direct result of this, 350 of the Council's third-party contracted employees received a real Living Wage of £9.30. By paying the real Living Wage rather than the national Living Wage, employees aged 25 and over can earn an average of £1,131 more a year and the difference between the national Living Wage and the real Living Wage is even more marked for younger workers. As part of the accreditation journey the Council engaged with individual contractors and found that 88% were already committed to paying the real Living Wage. The Council has committed to continuing to work with contractors to get this figure as close to 100% as possible. Supporting the living wage helps to tackle in work poverty and, as approximately 74% of the overall Council workforce is female, helps to address the gender related pay gap.

EXPLORING THE COST OF PREGNANCY [Costs of Living]

Evidence shows that there can be cost-related barriers to accessing NHS services, even when universally provided and free at point of access. NHS Health Scotland (now Public Health Scotland, PHS), Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH), NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (NHS GGC) and NHS Ayrshire & Arran (NHS AA) commissioned research to explore **the financial impact of pregnancy** and having a new baby on low-income families from urban (GGC) and rural (AA) populations. The research aimed to identify **cost-related barriers** experienced by these families in accessing antenatal healthcare, and exploring what health services can do to support the **financial wellbeing of expectant parents** and their families.

Qualitative research methods were used to speak directly to **pregnant woman and families from low income households in rural Ayrshire and Arran**, and urban Glasgow. A total of 25 in-depth interviews (five of them paired depths with an expectant or new mothers and their partners) and four focus groups were undertaken with pregnant women and new mothers, alongside two focus groups with frontline staff.

The research findings were published in May 2020, https://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/951_exploring_the_cost_of_the_pregnancy_pathway, and demonstrates the fact that a range of factors contributed to the financial pressures experienced by expectant and new families in receipt of low income, including:

1. Direct up-front **travel costs**, and a lack of available **affordable childcare** impacted on women's ability to attend antenatal appointments.
2. Partners had to take time off work to attend antenatal appointments, and this meant **a loss of household income** for some families. Women had to choose between having their partner present for key appointments or losing income.
3. Living in a **rural community**, such as in East Ayrshire, and having long distances to travel increased travel time and resultant direct up-front costs.
4. There was an **increased burden on overall household income levels**, particularly for asylum seekers, single parent families, and those in receipt of Universal Credit.
5. Additional costs associated with preparing for the arrival of a new baby and ensuring the child's wellbeing once born.
6. The **social pressure** to 'buy the best' for the baby were high.

An action plan has since been developed based on the recommendations from the research. This has local actions for NHS AA maternity and Public Health colleagues, as well as national actions from PHS and Scottish Government colleagues.

CHALLENGING POVERTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE [Income from employment; Costs of Living; Income from Social Security/Benefits in Kind]

Activity to challenge and raise awareness of child poverty has been taken forward at every opportunity and continues to be a focus of our partnership work, particularly as we seek to support our local communities in their Covid-19 renewal and recovery.

Challenge Poverty Week 2019 was used as an opportunity to go out into our communities and to engage directly with local people about the challenges they were facing and to raise awareness of the available supports. Social media was also used to further communicate these messages.

In the last year a new **East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan** has been developed. The East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-23 sets the local strategic intent for improvement in outcomes for all children and young people and identifies the key activities for 2020-23 to deliver these in priority areas, which include **tackling poverty and respecting and promoting rights**. The Plan has been developed through **engagement with local children, young people, families and partners** to understand what matters most to them, and young people are leading on design of the final document to ensure its look and feel represents their perspective.

East Ayrshire has a long standing commitment to **the meaningful involvement of children and young people**. We strive to give a platform to speak and be heard, to reflect upon topics and issues relevant to their lives and to ensure they influence change and improvement. Children and young people are our partners. We want them to be the drivers of their services. From the foundations in place, we continue to find new and innovative ways to ensure **the broadest and most diverse range of children and young people are in the driving seat for decisions that affect them**.

Delivering the rights of children and young people as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, is also fundamental to our work to address child poverty.

Our **Children and Young People's Cabinet** is well established as a central platform of engagement for young people in civic and democratic decision making, which is listened to and valued by the Council and Community Planning Partners. Representatives of the Cabinet participated in and co-chaired our **partnership challenge session on child poverty**, convened in March 2020, and are currently playing a central role in shaping our covid-19 recovery and renewal activity.

Immediately prior to lockdown, the partnership challenge session on child poverty brought together a range of stakeholders, including **local people with lived experience of poverty**, to look at what more we could do to make a difference on this challenging area. The keynote speaker was **Dr Jim McCormick of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation**, who challenged us to do more to support parents/carers in employment who were still struggling, linking in to our 'fair work' commitments. Opportunities to maximise the impact of the **Ayrshire Growth Deal**; the importance of **consistent support** from key workers and peers, rather than a pillar to post experience; the use of holistic tools to gauge where parents are with their lives/goals; and the importance of addressing **the fundamentals of family life**, such as **childcare, transport, housing** all came through during this session. Pledges were made, to ensure a positive 'take away' from the session.....

We Pledge To Challenge Child Poverty By:

Continuing to stand up and address all barriers to those facing poverty issues

Continue to effect and drive forward positive change for young people - such as our dignified and free sanitary provision

Doing all I can to promote and support families by finding and signposting to all supportive services

Using my opportunities in the Youth Cabinet to improve the lives of all

Work with local partner organisations to improve transport for our most vulnerable groups

Providing training and creating employment opportunities for those considered furthest away from the labour market

Hearing the voices of parents in our local area and making the changes they feel are important to them

Committing resources to delivering services which are community led and help empower people to address the issues most important to them

The pledges gathered from the March session remain important, and indeed some of this work has been accelerated by our response to the covid-19 pandemic. The wider outputs from the event will be carried forward into our future renewal and recovery work; and the 2020/2021 business of the **Poverty Action Group EA**. The Poverty Action Group is an organisation overseen by the Council's Financial Inclusion Delivery Manager, comprising of **20 statutory and third sector bodies** who provide a variety of services to challenge poverty in East Ayrshire. The partnership works well with referrals regularly being made between agencies where they can assist service users. Looking forward 2020/21, the Group are planning to launch a series of focus groups, bringing together members from the relevant partner organisations to look at poverty related issues on a thematic basis, with a view to identifying local solutions. The Focus Groups will look at Child Poverty; Affordable Credit and Debt; Housing; Food Insecurity; Health Awareness; Employability and Training; and Fuel Poverty.

Identifying and meeting the challenges ahead – Covid-19 and beyond.

While we have all been affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic, we know that for some groups, the **social, economic and health harms** caused by both the virus and associated lockdown measures, will be greater, and that this could have a profound and long-lasting impact, **exacerbating already existing inequalities in our communities**. The pandemic is likely to drive **more individuals and families into poverty** and we have already seen significant increases in the unemployment rate and in the number of people applying for Universal Credit.

Understanding these impacts is crucial to the development of our future work programme in relation to child poverty. Consequently, while during 2020/21 we will continue to progress the essential activity which we have already identified in relation to child poverty, we will also take an opportunity to **reset and recalibrate our partnership activity, to take account of the impact of the pandemic on our children and families**.

This partnership approach will build on the initial covid-19 response, recovery and renewal work that has already been taken forward by our partners, and the emerging renewal themes, in particular relating to **economic recovery** and the **wellbeing** of our children and young people.

In relation to the financial drivers of child poverty, our aspiration in emerging from this crisis must be to build **a strong local economy** which **supports fair work and tackles inequality**.

In relation to the wellbeing of our children and young people, our **Children and Young People Strategic Partnership (C&YPSP)** is already considering the significant impact on the pandemic on our young people, through **the interruption in key family relationships, friendships and the absence from the structure that school provides**. Early research indicates that the impact of the loss of these relationships is starting to be seen in the emotional and mental wellbeing of children across all our communities and our fear is that the greatest impact will fall upon those children who are living in poverty.

It is important that we take time to understand **the particular impact of Covid-19 on our most vulnerable children and families** and to this end a comprehensive **local impact assessment** of the pandemic has been taken forward across our community planning partnership, the findings of which will be presented to Elected members of **East Ayrshire Council** and the **CPP Board** for consideration in September 2020.

This event will be the launch pad for our scheduled 3 yearly review of our **Community Plan** which will see the development of new thematic delivery plans which will set out the priority activity to be taken forward across our community planning partnership between **2021 and 2024**, to improve outcomes for our local communities across our three existing community planning themes: **Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing**. This will also be aligned to the development of the new **Ayrshire Shared Equality Outcomes**, which is being taken forward within the same timeframe.

In relation to child poverty, our priority is to ensure that activity to address child poverty is central to this future programme of work, and is reflected across each of our three new delivery plans. This is reflected in the additional activity for 2020/21 highlighted at Appendix 2.

In developing this future approach, we will be working closely with our full range of stakeholders and central to this will be the role of our **children and young people** themselves, engaging with them to develop the solutions for their future. To this end a new online survey was launched by **Vibrant Communities** in August 2020, seeking the views of 5000 children and young people aged 8 to 26 years. Working in partnership with the **Children and Young People's Cabinet**, the '**5000 Voices**' survey has been developed to ensure that **the views and opinions of children and young people** are captured at this unique and significant moment in time. These survey results will help to inform our future child poverty work and the wider activity of our community planning partnership.

We will also draw on the wider ongoing '**Vibrant Voices**' programme of engagement which has seen a consistent approach across **the Council, H&SCP, third-sector partners and communities**, including focussed wellbeing conversations with priority groups; 21 facilitated conversations with community and voluntary organisations/resilience groups; a children and young peoples' engagement event led by Young Persons' Cabinet; and close engagement with equalities networks, including gypsy/traveller community and refugee community. Taken together with the findings of the recent Community Planning Residents' Survey, also undertaken over Summer 2020, and our wider impact assessment analysis, this will provide a significant body of evidence to **ensure that our future child poverty activity is targeted to meet the specific needs of our East Ayrshire communities and to have the greatest possible impact on the drivers of poverty.**

The timescale for the Community Plan Review is October 2020 – March 2021, with our new thematic Delivery Plans and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, reflecting our future partnership ambitions in relation to child poverty, to be published by 1 April 2021.

Priority Groups

We will continue to build on the work that has been taken forward to support the identified priority groups in relation to child poverty, for example our employability support for people with disabilities, improving access to training and employment opportunities. Linking in to the forthcoming consultation on the new shared equalities outcomes, we will also continue to improve our understanding of the challenges facing different groups, working in partnership with them to identify further opportunities to tackle poverty.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) is the performance management framework which underpins the work of our community planning partnership and includes a range of performance measures relevant to our work to address child poverty. As part of the community plan review, a new LOIP for the period 2021-24 will be developed. We will use this as an opportunity to improve the way that we use data to better monitor and evaluate the impact of our partnership activity on child poverty.

Appendix 1: Action Plan Updates 2019/20

ACTION	TIMESCALE	PARTNERS	PROGRESS AT MARCH 2020
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.	The spotlight session with community planning partners was convened in August 2019. The Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance outlined key local developments in relation to transport, and SPT and Economic Development colleagues provided valuable insights, linking the transport agenda into the Local Development Plan and Ayrshire Growth Deal. A briefing outlining the partnership position in relation to strategic transport developments, referencing transport as a local driver of child poverty, was subsequently developed and circulated Autumn 2019; and this shared agenda continues to be taken forward through all appropriate forums.
<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	An options appraisal has been undertaken for the establishment of a municipal bus service, with a report scheduled to be presented to Council for consideration Autumn 2020.
<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	Following the transport spotlight session a briefing for partners was prepared and circulated, setting out the Partnership's strategic intent in relation to transport, within the context of the emerging local and national transport agenda. This has ensured a consistent lobbying position across our CPP which has informed, among other things, the partners' responses to the ongoing Transport Scotland consultation on the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR).

			Ayrshire Roads Alliance engage regularly with SPT on public and school transport issues to ensure that where possible service improvements can be delivered where a need is identified. ARA also work as part of the CPP to leverage grant funding to improve local transport infrastructure.
<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	It is anticipated that the findings of the national review of Concessionary Travel for young people aged 25 and under will be published during 2020/21.
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	Further to the signing of the Ayrshire Growth Deal Heads of Terms on 8 March 2019, considerable work has been completed in progressing the deal to implementation stage. Key elements of this work required for inclusion in the suite of Full Deal documents are: a Deal Document, Implementation Plan, Financial Plan; Financial Agreement; Governance Document, Communications Protocol; and a detailed business case for each project. Using the Diagnostic, we have demonstrated inclusive growth commitment by ensuring that each business case has considered the constraints faced by our communities in accessing the labour market, including high value jobs. A consistent approach to ensuring that inclusive growth, equalities and community wealth building outcomes are embedded in each business case, has been taken to ensure an explicit commitment to how the project will achieve inclusive growth and reduce inequality,. Collaborative development of an Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy has also been taken forward, involving the public, private and third sectors, which will build on the Ayrshire Growth Deal through its ambitions for growing the Ayrshire economy over the next 10 years. An

			Inclusive Growth Action Plan has been agreed and will be aligned with the Regional Economic Strategy, to ensure that communities across the three authority areas are well placed to benefit from the broader investment across Ayrshire, and the employment opportunities and infrastructure improvements which will ensue.
<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.	Barclays 'Building Thriving Local Economies' Kilmarnock initiative was launched on 11 June 2019 at Ayrshire College, Kilmarnock. A series of further engagement sessions followed, with community planning partners and local business leaders, to inform development of a programme of bespoke support for Kilmarnock and surrounding areas. Three key focus areas were subsequently identified, namely co-ordination of Digital skills, SME support and increased mentoring support. A series of business development sessions were delivered in partnership with the local CVO and, since August 2019, all secondary schools in Kilmarnock gained access to the bank's Life Skills programme, which aims to equip young people with skills they need for the world of work. Further consideration is now being given to tailoring Barclays support to reflect the local covid-19 recovery and renewal agenda.
<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.	Engagement with the Scottish Government Fair Work team, including a presentation to the CPP Board, led, in December 2019, to the adoption of a joint pledge by East Ayrshire Council and CPP Board to 'Promote the dimensions of Fair Work within local workplaces with the aim of achieving our ambition for Kilmarnock to become a Fair Work Town by 2025'. The principles of Fair Work (including No Zero Hours Contracts, Tackling the Gender Pay Gap, Workforce Development and Trade Union recognition) are important to the Community Wealth building initiatives which are being taken forward locally on a pan-Ayrshire basis. Work had commenced prior to the current crisis to enshrine the principles of Fair Work, and it will be more important than ever that this continues. In April 2020, the Council secured accredited living wage status after undergoing a rigorous application process.

<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	East Ayrshire Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy 2020/21 includes a commitment to support and complement the Regional Economic Strategy and in particular the priorities which will contribute to the delivery of inclusive growth, community wealth building and sustainability. The strategy, approved in May 2020, sets out in detail the partnership approach that will be taken to this work.
<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	Employability Pipeline activity is targeted at individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, and the service is committed to closing the disability employment gap. Dedicated Supported Employment provision is targeted towards those affected by learning disability or Autism, as this group is significantly under-represented in employment. Activity to attract and support people with protected characteristics, and specifically those affected by disability, includes close working with partners including DWP, SDS, Third Sector organisations and other council services such as Education or Social Services, to promote available services and encourage referrals.
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, Poverty Action Group - EA, Social Security Scotland	Focus Groups in a number of key areas are being developed by Poverty Action Group to challenge the effects of poverty and identify better working practices. Financial Inclusion Team currently undergoing a review which will lead to a more localised service and better links with community organisations and GP services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise and implement joint working arrangements with Social Security Scotland. 	2019/20 and ongoing	EAHSCP/Social Security Scotland	Social Security Scotland are now based in The Johnnie Walker Bond alongside the Financial Inclusion Team. Social Security Scotland are not yet at full complement of staff and following the COVID-19 pandemic have not utilised the office with staff being used in other areas of work. This partnership will develop once they return to the office and develop their visiting programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote take-up of new Social Security Scotland benefits including the recent Best Start Grant for 	Best Start 2019/20 Scottish Child Payment	Poverty Action Group	Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Scottish Government have delayed the implementation of the Scottish Child Payment with the first payments not now due until 2021. This will be re-visited once

low income families in infancy and early years, and the Scottish Child Payment for under 6s by 2021 and remaining under 16s by 2022.	2020/21		the Scottish Government announce a new date for accepting applications. The Poverty Action Group have supported promotion of the Best Start Grants & Foods agenda via all partner organisations with a high level of take up in East Ayrshire
<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	East Ayrshire CAB provided outreach services in the 0-5% range of most deprived areas in East Ayrshire. Their main office is based in Kilmarnock, covering both Kilmarnock North & South areas whilst there are also outreach services in Muirkirk and Dalmellington. CAB also provide outreach services in other areas of deprivation in the 10% and 20% range, Drongan, New Cumnock, Patna and Newmilns whilst they operate a part time office in Cumnock. During COVID-19 pandemic, outreach services have been suspended
<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	The implementation of new Maternity electronic system, Badgernet, was delayed due to covid-19 until autumn 2020. Training and resources have been developed to support maternity staff to undertake direct referral manually in anticipation of being able to do so with Badgernet.
<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	Poverty Action Group are in the process of organising focus groups involving RSLs and In Court Advice amongst other partners to identify key areas of how poverty is affected by housing and benefit issues and how to challenge them going forward. Delayed by the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings have recently started via conference call. The first meeting of this group will be held by the end of October 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work across partners in registration, midwifery, 	2019/20	Poverty Action Group	Poverty Action Group are in the process of organising focus groups involving public health partners to identify key areas of poverty and

health visiting, early years, school nursing and others to provide up-stream, early advice and support to tackle child poverty.			health related issues and how to challenge them going forward. Delayed by the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings have recently started via conference call. The first meeting of this group will be held by the end of October 2020
<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	Discussions are at an early stage with the Town Centre Partnership surrounding using the EA Gift Card as a form of local currency to benefit the local economy and provide a cash based alternative to tackle the growing dependency on foodbanks. Discussions also organised between CAB and the 2 Credit Unions in East Ayrshire to see if it is possible to work together to provide assistance at point of need and access to affordable credit to prevent further 'crisis' situations
<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	Currently discussing with Sovereign Credit Union regarding the viability of them taking over the running of the Post Office in Cumnock
<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	It has not been able to progress development in this area due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New ways of delivering training online are being investigated by the Financial Inclusion Team at present
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	<p>Free school meals are provided to all children in P1-3 and automated systems are in place to maximise uptake of wider free school meal entitlements. In addition, where surplus food is left over from school lunches, this is now put in take away containers, labelled and placed in a specified area for young people to pick up and take home.</p> <p>Early Years Expansion: Having established a test site at the new Whatriggs Early Childhood Centre, East Ayrshire's expansion was planned for 3 phases in 2018-19, 2019-20 with universal roll out</p>

			<p>across academic and financial year 2020-21. Phase 2 between August 2019 and March 2020 added 11 ECCs and 2 Funded Providers to taking the total to 26 services providing 1140 hours. 34 childminders offered the Blended Model, a mix of childminder and ECC.</p> <p>The final phase of expansion was planned for April 2020 to January 2021 however the Coronavirus pandemic has halted this. The 15 ECCs and 2 Funded Providers not yet phased in will continue to deliver 600 hours until the revised 1140 implementation timescale is announced.</p> <p>Funding allocated for the expansion was to be directed to supporting families flexibly over the pandemic and in particular to providing critical childcare for vulnerable children and those of key workers. Critical childcare was provided free at the point of delivery to all children.</p>
<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	<p>The Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) continues to deliver a mix of homes across sizes and types, in response to aims and objectives set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house condition across all tenures. Site completions were achieved for the delivery of 134 Council homes, with 66 completions also achieved by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support vulnerable individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness through the implementation of the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. 	2019/20 and ongoing	East Ayrshire Council and key partners	<p>The Council's Housing Options service has continued to support vulnerable individuals and families who are, or are at risk, of homelessness. In response to COVID-19, all residents of St Andrews Court Hostel were relocated to furnished temporary accommodation in March to allow for physical distancing to be maintained whilst still being provided with support. Allocations for those on the Homeless Group resumed on 15 June, with robust risk assessments in place, to ensure a flow of applicants into settled homes. In addition, the Council's updated Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and Funding and Activity Monitoring Report for 2019/20 was submitted to the Scottish Government on 30 June to ensure further support continues to be provided to those at risk of homelessness.</p>

<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	Poverty Action Group are in the process of organising focus groups involving Citrus Energy and other partner organisations, including Home Energy Scotland and CAB to identify key areas of fuel poverty and how to challenge them going forward. Delayed by the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings have recently started via conference call. The first meeting of this group will be held by the end of October 2020
<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	Dignified food provision continued to expand during 2019/20, and by the end of 2019, holiday food programmes provided over 40,000 lunches during Easter, Summer and the October holidays, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from both parents and children. At Christmas 2019 the group expanded their support, working in conjunction with Home Link Workers and Education, providing over 500 meals to 39 families over the two week holiday period alone. 12 Food Larders have also been established. Free sanitary provision has been rolled out to all schools and is linked in to local food bank and community larder provision. Further activity during 2020/21 will see online ordering for free sanitary provision, and further extension of the existing community wide provision.
<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	<p>The research project examining the cost of pregnancy for low-income families in urban and rural settings was completed in 2019/20. The project explored cost-related barriers for women from low-income households affecting attendance at antenatal appointments, which in turn may impact adversely on their health and the health of their infant.</p> <p>Key issues included: up-front travel costs; childcare costs, and the need for women and/or their partners to take unpaid time off work to attend appointments. The need for less centralised antenatal services and greater flexibility for women-centred appointments was also highlighted. Most concerns highlighted in the research were exacerbated for women and families living in rural areas across East Ayrshire.</p>

			The research findings have been disseminated locally and nationally. An action plan has been developed by all research partners and Scottish Government, as some proposed recommendations require national-level changes, and will be progressed in 2020/2021.
COMMUNICATION			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and relaunch the EA Money digital platform as central 'one stop shop' for financial support across East Ayrshire. 	2019/20	Poverty Action Group - EA, led by EAHSCP	<p>This is still in development. Content has been developed to be added to the website to provide guidance and advice to public who do not require assistance. Group also reviewing existing Council and HSCP webpages to update information. Anticipated new website to be launched by March 2021</p> <p>Discussions also ongoing regarding dedicated Facebook page for Poverty Action Group</p>
<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	<p>A range of activities were undertaken to support the use of the locally developed Financial Inclusion Pathways to enable direct referral to specialist money advice services by key staff, such as health visitors, midwives and community midwife assistants (CMAs). This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular promotion of the direct referral tool to all NHS staff. Development and delivery of training sessions to key NHS staff groups Development of new resources based on the direct referral tool for use by professionals, e.g. an A5 version for use as a diary insert by Health Visitors and Midwives. A range of resources (Banners, Posters, Leaflets, Bibs) were developed to raise awareness amongst pregnant women that midwifery staff would routinely ask <u>all</u> women about money worries as a key element of delivering antenatal care. Similar resources were developed for families with young children specifically for use in Paediatric clinical areas in NHS Ayrshire & Arran acute hospitals. Awareness-raising leaflets are now being disseminated in the packs that Health Visitors provide to all women with newborn infants in their first visit to the family home. Leaflets for pregnant women will be included in the equivalent antenatal packs.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local training programme for Community Midwife Assistants (CMAs) was developed including best practice in raising money worries with pregnant women, and explicit use of the direct referral tool. • Training sessions for midwifery staff in use of direct referral tool scheduled for February-April 2020 were paused due to Covid-19. The potential for delivering the training virtually is being explored.
<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)	Initial discussions were held to develop a CPIA tool, by modifying existing inequality assessment tool. Currently paused due to covid-19.
<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	A communication campaign with regular inserts, was undertaken in 2019/20 to raise awareness amongst NHS Ayrshire & Arran and HSCP staff on their role and responsibilities in mitigating child poverty and modifying practice to be poverty-sensitive.
<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 Health Scotland NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS Lanarkshire	The Child Poverty communications plan was developed jointly by Health Scotland (now Public Health Scotland, PHS), and several Health Boards, including NHS Ayrshire & Arran, and shared with partners in 2019 as part of work around Challenge Poverty Week.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Challenge Poverty Week across East Ayrshire in October 2020 	October 2019	All Community Planning Partners	<p>A series of events were held throughout East Ayrshire to highlight Challenge Poverty Week with members of the public, key personnel and elected members signing a Pledge Board to Challenge Poverty.</p> <p>The Chief Executive of NHS Ayrshire & Arran delivered a blog to all NHS staff on the potential positive impact on household income of asking patients about money worries and directly referring them to specialist money advice services.</p> <p>Plans now being developed for Challenge Poverty Week, October 2020.</p>
<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	<p>NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health department are members of the national group progressing public health priority 5, and have lobbied to include child poverty and the gendered impact of austerity.</p>

Appendix 2: Additional Action Planned for 2020/21

ACTION	TIMESCALE	PARTNERS	POVERTY DRIVER	HOW IMPACT WILL BE ASSESSED	TARGET GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that child poverty is a central focus of the Community Plan Review 2020/21 and that this is reflected across the new thematic delivery plans 2021-24. 	October 2020-March 2021	Core Community Planning Partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 3 drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Outcomes Improvement Plan performance framework 	Universal and targeted activity for priority groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the emerging child poverty agenda with the Shared Equalities Outcomes which are being developed on a pan Ayrshire basis 2021-25. 	October 2020-March 2021	Core Community Planning Partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 3 drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Outcomes Improvement Plan performance framework 	Identified priority groups, with a focus on the protected equalities characteristics

Appendix 3: Some of the Partners in Our Child Poverty Work

