

**Local Child Poverty Action
Report for East Ayrshire
2022/23**

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Introduction

This is the fifth Local Child Poverty Action Report for East Ayrshire which has been produced in line with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, which requires Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPARs) for each local authority area. The development of this East Ayrshire report has been undertaken across our wider community planning partnership, reflecting our ongoing partnership approach to child poverty.

Child poverty levels remain stubbornly high, in East Ayrshire and across Scotland, and as people across our communities have struggled with rising costs of living, our children have also been impacted, particularly in families who were perhaps 'just managing' before the turmoil of the last few years.

As recognised in previous reports, there is no 'quick fix' for child poverty, nor is it something that can be tackled by any one individual agency alone. This challenge needs the totality of our partnership effort, commitment and resource. We are therefore working collectively with national and local partners to tackle poverty in the round – providing the immediate support and care that people need to allow them to live well, and also putting in place long term strategic plans to grow our economy in an inclusive way that supports the wellbeing of people across our communities.

This LCPAR does not seek to set out every piece of work being taken forward across our partnership to address this challenging agenda – it would not be possible to encapsulate this in a single report. We have therefore tried to focus on the identified drivers of poverty and the priorities set out within the legislation and related guidance; and to highlight some of the key work being taken forward to address these, and that which best aligns to the National Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026. We have also tried to focus on that work which is partnership led or driven, as we see partnership working as the route to maximise the impact of our limited resources.

We have also taken the opportunity to set out within this report our plans for the future governance of our local work to address child poverty which will be more closely integrated within our Children and Young People's Services Planning framework. This report therefore focuses on the 'look back' element of our LCPAR. Our future priorities in relation to child poverty are set out in the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 and this will form the basis of future reporting.

What We Now Know About Child Poverty in East Ayrshire




6,308
children (0-19 years) living in relative poverty, before housing costs 2021/22



East Ayrshire has the 4th highest rate of child poverty from 32 Scottish local authorities

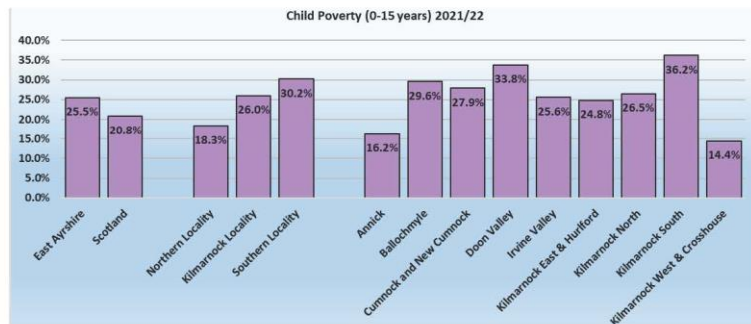
29%
In May 2023, 890 young people aged between 16 and 21 were claiming out of work benefits, 29% of all claimants




Hourly pay in East Ayrshire
£16.42
(Scotland £16.59)



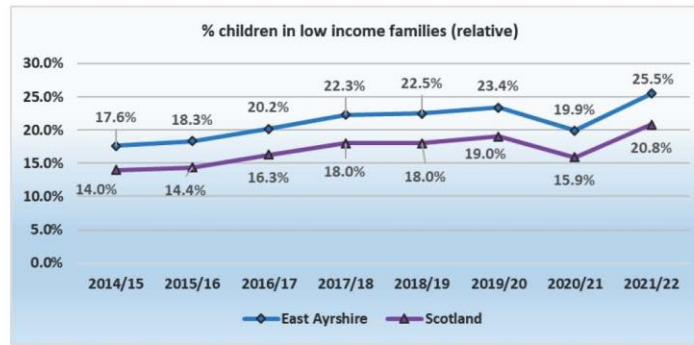
£4.98 million
in financial gains achieved by the Financial Inclusion Team and partners in 2022/23
(£40.1 million since November 2013)




19.4% of East Ayrshire households claiming universal credit in February 2023 (Scotland 14.7%)



77.7% of primary pupils and 19.8% of secondary pupils registered for free school meals in 2021/22 (Scotland 76.8% primary pupils, 18.6% secondary pupils)



East Ayrshire had an estimated level of relative child poverty of 24.4% per cent during 2021/22, 5.3 percentage points higher than the estimated rate of 19.1% the previous year.* The level of relative child poverty in East Ayrshire is also 4.5% higher than the estimated national rate of 19.9% during 2021/22 and equates to 6,308 children and young people (aged 0-19 years) living in poverty in our communities, underlining the significant challenges we face. During 2021/22, East Ayrshire had the 4th highest level of child poverty across the 32 Scottish Local Authorities (alongside West Dunbartonshire), with only Glasgow City, North Ayrshire and Clackmannanshire experiencing higher rates.

The rate of relative child (0-19) poverty in East Ayrshire has increased steadily in recent years, from 17 per cent in 2015/16 to 22 per cent in 2019/20 however, it then saw a welcome fall of 3 pps between 2019/20 and 2020/21. However, as highlighted above, there has been a notable increase of 5.3pps during 2021/22. These trends are also reflected nationally, although at a lower rate.

The level of child poverty varies considerably across our communities:

- The highest rates of children and young people living in relative poverty are found in Kilmarnock South Ward (36.2%), Doon Valley Ward (33.8%) and Ballochmyle Ward (29.6%).
- Conversely, in the Kilmarnock West and Crosshouse Ward, the rate of relative child poverty was 14.4% and in the Annick Ward it was 16.2% during 2021/22.
- This highlights that, even in what are considered our less deprived areas, a significant number of our children and young people experience the impact of poverty.
- At a Locality level, child poverty is most prevalent in the Southern Locality with a rate of 30.2 per cent, compared with 18.3 per cent in the Northern Locality during 2021/22.

71.3% of people in East Ayrshire were in employment during 2022, a fall of 3.9pps from the previous year. Throughout Scotland as a whole, 74.4% of people were in employment during 2022, 3.1pps higher than the figure for East Ayrshire. Hourly pay rates for full-time employees in East Ayrshire are slightly lower than the national average at £16.42 compared with £16.59. The claimant count rate for East Ayrshire is 4 per cent compared with 3.2 per cent for Scotland (www.nomisweb.co.uk, May 2023).

As at February 2023, 19.4% of all East Ayrshire households were on Universal Credit, compared with 14.7% of households across Scotland. This equates to 10,855 households and represents a significant increase from the pre-pandemic figure of 10% at April 2019.

During 2021/22, 77.7% of primary pupils in East Ayrshire were registered for free school meals equating to 6,989 children across the authority. 1,317 secondary pupils in East Ayrshire were registered for free school meals in 2021/22, 19.8% of all secondary pupils. The percentage of East Ayrshire pupils registered for free school meals has risen steadily since 2016 in line with the national trend. The

percentage of pupils registered for free school meals in East Ayrshire during 2021/22 remains slightly higher than the national figure for both primary pupils (0.9 pps) and secondary pupils (1.2 pps).

Nationally, child poverty levels are projected to continue to rise in future years. Research commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2018 on forecasting child poverty suggests that relative child poverty (after housing costs), will increase to between 35-38 per cent by 2030, depending on the extent of policy implementation. Applying these estimates locally suggests that nearly 9,000 children and young people could be living in relative poverty by 2030 unless action is taken to mitigate. This is likely to be further exacerbated in light of the current cost of living crisis.

** A family in low income BHC in the reference year must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics. Note also that the figure referenced above (24.4%) relates to children 0-19 years; which differs slightly from the figures presented in the table at page 5, which relate to those aged 0-15).*

Working in Partnership to Address Child Poverty

We recognise that the complex underlying drivers of child poverty can only be addressed with the collaborative input of local and, importantly, national partners at both Scottish and UK government level. In East Ayrshire this work is led by our Community Planning Partnership, which provides the strategic framework for the delivery of public services, with the aim of improving outcomes for local people and tackling inequality.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE PLANNING

In East Ayrshire, the [Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership](#) ('CYPSP') and Child Protection Committee ('CPC') have collective responsibility for strategic planning and improvement of services for children and young people, reporting directly to the Community Planning Partnership Board. The recently developed Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 sets the strategic direction for Partners' long term ambitions for young people growing up in East Ayrshire. Through the Plan, Partners commit to #KeepThePromise of the Independent Care Review's call to action to achieve significant and lasting change in the way Scotland cares for its children and young people. Partners will uphold, champion and defend the rights of children and young people in all we do and further embed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Partners will also develop and implement innovative ways of ensuring children and young people's voices are heard in discussions and decisions that affect them. This will include collaborative service redesign and the future of our towns and communities.

Child poverty is a permanent work stream within the pan-Ayrshire Infant Children and Young people's Transformational Change Programme Board (ICYPTCPB) and highlight reports are sent to Strategic Planning and Operational Group (SPOG).

The Children and Young People's Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23 provides further information on the work that we are doing in partnership to make sure that every child in East Ayrshire gets the best possible start in life.

During 2022/23 new arrangements have been developed to integrate future local child poverty action planning and reporting more closely within the Children and Young People's Services Plan.

Help Everyone At the Right Time – HEART

During 2022/23 we have continued to develop our **HEART** model of multi-disciplinary working in children’s services, involving Education, Early Years, School Nursing, Health Visiting, CAMHS, Vibrant Communities, Social Work, Housing and Allied Health Professionals. We now have established community teams who are working to ensure that children and families can access support at an early stage in their local community in a way that challenges discrimination and stigma, and this will continue to be developed and implemented over the coming months.

In March 2023 HEART was a Bronze Award Winner of the iESE Customer Focus Award. This award recognises that the organisation has delivered outstanding service to the people who use our services, in a transformational approach to how children and families are supported in East Ayrshire. We have also demonstrated the link between excellent customer service and performance through working on a smaller scale, to root more services in the communities they serve and be more connected to partners in other services.

More information about this work over the last year can be found in the Children and Young People’s Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23.

BEST START, BRIGHT FUTURES: NATIONAL CHILD POVERTY DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2026

As in previous years, and in line with the legislative requirements for the development of Local Child Poverty Action Plans, this report is framed around the three drivers of child poverty identified in the 2017 Act. However there is also clear alignment between the work being taken forward locally in East Ayrshire and the national priorities set out in the more recent [Best Start, Bright Futures 2022-2026](#):

- Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work
- Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs
- Supporting the next generation to thrive

Links to this national agenda will be highlighted over the course of this report. In the Looking Ahead section of the report, at page 41 we will also reflect on the revised LCPAR reporting guidance that was published in December 2022, and how this will shape our future planning and reporting on child poverty.

FINANCIAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

The Financial Health and Wellbeing Partnership is overseen by the Council's Financial Inclusion Delivery Manager. The Partnership comprises 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 provide specialist knowledge and assistance to service users. This work covers a range of key poverty issues such as: child poverty, debt, fuel and food poverty, rent arrears and housing issues and employability.

Examples of work undertaken by the Financial Health and Wellbeing Partnership throughout 2022/23 and progress as at March 2023, can be found throughout this report and in the Action Plan update presented at Appendix 1.

Financial Inclusion In Schools

Last year we reported on the innovative school-based pathfinder project that was taking place at Loudon Academy, in partnership with the Financial Inclusion Team.

Building on the previously reported success of this pilot project, and in response to ongoing challenges relating to child poverty, the Council subsequently agreed to expand the project to all secondary schools in East Ayrshire for a year, serving the local primary school and early year centre communities as well.

In the 2022/23 academic year the project generated £121,012 for families with children.

Additionally, the Early Years Financial Inclusion Team project has supported families with children from pre-birth to pre-school by ensuring their income is fully maximised, supporting 260 families to date and achieving £479,113 of additional income.

Partner organisations also work together on a range of projects and events which seek to raise awareness of the issues surrounding poverty and the assistance available to people. Partnership events, roadshows and social media are used on an annual basis to support Challenge Poverty Week, maximising the local reach of the national spotlight on the challenges relating to child poverty.

2022/23 UPDATE

In line with the requirements of the Child Poverty Act, our work is reported in relation to the three identified drivers of child poverty, income from employment; income from social security and in kind; and cost of living.

INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT

As recognised earlier in this report, employment rates in East Ayrshire have been below the Scottish average, and consequently preparing people for the world of work; supporting them to enter employment; and ensuring that good quality job opportunities are available, is a real focus for much of our partnership work in East Ayrshire, both in terms of the immediate service response and our more strategic long term planning.

Nationally it is also recognised that employability will be an essential element in delivering the Scottish Government's aims of tackling poverty, promoting inclusion and social justice, and creating a fair and prosperous Scotland; and it is a key component of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, contributing to the vision of a strong economy where good, secure and well-paid jobs and growing businesses have driven a significant reduction in poverty, and in particular, child poverty.

The National Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 calls for local and national partners to provide the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work; and to support our children and young people to learn and grow and to make a successful transition from school into the adult world – preventing them from becoming the parents of children in poverty in future.

Local progress in relation to Inclusive Economic Growth, Community Wealth Building and Fair Work is set out in some detail in the [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report 2022/23](#) and related [Economy and Skills Delivery Plan Update 2022/23](#).

Some of the specific work undertaken in 2022/23, relevant to tackling child poverty and increasing income from employment, is set out below.

Employability

Help for people and employers to find, train and support jobs in East Ayrshire is delivered via the [East Ayrshire Local Employability Partnership \(LEP\)](#). This is a partnership comprising representatives from employability agencies, Ayrshire College, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, the Chamber of Commerce, businesses, third sector and the local authority working together to deliver a comprehensive programme of recruitment, training and support to employers and employees alike.

In line with the nationally identified priorities for tackling child poverty, specific targeted activity has been undertaken to support parents into employment, and we have a continued focus on helping and supporting all of our young people to make a positive transition into the world of work.

96.85% of school leavers in East Ayrshire in 2021/22 progressed to an initial positive destination on leaving school. This represented the highest initial destination figure recorded in East Ayrshire to date, and was above the Scottish average (95.74%)

No One Left Behind

The [No-One Left Behind Operating Plan \(2022-27\)](#) provides a framework for local partners to work together to identify and commission employability training which addresses skills gaps and helps to ensure young people are equipped with the skills required to access opportunities through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

No One Left Behind delivery is led by East Ayrshire Council through a dynamic and unique provision within purpose-built employability space Skills and Learning 33 (SL33) as part of East Ayrshire Education Service. SL33 works collaboratively with local partners to provide a wraparound service for young people to ensure that all of their needs are met. The young people are identified through effective partnership arrangements with Skills Development Scotland and contacts with guidance staff in schools to support with a seamless transition for those who are at risk of disengagement.

SL33 work to reduce and eliminate barriers, and achieve this through offering workshops which incorporate confidence building, team work and communication, alongside Ayrshire College National 4 qualifications in Customer Service, Health and Wellbeing and ICT. They are continually adapting the offer to respond to the needs of the young people. This support is available to young people aged 15+ (within 6 months of leaving school) through to 26 years of age and aims to support young people with social and practical skills along with vocational qualifications.

In the year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 551 participants were registered for No-One Left Behind (NOLB), Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) and LTU (Long Term Unemployed).

Of these 551 participants:

- 423 end users had an initial status of unemployed; 37 were economically inactive; 73 were employed; 18 were school pupils attending at SL33;
- 107 participants identified as having a condition affecting their emotional, physical and mental well-being
- 104 individual clients identified as care experienced, and, of these participants, 95 were aged between 15 and 26 years.
- **224 of the participants were parents, and, of these, 140 were single parents**

Of the 423 participants who were unemployed during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 115 had progressed into employment; 63 had achieved an apprenticeship; 78 had progressed into further education; and 54 had moved into accredited training. Any participant not progressing during the financial year continues to be supported through No-One Left Behind and actively case managed to progress during 2023-24. Of the 37 participants who identified as economically inactive, 36 have now progressed into formal training programmes.

Employability Partner: Business Gateway

During 2022/23 a significant cohort of 'No One Left Behind' parents were considering self-employment following some PESF-funded training in the beauty industry. In response to this, SL33 organised a session in partnership with Business Gateway for parents to hear about the various support services available to help with starting up and growing a business. This was also a great opportunity for parents to ask questions that were specific to their own situations. Following this session two parents are at a stage where they are ready to self-refer to Business Gateway.

Parental Employability Support Fund Case Study: Dad's FC

Dads F.C. is a 6 week employability programme designed and run by SL33 Parental Employability Support Fund and Kilmarnock Football Club, targeted specifically at Dads on a low income in East Ayrshire. A successful pilot in 2022 paved the way for an official launch in January 2023. The following outcomes were achieved in the reporting period:

- All dads reported increased confidence through the peer support and were able to showcase their new skills to their families, partner agencies and Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Commander in a formal presentation day.
- 1 dad secured flexible part-time employment through Dads FC, which suited his circumstances.
- 1 dad secured full-time employment with Stagecoach as a bus driver.
- 1 dad went on to complete HGV Class 1 + 2 funded by the PESF Team.
- 1 dad was supported through an ITA application process to complete a food hygiene supervisor course.

Participant engagement continued after completion of the programme to ensure continued support to continue their employability journeys. Further plans have also been developed and are being implemented for a launch of Dads FC within Cumnock and Darvel, to be run in collaboration with Cumnock Juniors FC, Darvel FC, and local Early Childhood Centres (ECCs), to streamline referrals in the communities.

Employability Partner: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

In 2023 Dads FC featured a 6 week collaboration with Kilmarnock Fire Station, which offered a level 4 Employability Award to 5 programme participants. They also benefited from training in Search & Rescue techniques, out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and road traffic collision response, and involvement in a community garden project. Working in partnership with SFRS has

- Made careers in the Fire Service more accessible to participants engaging with SL33, including strong relationships with the on-call recruitment team (In addition to Kilmarnock, both Cumnock and Newmilns have retained fire stations).
- Formed connections which have facilitated the development of further SL33 programmes with post-school age learners.
- Led to SL33 being invited to the Easter Families Event at Kilmarnock Fire Station as a trusted partner. This event was attended by 1500-2000 people and provided an opportunity to advertise the supports offered by SL33 to the wider community.

Matching Training/Skills Provision to the Available Employment Opportunities

Partnership working at a strategic level is helping us to identify emerging growth sectors and to better align local training and employability provision to meet future needs.

Sector Skills Academies

The East Ayrshire Employability Partnership utilised the SDS Regional Skills Assessment of the highest industry vacancies to inform development of the following skills academies in East Ayrshire, which are open to all age clients:

- 2 x Health and Social Care courses – 6 people already completed with 3 in jobs and 3 awaiting for interviews
- 2 x Childcare & Early Years – 20+ people registered interest and early checks underway
- 2 x Construction courses – 16 people undertook the course with 6 in employment and 6 awaiting CSCS card to start work placement.

All programmes contain accredited training to ensure clients are equipped with the correct skills needed for the industry positions. In terms of future development the partnership is currently looking at more flexible offers/delivery for parents/carers with childcare or caring commitments.

Fair Work

At both local and regional level, partners continue to promote and support community wealth building and fair work, under the wider inclusive economic growth agenda that is reported in our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report 2022/23.

Ayrshire College, along with their estate partners, are Living Wage accredited. The College is a charter organisation with the Community Wealth Building Partnership, supporting and encouraging our partners to progress this as a key agenda. All NHS Ayrshire and Arran staff are also paid above the living wage and NHS A&A is exploring ways to secure real Living Wage accreditation. NHS A&A, via the Public Health Department, have also provided comment to a number of consultations relating to place and planning and make recommendation that employers provide the Living Wage. Additionally, working alongside NHS Human Resources Colleagues, the Public Health Department has created a new Modern Apprenticeship (Business Administration – Health Improvement Training). Fair Work is also a critical agenda for

social care with the Adult Social Care Pay Uplift being passed through to providers by the Integration Joint Board and with adherence to the living wage being included in contracts for services commissioned through the Health and Social Care Partnership

East Ayrshire Council

East Ayrshire Council marked its third anniversary of being an accredited Living Wage employer in March 2023, meaning that all staff earn above the Living Wage (currently £10.90 in the UK). The Council has also introduced a Jobs and Training Fund, which is being used to provide a number of apprenticeships and other training roles across the Council and in local business sectors. In the year since Cabinet approved the creation of the new fund, over 100 local young people have taken steps up the career ladder supported by this fund.

60 Modern Apprentices and 19 Graduate Interns have joined Council services through the Jobs & Training Fund, while 34 in either apprenticeship or intern roles have joined local businesses. During the first year of this programme a further 33 young people joined the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme through existing routes.

Raising Awareness of Parental Employability Support: Parentclub Website

East Ayrshire Parental Employability Support Fund practitioners were part of Scottish Government's PESF marketing campaign and have been featured on the [Parentclub](#) website. This has helped raise awareness for the service nationally as well as on a local level. Those involved were able to advocate for the struggles of parents on a low income as well as signpost to services which can provide transformative support.

Raising Awareness of Parental Employability Support: PESF Darvel Early Childhood Centre Pilot

As a pilot initiative to help increase communication between Early Childhood Centres (ECCs) and PESF support, a 'Parent Passport to Potential' event was hosted at Darvel ECC. This has resulted in increased awareness of the available PESF support; strengthened communication between PESF and the Community Practitioner team; development of a pathway to linking with ECCs local authority-wide, with a more robust and tested model of support for parents whose children are attending ECCs and accessing eligible two year old places; and a plan to consult the parents of Darvel ECC about their specific needs which will form the basis for a bespoke 6 week programme run by EA PESF which they can attend at the Centre; and a pathway for referrals to our Darvel Dads FC programme in 2023/24.

Affordable Child Care

We recognise the critical role that affordable access to child care plays in supporting parents and carers to access training/employment opportunities. Across East Ayrshire early learning and child care is delivered by 36 Early Childhood Centres and 7 funded providers.

Uptake of ELC places for eligible 2 year olds in East Ayrshire remains high, with 282 eligible 2 year olds placed between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. During 2022/23, processes have been reviewed and redeveloped to ensure the allocation of places for eligible 2 years are planned and delivered as close to eligibility dates as capacity allows.

The Multi-Agency Resource Allocation Group (RAG) approved 500 requests for assistance. 315 of these requests were to support children from birth to three years within one of our Early Childhood Centres, 32 children accessed support with a Community Childminder and 18 children were supported to attend Out of Schools Care Services. 6 children received additional support from the Home Visiting Teacher and a further 129 families were able to access support from a Community Practitioner.

More information about the additional supports offered through our early years provision can be found throughout this report.

Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

Best Start, Bright Futures 2022-2026, recognises the importance of supporting the next generation to thrive. Closing the poverty related attainment gap is a key part of this, and this work has been driven forward by Education colleagues in East Ayrshire, with the support of available national funding streams.

The East Ayrshire Education Service Quality and Standards Report 2021/22, published in November 2022, showcased the success of partnership working in supporting our children and young people to thrive, in spite of the many challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. Achievements included

- the highest ever leavers' positive destination percentage of young people leaving school moving into positive destinations
- recovery in attainment at all levels following the pandemic, with outstanding senior phase results on a local basis in August 2022.
- the closing of the attainment gap in all measures across 2021/22.

Funding Challenges

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding model undertook significant change at the start of financial year 2022/23. Designated SAC authorities were ceased across Scotland and all thirty two local authorities were apportioned Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) from the overall Attainment Scotland Fund.

The Attainment Scotland Fund global sum remained static and as a result East Ayrshire Council has entered a period of tapered reduction in funding across period 2022-2026. Each financial year sees a reduction of circa £635,000 as we move from £3.762m in 2021/22 to £1.21m in 2025/6.

We continue to work with establishments and communities to improve attainment and outcomes for our most deprived learners and to close the poverty related attainment gap. The authority SEF plan was developed to mitigate against barriers to learning caused by poverty and throughout 2022/23 we reviewed progress through a range of quality assurance measures including school review, attainment data analysis and our Children and Young People's Impact Forum Governance Board.

In 2022/23, a wide variety of interventions were identified in the SEF plan across our three levers for change of: Excellence in Literacy and Numeracy (planning for effective learning, teaching and assessment); Working together with Families and Communities; and Leadership for all.

Literacy

The SAC literacy team has provided professional learning and support for staff in all East Ayrshire schools to engage with and embed the EA Literacy Programme which contains a structured progression across all stages. The focus is on consistency in high-quality planning, learning, teaching and assessment to raise attainment and close the attainment gap in all aspects of literacy. This session, bespoke professional learning has been delivered to schools where required or requested. A focus on assessing pupil progress towards national expectations has raised teacher confidence in assigning achievement levels. Our SEF Speech and Language team is supporting twenty two schools on the journey towards Communication Friendly Environment accreditation. Six schools have already achieved accreditation

Numeracy

The aims and desired outcomes within the East Ayrshire numeracy strategy have remained unchanged this session with a focus on developing the numeracy skills of all learners for life, learning and work and closing the poverty related attainment gap. Our qualitative and quantitative data highlights that we are making significant progress against these desired outcomes. This evidence is coming through strongly from training evaluations, feedback from teaching blocks and feedback from head teachers and senior managers. Our combination of high quality Career Long Professional Learning and follow up support provided by the expertise and skill of the SAC Numeracy Team, Aims and Early Learning and Childcare Practitioners within individual schools has helped to accelerate progress towards these desired outcomes.

The ongoing development of the East Ayrshire Numeracy/Maths leader network this session has helped to maintain progress. The strengthening of this network will ensure the aims and desired outcomes of the East Ayrshire Numeracy Strategy can be taken forward by our practitioners and leaders into the next academic session and beyond.

More detailed information on improving levels of secondary school attainment in East Ayrshire can be found in the [update](#) provided to the Council's Governance and Scrutiny Committee in May 2023.

INCOME FROM SOCIAL SECURITY AND IN KIND BENEFITS

At a local level, joined up working across our Community Planning Partnership is recognised as the key to maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs. Wherever possible we seek to use existing points of contact across partnership services to expand our reach, ensuring that local families are signposted to and supported to access the social security and in kind benefits that they are entitled to.

Health and Social Care Partnership Financial Inclusion Team

This work is led by the Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) which, together with its partners, has continued to provide holistic support and to help East Ayrshire residents to maximise their benefit entitlement. The EA Money team received a record 3,089 referrals and advice enquiries throughout 2022/23, an 18.7% increase from the previous year. This figure does not include cases which were referred by partner organisations to the various new projects overseen by FIT during the year, in particular from Health and Education colleagues.

Overall, the financial gains achieved for people in East Ayrshire totalled £4,981,701, which is an increase of over £1.5m on the previous reporting period. This takes the cumulative total amount of financial gains since the establishment of the FIT team in November 2013 to £40,151,326. Details of some of the projects taken forward in 2022/23 can be found below.

- The FIT Community team supported 470 individuals and families during 2022/23, achieving financial gains of £2,707,260, a 15% increase on the previous reporting period.
- The Macmillan Project generated financial gains of £1,048,232 for people living with cancer in this period, representing an increase of 32.7% on last year.
- The in-Court Advice team based at Kilmarnock Sherriff Court reported a considerable increase in the average level of rent arrears during 2022/23, working with service users with a combined arrears total of £268,354. The team supported 108 new tenants and achieved financial gains totalling £81,944 for these clients in the reporting period.
- The Employability FIT has been invaluable to those looking to move into employment, achieving £248,662 in financial gains for clients and supporting 13 people to progress along the employability pipeline during 2022/23.

The Financial Inclusion Team has also been proactive over the last year, expanding the schools-based pathfinder project to all secondary schools in East Ayrshire for one year and launching an Early Years project, which works alongside Health Visitors to support families by ensuring their income is fully maximised at this important stage in the child's development; and a Welfare Advice in Health Partnerships, project with FIT staff working within identified GP Practices.

Financial Inclusion Early Years Project

This pathfinder project was established to support health colleagues working with families with young children to ensure that their benefit income was fully maximised. Working with families with children from pre-birth to pre-school, referrals come solely from Health Visitors with a referral pathway having been established.

Initial funding for the pathfinder project came from Covid monies to support children's services, and in September 2022 Cabinet agreed a further year of funding for the project, as part of the Council's wider response to the Cost of Living crisis. Two Financial Inclusion Assistants were recruited, one commencing on May 2022, the other in August 2022.

By 31 March 2023, the project had supported 260 families, generating financial gains of £479,113.

Welfare Advice in Health Partnerships

This is a new project, funded by the Improvement Service with an additional staff member provided from FIT resources. Financial Inclusion Assistants are based one day per week within GP Practices to provide patients with advice and assistance with social security benefits. The project is funded for two years and became operational in East Ayrshire in August 2022.

Initially the project was based within the 'Deep End' GP Practices, which are the 150 GP Practices based within the highest areas of deprivation based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. In East Ayrshire, 7 GP practices were identified, Dalmellington, Tanyard (Cumnock) and the 5 Kilmarnock based practices, Portland, Old Irvine Road, Holmhead, The Wards and Marnock.

Since the roll out of this project, 148 patients have received advice and support securing financial gains of £215,528.

The Improvement Service has since agreed to fund a further 5 rural GP practices in East Ayrshire, Ballochmyle (Mauchline), Galston, Loudoun (Newmilns), Crosshouse and The Valley (New Cumnock). Roll out of this extension will commence in 2023/24.

Encouraging Uptake of Best Start

The promotion of Best Start Grants and the Best Start Food scheme and other supports to maximise household income is part of the universal Health Visiting (HV) pathway in Ayrshire. Resources to promote Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods are included within the newly refreshed Early Years Information Pathway and within the Health Visiting app, 'Ayrshire Bairns'.

As part of the Scottish Vitamins Scheme, all breastfeeding mothers and children up to the age of 3 years are all eligible to receive a free daily vitamin D supplement. This is in addition to existing Scottish Government policy that all pregnant women in Scotland will be provided with vitamins containing vitamin D throughout their pregnancy. Vitamins are provided by NHS A&A midwifery and health visiting staff at specific appointments and since the introduction of universal provision of vitamin D, uptake has been high.

Dalmellington Community Health Hub

The [Dalmellington Community Health](#) Hub project, which started in October 2022, offers a weekly event at Dalmellington community centre which is open to all members of the community.

Each week a number of NHS, East Ayrshire Council and voluntary sector partners are available to support people and families to live healthier lives through health education measures and improved access to disease prevention services.

This includes provision of financial inclusion and home energy advice, and also digital inclusion services, in a warm and welcoming community space.

Maximising Established Contacts with Parents and Carers

Through our education establishments, we have links to children, parents and carers across the authority area, and we work creatively in partnership to maximise every opportunity to reach out to parents and carers, sharing information and signposting to available supports and services.

- There is now a Financial Inclusion Team officer associated with every education group in East Ayrshire
- As a result of joint work with the Financial Inclusion Team, a poster with a QR code linking directly to the financial inclusion webpage was created for display at front entrances of ECC's and Funded Providers. Posters have also been displayed in all staff rooms.
- The ELC GLOW tile has a space where all information shared is stored for reference. This means that these resources are visible and can easily be accessed by ELC staff and other GLOW users.
- Information updates are shared regularly with providers for onward issue to parents and carers. These include information when a claim deadline for a particular benefit is approaching or has opened.

The Universal Credit Support Team has continued to tackle poverty in East Ayrshire by increasing clients' income, identifying issues relating to food insecurity and energy poverty, and by linking with partners to collaboratively address challenging circumstances linked to poverty. The team have supported residents with: all aspects of claiming Universal Credit, maximising income by ensuring clients receive all entitled benefits, and providing claim assistance, claim advice, debt advice and budgeting advice.

During 2022/23, the team generated £355,311 in financial gains for clients, dealt with 744 formal referrals and handled 48,427 different items of communication, which is reflective of the current economic climate.

COST OF LIVING

The Cost of Living Crisis has impacted on families across East Ayrshire, and across Scotland, over the last year. For community planning partners this has increased the demand for services, both immediate emergency supports and the long term provision to allow families to live dignified lives.

Cost of Living Crisis Support

In September 2022, an extensive communications campaign was launched across East Ayrshire to help tackle the cost of living crisis; and in October, the Council approved over [£3.125m investment](#) to progress a range of partnership initiatives to address the immediate challenges facing our communities.

Dignified Food Provision

- 1,200 East Ayrshire Residents are registered Community Larder Members
- 510 weekly visits to Community Larders

2022/23 has seen the continued expansion of the Dignified Food/Food Larder service, led by the Council's Facilities Management and Vibrant Communities Services, and delivered in collaboration with partners, faith groups and third sector organisations. In November 2022 a new central catering unit was opened by East Ayrshire Council, helping to reduce costs for the Council and providing new job opportunities through the early years expansion programme. The kitchen runs 365 days per year, providing breakfasts, lunches and ready meals at venues across East Ayrshire. Working with a range of organisations including [CVO East Ayrshire \(CVOEA\)](#) and [Fareshare](#), the Catering Service supports [Food Banks and Community Larders](#). It also runs lunch clubs throughout the authority area, and has expanded its services over the last year, with increased opening hours, providing affordable ready meals, free tea and coffee and food deliveries. Emergency food boxes were also made available over the festive period as part of the Council's Caring, Kind, Connected approach to supporting communities through the Cost Of Living crisis. Finance has been secured from a range of sources including covid grants and cost of living funding, and Larder members are also signposted to additional supports by a network of community volunteers. The community mobilisation seen during the Covid-19 pandemic continues, with all sections of our communities pulling together and supporting the most vulnerable.

Free School Meals

Providing and encouraging uptake of healthy, affordable school meals is a key part of our approach to supporting families with the cost of living and ensuring that our children and young people have the best start in life. Healthy, nutritious, local sourced meals are provided every day to children in school, early learning and childcare settings. East Ayrshire Council is the longest-standing Food for Life Served Here Gold award holder in the UK, and is committed to continuing to work with local businesses to support the local economy and to reduce our carbon footprint by continuing to source fresh local produce.

Since January 2022, all children from P1 to P5 are offered a free, nutritious two-course meal, supported by the Scottish Government's universal free school meals initiative, and these are also available to older children and young people who meet certain criteria, for example, low income families. As part of funded early years 1140 provision, all children attending an early years setting are also provided with a healthy meal and snacks as part of their day. The service is providing this through a recharge to education with over 2,000 meals provided daily, of which over 400 meet specific individual dietary needs.

In March 2023 East Ayrshire Council also committed to providing half price school meals for one year from August 2023, and it is anticipated that this will further increase the uptake of school meals (currently 71% of free school meals and 58% overall).

Almost 4,000 local children and young people entitled to means tested school meals also benefitted from the additional grant funding provided by Scottish Government, their families receiving direct payments to cover lunch costs over school holiday periods. This 'cash first' approach enables a more dignified and fairer way of supporting people in short-term financial hardship, allowing them to make their own choices.

As part of the Council's Cost of Living Response, in September 2022, £50,000 from the Cost of Living Fund was allocated to provide discretionary free school meals to children and young people for up to eight weeks, which could be back-dated if necessary. Recognising the difficulties that families were facing and to address stigma, the Council also agreed to some changes in the way school meal debt is managed. Anyone who is in arrears is now referred to the Financial Inclusion Team for support. In each case the team takes appropriate action to ensure that the child or young person continues to receive a meal at lunchtime, and they will also provide additional advice and support to maximise the family income, or help to manage an emergency situation.

Also in 2022, to help raise awareness of school meals, East Ayrshire Council Catering Services launched a competition for all primary and special school children and young people, asking them to create a new mascot to appear on school meal menus and all branding. Over 500 entries were received and the winning design, 'Super Tattie, came from a local pupil at Dalmellington Primary School. The design has since been brought to life and Super Tattie' makes regular visits to local primary schools, encouraging the children to enjoy healthy, nutritious school meals.

Vibrant Communities

Vibrant Communities continued to provide FREE access to over 90% of the holiday provision (Easter and Summer) in 2022/23. Recognising that families are still affected post pandemic and with the cost of living crisis, VC offered free holiday programmes to ensure equitable access to all children and young people throughout the authority. Participants also received a free healthy packed lunch at every session they attended ensuring that this reduced holiday hunger concerns for many families in our authority. **VC distributed 5977 free lunches during the Easter 2022 programme and 19,490 during the Summer 2022 programme.**

Smarrt Cookie Initiative

During 2023 the Council's Vibrant Communities team has worked in partnership with the [Rapid Relief Team organisation](#), to help break down the barriers hunger can create in distracting children from their education. The Rapid Relief Team launched a scheme called 'Smarrt Cookie' which involves nutritional bars being provided to children who come to school without having had breakfast. The bars contain a nutritional balance of energy, protein, carbohydrates, fats and fibre to help pupils reach their full potential in school. Within the reporting period Shortlees Primary School and Hurlford Primary have both taken part in this initiative.

Home Link Workers

The Home Link Team continue to provide a range of supports for children and families in East Ayrshire. The team have made good progress across all 6 Education Groups over the last 12 months, providing tailored support where it is needed most to 248 children, young people and their families on a weekly basis. This support has included

- 4,998 coaching conversation telephone calls,
- 8,250 text messages,
- 1,620 home visits, garden visits and walk and talks,
- 188 Team Around the Child meetings and
- 442 requests from parents/carers for further general wellbeing support.

Partnership working and communication continues to be strong between Home Link and Education, with 2,767 calls and other communications with colleagues, further bridging the gap between school and home. Positive relationships are key to this work. This has allowed the Home Link team to forward on 372 requests from parents/carers to other services and supports in the local community. The Home Link Team also coordinated and delivered a number of events throughout the year, including numerous Family Learning programme i-lunch sessions, which were well attended.

Early Years

Within Early Years there are 14 full time equivalent community practitioners who offer early intervention support to children and their families. The impact of poverty on families continues to be evident within the work of this team: 115 families were supported to access community food larders and food banks, and 91 families were supported to access financial services such as EA Money, Financial Inclusion Team as well as Energy Support.

For some families, Christmas can be a particularly difficult time of year emotionally and financially, 281 families were supported to access the Christmas Charity Fund and throughout the year 223 families were supported to access clothing and equipment from Hillhouse Care.

As well as practical support offered to families, the team offer a number of interventions such as play at home, book bug and peep family engagement sessions, 755 families were supported to attend one or more of these interventions. There is also a continued focus on

developing the PEEP 'supporting parents and children to learn together' programme. This programme has been delivered 224 times in 22-23 within the grounds of our ECCs and over summer 2023 we will take this into our communities with 4 sessions for children and families in various locations within the authority. There are plans to offer formal training to parents participating in this programme.

We have stopped the historical practice of early learning and childcare services requesting weekly payments from parents/carers to contribute to snack or any other fund in all services. Early Learning and Childcare is provided with no cost to parents/ carers.

Family Support Team

The Family Support Team have continued to support families through providing a number of interventions in 2022-23. Seasonal activities have resumed and have taken place throughout the Easter, summer, October and winter holidays, enabling families to take part in a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, messy play, physical play and song/story time, and make those all-important memories together. Families are supported to attend by the team and the activities also serve as an opportunity for signposting to additional supports, such as food larders or other community events.

Weekend activities have taken place throughout the year, offering families positive, low cost, easily accessible community activities that focus on health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation and fostering positive attachments. The weekend activities build on the work and relationships nurtured with families who work alongside the team through group work activity, focussed work and family time.

Group work activity within the Family Support service has expanded throughout 2022, with a variety of groups being held across the authority that focus on bringing people together with shared aims; promoting positive social interactions; decreasing social isolation; upskilling parents, carers and young people; and, linking people to their local community. Groups that have ran throughout 2022-23 have included:

- **Conversation Café** – A weekly early morning get together for parents who may not be ready to attend parent and toddler groups. Focuses on parents with similar circumstances meeting to share strategies and offer peer support.
- **Parent Chat** – A 6 weekly parent's group offering help and advice with routine, boundaries, self-care and the importance of play.
- **Let's Get Organised** – Running in 6-8 week blocks, focuses on home conditions, improving day to day household management, improving hygiene in the home and building problem solving skills.
- **Dad's Group** – Aimed at dads and father figures, focusing on reducing social isolation, increasing knowledge and confidence in play, increasing knowledge of child development and dealing with challenging circumstances when parenting.

- **Boys Club** – Delivered April-July 2022, focusing on health and wellbeing activities for boys aged 10-15 years. Five young people attended regularly throughout the programme and took part in cooking, boxing and outdoor play opportunities in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

Free Bus Travel

15,273 young people (11-25) in East Ayrshire have a Young Scot Card/National Entitlement Card, which equates to 78% of the population of young people, a slight decrease of 3% from the previous year. With this card, comes the entitlement for free bus travel. However, in relation to the above statistic there are a number of legacy cards that have not yet been renewed to the new version and with this in mind, the number of young people who have a Young Scot NEC in East Ayrshire sits at **17, 265**

The highest uptake of Young Scot NEC cards in East Ayrshire are:

- Quintile 1 – 33% and 31%
- Quintile 2 – 24% and 25%.

The number of valid East Ayrshire card holders in the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme (i.e. the Young Scot/NEC card holders who have accessed the free bus travel/downloaded the Transport Scotland Pass Collect App) was **19,907**, representing a **47% increase** on the previous year's statistics.

Young people who have the Young Scot NEC card have access to 350 unique discounts, either online or in store, and in 2022/23 card holders in East Ayrshire used their card to access **2158 discounts**, saving thousands of pounds on items purchased.

There are **1,874** young people signed up to East Ayrshire 'Young Scot Rewards' which is a **61% increase** on the previous year.

Affordable Housing

Every family should have access to a warm, safe, affordable and energy efficient home that meets their needs, in a community they feel part of and proud of. This is the aspiration set out in Housing to 2040, the Scottish Government's first long-term national housing strategy, which is being delivered in East Ayrshire through East Ayrshire Council's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2019-24.

The Council's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) continues to deliver a mix of homes across sizes and type in response to aims and objectives set out in the LHS, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house condition across all tenures; with the provision of affordable and efficient homes contributing to reducing child poverty. Each new build Council home allows for a work / study space within the living room and is capable of receiving broadband installations as part of the warm, energy efficient homes delivery to support pupils and students to achieve their potential. In 2022/23, site starts were achieved by both the Council and Registered Social Landlord partners for 17 homes and 138 homes respectively.

Housing First

East Ayrshire's Housing First programme continues to operate with the aim of providing a stable home with intensive wraparound support for homeless people with multiple and complex needs. This collaborative, trauma informed approach incorporates wider homelessness prevention measures, accessible housing options advice, substantial investment in the increase of housing supply, robust partnership working and resourced, and flexible, wraparound housing support.

Of the 1,096 homeless presentations in 2022/23, 300 households stated that they required support with a mental health problem and 117 households cited a drug and/or alcohol dependency. 34% of applicants indicated that they had multiple support needs, demonstrating the continued need for this approach.

A core group of partners meet on a monthly basis to discuss referrals and any issues arising. Single points of contact are established within Addiction and Mental Health Services and Children's Health, Care and Justice Services to target supports and ensure that Housing First Tenants are provided with prompt support. Housing First tenants are signposted through the Health and Homelessness Nurse and through the continuing open referral system for NHS Addiction Services to ensure the provision of health and wellbeing advice and an enhanced

referral pathway for those with multiple/ complex needs. The programme achieved its quota of creating five furnished Housing First tenancies in 2022/23 as set out in the 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, and has maintained a 100% tenancy sustainment rate since launching in August 2021

The Child Wellbeing Protocol was launched in November 2020 in conjunction with colleagues in Education Services and Health & Social Care Partnership to prevent homelessness and mitigate transitions and trauma for children, young people and families. In 2022/23 there were 330 presentations from families with children seeking assistance and 24 referrals in conjunction with the Child Wellbeing Protocol.

An Education Programme is being developed to be rolled out to 4th Year Pupils in Secondary Schools by Housing Options supported by SL33. The Prevention Officer also attends SL33 and Kilmarnock College on a regular basis offering advice and guidance to young people who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Joint Care Leavers Protocol is due to be launched and a review of all Housing Support Services is progressing. All of these actions are reflected in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

To tackle homelessness in 16/17 year olds, all Housing Options Officers now adopt a multi-agency case conference approach with all professionals involved with the young person, to prevent homelessness in a targeted way wherever possible. We are pleased to note a decline in under 18s presentations due to this robust approach.

A Safe As Houses Action Group was established and is co-chaired by the Housing Options Manager and East Ayrshire Churches Homelessness Action and resumed in July 2022. The purpose of the group is to ensure that the prevention of homelessness remains a central focus for action and activity across services, partners and communities, with an emphasis on developing practical responses through cross-sector, multi-disciplinary working to issues including employment, access to benefits/other supports and the cost of living. One of the actions in this group's plan is to look at the resources for children and parents within schools; and a Parental Empowerment theme could be adopted to frame a survey with Coaching expanded to include Empowerment and link in to questions around a knowledge of Housing Services and Homelessness.

Future activities within Housing Options will include more upstream prevention focused on high-risk groups such as vulnerable young people and children and their families through partnership working and collaboration across the voluntary sector, H&SCP, Education and Children's Services.

Fuel Poverty

Working closely with partners across the Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership, the Financial Inclusion team also make referrals to other teams and agencies who provide specialist support. These partner agencies include the Lemon Aid Fuel Poverty Services for fuel debt issues, Citizens Advice Bureau for multiple debts and the Universal Credit Support Team, providing a holistic service to ensure that service users receive the full support that they need.

Citrus Energy assisted 3,445 East Ayrshire households during 2022/23, of which approximately 49% (1,688) were households with children. Of their total client base, 1,070 households had self-disconnected in response to unaffordable energy costs, and 64% of these households had children living in them – representing 685 households in East Ayrshire where children were living in a house with no heating or at times no electricity. Citrus Energy worked with local partners to support these households, undertaking 242 house visits and securing financial gains of £363,587.

'We have stories from families saying their child used to get bullied at school because their school uniform smelt damp due to the heating being off in their house. We have other families telling us that their kids couldn't bring their friends around to the house because it was cold. Over the years we have had many parents tell us they were in arrears as they prioritised Christmas or their kids birthdays rather than pay their electricity or gas.' Citrus Energy

Digital Poverty

Ensuring that all children and young people have access to the digital world that many of us take for granted is an important element of our work to address child poverty – bridging the digital divide. Good progress has been made over the last year, including:

- **The East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (EAHSCP) Sensory Impairment Team** provided 19 iPads with Mi-Fi to service users with visual and hearing loss, providing training on how to operate the iPads with assistive software activated (normally a screen reader or magnification app for those with VI).
- **EAHSCP Thinking Differently Team** working with Connecting Scotland provided 362 households, including care leavers and vulnerable families, with either Chromebooks or iPads and / or Wi-Fi units, with 24 months unlimited data to allow them to become digitally included - the 24 month data was further extended for another 12 months. Working with Input Community Works, they provided

another 40 devices and / or Wi-Fi units to care experienced young people over 16 and in particular to a group of asylum seeking young people.

- **East Ayrshire Carers Centre** issued 32 devices to young carers and supported them to get online.
- **The No One Left Behind Partnership with Barclays** secured 40 laptops for young people can use for their college work and/or any online activity such as training, job opportunities, CV, My World of Work and these are used every day. The laptops also benefit the third sector, private sector and public sector partners who access and use SL33/Education Service.
- **Ayrshire College and schools across East Ayrshire** have also taken a number of steps to ensure that all students have access to a device and appropriate connectivity. More details of this work can be found in the Economy and Skills 2022/23 Update Report.

East Ayrshire Council's new Digital Strategy, [Our Digital Journey to 2027 and Beyond](#), was also approved in October 2022, setting out a digital inclusion approach, continuing our work to bridge the digital divide.

Dignified Provision of Free Sanitary Products

2,357 product orders on the home delivery scheme were processed during 2022/23 totalling £65,150. This represents a significant increase on the numbers reported in 2021/22 (1,000 product orders totalling £20,110). The products are available in the Warm Spaces hubs, and access to products in community and voluntary group venues continues to expand, with the Pick Up My Period App regularly updated with the new venues, where appropriate. In addition, free sanitary products are available in all schools across East Ayrshire.

Open Doors

The CVO's Open Doors Community Wellbeing Hub continued to operate in the Kilmarnock town centre during 2022/23 to provide a safe place where people could access a wide range of activities and supports aimed at providing health and social benefits, improving life chances and signposting to opportunities within the community. Open Doors addresses various priorities identified by the community, while ensuring maximum use of existing local resources and accessibility through a person-centred and joined-up approach. The Open Doors team and volunteers have organised and facilitated several groups and services that have helped to tackle food insecurity, social isolation and lack of opportunities throughout the reporting period, with a key focus on children and families to help create lasting memories, a safe space and healthy meals.

SUPPORT FOR PRIORITY GROUPS

As in previous years, much of our support for priority groups has focused on employability, seeking to facilitate access to the job market for those parents and young people who face particular barriers to accessing employment, such as disabilities, mental health issues, language barriers and caring responsibilities.

Extending the Reach of Parental Employability Support

Over the last year the PESF team has strengthened links with NHS and East Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership, resulting in a steady stream of referrals from the Family Nurse Partnership, which is an intensive home visiting programme for **first time parents age 19 and under**. It is designed to cover the first 1001 days of a child's life, from early pregnancy until the child reaches the age of 2 years old. Being linked well with this service has made early intervention strategies more successful for PESF to support parents with their employability needs much earlier in their journey. Developing this model of support, health and wellbeing partners are being invited to SL33 coffee mornings, including Oral Health Improvement/Childsmile and the health visiting teams who can deliver Bookbug sessions. There has also been an opportunity to present and showcase PESF/SL33 services to the NHS Perinatal mental health team, who have now included this in their inductions for new staff members. This will have considerable impact on our ability to support **parents with mental health conditions**.

NHS Mental Health Supports for Employability

The Education/SL33 has welcomed the presence of an NHS Ayrshire & Arran Mental Health Nurse, supported through the SALUS programme from the Ayrshire Growth Deal, 2 days a week. This is an NHS support service available to people whose mental or physical health is acting as a barrier to their progression into work; and has been a key driver in tackling mental and physical health barriers for anyone using the Education/SL33 service, providing wider opportunities and support for those who are ready to progress. This partnership includes joint delivery of sessions targeting mental health and coping mechanisms/resilience; provision of a safe space to speak to someone not in a formal setting; wrap around support; cross partner working ensuring that relevant people are up to date with client situation/progress; and increased communication and trust with the teams.

Outreach work

Links have also been made with Ayr Jobcentre/DWP to improve services provided to **parents living in some of our more rural areas** where council services are less accessible, for example hosting sessions for parents with East Ayrshire addresses who attend in South Ayrshire, and further plans to attend a Cost of Living event at Ayr Jobcentre in 2023/24 which will help strengthen relationships and advertise our services to those parents. Ayr Jobcentre can also be used as a meeting point for appointments.

CVO (Council of Voluntary Organisations) East Ayrshire

The PESF Boost programme is being partially delivered by the third sector by CVO (Council of Voluntary Organisations) East Ayrshire through formal tender process. This has allowed for a more specialised provision for **unemployed parents under 25 and unemployed parents with a disability**, and good progress has been reported.

The project has seen further engagement with families over the last year, especially those accessing emergency food provision. Some of this contact has been with hard to reach families who have not previously accessed partnership supports, and the opportunity has been offered to work with parents to engage them in meaningful activity, starting the process of raising aspirations and improving wellbeing. By supporting families to live less chaotic and healthier lives, the project enables them to take the first steps toward future employment. A new cohort of trainees began Certificate of Work Readiness programme (this was not limited to PESF eligible parents and was open to other clients from across the organisation), and 5 PESF Boost eligible parents have undertaken the course. Those parents also had the opportunity to access a work experience placement within CVO.

The programme of activities offered has evolved, and has this year included a twice weekly baby sensory play/music group (suitable from birth to 3 years) and a child friendly fitness class (class for parents – however if they have no childcare, pre-schoolers can accompany their parents to class and play in a safe supervised area while parents join in). One to one sessions are also offered, including “eat well on a budget” and one to one family support drop in sessions which offer holistic support and signposting for parents to support family wellbeing. Parents’ enterprise and craft classes also continued to run and proved a massive confidence boost for parents; and the Open Doors family community living room continues to be a safe and warm space for families to get a hot meal and some company.

Support for Families with English as a Second Other Language (ESOL)

ESOL Essential Skills Support Workers supported 115 Active ESOL learners across East Ayrshire in 2022/23.

In partnership with SL33, Vibrant Communities funded an ESOL Work Coach through the Parental Employability Support Fund, to encourage and support **parents with English as a second language** in the direction of employability opportunities, enabling them to take up suitable sustainable employment and/or undertake upskilling opportunities. A worker was appointed November 2022 and currently has case load of 32 people. Significant highlights and outcomes to date include:

- Establishing and responding to the employability needs of ESOL learners within the East Ayrshire community to help alleviate child poverty for parents speaking English as a second language.
- Supporting 8 people into employment, despite the barrier of English language skills.
- Supporting two parents into a work experience placement with East Ayrshire Outdoor Amenities – Greener Communities. The two parents require first aid training for this which will be facilitated through an Afghan interpreter.
- Supporting a Ukrainian parent of three children who wanted to start his own IT business based in Kilmarnock, by introducing him to a business mentor in Ayrshire. The ESOL learner has had two meetings with the business mentor, supported by an interpreter. Business Gateway support has been sought, and are looking into a business loan to get the learner's business up and running.
- Networking with various partners across public, private and third sectors to ensure that the support is embedded early
- Supporting a number of clients into work, training and engaging with employers to advocate on the behalf of parents.
- Supporting a new accredited digital class in Cumnock, run by an East Ayrshire community tutor for parents who require support with IT in order to gain employment. This is something that we will be looking replicate East Ayrshire-wide in 2023/24.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Nine unaccompanied asylum seeking children (under 18) are being supported in East Ayrshire across fostering, Children's Houses and independent tenancy support arrangements. We are also providing aftercare support to 11 young people over the age of 18. The young people that we support have come to East Ayrshire from a variety of countries including, Vietnam, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Egypt and Iran. Our UASC team have provided and coordinated support and services to young people, linking them in with ESOL language

classes, education, sports groups, health and care, cultural and religious connections, and community activities. We have also supported young people to manage their tenancies, daily living tasks and to access leisure activities in their local community.

The Council led Resettlement Team are also currently supporting 75 Ukrainian households which includes 70 children; and provide support for another 8 households welcomed to East Ayrshire through other UK resettlement schemes including 21 children. Prior to families and individuals arriving through UK-wide resettlement schemes, settled furnished accommodation is identified which is safe and will meet the needs of the children. Families are appointed a Key Worker who assists parents and carers with registration in nurseries and schools, school clothing grant and free school meals applications. Assistance with benefits claims is also provided alongside budgeting support and guidance. Close working arrangements are in place across our CPP and with national partners to highlight, respond and escalate any safeguarding concerns where required.

Inclusion

SL33 has introduced fortnightly coffee mornings for parents and these have been well-attended by families from a range of different backgrounds. This has increased the integration of New Scots – particularly Ukrainian families – with native Scots and has had significant impact on confidence, wellbeing and language acquisition for those speaking English as a second language. The attendance of partner agencies such as NHS Childsmile has attracted parents with younger children and in particular those whose children have disabilities. Parents have been able to gain access to expert advice on how to support children with sensory issues and additional support needs with their oral health.

Advertising the coffee mornings through Universal Credit journals and the East Ayrshire school app has increased outreach to parents who were not aware of SL33 services; and plans are in place to create a calendar of coffee mornings for 2023/24, populated with partner agencies, which may help to significantly reduce barriers that unemployed parents are facing in their lives and which may indirectly bring them closer to the labour market.

Lifeskills

Vibrant Communities Strategic Education Fund Family Literacies recommenced face to face delivery in August 2022 after two years of pandemic restrictions. Family Literacies offered a blended model of delivery - face to face in schools as well as online You Tube videos with

supporting packs for families who preferred engagement in their own time at home, targeting SIMD1+2 families and Schools. Families Connect face to face sessions were also introduced, offering an early intervention approach to family literacy learning from targeting ECC, through to P2 families. 3 Primary schools engaged in Face to Face Family Literacies sessions from September 2022 until December 2022, and 32 Parents and 31 children engaged with the programme, and 4 families engaged through remote learning packs.

SEF funding for Family Literacies ended in December 2022. Family Literacy learning and family engagement has since been picked up through Shared Prosperity funding, which has been secured to 2025 to deliver 'Multiply'. The programme offers bespoke family literacy supports which are targeted and offered to parents/adults who reside within East Ayrshire as first steps to numeracy learning with progression route to Adult Literacies and accredited learning opportunities. It aims to assist parents to be feel more confident in their numeracy skills and have positive impacts on their work, family, community and personal lives. Since January 65 adults have attended numeracy specific training/supports.

Support for Unpaid Carers

The East Ayrshire Carers Centre is a key partner which provides valuable assistance for both adult and young carers. The supports delivered throughout 2022/23 were wide-ranging and, in relation to our work to address child poverty, has included

- personal finance, benefit and debt management advice, fuel poverty awareness, form completion and income maximisation delivered in-house and through outreach support and home visits;
- employability skills and training for young people aged 16 to 25; and
- 1:1 practical, emotional and social support to improve health and wellbeing and respite breaks for young carers, adults and families;

Within the reporting period the East Ayrshire Carers Centre has achieved over £4 million in benefit awards; completed 593 Support Plans; received 718 new registrations; provided 29,304 instances of 1:1 advice, information and support; donated over 3,000 individual Christmas gifts to young carers; delivered 100 breaks/experiences through 'Respitality'; supported 55 families to have a break away through the 'ScotSpirit' scheme; and delivered 13 weekly young carers groups throughout East Ayrshire, supporting over 230 young carers each week.

CHILDREN'S VOICES

Preparations are being made for the forthcoming implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in terms of governance and reporting, although Children's rights are already strongly reflected in all of the partnership work that takes place in East Ayrshire. This is driven by the voices of the children and young people themselves. Our Children and Young People's Cabinet is particularly active in holding partners to account and working with us to shape strategic decision making in East Ayrshire, as are student representatives across our schools and colleges. Our care experienced young people also work closely with our Corporate Parenting Board, ensuring that young people can influence positive change by raising their concerns directly with leaders and elected members.

These voices are instrumental in shaping our partnership approach to children and young people's service provision and child poverty.

In delivering our commitment to #KeepThePromise, we have prioritised listening to our children and young people and have provided opportunities for them to talk about issues that are important to them throughout 2022/23. The Promise Participation team established a visual art group called 'ArtClub?' which is led by care-experienced young people with an interest in contemporary visual art and activism.

There have been a number of developments emerging from this engagement to date. In particular, our parents and carers of children with disabilities and Additional Support Needs (ASN) have been fully involved in co-producing facilities which will benefit a significant number of families. Parents also told us that the traditional short breaks model did not necessarily work for their families, and that they wanted an opportunity to enjoy a whole-family break together. We have supported a test of change, of whole-family provision at the Tree Tops facility in the Dean Park. This will allow a number of families to enjoy a residential break together, fully supported by park rangers who will provide activities. The facilities on-site are fully compatible for children with disabilities, and includes a cinema for film nights. This resource should be launched later in 2023.

During 2023 development of the new Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 has been undertaken, and our children and young people have played a lead role in the development of this plan, to ensure that it reflects the things that are important to them. Child Poverty and the Cost of Living Crisis featured prominently in this engagement, and this is reflected in the priority given to child poverty work in the new plan.

2022/23 Progress Update: Planned Activity

A summary progress update in relation to our planned activity to address the identified drivers of child poverty activity, as set out in our previous LCPARs, is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.

However this Local Child Poverty Report is not designed to be read in isolation:

- Our [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report 22/23](#) highlights the wide range of partnership activity taken forward over the last year, including work to address the drivers of child poverty.
- Our Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23 has been developed in partnership with our Children and Young People's Cabinet and includes further updates on partnership work to address child poverty; as does the [Health and Social Care Partnership Annual Report 2022/23](#).
- An update on NHS Ayrshire & Arran's pan-Ayrshire child poverty analysis and related work is available in the [Investing in the Future: Tackling Child Poverty](#) report which was presented to the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board in August 2023.

Looking Ahead - Future Planning, Governance and Reporting

The publication of the National Child Poverty Delivery Plan [Best Start, Bright Futures 2022-2026](#) was accompanied by revised Local Child Poverty Action Plan Guidance, which offered local partners the opportunity to take a more strategic multi-year approach to child poverty planning and reporting. This coincided with the development of East Ayrshire Council's new Strategic Planning Framework 2022/27, which included a renewed commitment to tackle the causes and effects of poverty and inequality; and alongside this the establishment of a new Project Management Office (PMO) function, to support council services and partners to make better use of data and benefits realisation analysis to improve and inform future performance management and reporting.

Child Poverty was also identified as a priority in the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-23, a plan that has now come to the end of its lifecycle, with the development of a new plan, co-produced with local children and young people, taking place during 2022/23.

Partnership consideration was given to the opportunities presented, and proposals developed for the future integration of local child poverty action planning and reporting within the new Children and Young People's Services Planning Framework 2023-26. This approach was duly approved by local Community Planning Partners in June 2023.

Development of the new Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 has since taken place, and this new plan will articulate our future partnership priorities and commitments in relation to child poverty, and set out a 3 year strategic framework for this work, which will include our future Local Child Poverty Action Plan reporting.

Partnership working remains at the heart of this new approach, and there will remain strong links across to partnership activity to deliver inclusive economic growth in East Ayrshire and those other wider but always interlinked ambitions set out in our shared Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. In addition, a number of partnered applications are being submitted to the Scottish Government Child Poverty Accelerator Practice Fund (CPAF) which if successful will see partnership activity to undertake East Ayrshire-wide mapping of current activities and identification of gaps as well as an Ayrshire and Arran wide evaluation of income maximisation activity (which will include East Ayrshire).

Most importantly, children remain at the heart of everything that we do, and our partnership commitment to tackling child poverty remains as strong, if not stronger, than ever.

Appendix 1: Action Plan Updates 2022/23

ACTION	PROGRESS AT MARCH 2023
Ongoing Priority Actions	
Break Down the Barriers to Affordable Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15,273 young people (11-25) in East Ayrshire have a Young Scot Card/National Entitlement Card, which equates to 78% of the population of young people, a slight decrease of 3% from the previous year. With this card, comes the entitlement for free bus travel. • However, in relation to the above statistic there are a number of legacy cards that have not yet been renewed to the new version and with this in mind, the number of young people who have a Young Scot NEC in East Ayrshire sits at 17,265 • The highest uptake of Young Scot NEC cards in East Ayrshire are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quintile 1 – 33% and 31% ○ Quintile 2 – 24% and 25% • In East Ayrshire, the number of valid card holders in the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme (i.e. the Young Scot/NEC card holders who have accessed the free bus travel/downloaded the Transport Scotland Pass Collect App) was 19,907, representing a 47% increase on the previous year's statistics. • Vibrant Communities lead on encouraging local uptake of these entitlements, and during 2022/23 NHS colleagues have also undertaken awareness raising of the new free bus passes for under 22 year olds, with information circulated at relevant meetings/departments. • Where people experiencing homelessness struggled with transport costs, Housing Options officers continued to provide assistance in this area via bus tokens and taxis for households with children.
Support Meaningful Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayrshire Economic Strategy: Development of the new Ayrshire Economic Strategy is being undertaken, as a framework for the 3 Ayrshire authorities to build on the Ayrshire Growth Deal Investment and deliver sustainable economic growth in the years ahead. • The <u>East Ayrshire No One Left Behind (NOLB) Operating Plan</u> sets out a clear direction of travel over the period between 2022-2027 which will maximise the combined partnership employability resources. • In the year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 551 participants were registered for No-One Left Behind (NOLB), Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) and LTU (Long Term Unemployed). 224 of the participants were parents, and, of these, 140 were single parents.

- *More detail of our extensive employability activity may be found in the body of this report; and in the LOIP Annual Performance Report 2022/23.*
- **East Ayrshire Council Employability Fund:** In February 2022 EAC approved the establishment of a new Jobs and Training Fund, with £6m to finance training placements in services across the Council and local business for East Ayrshire residents. During the first year of the programme 60 Modern Apprentices and 19 Graduate Interns have joined Council services through the Jobs & Training Fund, while 34 in either apprenticeship or intern roles have joined local businesses. A further 33 young people also joined the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme through existing routes.
- **ESOL Support:** PESF (Parental Employability Support Fund) funding is supporting post to provide ESOL (English as a second other language) learners/parents with intensive support by a dedicated work coach both in a one to one and a group setting. The post was introduced in November 2022 and has a caseload of 32 people.
- The Vibrant Communities ESOL team already work in partnership to provide short vocational courses in Emergency First Aid at Work and Elementary Food Hygiene through Community Based Adult Learning Recovery Fund. These courses assist learners gain a qualification that can be used on their CV's and to improve their chances of finding employment.
- **Affordable Child Care:** Early learning and child care is delivered by 36 Early Childhood Centres and 7 funded providers. Uptake of ELC places for eligible 2 year olds in East Ayrshire remains high, with 282 eligible 2 year olds placed between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.
- **Early Years Employability:** The Council's Early Years' Service continues to use values based recruitment to employ Support Assistants and fund them to undertake a Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 6 qualification which then allows them to register with the Scottish Social Services Council. They currently employ 1 x Graduate Apprentice (GA) and 10 x Modern Apprentices (MA) within the service. They also delivered 6 Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) at SCQF level 6 qualification to S5 and S6 pupils in local schools. Those who have completed a FA an interview for MA and those who have completed either MA or GA are guaranteed an interview for Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner posts.
- **Closing the Attainment Gap:** The closing of the poverty related attainment gap was shown in all EA measures in 2021/22 and the highest ever leavers' positive destination percentage of young people leaving school moving into positive destinations was also achieved. Although the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding model changed at the start of financial year 2022/2, resulting in a reducing Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) allocation for East Ayrshire, significant work continues to be taken forward to improve literacy and numeracy and improve outcomes for children and families across the authority area. More details of this may be found in the body of this report.
- **Education Mentoring Development Officers:** Mentoring Development Officer has provided support to 56 young people, where poverty was a barrier to learning, across 3 educational establishments. 64 tailored support

	<p>sessions (12 groups) and 2 short term 1-2-1s have been provided. A Young People's Mentor (funded through CEF), has also supported 47 pupils where poverty was a barrier to learning in local secondary schools. Evaluation feedback indicates that 89.5% of participants are more involved in their school/Community; 100% have improved communication skills; and 78.9% improved their reading, writing and number skills. Wellbeing Web Scores showed an average increase of 0.8.</p>
Promote Financial Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FIT: The Financial Inclusion Team (FIT), together with its partners, has continued to support East Ayrshire residents to maximise their benefit entitlement. During 2022/23, the FIT received a record 3,089 referrals and advice enquiries throughout 2022/23, an 18.7% increase from the previous year. During this period, the financial gains achieved for people in East Ayrshire totalled £4,981,701, which is an increase of over £1.5m on the previous reporting period. This sum takes the cumulative total amount of financial gains since the creation of the team in November 2013 to £40,151,326. • FIT Schools: Following the success of the school-based financial inclusion pathfinder project in Loudoun Academy the Council agreed to expand the project to all secondary schools in East Ayrshire for a year, serving the local primary school and early year centre communities as well. In the 22/23 academic year the project has generated £121,012 for families with children. • FIT Early Years: The Early Years Financial Inclusion Team project has supported families with children from pre-birth to pre-school by ensuring their income is fully maximised, supporting 260 families to date and achieving £479,113 of additional income. • Early Years: As a result of joint work with the Financial Inclusion Team, a poster with a QR code linking directly to the financial inclusion webpage was created for display at front entrances of ECC's and Funded Providers. Posters have also been displayed in all staff rooms. Information updates are shared regularly with providers for onward issue to parents and carers. These include information when a claim deadline for a particular benefit is approaching or has opened. The ELC GLOW tile has a space where all information shared is stored for reference for ELC staff. • Housing Support: The Council's Housing Support team continue to support families from a homeless background to maximise their benefits and claim for grants, reductions that they are entitled too. The team also assist young people who are from a homeless background or looked after and accommodated with council tax exemption applications. • Housing Options: Throughout each service user's homelessness journey, Housing Options Officers undertake a trauma-informed and person-centred approach and signpost to relevant financial wellbeing services in the community such as the Universal Credit Support Team who are proficient in benefits, income maximisation and better off calculations. Officers also liaised with and signposted people to DWP, EA Money and EA Citizens Advice Bureau to provide assistance and support to make and maintain a claim for Universal Credit, maximising income for the individual, reducing food security and fuel poverty as well as promoting tenancy sustainment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Financial Inclusion Pathways: NHS A&A continue to further develop financial inclusion referral pathways. A single pan-Ayrshire document setting out the financial inclusion pathways in each of the three Ayrshire Authorities has been developed as a poster for display in Acute services. • A child poverty and Financial Inclusion workshop has taken place for NHS staff and evaluated positively. Additionally, a separate session was delivered to three Paediatric Nursery Nurses. The better Health Hub are utilising the Financial Inclusion pathways as appropriate and were in attendance at the pilot workshop. • Dalmellington Community Health Hub is a weekly event at Dalmellington community centre. The project started in October 2022 and each week a number of NHS, council and voluntary agencies are available to support people in living healthier lives through health education measures and improved access to disease prevention services. This includes provision of financial inclusion and also digital inclusion services. • Loss of Earnings: Activity to better support claiming back loss of earnings due to having to isolate is being taken forward in collaboration between the NHS A&A Health Protection Team and the Finance Department. Reviewed letters sent to those who are being restricted/excluded from work due to a notifiable disease. Letter reworded and frequently asked questions developed to make the process easier. Concurrently, in addition to helping with the letter, Finance colleagues are reviewing their system for processing loss of earning payments.
Address Every Day Living Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living Crisis Response: In September 2022, an extensive communications campaign was launched across East Ayrshire to help tackle the cost of living crisis. In October, the Council approved over £3.125m investment to progress a range of partnership initiatives to address the immediate challenges facing our communities. • Affordable Housing: The Council's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) continues to deliver a mix of homes across sizes and type in response to aims and objectives set out in the LHS, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house condition across all tenures; with the provision of affordable and efficient homes contributing to reducing child poverty. Each new build Council home allows for a work / study space within the living room and is capable of receiving broadband installations as part of the warm, energy efficient homes delivery to support pupils and students to achieve their potential. In 2022/23, site starts were achieved by both the Council and Registered Social Landlord partners for 17 homes and 138 homes respectively. • Best Start: The promotion of Best Start Grants and the Best Start Food scheme and other supports to maximise household income is part of the universal Health Visiting (HV) pathway. Resource to promote BSG and Best Start Foods are included within the newly refreshed Early Years Information Pathway and within the Health Visiting app, 'Ayrshire Bairns' • Early Years: EAC has stopped the historical practice of early learning and childcare services requesting weekly payments from parents/carers to contribute to snack or any other fund in all services. Early Learning and Childcare is provided with no cost to parents/ carers.

- **Free school meals** are available to families receiving benefits or tax credits, and since the start of 2022, every child from Primary 1 to Primary 5 is now entitled to free school meals. We also collaborate with our communities to improve food security and make healthy and nutritious food accessible. We will continue to build on the community resilience that worked so well throughout the pandemic to redouble our efforts to tackle economic and health inequalities in our communities.
- In addition, Scottish Government grant funding has been made available to support families during school holiday periods. Payments are made for those on low income Free School Meal entitlement to support the purchase of food during those periods when schools are closed.
- **Vibrant Communities** continued to provide FREE access to over 90% of the holiday provision (Easter and Summer) in 2022/23. Recognising that families are still affected post pandemic and with the cost of living crisis, VC continued to offer free holiday programmes to ensure equitable access to all children and young people throughout the authority. Participants also received a free healthy packed lunch at every session they attended ensuring that this reduced holiday hunger concerns for many families in our authority. **VC distributed 5977 free lunches during the Easter 2022 programme and 19,490 during the Summer 2022 programme.**
- **I-Lunch Holiday Programmes:** During the summer holidays, meals are provided to all children attending summer activity programmes. I-lunch programmes are facilitated during the holidays and include cooking classes and meals for families and young people. Supported by a number of partnership organisations, the Home Link Team delivered iLunch sessions across 26 primary schools with a blend of outdoor and indoor sessions. In total 45 family learning session took place and lunches were supplied, benefitting 77 families, 352 children and young people and 179 parents and carers. 226 Cooking packs were issued to families supported by family cooking sessions as part of the iLunch programme. 197 Historical Scotland fun learning packs (literacy) and 197 SPARK magazines (STEM) were also issued, to further support family learning at home.
- The **“Get into Summer”** funding allowed us to enhance the provision across all 26 schools offering 12 trips. In total 568 children, young people and parents/carers attended trips where breakfasts and lunches were provided.
- In partnership with the **Play and Early Intervention** Team five Summer of Play events were offered and attended by 413 children and young people and 254 parents/carers.
- 26 outdoor face to face sessions were delivered with 114 parent/carers attendance and 221 children and young people and 59 families enjoyed a cooking session. In partnership with our Play and Early Intervention team 79 people we welcomed to indoor family playtimes events. Food was provided at all events.
- 82% of the iLunch parents/carers said that being part of the programme had helped them support their child's learning a great deal.
- **Home Link Workers Family Support:** Home Link Workers (HLW) continue to make progress across all Education Groups. Since their inception in August 2017 to date HLW have supported a total of 943 children, young people and their families, with 792 of those families now no longer requiring Home Link support.

- During 22/23 the Home Link Team continued to make progress across all Education Groups with team are providing tailored support where it is needed most to 163 Children, young people and their families. Over the Christmas 2022 period, 748 items were provided to support families. These included gifts, appliances and fuel vouchers.
- **BeAwesome:** Funding from the Kris Boyd Charity allowed partnership working with Ayrshire College and Active Schools to provide a FREE 6 week family food programme, named by families as '[BeAwesome](#)'. Parents/carers received work experience, cooking sessions and information on cooking on a budget. Older children took part in sporting activities and the younger children took part in activities within the Crèche. Families were provided with the clothing to take part, snacks, cooking equipment and hampers. The families got to meet, Former Scotland Player, Kris Boyd and World Cup winner Rose Reilly.
- **15,273** young people (11-25) in East Ayrshire have a **Young Scot Card/National Entitlement Card**, which equates to 78% of the population of young people. In addition to the free bus travel referenced above, young people who have the Young Scot NEC card have access to 350 unique discounts, either online or in store, and in 2022/23 card holders in East Ayrshire used their card to access **2158 discounts**, saving thousands of pounds on items purchased.
- There are **1874** young people signed up to East Ayrshire 'Young Scot Rewards' which is a **61% increase** on the previous year.
- **Fuel Poverty:** The Financial Inclusion Team and Vibrant Communities continue to work closely with Citrus energy to ensure families are supported with utilities concerns, debt and provision. **Citrus Energy** assisted 3,445 East Ayrshire households during 2022/23, of which approximately 49% (1,688) were households with children. Of their total client base, 1,070 households had self-disconnected in response to unaffordable energy costs, and 64% of these households had children living in them – representing 685 households in East Ayrshire where children were living in a house with no heating or at times no electricity. Citrus Energy worked with local partners to support these households, undertaking 242 house visits and securing financial gains of £363,587.
- **Cost of Pregnancy:** NHS A&A Cost of Pregnancy implementation group, created in response to the Cost of Pregnancy Report, continues to progress its agreed action plan. Areas of good practice identified include the up skilling of community-based MCAs, who underwent training in financial inclusion services in the three Ayrshires, to support clear pathways between maternity and financial inclusion services; and the Safeguarding Midwifery Team having expertise on local third sector support that is available to help pregnant women and their families with limited means to prepare for the arrival of their baby.
- **Young Patients Family fund:** NHS A&A is undertaking analysis and planning activity to increase uptake of the Young Patient's Family Fund.
- **Oral Healthcare:** In financial year 22/23, NHS A&A have taken a full allocation of resources, this is a total of 60,230 tooth brushing packs and includes the additional packs provided as part of the funding announced in 2021. Packs have been distributed throughout our establishments (schools/nurseries) during the current

	academic year, and have supported local foodbanks and charities and local community groups promoting oral health.
Raise Awareness/Tackle Stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge Poverty Week: Partnership events, roadshows and social media are used on an annual basis to support Challenge Poverty Week, maximising the local reach of the national spotlight on the challenges relating to child poverty. • The NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Health Information and Resources Service (HIRS) delivered by Public Health, provides free quality assured health and wellbeing information and resources. The Health service attended the East Ayrshire Poverty Event during the poverty awareness week to promote the service to the event attendees (predominantly professionals) to raise awareness of the services HIRS provides. • NHS Tweets were also sent during child poverty week in October 2022 and retweeted at relevant points. Stop presses developed and circulated to staff around Maintaining good health through the cost of living crisis; Cost of living- energy bills; Credit unions; Food Banks and Food Larders; and Gambling. • NHS Staff Training: Staff training on child poverty and financial inclusion referral pathways has taken place and evaluated positively. The first workshop had 20 colleagues from a mix of staff groups who engage with Children, Young People and Families represented, such as Maternity Care Assistants (MCAs), Promoting Attendance Advisors, School Nurses, and Quit Your Way advisors. A separate session was delivered to three Paediatric Nursery Nurses. A further workshop is planned for the financial year 2023/24. • NHS Human Resources (HR) staff who liaise with colleagues experiencing long term sickness absence have been given access to the child poverty and financial inclusion training, empowering them to raise financial concerns and support routes, with those colleagues. • Parental Engagement and Empowerment: Education colleagues are refreshing the EAC Parental Engagement Framework to bring it in line with the new Strategic Framework for Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement, Family Learning and Learning at Home. Parental Empowerment Programmes are currently underway in Littlemill and New Cumnock Primary schools and Robert Burns Academy. It is anticipated that another 3 schools will follow in 23/24.
Priority Actions identified in the 2021 Community Plan Review*	
Drive forward inclusive economic recovery and growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Economic Growth is a key priority for our CPP, with particular work in this regard being taken forward through the Ayrshire Growth Deal. Further information on progress during 2022/23 may be found in our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report 2022/23.
Focus our ongoing response, renewal and recovery from Covid19 on helping our most vulnerable and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Free School Meals: As part of the Council's Cost of Living Crisis Response, £50,000 from the Cost of Living Fund was allocated to provide discretionary free school meals to children and young people for up to eight weeks.

<p>disadvantaged people and families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Allocation Group: The Resource Allocation Group (RAG) is a joint Early years and Health group which considers Requests for Assistance for vulnerable children and those in need from agencies involved with families and children up to 12 years. During the reporting year, RAG approved 500 requests for assistance. 315 of these requests were to support children from birth to three years within one our Early Childhood Centres, 32 children accessed support with a Community Childminder and 18 children were supported to attend Out of Schools Care Services. 6 children received additional support from the Home Visiting Teacher and a further 129 families were able to access support from a Community Practitioner. • Holiday ECC Provision: The management teams from Hillbank, Onthank and Cairns Early Childhood Centres in the North West Kilmarnock area have worked collaboratively to arrange a holiday programme of drop in sessions during the summer of 2023 for families with children who have additional support needs. These sessions are aimed at supporting families to make connections and will include informal advice and support from professionals in Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy. The HEART programme has provided some funding for resources to support this project. • Housing First: East Ayrshire’s Housing First programme continues to operate with the aim of providing a stable home with intensive wraparound support for homeless people with multiple and complex needs. This collaborative, trauma informed approach incorporates wider homelessness prevention measures, accessible housing options advice, substantial investment in the increase of housing supply, robust partnership working and resourced, and flexible, wraparound housing support. • Of the 1,096 homeless presentations in 2022/23, 300 households stated that they required support with a mental health problem and 117 households cited a drug and/or alcohol dependency. 34% of applicants indicated that they had multiple support needs, demonstrating the continued need for this approach. • Housing Options: In response to identified need, Housing Options officers provide food and hygiene packs and make food bank and clothing bank referrals to local partners including EACHa. • Dignified Food Provision: East Ayrshire Council’s Vibrant Communities and Facilities Management services continue to link with local resilience groups and community larders to ensure food security and dignified food provision to families. 1,200 East Ayrshire Residents are registered Community Larder Members and an average 510 weekly visits to Community Larders are recorded.
<p>Adopt the Scottish Approach to Service Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEC Pathfinder: The <u>Transforming Local Systems (TLS) TEC Pathfinder</u> Programme continued to progress during 2022/23, working towards the aim of transforming health and social care services for those with long term health conditions living in the Irvine Valley. The team followed the Scottish Approach to Service Design to discover and define the challenges experienced by local residents and professionals in the area. • Further information about this work may be found in the Health and Social Care Partnership Annual Report 2022/23.

<p>Take forward place-based redesign through the Doon Valley Community Campus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusive design approach being applied to the £41.5m community campus in Dalmellington reflects our partnership commitment to a place based approach to community wellbeing. When completed it will deliver state of the art shared facilities that support education, health and wellbeing, sports excellence, the arts, culture and events, community integration and lifelong learning. • The Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran and EA Health & Social Care Partnership are working closely with the community and a wide range of partners to maximise the impact of the investment, including the development of environmentally sustainable joint procurement opportunities with the local supply chain. • The project remains on track for completion in Summer 2025.
<p>Design and implement a wellbeing-focused service delivery model with children and families, to get it right for every child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEART: Our Children’s Services Wellbeing Model – HEART represents a collaborative and transformational approach to improving support for our children, young people and families in East Ayrshire. The vision of the Model is to ensure that children and families can access support locally and at an early stage, in a way that challenges discrimination and stigma. Fundamentally, the Model incorporates multi-disciplinary team working and the GIRFEC principles. Partners involved include Education, Early Years, School Nursing, Health Visiting, CAMHS, Vibrant Communities, Social Work, Housing and Allied Health Professionals. We now have established community teams who are working to ensure that children and families can access support at an early stage in their local community in a way that challenges discrimination and stigma, and this will continue to be developed and implemented over the coming months. • Early Years: Processes have been reviewed and redeveloped to ensure the allocation of places for eligible 2 years are planned and delivered as close to eligibility dates as capacity allows. Uptake of ELC places for eligible 2 yr olds in East Ayrshire Council National remains high with 282 eligible 2 year olds placed between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. • During the reporting period the Multi-Agency Resource Allocation Group (RAG) approved 500 request for assistance; 315 of these requests were to support children from birth to three years within one our Early Childhood Centres, 32 children accessed support with a Community Childminder and 18 children were supported to attend Out of Schools Care Services. 6 children received additional support from the Home Visiting Teacher and a further 129 families were able to access support from a Community Practitioner. • Within Early Years there are 14 full time equivalent community practitioners who offer early intervention support to children and their families. The impact of poverty on families continues to be evident within the work of this team; 115 families where supported to access community food larders and food banks, 91 families were supported to access financial services such as EA Money, Financial Inclusion Team as well as Energy Support. • For some families, Christmas can be a particularly difficult time of year emotionally and financially, 281 families were supported to access the Christmas Charity Fund and throughout the year 223 families were supported to access clothing and equipment from Hillhouse Care.

- As well as practical support offered to families, the team offer a number of interventions such as play at home, book bug and peep family engagement sessions, 755 families were supported to attend one or more of these interventions.
- Each of the **community practitioners** is linked to one of our 36 Early Childhood Centres as well as the 7 funded providers delivering early learning and childcare. The added benefit of being linked to one of our establishments means that parents can contact their link community practitioner for advice and support. This year the team supported an additional 150 families.
- There is a continued focus on developing the **PEEP ‘supporting parents and children to learn together’ programme**. This programme has been delivered 224 times in 22-23 within the grounds of our ECCs and over summer 2023 we will take this into our communities with 4 sessions for children and families in various locations within the authority. There are plans to offer formal training to parents participating in this programme.
- **NHS Wellbeing Prescription Pad:** Wellbeing prescription pad is used with all participating families within CHW programme (JumpStart) The Pad is used at all initial wellbeing chats with participating families and again at post programme assessments. The Wellbeing Pad is a staple of discussions in almost all interactions with service users and is revisited at various contact points.
- **Antenatal Care:** NHS colleagues are working on a campaign to encourage uptake of Ante-natal appointments, in particular raising awareness with businesses around entitlement of employees to paid time off to go to their antenatal appointments. Campaign materials are in development and will be rolled out to small and medium enterprises in due course. The Health Improvement Officer has also undertaken research on the benefits of attending antenatal appointments and entitlements.
- **Vitamin D Provision:** A Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) for the distribution of vitamin D to breastfeeding mothers and children up to the age of 3 years was introduced in January 2022. During 2022/23, questions on uptake of vitamins were added to Care Partner. Reports from Care Partner show uptake is high however questions will be modified from April 2023 to improve the quality of the data returned.
- **Oral Health:** In financial year 22/23, NHS A&A have taken our full allocation of resources, this is a total of 60,230 toothbrushing packs and includes the additional packs provided as part of the funding announced in 2021. We have distributed packs throughout our establishments (schools/nurseries) during the current academic year, supported local foodbanks & charities and local community groups promoting oral health. All Public Dental Services (PDS) clinics have access to HC1 forms and staff are reminded to offer them to patients.
- **Smoking Cessation:** Quit Your Way, the local smoking prevention and cessation service promoted a local campaign to encourage people to stop smoking and save money for Christmas. Also, in support of No Smoking Day in March 2023, an incentive scheme was introduced to link to the national theme which was “The Cost Of Living”. The aim of the scheme was based on anyone who signed up to Quit Your Way (QYW) and stopped smoking for 4 weeks between January 30 2023 and March 8 2023 (NSD) would be entered into a draw to win

	<p>a £25 ALDI food voucher. The outcome of the incentive scheme was 33 people were eligible to be entered into the draw and 15 people won a voucher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NHS A&A health improvement training programme includes training on a variety of health improvement topics. A new course has been introduced to the 2023/24 programme, called Creating a Fairer, Healthier Ayrshire and Arran. This provides an introductory level of awareness and knowledge of health inequalities. The training programme has been widely disseminated to a range of partners. • In response to the cost of living crisis, information has been produced on the impact of cold homes on health and shared across the HSCP and Local Authority networks. Furthermore, an input was provided on this important topic at a workshop at the recent Local Conversation events which focussed on self-neglect
<p>Build on the learning over the Covid19 pandemic to improve interventions to protect people through our multi-agency public protection arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Ayrshire Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) has now been implemented. MARAC protects victims of domestic abuse who are at risk of significant harm or death through pan-Ayrshire partnership working with South & North Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, ASSIST and the three Ayrshire Women's Aids). • Trauma: Education and the police continue to implement Trauma Informed Contact and Care (TICC). Any child impacted by a domestic abuse incident is supported by their school the following day. • Public Protection Chief Officers Group: All public protection matters in East Ayrshire are overseen by a Chief Officers Group, which includes the following representation: the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP), Child Protection Committee (CPC), the Adult Protection Committee (APC), the Protection and Learning Team, the Violence against Women Partnership (VAWP) and the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Oversight Group. Updates on this work are reported in the Health and Social Care Partnership Annual Report 2022/23 and the Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2022/23.
<p>Invest in a new wellbeing focused website for East Ayrshire, so people can easily access information and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livingwellea: As previously reported the https://www.livingwellea.co.uk/ webpage was created to provide an accessible resource for supporting our residents to look after their physical and mental health during the pandemic. The webpage contains a range of useful materials, help and advice relating to various themes including: mental health and wellbeing, young people, parents and carers, physical and entertainment activities, financial assistance and contact information for numerous organisations which can provide additional support. The webpage is refreshed on a regular basis to ensure the content remains relevant and up to date.
<p>Invest in ensuring people and families who are vulnerable or socially disadvantaged are digitally included at home or in their community and are supported to access online opportunities safely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Ayrshire Digital Access Network has continued to take forward activity to address digital inclusion. • The East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (EAHSCP) Sensory Impairment Team provided 19 iPads with Mi-Fi to service users with visual and hearing loss. • EAHSCP Thinking Differently Team working with Connecting Scotland provided 362 households, including care leavers and vulnerable families, with eChromebooks or iPads and / or Wi-Fi units, with 24 months unlimited data to allow them to become digitally included - the 24 month data was further extended for another 12 months.

	<p>Working with Input Community Works, they provided another 40 devices and / or Wi-Fi units to care experienced young people over 16 and in particular to a group of asylum seeking young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Ayrshire Carers Centre issued 32 devices to young carers and supported them to get online • The No One Left Behind Partnership with Barclays secured 40 laptops for young people can use for their college work and/or any online activity such as training, job opportunities, CV, My World of Work etc. • Ayrshire College and schools across East Ayrshire continue to ensure that all students have access to a device and appropriate connectivity. • Housing Options continued to promote Digital inclusion where possible by providing mobile phones and top ups to ensure people experiencing homelessness were able to stay vitally connected to support services, friends, family and the local community. For tenants from a homeless background who have no access to the internet, we have linked with Connecting Scotland to provide them with a digital device and internet access for 2 years to help them settle in their home and stay connected. • East Ayrshire Council approved a new <u>Digital Strategy</u> which sets out ambitious plans for digitally included communities.
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**These commitments are articulated in our Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan and in our Community Plan Review Supplement and related thematic Delivery Plans.

Appendix 2: Some of the Partners in Our Child Poverty Work

- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
 - East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
 - MacMillan Cancer Support
 - Skills Development Scotland
 - Centrestage
 - East Ayrshire Council
 - Shire Housing Association
 - Atrium Homes
 - The Zone
 - BBC Children in Need
 - Sovereign Credit Union
 - East Ayrshire Women's Aid
 - Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 - East Ayrshire Carers' Centre
 - DWP
 - The Hunter Foundation
 - Coalfield Community Transport
 - Menu For Change – Oxfam Scotland; Nourish Scotland; Poverty Alliance; Child Poverty Action Group Scotland
 - Salvation Army, Kilmarnock Football Club, Scottish Book Trust, Elm Hall Church, Hillhouse and Cash 4 Kids.
- **Our Communities**
 - Ayrshire Credit Union
 - Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
 - Ayrshire College
 - Barnardos
 - East Ayrshire Citizen's Advice Bureau
 - Cunninghame Homes
 - Social Security Scotland
 - YipWorld
 - East Ayrshire Advocacy Service
 - Citrus Energy
 - Scottish Enterprise
 - Police Scotland
 - Home Energy Scotland
 - East Ayrshire Works
 - Barclays
 - CVO East Ayrshire