

Local Child Poverty Action Report for East Ayrshire 2021/22

Foreword

Emerging from what we hope was the worst of the covid-19 pandemic, we committed in 2021/22 to focus on recovery and renewal, all too aware of the impact of lockdown and the related pandemic restrictions, particularly on our children and young people. Their mental health, social development, education and employment prospects were all affected – and it was clear that the challenges that we faced in relation to child poverty had also increased, notwithstanding our partnership efforts to mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic.

In response to this, we had taken the opportunity through the Community Plan review in 2021, to recalibrate our partnership work to meet these emerging challenges – and consequently identified a revised suite of priority areas of focus for our partnership in the period 2021-24, which included renewal and recovery; inclusive economic growth; community wellbeing; children and young people; and poverty and inequality.

This is the work that has been highlighted in this Local Child Poverty Action Report and the related Local Outcomes Improvement Plan annual reporting materials for 2021/22, and that I am proud to share. These reports demonstrate once again the strength of partnership working in East Ayrshire and the important work that takes place at an operational and strategic level every day, between the Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, our Health and Social Care Partnership, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, our Third Sector partners and, most importantly, with our communities themselves. All determined to improve outcomes for local people and to ensure that our children have the best possible start in life and opportunities for the future.

And yet, we now face together a new challenge, in the form of a cost of living crisis which we know will impact on us all, and which threatens to overwhelm many households across East Ayrshire, further exacerbating the challenges that we face in relation to child poverty. There are, as we know, external factors which have brought these challenges to bear on the people of East Ayrshire – the Covid 19 pandemic and now the wider geo-political developments behind the rising costs that everyone is facing. We have limited control over these factors at a local level and our minds must therefore turn to that which we can control, the response to these challenges that we can deliver in partnership.

So yes, we are concerned by the continually escalating challenges that we face, but we can say with confidence that Community Planning Partners in East Ayrshire will continue to work together and redouble our efforts to improve outcomes for local children, young people and their families. The pages that follow illustrate our unwavering commitment to doing all that we can to tackle child poverty through partnership working and our continued ambitions for our children and young people.

Cllr Douglas Reid, Chair of East Ayrshire CPP Board.

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Introduction

This is the fourth 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.

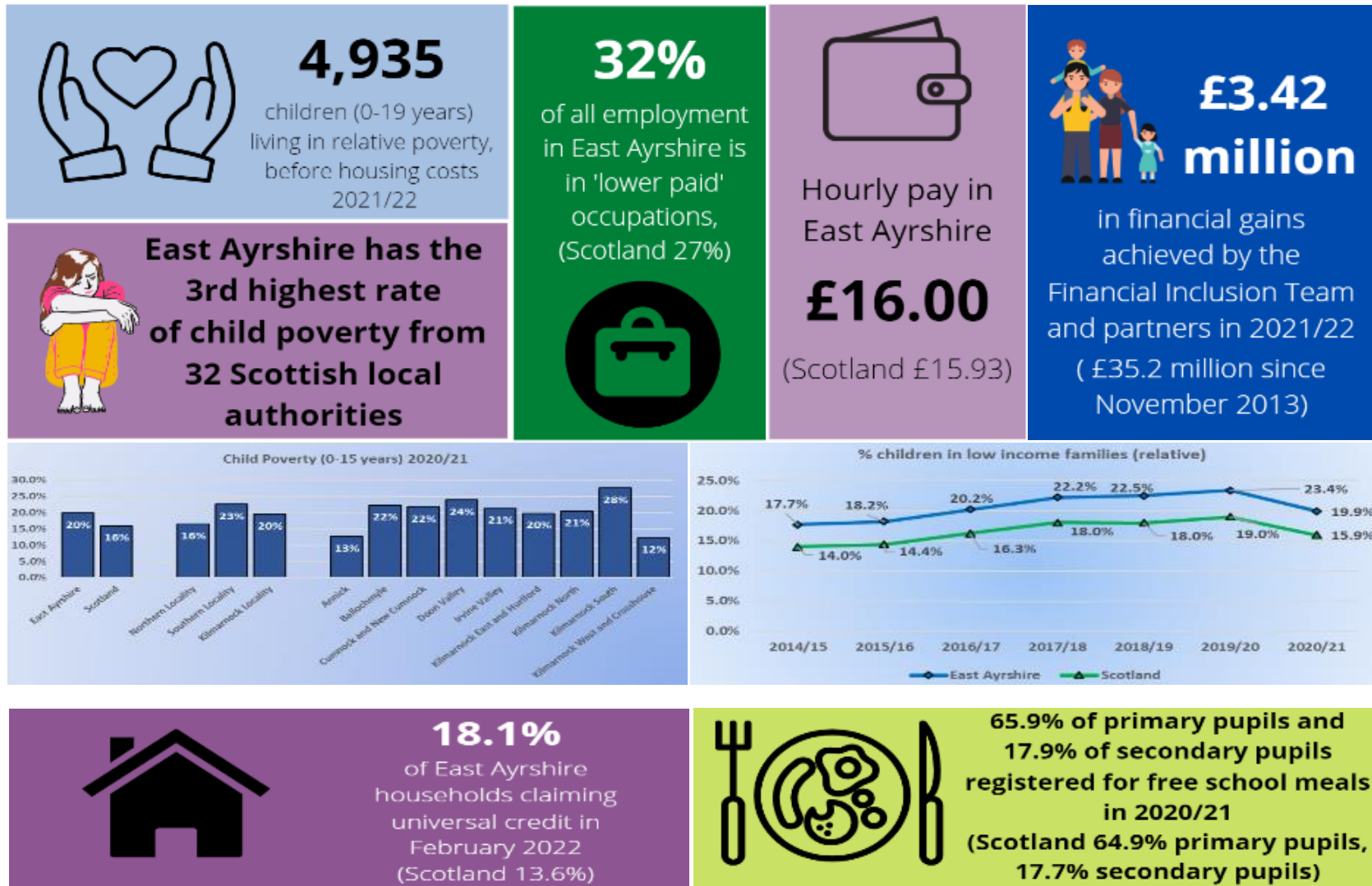
The impact of poverty on the social, emotional and educational development of children and young people is well-established. Specific examples include the poverty-related attainment gap, reduced learning capacity of children who attend school hungry, reduced parental engagement in children's learning, and the inability to afford new clothes, school equipment or to access activities that others take for granted. Poverty has a long-lasting and detrimental impact on young people, affecting their future life changes and access to opportunities.

The cost of living is also set to increase greatly for individuals and families over the coming months. The combined effect of rising inflation, food costs, interest rates and fuel prices will have a significant impact across East Ayrshire and it is evident that these new costs will hit our communities hard. The move to the recovery stage of the pandemic has also led to the withdrawal of the grant funded schemes that supported individuals and businesses, providing stability and enabling individuals to remain employed during the pandemic.

Within this challenging context, partners in East Ayrshire are working closely with our local communities to build resilience and to ensure that families who are struggling are able to access the support that they need, when they need it. Importantly we are also working at a strategic level, with regional and national partners, to create the sustainable economic growth that will be so fundamental to providing the employment and other opportunities needed to allow local people to move out of poverty.

This LCPAR does not seek to set out every piece of work being taken forward across our partnership to address this challenging agenda – to encapsulate all of that in a single report would simply not be possible. We have therefore tried to focus on the identified drivers of poverty set out within the legislation and related LCPAR guidance, and to highlight some of the key work being taken forward to address these. We have also tried to focus on that work which is partnership led or driven, as we see partnership working as the route to maximising the impact of our limited resources.

What We Now Know About Child Poverty in East Ayrshire



East Ayrshire had a level of relative child (aged 0-19 years) poverty of 19.1% during 2020/21, 3.8 percentage points higher than the national rate of 15.3%*. This equates to 4,935 children and young people aged 0-19 living in poverty within our communities and underlines the significant challenge this presents. During 2020/21, East Ayrshire had the 3rd highest level of child poverty of the 32 Scottish local authorities, with only Glasgow City and North Ayrshire experiencing higher rates.

The rate of relative child (0-19) poverty in East Ayrshire has been steadily rising in recent years, from 17% in 2015/16 to 22% in 2019/20, however the rate then fell by 3 PPs between 2019/20 and 2020/21. This trend has been reflected nationally where child poverty rates also rose between 2015/16 - 2019/20, and then decreased in 2020/21.

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 (27.6%), Doon Valley Ward (23.9%) and Ballochmyle Ward (22.3%).
- Conversely, in the Kilmarnock West and Crosshouse Ward the rate of relative child poverty was 12.2% and in the Annick Ward it was 12.7% during 2020/21.
- This highlights that, even in what are considered our more prosperous 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 22.6%, compared to 16.5% in the Northern Locality during 2020/21.

The percentage of people in employment in East Ayrshire, at 75.2% during 2021, remains above that of Scotland as a whole, which stands at 73.1%. Hourly pay rates for full-time employees in East Ayrshire are slightly higher than the national average at £16.00 compared to £15.93. The claimant count rate for East Ayrshire is 4.5% compared with 3.3% for Scotland (www.nomisweb.co.uk, May 2022).

At February 2022, 18.1% of all East Ayrshire households were on Universal Credit, compared to 13.6% of households across Scotland. This equates to 10,138 households and represents a significant increase from the pre-pandemic figure of 10% at April 2019.

During 2020/21, 65.9% of primary pupils in East Ayrshire were registered for free school meals, equating to 5,914 children across the authority. The percentage of primary pupils registered for free school meals in East Ayrshire has risen continually in recent years in line with

the national trend. 1,228 secondary pupils in East Ayrshire were registered for free school meals in 2020/21, 17.9% of all secondary pupils. The percentage of East Ayrshire secondary pupils registered for free school meals also rose in line with the national trend until 2020/21 when it fell by 0.5 PPs from 18.4% in 2019/20 to 17.9% the year later. The percentage of pupils registered for free school meals in East Ayrshire during 2020/21 remains slightly higher than the national figure for both primary pupils (1 PPs) and secondary pupils (0.2 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% by 2030 depending on the extent of policy implementation. Applying this estimate locally suggests that nearly 9,000 children and young people could be living in relative poverty by 2030 unless effective action is taken to mitigate against it. This situation is likely to be further exacerbated by the current cost of living crisis.

** A family in low income (before housing costs) in the reference year must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.*

Working in Partnership to Address Child Poverty

We have always recognised 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 [Children and Young People's plan 20-23](#) 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.



HELP EVERYONE AT THE
RIGHT TIME (HEART)

2021/22 has seen the development of our new **Children's Services Wellbeing Model – HEART**. This 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. Key leads have been nominated and colleagues aligned to each of the six new Community Teams, which formally commenced work in April 2022. **If a family needs some extra help or support, there will be a team of practitioners linked to that locality who have a good knowledge of the area and all services that are available to offer early help when families need it most.**

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 2021/22 and progress as at March 2022, can be found throughout this report and in the Action Plan update presented at Appendix 1.

To support the Financial Inclusion Team, NHS Ayrshire and Arran's Health Improvement Team collated data relating to the levels of respiratory disease in East Ayrshire, specifically Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). This intelligence informed a paper highlighting the potential impact of fuel poverty on respiratory health from which the Financial Inclusion Team was awarded an additional £250k to specifically target the cost of living and fuel poverty crisis

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.

2021/22 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

Significant progress is being made in East Ayrshire to put in place the long term strategic framework which will deliver sustainable economic growth. This will bring employment opportunities for parents and carers, and potential future routes out of poverty for those 4935 children and young people who are currently living in poverty in East Ayrshire.

Our approach to this is two-fold – on the one hand working in partnership to create and support clean, green employment opportunities; and on the other, making sure that our current and future workforce is ready and able to take advantage of those emerging opportunities.

The £251.5m Ayrshire Growth Deal is part of our wider Ayrshire Economic Strategy and will support us to attract and develop more innovative and internationally focused companies; improve key elements of our strategic transport and digital infrastructure; and work with communities to raise aspiration and ambition, provide employment and skills support and improve access to jobs. The scale of this deal will galvanise efforts to develop key strategic sites and key sectors in Ayrshire, and aims to facilitate private sector investment of more than £300m into the region and to support up to 7,000 new jobs. Central to both the Growth Deal and our wider economic growth ambitions is our commitment to deliver local benefits through Community Wealth Building.

In 2021/22 the Regional Economic Strategy Group have appointed consultants to prepare an **Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy** which aligns with Community Wealth Building principles and the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). Local consultation and engagement activity with community planning partners and wider stakeholders will take place over summer 2022, to inform development of this new strategy. The strategy will play a fundamental role in our future work to address child poverty, embedding that community wealth building approach to ensure that people in communities across East Ayrshire feel the benefit of the current and anticipated AGD related investment.

Employability

Being able to access good quality employment opportunities is a key route out of poverty and consequently, right across our partnership, we have a strong focus on employability. We have an established **Local Employability Partnership (LEP)** for East Ayrshire which drives the employability agenda and seeks to foster a strong collaborative approach to delivery, with membership drawn from the following organisations: East Ayrshire Council, DWP, Skills Development Scotland, Ayrshire College, East Ayrshire Third Sector Interface, Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Ayrshire & Arran. The LEP has oversight of the strategic development and governance of employability and skills in East Ayrshire including the relevant elements of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy. In October 2021, the Scottish Government announced a commitment to transfer the governance of all its employability funding to Local Employability Partnerships with local authorities acting as lead authorities for financial management. To support this activity, an [East Ayrshire No One Left Behind \(NOLB\) Operating Plan](#) has been produced which sets out a clear direction of travel over the period between 2022-2027, maximising the combined partnership employability resources.

Tackling child poverty is recognised as one of the key policy drivers of the No One Left Behind Operating Plan. Whilst the overall objective is to reduce unemployment, tackling inequalities in relation to employment is the key focus of the Plan – and the programme of work set out in therein reflects a clear overlap with the priority groups identified in the child poverty legislation.

Employability Activity

- During 2021-22, seven training providers, including the Council's Employability Service, were allocated 308 **Employability Fund** starts across stages 2 to 4 of the strategic skills pipeline with funding of £628,320 for 16-17 Year olds; and £394,850 allocated for clients over 18 years. This included provision for training allowances paid to clients for a maximum of 26 weeks.
- The Council's **Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF)** team work with parents who are either unemployed or in low skilled/low income occupations with a view to providing them with appropriate training options to build skills to progress in work to higher grade positions or to help them access a greater range of employment options. Of the 70 parents the team supported from April to December 2021, 47 were single parents while the remainder were couples on low incomes. 20 clients were employed in low skilled/low - income occupations and through PESF were able to access training to progress into higher income jobs. 4 clients were initially identified

as economically inactive with 1 moving into employment and the remaining 3 continuing to engage with the PESF team. The remaining 46 clients were either unemployed or long term unemployed (over a year) and 31 of this cohort had progressed into further learning, training or employment by December 2021 with the remainder continuing to engage with the PESF team.

- The Education Service **Young Person Guarantee (YPG)** team consists of a Project Manager and three designated work coaches, as well as a job coach aligned to the Supported Employment Service. Delivery of the programme commenced fully in September 2021 and, as of March 2022, the team have supported 260 young people (16-24 years). Of these, 30 are undertaking salary supported Modern Apprenticeships for 12 months with local private employers and third sector organisations; a further 20 Modern Apprentices are being employed by the council; 78 young people are in jobs funded via bespoke YPG grant allocation (including kickstart extensions); 9 young people are in work trials and 8 of those in a work trial in February 2022 are now in full time employment; 31 young people are being supported across a range of sectors, with 17 of these accessing 6 months' salary support; 2 young people have progressed into full-time college courses while 3 are working on college applications for the August 2022 intake; and 23 young people have achieved qualifications with an additional 43 on track to achieve these before the end of June 2022.
- The Education Service **No-One Left Behind** post-school team work primarily with clients furthest from the labour market and with substantial barriers to participation, delivering activity agreement type provision which seeks to re-engage, build core and employability skills before progressing participants into more formal training provision, further learning or employment. From April to December 2021, 144 individual clients were supported by the NOLB team and of these 116 progressed into further learning, training or employment; while 28 disengaged from the programme or were unable to complete due to factors that included ill health; drugs and alcohol issues; and involvement with criminal justice.
- **Employability Fund** staff working alongside education colleagues have centred their efforts to reduce youth unemployment, by preparing 47 young people (16-19) for working life, in particular through delivery the **Skills Development Scotland Employability Fund**.

- **Home Link Workers** are currently running three parental empowerment programmes which aim to boost parental wellbeing and confidence so that they can take the next step in their employment journey. By linking with the Parental Employability Fund Staff the parents have had the opportunity to access funding to sign up for courses which will assist them into employment.
- **East Ayrshire Council of Voluntary Organisations (CVO)** developed and implemented a 26-week Positive Destinations training programme in 2021/22. The programme aimed to improve the pathways to education, training and employment for care experienced young people by creating opportunities to develop employability skills, work experience and qualifications, through access to the full range of CVO services. The programme supported: 20 trainees, 2 modern apprentices, 5 employment opportunities and 3 work experience placements during 2021/22, with 18 of the 20 trainees having completed the course and 11 trainees being supported in employment.
- In February 2022 [East Ayrshire Council](#) also approved the establishment of a new Jobs and Training Fund, with £6m allocated to finance 200 training placements in services across the Council and local business for East Ayrshire residents over three years.
- **NHS Ayrshire and Arran** has developed an Employability Strategy with priorities such as “social inclusion” providing opportunity to focus resource on lone parents, people involved in the justice system and people in care to develop skills and confidence in entering employment through different pathways.

Fair Work

As part of a commitment to embed the Scottish Local Government Living Wage, East Ayrshire Council has implemented a revised Pay and Grading Structure up to Grade 5. Approximately 900 employees and bank workers will benefit from the pay and grading structure change. From 1 April 2022, the minimum starting salary for employees on the East Ayrshire Council pay and grading structure is £10.18 per hour, with Community Care officers receiving a minimum £11.56 per hour.

The NHS as an Anchor Organisation has been considering its strategic intent and established an internal Community Wealth Building/NHS Anchor Programme Board which includes key personnel.

Supporting Parents to Access Childcare

We recognise that access to affordable childcare can be a barrier to accessing the job market, particularly for single parents or those without wider family support. The full implementation of the statutory entitlement of 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds has been achieved by the collaborative efforts and commitment of colleagues across the Council's central years team, finance team, facilities and property management, procurement, planning and the ELC workforce, and childminders across East Ayrshire who are delivering the service to children and families. The estimated uptake of funded ELC places for eligible 2 year olds in East Ayrshire is 67%, rising to 93% of 3 year olds and 97% of 4 year olds.

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. The RAG can allocate support which is in addition to universal services and this includes places for children 0-5 years in Early Childhood Centres or with childminders, support from the Community Practitioner Team, access to the pre School Home Visiting Teacher and access to Out of School Care. This includes access to the Avenue Childcare Services, a voluntary sector not for profit childcare service in North West Kilmarnock, which receives grant funding to provide places for RFA children and which provides employment opportunities for local people and supports local families. 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.

Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

We have continued to use Strategic Equity Funding (SEF), previously SAC and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. All our SAC Mentor Development, Home Link, Outdoor Education and Family Literacy staff continue to provide targeted support to our SIMD 1 and 2 children, young people and their families. Schools are currently adjusting to the move from a one year to a four year allocation of PEF funding, with new spending plans under development.

Income from Social Security and In Kind Benefits

HSCP Financial Inclusion Team

The Financial Inclusion Team (FIT), together with its partners, has continued to support East Ayrshire residents to maximise their benefit entitlement. During 2021/22, the FIT received 2,602 referrals and advice enquiries, a significant increase of 45% from the previous year and 14% higher than the pre-pandemic caseload. During this period, the **financial gains achieved for people in East Ayrshire totalled £3,416,331**. This sum takes the cumulative total amount of financial gains since the creation of the team in November 2013 to £35,169,624.

In Court Advice (ICA) staff have reported a significant increase in the average level of rent arrears during 2021/22, with the £246,300.69 total arrears figure equating to an 88% increase on the previous year. ICA staff are currently supporting 903 tenants, with the financial gains achieved for people totalling £54,265, which represents an increase of 34% from the previous year.

The Employability FIT Team works with people from low income households, workless households and lone parents to remove barriers that prevent them from moving into training or employment. This project has achieved £270,246 in financial gains for people and supported 254 families in relation to fuel poverty over the last year.

The **East Ayrshire Carers Centre** remains a key partner which provides valuable assistance for both adult and young carers in the authority. The supports delivered throughout the reporting period were wide-ranging and included the provision of benefit, money and debt management advice, fuel poverty awareness, form completion and maximisation of income.

Within the reporting period the East Ayrshire Carers Centre achieved over £1.6 million in benefit awards; completed 203 adult carers support plans; received 455 new registrations; oversaw 263 carers awarded money from the Winter Wellbeing Fund and over 250 Time to Live grants for adult and young carers to pursue hobbies and breaks at home; provided 12,782 instances of advice and support; and donated over 3,000 individual Christmas gifts and 400 Easter eggs to young carers.

The **Universal Credit Support Team** has continued to tackle poverty in East Ayrshire by increasing clients' income, identifying issues in relation to food insecurity and energy poverty, and by linking with partners to collaboratively address difficult circumstances associated with

poverty. The team have supported residents with: all aspects of claiming Universal Credit, increasing income by ensuring clients receive all the benefits they are entitled too, providing claim assistance, claim advice, debt advice and budgeting advice. In 2021/22, the team generated £291,290 in financial gains for clients, dealt with 679 referrals and handled approximately 15,000 calls and 16,000 emails, which is reflective of the current economic climate.

Maximising Established Contacts with Parents and Carers

Through our education establishments, we try to maximise every opportunity to reach out to parents and carers, sharing information and signposting to available supports and services.

- A **Financial Inclusion Education Service Group** has been established to share financial information with our ECC and School parents. In addition to sending out text messages, updates are posted on a blog which has had a large number of hits. [Financial Information | Parent Health and Wellbeing Information Site \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://glowscotland.org.uk)
- Support for those who required additional support when isolating due to COVID-19 continued. This included the **Test and Protect Education Hub** working closely with the Education Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for contact tracing to identify positive COVID-19 cases and also school contacts of the case who were vulnerable. Families who were identified as being vulnerable were offered support which included provision of food and toiletry parcels.
- **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.
- The Financial inclusion team provided learning and development opportunities to Early Years staff in October 2021 at the In Service day. They also attended and gave a presentation to the Depute and Senior meetings in April 22 to promote the resources available.

Education staff have also worked closely with the Financial Inclusion Team to develop a new **East Ayrshire Child Poverty Pathfinder** during 2022/23.

EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD POVERTY PATHFINDER

Financial inclusion is key to addressing poverty and ensuring that children have a solid foundation for their personal, emotional and social development. In August 2021, a school-based financial inclusion pathfinder project was established within the Loudoun Academy learning community, to provide support to children and families experiencing financial hardship. The focus of the pathfinder is on income maximisation for low income families through raising awareness of both UK, Scottish and Local Government benefits. By promoting financial inclusion, wider health, wellbeing and equalities outcomes will also be supported.

In the period up to 31st March 2022, 40 families have been supported with financial gains totalling £60,927.63. Of the families supported, 33 have been lone parent households.

The support provided has not just been with regard to social security benefits but has included assistance with fuel issues, claiming free school meals, Educational Maintenance Allowance, disability benefits, the new Scottish Social Security benefits, travel cards and more. Three families have also been provided with a free Chromebook and two years free internet access to assist the child(ren) with homework and also job search opportunities for parents.

Referrals have also been made to partner organisations such as In Court Advice, Citrus Energy, CAB and the FIT Employability team to assist with a range of services from potential eviction, fuel and other debts and also assisting parents along the employability pipeline. Work is currently underway on the potential to upscale the pathfinder to other school learning communities.

The following case studies demonstrate the impact of this work on individual families.

PATHFINDER CASESTUDIES

Case 1

Referral from Teacher regarding pupil without PE kit and requiring paper copy of homework. Lone parent who has 3 children and is suffering from poor mental health. Benefits checked. Low Income Pandemic Payment claimed into bank account of £130. Digital exclusion identified as an issue – awarded Chromebook + 2yrs free unlimited internet access via Financial Inclusion Employability Team. Whole family now benefit from digital access.

Case 2

Primary School referral regarding debt on parent pay account for school meals. Lone parent with 3 children at Primary School. Not entitled to free school meals as income too high. Was working additional hours when applied for school meals over the holiday period. Check of reduced income and advised to reapply (school meals £32.25 p/w awarded). Applied within timescale to qualify for Family Pandemic Payments totalling £705 at Christmas and ongoing awards next year. Low Income Pandemic Payment £130 claimed.

Case 3

School referral for assistance with completing child Disability Living Allowance review form. Lone parent with 2 children at Secondary School. Dad works part-time but earns over the threshold to claim Carers Allowance, however his Universal Credit award is missing the carer element and child disability element amounting to £292.62 p/m. Identified that the eldest child qualified for Education Maintenance Allowance of £30p/w during term time. Review of DLA awarded continued award of £83.70 p/w.

Case 4

Lone parent working full-time with 2 children in Secondary School. Query claim for Education Maintenance Allowance after seeing information shared on school app by Financial Inclusion Officer. An award of Education Maintenance Allowance £30 p/w to her 16yr old son was made. Parent was delighted as did not qualify for any other benefits due to working full time.

Cost of Living

The Financial Inclusion work previously highlighted is at the forefront of our work to support families to meet the rising costs of living, however a range of activity is being taken at all levels across our partnership to provide additional support.

Home Link Workers

Systemic sharing of approaches has enabled the Home Link Team to continue to make progress across all six Education Groups, with the Home Link Workers supporting a total of 940 children, young people and their families with 726 of those now no longer requiring Home Link support. Across the reporting period 2021/22 a total of **139** families were supported.

At the time of reporting, the team are providing tailored support where it is needed most to 179 children, young people and families on a weekly basis, including 6,591 phone calls, 539 garden visits, 982 supportive emails and 270 requests from parents/carers for further general wellbeing support in the reporting period.

Throughout 2021/22, the Home Link Team worked with a number of support agencies and partners to increase collective efforts to help children living in poverty. This support included provision of 79 I.T devices, 41 clothing vouchers and 21 white goods. The Home Link Team also coordinated and delivered iLunch sessions across 26 primary schools during 2021/22, with a blend of outdoor face to face sessions, garden visits and telephone coaching and mentoring calls. In total, 61 outdoor sessions took place with a focus on family learning.

Other practical supports offered to parents and carers in our Education establishments include the following:

- **Early Years** 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. Early Learning and Childcare is provided with no cost to parents/carers.
- Early Years have facilitated and administered the Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme with all local providers registered with the Care Inspectorate and providing care to children 6 months to not yet attending school. The SMHSS provides a payment for a snack of milk and fruit or vegetable for each attendance by eligible children.
- Early Years are running a summer scheme in 2022 in the North West Kilmarnock area in conjunction with PEACE out of school care and, through Scottish Government 'Get into Summer' funding, offer up to 20 full time equivalent places fully funded.

- The Scottish Book Trust initiative provided books that were distributed through ECC's, Schools and Food Larders.
- **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; and ECC infants receive free lunches and afternoon 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.
- 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. Grant Funding of £569,000 was made available over the holiday periods Easter, Summer, October Break and Christmas 2022. Payments are made for those on low income Free School Meal entitlement to support the purchase of food during these periods when schools are closed. Additional school meals will also be available for those pupils who wish to take these home, provided by Catering Staff at the end of the school day. This has been arranged in conjunction with Facilities and Property Management to make good use of any excess meals prepared during the school day.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel Poverty is historically a major problem in Scotland and in East Ayrshire in particular, where figures show that the number of homes affected by fuel poverty are significantly higher than the Scottish average. With the recent increase in fuel prices, the problem will be exacerbated with the number of households unable to heat their home adequately anticipated to rise sharply. Rural poverty is also an issue with many homes in rural areas not having access to gas and having to rely on heating oil. In response, we are currently working in partnership with Lemon Aid Fuel Poverty Services, a subsidiary of Cunninghame Housing Association, to deliver financial support to households to tackle fuel poverty and fuel debt.

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) is also reporting that fuel debt is a growing concern for consumers. The latest CAS data reflects a 13% increase in fuel debt advice as a proportion of all debt advice compared to November 2020. The steady rise of energy as a debt issue in the CAB network is predicted to rise further as people continue to struggle with energy bills. Again, we are working closely with CAS to provide additional staff resources to assist people with fuel debt and rising energy costs.

Housing

The actions detailed within Housing to 2040 are ambitious and aspirational, putting housing firmly at the centre of other national objectives such as tackling poverty and inequality, creating and supporting jobs, ensuring local authorities meet energy efficiency and fuel poverty targets, tackling the climate change emergency and ensuring that people have connected, cohesive and vibrant communities in which to live. This approach will drive forward ambitious changes within all areas of Housing within East Ayrshire and inform the future strategic direction of the service and local objectives as detailed within the [Local Housing Strategy 2019-2024](#).

The Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) continues to deliver a mix of homes across sizes and types, in response to the aims and objectives set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house condition across all tenures. In 2021/22, site starts were achieved for the delivery of 104 Council homes, with 18 of these homes as part of the Council's first net zero housing development. The net zero homes, designed in partnership with CCG and MAST architects, embrace new technology and are the future of house building in Scotland. Net zero will be achieved through a combination of enhanced building fabric like thicker insulation and triple-glazed windows that will reduce heat loss. The homes will be fitted with air source heat pumps and an advanced ventilation system to promote clear air-flow.

Site starts have also been achieved by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners for the delivery of 29 homes, with the completion of 1 home achieved by a RSL partner in response to an identified housing need.

Preventing Homelessness

In 2021/22, 23.8% of homeless applications were from young people aged 16 to 24 (HL1), compared to 22.6% in 2020/21. The number of statutory homeless households with children in temporary accommodation increased by 30.6% in 2021/22 with 111 households compared to 85 in 2020/21.

East Ayrshire Housing Options activities are embedded within our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The principles of early intervention and prevention shape all activities to provide people with advice relating to housing and financial matters and access to a wide range of support services to prevent a homelessness situation occurring. 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 claims for Universal Credit, maximising income for the individual, reducing food security and fuel poverty as well as promoting tenancy sustainment.

An intensive Housing Support Service, delivered by Quarriers, was commissioned for young people aged 16-25. This service prevents young people from losing their tenancies and alleviates homelessness by helping them to develop the skills they need to manage their own home and is centred on the needs and goals of the individual, based on a Personal Support Plan setting out goals, tasks and timescales.

The Universal Credit Support Team administer and assess the Scottish Government's Tenant Grant Fund. This Fund is open to any tenant of any tenure; its aim is to prevent homelessness caused by financial loss through the pandemic and to sustain tenancies that might otherwise have failed. The Fund has approved 82 applications so far and has paid £92,868.67 to rent accounts. Housing Options staff fed directly into this by referring suitable clients at risk of or experiencing homelessness to the UC Support Team for this funding as part of their prevention work.

Digital Poverty

Established in 2018, the award winning East Ayrshire Digital Access Network (EA DAN) brings together a range of local and national organisations to promote digital access and equality. During the Pandemic, the EA DAN was the driving force behind the Connecting Scotland Programme in East Ayrshire which helped to promote and maximise East Ayrshire's allocation. Almost 1,500 families in East Ayrshire are benefitting from the programme since it launched in 2020, helping people get online, learn new skills and connect with their family, friends and loved ones. This is achieved by providing those experiencing digital exclusion with a device, connectivity and wraparound support as we seek to further reduce digital exclusion and tackle digital poverty.

Key achievements during 2021/22 include a dedicated resource appointed to lead on Digital Inclusion in East Ayrshire; a reviewed approach to Digital Inclusion in East Ayrshire, identifying new key priorities; 532 digitally excluded individuals supported during 2021/22, via the Connecting Scotland Programme in East Ayrshire; and building on a successful Connecting Scotland application, a dedicated "Connecting Voices" mailbox and webpage was created and launched to support Care Leavers with regular information and updates issued by the 77 partners.

Throughout 2021/22, the Connecting Scotland Initiative has been fully promoted and supported within our Children's Services. Within this period, more than 390 households including care leavers and vulnerable families and adults, have been provided with devices (Chromebooks or Ipad) and/or WIFI (24 months unlimited data), to allow them to become digitally included during the pandemic. Over 70 workers have made requests to include the children, young people and families that they support, and they have taken on the role as digital champions to ensure their families can set up and fully utilise the new devices.

East Ayrshire Council has also been taking forward wider work to increase its digital presence, to help local to communities access more services on-line; and to support our communities to become more digitally aware. This ongoing work, which includes a 'digital communities' focus on enabling low income households, and other groups who face barriers in this regard, to access the available council services and supports digitally, will be reflected in the Council's new Digital Strategy which is being developed for publication later in 2022. Detailed consultation and engagement with the local Equalities Forum is informing this work.

Dignified Provision of Free Sanitary Products

1,000 product orders on the home delivery scheme were processed during 2021/22 totalling £20,110. Products are available in all Community Food Larders and Foodbanks across the authority area, as well as in council and leisure trust public buildings. Various community and voluntary groups also stock products for users to take as needed.

Distribution of oral hygiene resources (toothpaste/toothbrushes)

As part of the Childsmile programme, toothbrushing resources are distributed to a number of different places to support oral health. The main routes of delivery are via dental practices, schools and nurseries or health visiting teams. However, recognising that a targeted approach is necessary, distribution is targeted at supporting those families and individuals who may need these practical resources the most. This has included providing packs to local food banks, community groups and community appeals.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, this work continued via providers who maintained their in-person services (such as food banks). However, delivery via groups such as community groups, mother and toddler groups stopped as these did not meet in person. In the second half of last year the public dental service undertook work to get these deliveries back up and running and re-engage with groups we have lost

contact with during COVID. Additionally, we were given more money from Scottish Government and additional packs to distribute as part of an expansion of Childsmile funding. The work is ongoing, and we continue to distribute packs.

Provision of Vitamins

A Standard Operating Procedure to provide clarity to Midwifery, Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership staff around vitamin distribution within the antenatal period and first twelve months of the national universal health visiting pathway was created and operationalised.

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.

The Council's in-house **Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF)**, referenced earlier in this report, is complemented by delivery funded through Scottish Government PESF (Boost) grant by **CVO (East Ayrshire)** who oversee the '**Find your Future**' programme. This programme offers personalised support for parents who face barriers to progressing their careers, including help to gain qualifications, improving skills or work experience, money advice, and motivational support. This targeted programme, launched in February 2022 is aimed at parents who have a disability or barrier to employment which can include Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Dyslexia, Learning Disabilities, Visual and/or Hearing Impairment, ADHD, and mental health issues.

East Ayrshire Works (The Employability Service) has continuously contributed to the councils wider child poverty work with a strong focus on assisting those at a disadvantage in the labour market. Programmes are specifically designed to engage in a targeted way with people with disabilities, lone parents, ethnic minorities, women returners and other groups of women currently outside the labour market and young unemployed people. In 2021/22, 135 clients with children were referred on to a range of partner agencies internal and external to improve their financial wellbeing whilst we supported their journey to employment.

42 clients with children, specifically sought our support to improve their financial situation by gaining qualifications and of that group, 35 have achieved improved sustained employment and the others have achieved vocational training accreditation. A Job Broker service exists to facilitate the smooth and effective job matching. 16 Parents utilised a targeted programme to gain a wage subsidy and employment. In

addition to that, the Scottish Government funded Long Term Unemployed Project has seen 47 parents encouraged to try employment in work placements within the 3rd sector organisations.

The Council's **Supported Employment Service** consists of a team of 5 Job Coaches which provide holistic and tailored support to young people and adults with learning disabilities, Autism and those affected by mental illness to find and secure sustainable employment that is a good match to the individuals' interests and abilities. Over the last year the team has supported 138 individuals and 45 have moved into employment, modern apprenticeships or training. The team continue to work with these clients to help them progress. The success of this model is in the flexibility of support and the skills of coaches to tailor appropriate support that is unique to each individual and job role. The service sees ongoing demand with a waiting list regularly in operation.

The **Employability Financial Inclusion Team** also support people from low income households, workless households and lone parents to overcome training and employment barriers. This project has been very successful, achieving £270,246 in financial gains for clients and supporting 254 families with fuel poverty in the last year. **The Health and Community Care FIT** was also recently established to undertake projects to assist people and families who have health and disability issues. One developing project involves basing Financial Inclusion staff within seven East Ayrshire GP Practices, with an anticipated start date in Summer 2022. **The Macmillan Project** also continues to receive a high number of referrals, with an additional staff resource having been allocated to the project to support this demand. This project has generated financial gains of £790,020 for people living with cancer, representing an increase of 69% from pre-pandemic levels.

East Ayrshire's Housing First Programme launched in August 2021 and aims to provide a stable home with intensive wraparound support for homeless people with multiple and complex needs. This collaborative, trauma-informed approach includes 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 651 homeless decisions in 2021/2022 where East Ayrshire had a duty to find settled accommodation, 205 stated they required support with a mental health problem and 114 households cited a drug and/or alcohol dependency. Just over 40% of applicants stated they have multiple support needs, demonstrating the need for this approach. The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has committed to creating 5 furnished tenancies in each year of the plan and to date 5 furnished tenancies have commenced. All of these tenancies are single males but 3 of the tenancies have regular access to their children.

The **Child Wellbeing Protocol**, launched in November 2020 in conjunction with colleagues in Education Services and Health & Social Care Partnership, seeks to prevent homelessness and mitigate transitions and trauma for children, young people and families. There have been 96 referrals made to date out of 559 families with children seeing assistance.

East Ayrshire Works Financial Inclusion Pathways is a recently re-launched European Social Fund Operation to help people who are at risk of falling into poverty. The service focuses on helping people of working age with finance or debt issues and who are unable to afford the basics in life. The support aims to help maximise living standards, reduce stress and improve quality of life and is targeted at lone parent households, workless households, and low income households. A range of advice and expertise is on offer on debt/finances and the project aims to help people on their employment journey and break down the barriers that prevent them from taking up employment. A range of interventions can be put in place to help people progress through the employability pipeline including support to maximise income, assistance with debts, support for childcare, and help with transport costs.

82.5% of the families supported by the East Ayrshire Child Poverty Pathfinder Project have been lone parent households.

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

Funding has been identified through PESF (Parental Employability Support Fund) for one year for a 35 hour post. Vibrant Communities and Education (Post 16) will work collaboratively to support and meet this identified need. This initiative will address a gap which has been identified and will enhance our work with ESOL (English as a second other language) learners and help progress them into employment opportunities. Intensive support will be provided to ESOL learners/parents by a dedicated work coach in both a one to one and a group setting.

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 CVs and to improve their chances of finding employment. The Vibrant Communities Community Based Adult Learning Money MOT course materials have also been adapted for ESOL learners to deliver basic information on money management, in order to improve learners' knowledge of money management for themselves and their families.

Vibrant Communities ESOL team also work in partnership with TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) providing outdoor learning through **Asylum Migration Integration Fund** allowing families to participate together in and learn about nature. Activities have included, walks, litter picks, how to grow your own, outdoor cooking etc., not only providing activities for family to take part in as a whole but also offering socially interactive activities in a relaxing environment which promote health and wellbeing.

Support for Unpaid Carers

There is growing concern that unpaid carers are even less well placed to cope with the cost of living crisis than many others and that they will be disproportionately affected. Carers often face higher bills, particularly energy bills, than the wider population when caring for someone frail or unwell and often need targeted financial support. Carers UK have reported that 23% of unpaid carers said they did not have enough money to manage their monthly expenses. Many stated they were anxious about covering even basic living costs. A further 18% said they are in or have been in debt because of caring in the past year, and 6% could not afford utility bills like electricity, gas, water, or telephone bills. These figures sharply rise to 44% of those providing more than 35 hours of care per week.

From the funding package made available through the Scottish Government for wellbeing support to unpaid carers over the 2021/22 winter period, East Ayrshire Carers Centre was allocated £75k. This was used to set up a **Winter Wellbeing & Recovery Fund**, which was launched on 28 January 2022. As well as helping to support the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of unpaid carers, the fund was also designed to assist with everyday living costs and household bills. The response to the fund was overwhelming, meaning that the full £75k was allocated by the time applications closed on 4th February. Partners have since been working with East Ayrshire Carers Centre to reinstate a hardship fund for unpaid carers.

38 young carers aged 11 to 18 years old in East Ayrshire have signed up for the **Young Scot 'Young Carers Package'** and they have accessed 721 Young Carers Opportunities. It is part of the Scottish Governments commitment to recognising the contributions of young carers and make the most of their free time, particularly during and post Covid-19 pandemic. The packages include digital vouchers for Netflix and Amazon (and many more) and access to meaningful subscriptions.

Poverty & Social Inclusion Project

We reconsider that for many, the best route out of poverty is through work. The Poverty & Social Inclusion Project, based within the Financial Inclusion Team, is funded by East Ayrshire Council and the Scottish Government to assist single parents, low income or workless households to break down the barriers to training and employment. This can include support with welfare benefits, managing debt, arranging childcare or helping with transport, amongst other issues.

Priorities over the period 2021/22 have included establishing greater levels of community participation and engagement, improving transportation and connectivity, tackling social Isolation and loneliness, supporting initiatives to tackle poverty, and working with all partners to ensure that stigma is not a barrier for individuals seeking the support and treatment they need.

An East Ayrshire Trauma Advisory Board has also been established to ensure that all partners take trauma into account and to challenge stigma and discrimination in their work, thinking and practice. A Trauma Lead Officer will also be recruited in early course to lead on developing and embedding trauma-informed practices across East Ayrshire.

2021/22 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 Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2021/22 has been developed in partnership with our Children and Young People's Cabinet and includes further updates on partnership work to address child poverty.

An update on NHS Ayrshire & Arran's pan-Ayrshire child poverty analysis and related work is available in the [NHS Ayrshire & Arran Director of Public Health Child Health Report 2022.](#)

Our [LOIP Annual Performance Report 2021/22](#) highlights the range of partnership activity taken forward over the last year, including work to address the drivers of child poverty.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

We know that for people in our communities the next 12 months and beyond will be challenging due to the impact of the cost of living crisis on family budgets. There will likely be an increase in demand for the support of our Financial Inclusion Team as people struggle to manage within their means.

A dedicated partnership spotlight session on the cost of living crisis will take place in September 2022, bringing local Elected Members and Members of the Community Planning Partnership Board together with key officers from across our CPP. The aim of this session will be to ensure that the full range of community planning partners across East Ayrshire are fully mobilised to support our communities to meet rising costs and the related challenges as we move forward into Autumn/Winter 2022/23; to seek ideas for innovation and further opportunities for enhanced collaboration to maximise the impact of the available partnership resource; and most importantly to ensure that an effective programme of practical support is available to local people, where and when it is needed, throughout the communities of East Ayrshire at this most challenging of times.

Alongside the emerging cost of living crisis and the issues that it will bring, the longer term impact of the covid-19 pandemic is still unknown, although we are starting to see some indicators which are of concern. Children and Young people have been significantly impacted by the restrictions that were placed upon them and that they complied with. We have already seen the impact on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. In meeting this challenge we will be working with key partners to further develop the support available at the earliest possible points for our children and young people.

Specific Partnership Actions already identified to be taken forward over the next year in relation to tackling child poverty include: Learning from and further expanding the East Ayrshire Child Poverty Pathfinder; Continued work between the Financial Inclusion Team and NHS Ayrshire & Arran local Health Improvement Team, to include delivery of training on Child Poverty and promotion of referral pathways to Financial Inclusion to key NHS staff groups including paediatrics, midwifery, Occupational Therapy and HR; Ongoing promotion of supports such as the Best Start Grant, Young Patients family Fund and the Scottish Young Persons Bus Pass across a range of partners; and an action plan on digital inclusion to be created via the Digital Access/Inclusion Network.

This focus on digital inclusion will include work to maximise allocations arising from future phases of the Scottish Government funded Connecting Scotland Programme particularly in relation to Child Poverty and the 6 priority family types; Using key data and insight to develop a Digital Exclusion Risk Index to better understand communities at risk of digital exclusion and adopt an evidence based and targeted approach which ensures we use our resources wisely and effectively; and working with key stakeholders, to create a pathway to tackle digital exclusion in East Ayrshire ensuring no one is left behind. This work will be articulated in the new East Ayrshire Council Digital Strategy which will be published later in 2022.

East Ayrshire Council has also recently adopted a new Strategic Plan 2022-27, which includes a commitment to tackle the causes and effects of poverty and inequality, including child poverty. To support implementation of this Plan, a new Project Management Office has been established which will implement a benefits realisation model to ensure the achievement of strategic priorities. It is anticipated that this new approach will assist us to better demonstrate in future reports the link between our partnership activity and an improvement in outcomes related to child poverty.

We also await the revised Local Child Poverty Action Report Guidance from Scottish Government, anticipated later in 2022, which will inform the future planning and reporting of our work. Early partnership engagement will take place in this regard, once the revised guidance becomes available.

Governance and Reporting

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

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

The current governance arrangements are set out in the diagram below.



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

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

Appendix 1: Action Plan Updates 2021/22

ACTION	TIMESCALE	PARTNERS	PROGRESS AT MARCH 2022
Ongoing Priority Actions			
Break Down the Barriers to Affordable Transport	Ongoing	Core community planning partners plus Ayrshire Roads Alliance and SPT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 16,000 young people (11-25) in East Ayrshire have a Young Scot Card/National Entitlement Card, which equates to 81% of the population of young people, an increase of 12% from the previous year. With this card, comes the entitlement for free bus travel. In East Ayrshire, at 1 August 2022, 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 13,494, representing 61.4% of the eligible young people in the authority area. This compares well with the overall Scottish uptake figure of 48.8% at the same date. 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	Ongoing	All Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a 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 recently developed East Ayrshire No One Left Behind (NOLB) Operating Plan sets out a clear direction of travel over the period between 2022-2027 which will maximise the combined partnership employability resources. In 2021-22, seven training providers, including the council's Employability Service, were allocated 308 Employability Fund starts across stages 2 to 4 of the strategic skills pipeline with

			<p>funding of £628,320 for 16-17 Year olds; and £394,850 allocated for clients over 18 years. This included provision for training allowances paid to clients for a maximum of 26 weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More detail of our extensive employability activity may be found in the body of this report.</i> • In February 2022 East Ayrshire Council approved the establishment of a new Jobs and Training Fund, with £6m to finance 200 training placements in services across the Council and local business for East Ayrshire residents. • NHS Ayrshire and Arran has developed an Employability Strategy with priorities such as “social inclusion” providing opportunity to focus resource on lone parents, people involved in the justice system and people in care to develop skills and confidence in entering employment through different pathways. • The Council’s Early Years’ Service uses 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 Scottish Social Services Council. 4 x Graduate Apprentices (GA) and 10 x Modern Apprentices (MA) are currently employed within the service. They also deliver Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) at SCQF level 6 qualification to S5 and S6 pupils in local schools. Those who have completed an FA are guaranteed an interview for a MA and those who have completed either MA or GA, an interview for an Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner post. • 76 young people in East Ayrshire have registered for the #YSNext Entitlement Package via Young Scot. This is designed for young people aged between 16 – 25 who are not in employment or education and is designed to support young people to develop new skills, make their everyday living easier and to promote good health and wellbeing through targeted and tailored support. Young people have completed 318 YSNext activities and redeemed 527 YSNext Rewards.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding has been identified through PESF (Parental Employability Support Fund) for one year for 1 - 35 hour 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. Vibrant Communities and Education (Post 16) will work collaboratively to support this new post, which has been developed in response to identified need, to support ESOL learners into employment. • 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.
Promote Financial Inclusion	Ongoing	AI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Financial Inclusion Team (FIT), together with its partners, has continued to support East Ayrshire residents to maximise their benefit entitlement. During 2021/22, the FIT received 2,602 referrals and advice enquiries, a significant increase of 45% from the previous year and 14% higher than the pre-pandemic caseload. During this period, the financial gains achieved for people in East Ayrshire totalled £3,416,331. This sum takes the cumulative total amount of financial gains since the creation of the team in November 2013 to £35,169,624. • In August 2021, a school-based financial inclusion pathfinder project was established within the Loudoun Academy learning community to provide support to children and families experiencing financial hardship. In the period up to 31st March 2022, 40 families have been supported by with financial gains totalling £60,927.63. Of the families supported, 33 have been lone parent households. • A Financial Inclusion Education Service Group has been established to share financial information with ECC and School parents. In addition to sending out text messages, updates are posted on our blog which has had a large number of hits.

			<p>Financial Information Parent Health and Wellbeing Information Site (glowscotland.org.uk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • The Financial inclusion team provided learning and development opportunities to Early Years staff in October 2021 at the In Service day. They also attended and gave a presentation to the Depute and Senior meetings in April 22 to promote the resources available. • 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. • 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.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vibrant Communities Community Based Adult Learning Money MOT course materials have been adapted for ESOL learners to deliver basic information on money management, in order to improve learners' knowledge of money management for themselves and their families.
Address Every Day Living Costs	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. In addition, grant Funding of £569,000 has been made available for the holiday periods Easter, Summer, October Break and Christmas 2022. Payments will be made for those on low income Free School Meal entitlement to support the purchase of food during these periods when schools are closed. There have been over 1000 Young Scot Reward Redemptions made by young people in East Ayrshire who have the Young Scot card. This contributes significantly to reducing everyday costs in some supermarkets, high street stores and entertainment venues. Vibrant Communities continue to engage with business and high street stores to encourage them to be endorsees of the Young Scot Rewards scheme to enable East Ayrshire young people to access rewards in their locality with the positive effect being it is encouraging people to shop local. East Ayrshire Council's Vibrant Communities and Facilities Management services continue to link with local resilience groups and community ladders to ensure food security and

			<p>dignified food provision to families. 16 Community Larders support over 1000 members and recorded an average weekly visit rate of 30 persons per week during 2021/22.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant Communities continue to work closely with Citrus energy to ensure families are supported with utilities concerns, debt and provision • A Standard Operating Procedure to provide clarity to Midwifery, Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership staff around vitamin distribution within the antenatal period and first twelve months of the national universal health visiting pathway was created and operationalised. • A number of supports are available including Best Start Grant (which provides parents or carers who get certain benefits or tax credits with financial support during the key early years of a child's life) and the Young Patients Family Fund (parents, primary carer or siblings - aged under 18 - of a young inpatient under the age of 18 receiving hospital care, can claim for the costs of travel and food). • As part of the Childsmile programme, toothbrushing resources are distributed to a number of different places to support oral health. The main routes of delivery are via dental practices, schools and nurseries or health visiting teams. However, recognising that a targeted approach is necessary, distribution is targeted at supporting those families and individuals who may need these practical resources the most. This has included providing packs to local food banks, community groups and community appeals.
Raise Awareness/Tackle Stigma	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • We continue to encourage schools to take part in our Poverty Proofing your Establishment Community Programme and we ran a very popular Poverty Week competition in our Primary

			<p>and Secondary Schools. We have since created a programme for our ECCs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Housing Options have completed NHS accredited trauma training and fully understand that homelessness in and of itself is a traumatic event.
Priority Actions identified in the 2021 Community Plan Review*			
Drive forward inclusive economic recovery and growth	Ongoing		<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 2021/22 may be found in our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report 2021/22.
Focus our ongoing response, renewal and recovery from Covid19 on helping our most vulnerable and disadvantaged people and families	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for those who required additional support when isolating due to COVID-19 continued. This included the Test and Protect Education Hub working closely with the Education Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for contact tracing to identify positive COVID-19 cases and also school contacts of the case who were vulnerable. Families who were identified as being vulnerable were offered support which included provision of food and toiletry parcels. • Vibrant Communities continue to respond to requests for support with Covid related issues. This includes linking families to local food provision through local resilience groups and third sector partners. The team will also deliver food and pharmacy provisions for families. • 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. • An intensive Housing Support Service, delivered by Quarriers, was commissioned for young people aged 16-25. This service prevents young people from losing their tenancies and alleviates homelessness by helping them to develop the skills they need to manage their own home and is centred on the

			<p>needs and goals of the individual, based on a Personal Support Plan setting out goals, tasks and timescales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In education establishments, Covid recovery teachers have supported those children in most need. • All our SAC Mentor Development, Home Link, Outdoor Education and Family Literacy staff continue to provide targeted support to our SIMD 1 and 2 children, young people and their families. • The Resource Allocation Group 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. The RAG can allocate support which is in addition to universal services and this includes places for children 0-5 years in Early Childhood Centres or with childminders, support from the Community Practitioner Team, access to the pre School Home Visiting Teacher and access to Out of School Care. This includes access to the Avenue Childcare Services , a voluntary sector not for profit childcare service in North West Kilmarnock ,which receives grant funding to provide places for RFA children and which provides employment opportunities for local people and supports local families. • Early Years are running a summer scheme in 2022 in the North West Kilmarnock area in conjunction with PEACE out of school care and, through 'Get into Summer' funding, offer up to 20 full time equivalent places fully funded through Scottish Government Funding.
Adopt the Scottish Approach to Service Design	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transforming Local Systems (TLS) TEC Pathfinder is seeking to transform health and care systems, working towards prevention and self-management, whilst incorporating relevant digital technology. Based in the Irvine Valley, East Ayrshire Pathfinder is one of four pilots across Scotland that are testing the Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAtdSD) approach based around the four stages: Discover, Define, Develop, Deliver.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathfinder aims to contribute to whole system transformation of health and social care, working towards preventative and digitally enabled services and supports. It applies the SA_tSD in the context of health and social care transformation by engaging with local communities and partners to share their experience and learning. The focus is on a person-centred approaches to designing health and social care services, ensuring that people and communities are at the heart of these conversations. • One example of the wider application of the SA_tSD is the development of the Mind of My Own app, which is being used to gather the views of children and young people. Children can use it independently or be supported to use by practitioners to express their views on their wellbeing and on a wide range of issues that are important to them. Mind of My Own empowers young people to have a voice and ensures their views and feelings are heard, whilst providing an attractive way for children and young people to start the conversation. It also helps workers capture and evidence their views, ensuring they are being heard and considered, meeting quality standards around the voice of the child. • Having concluded the Discover/Design phase, the focus is now on the Develop/Deliver stage which is bringing forward digital solutions based on the feedback community and partner engagement. Consideration is now also being given to how the approach can be up-scaled and embedded across services.
Take forward place-based redesign through the Doon Valley Community Campus	Ongoing to project completion (2025)		<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

			<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further design development and community engagement will take place during 2022/23, along with the detailed site investigations required to allow development to commence, with completion anticipated in 2025.
Design and implement a wellbeing-focused service delivery model with children and families, to get it right for every child.	2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our new 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. Key leads have been nominated and colleagues aligned to each of the six new Community Teams, which formally commenced work in April 2022. • 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 as reported in the Summary Statistics For Schools In Scotland 2021 was the highest of all Scottish Local Authorities. Population Estimations from the NRS for 2021-22, issued in November 2021 indicate that 67% of estimated eligible 2 year olds were accessing a funded ELC place in East Ayrshire. • There is a continued focus on developing the PEEP 'supporting parents and children to learn together' programme.
Build on the learning over the Covid19 pandemic to improve interventions to protect people	2021/22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Ayrshire Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) has now been approved and funded. MARAC protects victims of domestic abuse who are at risk of significant

through our multi-agency public protection arrangements.			<p>harm or death. Ayrshire wide work commenced on implementation in September 2021 (in partnership with South & North Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, ASSIST and the three Ayrshire Women's Aids) and the Ayrshire MARAC will formally commence in summer 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and the police have implemented Trauma Informed Contact and Care (TICC). Any child impacted by a domestic abuse incident is supported by their school the following day. • 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 2021/22 and the Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2021/22. • All Housing managers have undertaken Chronology of Significant Events training in February 2022, which has been rolled out across Housing teams as per our commitment to partnership working regarding safeguarding. The purpose of attending the training was to ensure that Housing colleagues are able to identify significant risks and feed into robust chronologies to assist in Initial Case Reviews and Significant Case Reviews as part of effective multi-agency working and safeguarding of children.
Invest in a new wellbeing focused website for East Ayrshire, so people can easily access information and support.	2021/22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

			<p>additional support. The webpage is refreshed on a regular basis to ensure the content remains relevant and up to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-agency group, including Education, has had initial conversations to develop the current GIRFEC Website to include a wellbeing focussed section for East Ayrshire.
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.	2021/22 and ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Ayrshire Digital Access Network has continued to take forward activity to address digital inclusion. In 2021/22 this has included a dedicated resource appointed to lead on Digital Inclusion in East Ayrshire; a reviewed approach to Digital Inclusion in East Ayrshire and the identification of new key priorities; 532 digitally excluded individuals supported via the Connecting Scotland Programme in East Ayrshire; and, building on a successful Connecting Scotland application, a dedicated "Connecting Voices" mailbox and webpage was created and launched to support Care Leavers with regular information and updates issued by the 77 partners. • Throughout 2021/22, the Connecting Scotland Initiative has been fully promoted and supported within our Children's Services. Within this period, more than 390 households including care leavers and vulnerable families and adults, have been provided with devices (Chromebooks or I pads) and/or WIFI (24 months unlimited data), to allow them to become digitally included during the pandemic. Over 70 workers have made requests to include the children, young people and families that they support, and they have taken on the role as digital champions to ensure their families can set up and fully utilise the new devices. • Education have ensured that children who require a device have access to one; and Home Link Workers have ensured that the families they work with are digitally included. • 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.
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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