

**Local Child Poverty Action
Report for East Ayrshire
2020/21**

Foreword

They say that poverty is not inevitable but for many families across our communities, especially after the trials of the last year, that's exactly how it feels: inevitable.

We know that even before the pandemic, almost 6,000 children in East Ayrshire were living in poverty.

And looking ahead, projections tell us that the situation is likely to get worse.

By 2030 we are potentially looking at 8,900 children across East Ayrshire living in poverty, if we don't take more action now.

In the face of this crisis, this Local Child Poverty Action Report could not be developed as a narrow set of defined actions to address child poverty.

It had to be developed as part of a wider suite of partnership plans which reflect the mobilisation of our combined partnership resources to address the sheer injustice of children in this country, in this century, growing up in poverty.

It had to be developed to reflect our collective commitment to change, to meeting these challenges head on and making sure that children and young people growing up in East Ayrshire have and will continue to have opportunities for a better future.

It has been developed to challenge us all to do more.

They deserve no less.

Councillor Douglas Reid
Chair of Community Planning Partnership

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Introduction

This is the third 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. Although this reporting duty is placed solely on local authorities and health boards, development of this East Ayrshire report has been undertaken across our wider community planning partnership, to reflect our ongoing **partnership approach to child poverty**.

In our first LCPAR, the 2018/19 report, we articulated our partnership approach to addressing child poverty and set out the shared programme of work that would be taken forward across our CPP to address the identified drivers of child poverty (income from employment; cost of living; and income from benefits) in the years ahead.

The following year, our 2019/20 LCPAR provided updates on the original planned programme of work while also recognising the significant emerging impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We highlighted in some detail our partnership response to this and the immediate supports that were being offered to children and families across our communities – but we also recognised that the full impact of the pandemic would only become clear in the months and years ahead.

Looking ahead to 2020/21, our aim was to continue to progress the essential activity previously identified in relation to child poverty, while also taking the opportunity **to reset and recalibrate our partnership work to take account of the impact of the pandemic** on our children and families.

In this third, 2020/21 Local Child Poverty Report for East Ayrshire we will:

- Set out what we now know about child poverty in East Ayrshire, with a focus on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Demonstrate the way that our partnership is evolving to ensure that we continue to prevent; mitigate; and undo the effects of child poverty while meeting the unprecedented demands of pandemic recovery and renewal;
- Provide a concise update on the ongoing work that is being taken forward across our partnership to address the key drivers of child poverty, signposting to the further detail on this activity that is available in other sources;
- Set the direction of travel for our future partnership activity to address child poverty, to be further developed during 2021/22 and beyond.

‘The pandemic has impacted finances for families in an unprecedented way, plunging those already experiencing low income into increasingly dire circumstances, and extending the reach of poverty into households which have never experienced it before. How this will affect trends previously forecast remains to be seen, however this is an area which requires immediate and transformational action with more urgency than ever before in order to mitigate future impact.’ (NHS Ayrshire & Arran State of Child Health Child Poverty Update Report, August 2021)


What We Now Know About Child Poverty in East Ayrshire



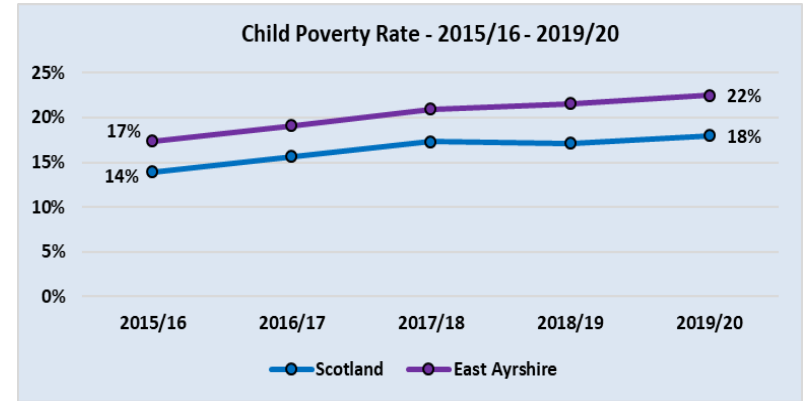
5,862
Children aged 0-19 lived in relative poverty in 2019/20 (Before Housing Costs)



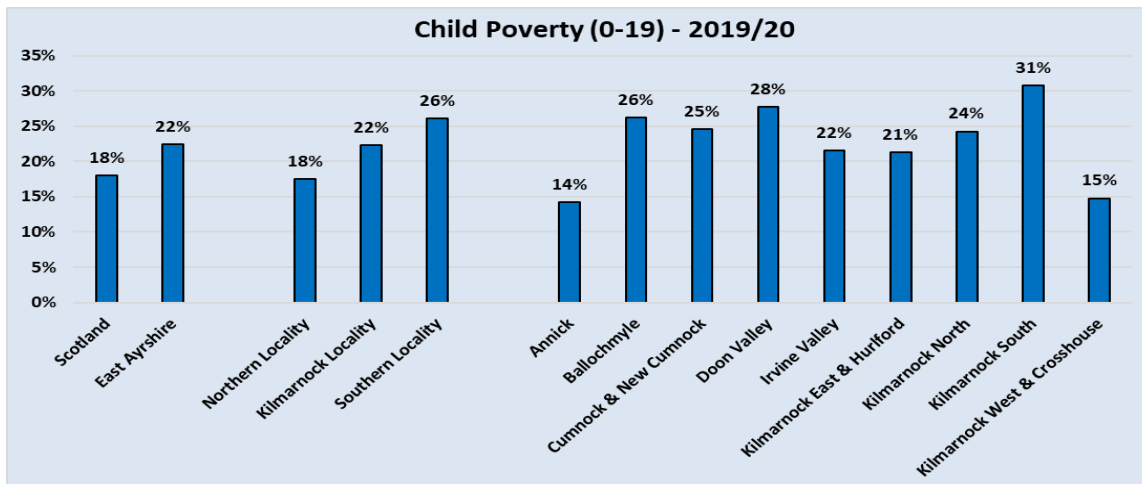

8,900
Children living in poverty by 2030 if no action is taken



Hourly pay in East Ayrshire
£15.86
(Scotland = £15.63)




£5 million
in financial gains achieved by the Financial Inclusion Team and partners in 2020/21

204,961
Meals provided to children during 2020/21 (food boxes and individual meals supplied by EAC Facilities Management)

East Ayrshire had a level of relative child (0-19) poverty of 22 per cent in 2019/20. Over one in every five children lived in relative poverty as measured at below 60 per cent of the national median income (before housing costs), equating to 5,862 children and young people. The extent of child poverty in our communities underlines the challenge which this presents, with the 2019/20 East Ayrshire rate being notably higher than the national level (18 per cent).

The rate of relative child (0-19) poverty in East Ayrshire has continued to rise in recent years, from 17 per cent in 2015/16 to 22 per cent in 2019/20, marking an increase of five percentage points. There has been a similar trend nationally over this period, but at a lesser scale.

There is considerable variation in the level of child poverty across our communities:

- In Kilmarnock South, 31 per cent of children and young people lived in relative poverty; in Doon Valley the figure was 28 per cent; and for Ballochmyle, 26 per cent of children and young people lived in relative poverty.
- In contrast to this, in the Annick Ward and also in the Kilmarnock West and Crosshouse Ward, the rates of relative child poverty were 14 and 15 per cent in 2019/20.
- This demonstrates that, even in what are considered more affluent areas, a significant number of our children and young people experience the impact of poverty.
- At a Locality level, child poverty is most prevalent in the Southern Locality with a rate of 26 per cent, compared with 18 per cent in the Northern Locality.

The percentage of people in employment in East Ayrshire, at 73.2, remains below that of Scotland as a whole, which stands at 73.5. Hourly pay rates for full-time employees in East Ayrshire are slightly higher than the national average at £15.86 compared with £15.63. The claimant count rate for East Ayrshire is 6.6 per cent compared with 5.1 per cent for Scotland (www.nomisweb.co.uk, July 2021).

At May 2021, 21% of all East Ayrshire households were on Universal Credit, compared with 16% of households across Scotland. This equates to almost 12,000 households (11,759) and represents a significant increase from the pre-pandemic figure of 10% at April 2019.

204,961 meals were provided to children within 2020/21 in response to challenging circumstances experienced by families during the pandemic, supplied by East Ayrshire Council Facilities Management in the form of individual meals and food boxes.

Nationally, child poverty levels are projected to continue to rise in future years. Research commissioned by the Scottish Government on forecasting child poverty suggests that relative child poverty (after housing costs), will increase to between 35-38 per cent by 2030 depending on the extent of policy implementation. Applying these estimates locally suggests that as many as 8,848 children and young people could be living in relative poverty by 2030 unless action is taken to address this.

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.

During 2020/21 a scheduled three yearly review of our Community Plan was undertaken, to set the partnership direction for the period 2021-24, taking account of current and emerging external developments; analysis of the available data and covid-19 impact assessments; and what our communities were telling us was important to them. A range of survey and virtual engagement activity was undertaken to inform the review. The outcome of this process was a new [Community Plan Review Supplement](#) which sets out the framework within which our partnership activity will be undertaken over the next three years, and a new [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2021-24](#). Taken collectively, these represent our partnership approach to recovery and renewal, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our Partnership Priorities for 2021-24

Child Poverty and the impact of the pandemic on children and families, and on the future prospects of our young people, were key themes that emerged during the review process.

Our new partnership priorities represent the key areas of work that we believe we need to focus on to address these challenges.

Three thematic partnership delivery plans have been developed, setting out the activity that will be taken forward in partnership over the next three years, 2021-24. Our [Wellbeing Delivery Plan](#) includes an explicit commitment to address child poverty with ambitious targets and actions to shift the child poverty curve, and both our [Economy & Skills](#) and [Safer Communities](#) Delivery Plans also include key workstreams which we believe will address the key drivers of child poverty.



As a community planning partnership we have a particular role to play in ensuring that game changing developments which have been years in the planning, such as the [Ayrshire Growth Deal](#) and the [Caring for Ayrshire](#) Transformational Change Programme, are now realised and their potential benefits maximised and harnessed to address the challenges of child poverty.

We know that a **holistic approach** is required to tackle the **cumulative economic and health impacts of the pandemic**. We have committed to work collaboratively to build on the **community resilience** that has been so clearly demonstrated in our pandemic response and to provide **the economic and social conditions** necessary to facilitate recovery and renewal – conditions which will also allow us to lift more children out of poverty. We have also committed to redouble our efforts to tackle inequality within our communities, particularly those **economic and health inequalities** which have been exacerbated by the pandemic and which face the priority groups identified within the Child Poverty legislation.

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](#), ready for this becoming law. 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.

It is vital that we listen to and include all children and young people in the decisions that affect their lives.

Partners' aims are for children and young people, regardless of ability or background, to be aware of and able to meaningfully express their rights and responsibilities. Our aims are for children and young people, regardless of ability or background to comfortably express their views in discussions about their lives and be listened to, valued and taken into account when decisions are being made.

FINANCIAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

The Financial Health and Wellbeing Partnership (formerly known as the Poverty Action Group), 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 2020/21 and progress as at March 2021, can be found below and in the Action Plan at Appendix 1.

Partner organisations also work together on numerous projects and events, such as Challenge Poverty Week, to raise awareness of the issues surrounding poverty and what assistance can be provided for people.

East Ayrshire Financial Inclusion Team continued to support people in East Ayrshire to access key benefits. The EA Money team assisted with 1,788 referrals and achieved £3,660,994 in financial gains for East Ayrshire residents in 2020/21.

The Financial Inclusion Team have also re-launched an **Employability Team**, funded by ESF to December 2022, designed to assist priority groups to overcome barriers to employment, particularly in relation to income maximisation, transport and childcare and to help them on their employability journey. Partnerships have been created with various employability partners who make referrals into the project.

New initiatives are also being developed to expand the reach of partnership services, including a pilot project commencing in August 2021 which will base a **Financial Inclusion Officer within a Secondary School establishment** to support families whose children attend the school and its' cluster and early years establishments; and another **Financial Inclusion Officer within six Deep End GP Practices** on a two year pilot basis. It is anticipated that this GP project will be up and running by the end of 2021

Discussions are ongoing with the Town Centre Partnership regarding the potential use of the **East Ayrshire Gift Card as a form of local currency**. This would benefit the local economy and provide a cash based alternative to tackle the growing dependency on foodbanks and treat people with dignity. Options currently being looked at include a range of payments being made this way, including social work hardship payments.

2020/21: Response, Recovery and Renewal

During 2020/21, our child poverty work was dominated by the Covid-19 response, which saw an unprecedented mobilisation of our community and partnership resources to ensure that everyone affected by the pandemic received the support they needed. At the forefront of this agenda was an early recognition that vulnerable children, young people and their families would be among those worst affected by the pandemic.

Response

In our previous LCPAR, we reported in some detail on that initial pandemic response as it addressed child poverty. Some of the key elements of this work, which we believe impacted on the identified drivers of child poverty, are summarised below:

- **Support for Business:** Almost **4,000 business grants** totaling **£33 million of emergency assistance** was provided to East Ayrshire businesses, to support continued employment for people across Ayrshire in the face of the pandemic.
- **East Ayrshire Works Financial Inclusion Pathways Team – Employability:** Prepared “Better off” calculations for young people, and arranged additional training to help secure employment, such as the Construction Skills Certification Scheme.
- **East Ayrshire Financial Inclusion Team:** Continued to support people in East Ayrshire to access key benefits. The EA Money team assisted with **1,788 referrals** and achieved **£3,660,994 in financial gains** for East Ayrshire residents in 2020/21.
- **Universal Credit Support Team:** Supported East Ayrshire residents in relation to: all aspects of claiming Universal Credit, increasing income by ensuring clients receive entitled benefits, providing claim assistance/advice, debt advice and budgeting advice. The team also promoted **Free School Meals** and the **Scottish Government’s Child Payment**.
- **Self-Directed Support Covid Recovery Fund:** Families in need of support from Social Work services during the pandemic could apply for up to £500 to shape their plans with their own personal ideas. People who received this support described themselves as feeling more empowered, trusted and valued.
- **Housing Options Support for vulnerable families:** The **Child Wellbeing Protocol** launched in November 2020 to **prevent homelessness** and mitigate transitions and trauma for families, young people and children, whose Council tenancy is at risk.
- **Critical Childcare Provision:** The Education Service coordinated and, with partners and colleagues in Vibrant Communities, provided free at the point of delivery childcare provision for vulnerable children and those of key workers throughout the Covid-19 lockdown periods.
- **Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Community Practitioners:** Continued to support families with children under 5 years across East Ayrshire with doorstep visits, by phone and virtual meetings with 137 families benefitting from long-term support.
- **The Scottish Attainment Challenge Home Link Team:** provided support to 830 families and made nearly 400 socially distanced visits over that time. Almost 100 families were directed to partner services and providers to mitigate against poverty related barriers. 605 families no longer requiring Home Link Support.

- **Dignified Food Provision: 884,468 meals provided** to meet community need and **58 tonnes of food distributed** through the **Community Food Larders** (Delivered by the Council's Facilities and Property Management and Vibrant Communities teams in partnership with Fareshare, Community Resilience Groups and (now) 16 Community Food Larders across East Ayrshire).
- **Community Resilience:** The establishment of in excess of **120 Community Resilience Groups** and the mobilisation of over **1,500 volunteers**; and a **Vibrant Communities 'HIT' team** established to triage calls to a central covid-19 response contact number throughout the pandemic, quickly becoming a seven-day service to ensure a rapid response to identified need.
- **Targeted programmes delivered by partners: 'iLunch'** addressed food poverty and learning loss during holiday periods. **CVO's** provision of weekly home creative enterprise packs allowed trainees to prepare meals at home. Some households experiencing financial hardship received **energy/fuel top ups** remotely throughout the pandemic. Laptop / tablet devices and unlimited free internet provided to vulnerable young people through the **Connecting Scotland** initiative. **Community Care Grants** provided items such as washing machines/cookers/beds for those starting their own tenancy and Aberlour Funds were awarded to young people with children to purchase them new clothing and shoes.

East Ayrshire Council's Education Service

From March 2020 the Education Service provided key supports to children and families in response to the global pandemic. Schools moved to remote learning, providing digital learning experiences and delivery of resources to families. 2,592 digital devices were provided via funding from the Scottish Government to children and young people who required this support. School and Early Childhood Centre staff were a key point of contact for families providing advice and wellbeing support throughout lockdown.

In line with public health guidance all ELC providers have to date experienced two periods of significant restrictions during 2020 and 2021; however critical childcare for vulnerable children and those of key workers was provided free at the point of delivery to all children throughout the Covid-19 lockdown periods. Locally this included fully funded access to registered school aged childcare at term time and school holidays for Key Workers' children and vulnerable children subject to request for Assistance.

All 9 local school aged childcare services accessed Scottish Government Transition Support Funding and Temporary Restrictions Funding, administered locally via the Bizaccount platform. The funding assisted services to meet COVID guidance and mitigations and helped maintain the services in the face of very significantly reduced attendance numbers and therefore income.

In addition, the Community Practitioner Team supported 141 families to access food via foodbanks and 77 families were supported to access clothing from Hillhouse Care. The team also supported families with onward referrals being made to charities such as the Buttle UK, which offers support to families living in financial hardship, 10 families benefited from grants. 20 families have benefited from being supported to sign up to Citrus Energy, a social enterprise group which helps families on low income make saving on gas and electricity. The team continue to work in partnership with other agencies and have supported a number of families access support from housing services, Women's Aid, mental health services and the financial inclusion

team. This Team also planned and delivered the ELC Summer of Activity 2021 offer, with around 80 families enjoy outings to Ayr Farm Park and 25 visiting a range of other Ayrshire attractions. Lunches and transport were provided for all participating families. 95 Activity Bags encouraging family physical and creative play were also distributed to 150 children.

The Educational Psychology Service also continued to provide both remote support, and physically present service delivery where there was a context of significant wellbeing concern, working with all establishments through this period. The impact of poverty on families continues to be evident within the work undertaken by Education staff with many families requiring support to access food via foodbanks, and clothing from Hillhouse Care. (The team also supported families with onward referrals being made to charities such as the Buttle UK, which offers support to families living in financial hardship. Ten families benefited from grants received from this trust.) Families also benefited from being supported to sign up to citrus energy. Education staff continued to work in partnership with other agencies, signposting families to a wide range of supports and services.

Other activity included:

- The **Home Link team** secured 79 IT devices, 41 clothing vouchers and 21 white goods, and 580 referrals were submitted to support agencies, for example Scottish Welfare Fund, Children in Need, Connecting Scotland, EAC Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit team. They also provided a number of additional supports in relation to EAC Covid recovery and response: 3,190 Test and Protect phone calls, 323 food parcels delivered and 2,796 children and young people signed up for Free School Meals.
- Summer **iLunch sessions** were delivered across 26 schools with a blend of outdoor, garden visits and telephone calls. In total 61 outdoor sessions took place with a focus on family learning. 531 learning packs have been delivered to families since August 2020. Partners involved included Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Outdoor Learning, Financial Inclusion, Active Schools and Family Literacy staff.
- “Get into Summer” funding provided store cupboard ingredient boxes (190), cooking kits and healthy recipes, ensuring that there was no barriers to families cooking together. With the funding families also participated in learning trips to Dumfries House, Newmilns Ski Slope and Kelburn Country Park. Families were also provided with swimming passes and transport warrants. (168 adults / 300 child and young people)
- Systemic sharing of approaches has ensured that we continue to make progress across all 7 Education Groups with the Home Link Workers (HLW) supporting a total of 830 children, young people and their families, with 605 of those families now no longer requiring Home Link support. Currently the Home Link team are providing tailored support to 191 children, young people and their families on a weekly basis. 6,591 phone calls, 539 garden visits, 982 supportive emails, 270 successful parental requests for home learning resources have been recorded.
- To ensure we provide tailored support where it is needed most, the **Mentor Development Officers** (MDOs) worked within the Covid-19 guidelines to deliver 12 week blocks of programmes in 4 establishments (1-2-1s 27 - 179 sessions, 14 groups – 132 sessions, Cases closed – 100). Stewarton Academy Education Hub received educational support two days per week for 3 months. 29 Dynamic Youth Awards (34 Dynamic Youth and 1 Bronze Youth Achievement Award) were completed. To share approaches the Mentoring Development Officers delivered youth work awareness training to the Young Peoples Mentors and HLWs. This training is being rolled out to teachers from April 2021. During the summer on average 73 (target 70) young people, attend the sessions each day.
- A working group, comprising Financial Inclusion, ECC, Vibrant Communities and Education staff has been established to raise awareness of the financial supports that are available to families. **A Blog has been set up to keep parents informed and has achieved 13,379 hits to date.**

Free Sanitary Provision: Launch of On-line Ordering Service

In August 2020 in response to the closure of council building due to the pandemic, East Ayrshire Council launched an online ordering service providing free access to sanitary products for any resident across East Ayrshire who needs them. The online ordering service is all part of the Council's drive to end period poverty backed by funding from the Scottish Government. Many girls and women are unable to meet the relatively high cost of basic sanitary products, meaning they might miss school or work, lose confidence or have to forego opportunities because they can't afford to buy them.

Residents can now receive two months' period products at a time by filling out an online form at <https://eastayrshi.re/FSP>. Alternatively, the products can be ordered by phone for those who do not have internet access.

With many premises that usually provide free access to sanitary products being closed due to Covid-19, the Council decided to launch this online service which allows products to be delivered direct to homes. The online ordering service ensures that sanitary products are still accessible during this time for all members of our community.

During the first weekend of the launch over 500 orders were received and processed.

Recovery and Renewal

As the year progressed, our attention turned to the longer term recovery and renewal activity which would necessarily follow on from the initial pandemic response. Our **empowered, flexible, collaborative and place-based approach** to recovery and renewal has been a defining feature of our overall response to the crisis. This has been a significant and transformational endeavour, requiring shared learning, flexibility, strong commitment and close collaboration between all partners.

A **Wellbeing Recovery and Renewal Group** was established, with membership spanning across the Council, the HSCP, the third sector and local communities. Representatives worked collaboratively and established eight sub-groups reflecting key priorities, which subsequently developed individual Action Plans and implemented a range of activities in response to the pandemic. The sub-groups taking forward work which either directly or indirectly impacted on child poverty, and examples of achievements made during 2020/21 are set out below:

Food for All, Food for Life

- Catering Services delivered **3,260 food parcels** to the families of all school pupils entitled to free meals.
- Establishment of **Food Larders**, working with third sector organisations and community groups to provide food larders in areas of greatest need.
- Provision of pressure cookers, recipes, ingredients and clothes washing facilities for the most vulnerable.
- Extension of **food bank** opening hours to seven days a week and evenings.

Safe as Houses

- Joint work on **sustainable tenancies**, early intervention and income maximisation.
- Streamlining reactive processes and establishing **education/training programmes** and **referral pathways**.

Financial Health and Wellbeing Partnership

- Provision of financial help for **new housing tenants**.
- Recruitment of 3 trainee **debt advisors** in Citizen's Advice Bureau and 2 staff in Financial Inclusion Team.
- Support for residents in relation to **fuel poverty**.

Volunteering

- Development of Covid-19 volunteer database.
- Local co-ordination of the '**Scotland Cares**' **volunteer recruitment campaign** (over 1,500 in East Ayrshire).
- Matching and deployment of volunteers in **Community Resilience Hubs**.

This innovative and collaborative work was recognised through the **iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards** by receiving a Certificate of Excellence in 2021.

Notwithstanding the pandemic response and recovery activity, business as usual continued, with the **ongoing provision of essential services** throughout the year, some of which managed to expand to support even more families than previously.

The **Affordable Housing** Supply Programme (AHSP) continues to deliver a mix of homes across sizes and types, in response to aims and objectives set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house condition across all tenures. In spite of the challenges of the pandemic restrictions, site completions were achieved for the delivery of 56 new Council homes, with 49 completions also achieved by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners.

Completion of the Early Learning and Childcare expansion programme means that, from August 2021, all 36 Early Childhood Centres (ECC) in East Ayrshire are now delivering 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), after the completion of the Early Learning and Childcare expansion programme. In addition, 7 funded Early Learning and Childcare providers and 40 childminders are on the Council's contract framework to deliver funded ELC.

This means that all 3 and 4 year olds, and eligible 2 year olds, in East Ayrshire can benefit from 1140 hours a year of funded Early Learning and Childcare. This works out at about 30 hours a week if parents and carers use it during school term-time, or **just under 24 hours** a week if used all year-round.

East Ayrshire Council remains a designated **Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)** authority, and therefore, receives additional funding to support improved attainment and outcomes for our most disadvantaged learners and close the poverty related improvement gap. The Scottish Government confirmed East Ayrshire Council Scottish Attainment Challenge funding for financial year 2020-21 of £3.762m. The Council's SAC programme delivered 13 interventions across educational establishments and communities for the 2020-21 school year **to mitigate against the poverty related attainment gap**.

The **Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Care Experienced Children and Young People fund** was used to fund 2 work coaches with specific responsibility for supporting transition into further learning, training and employment for care experienced young people up to 24 years, as part of the Education Service's No-One Left Behind team. For the 52 care experienced young people supported in 2020-21, the following outcomes were achieved: 12 (23%) are now employed; 13 (25%) have progressed into Further Education; 12 (23%) are in national training programmes; 1 (2%) young person is volunteering; 11 (21%) are currently unemployed and continuing to engage with 16+ work coaches; 3 (6%) young people are economically inactive either because of pregnancy or mental health issues – they too continue to engage with the 16+ transitional workers.

Employability Support provision was enhanced with the opening of a new **Developing the Young Workforce Partnership Hub** in Kilmarnock in January 2021. This centre provides a 'single door' approach to support young people furthest from the labour market, where continued engagement depends on building sustained relationships and these relationships are strengthened if they are built between the client and a person, rather than a service or organisation. Although led by the **Education Service (No-One Left Behind team, Parental Employability Support Fund team and Care Experienced Work Coach team)** with vocational training opportunities targeted at school age learners, the hub also brings together **Council employability and social work services; Department of Work and Pensions (DWP); Skills Development Scotland (SDS); and third sector**

training providers. Young people attending the hub can draw on support from these partners and transition between them seamlessly to progress into positive destinations. Provision remained accessible to young people during lockdown periods as a blended offer combining remote with face-to-face engagement and through effective partnership working.

Support for Business

Ensuring that parents and carers are able to access good quality employment opportunities remains a priority for our partnership, and we recognised the importance of supporting local businesses to survive the unprecedented disruption caused by the pandemic.

A new **business support helpline**, was launched in June 2020 by the three Ayrshire councils to help local businesses navigate the extensive support strands and funding opportunities available to them; and East Ayrshire Council put in place a range of online application mechanisms to administer and process the Scottish Government's and its own **business support schemes**. The assistance provided, **to the value of £33 million**, has been crucial in building the resilience of our business base, helping to ensure their immediate survival and in the longer-term, their return to profitability. The Business Support Team also set up a survey for local businesses to complete to allow them to more fully **assess the impacts of the Coronavirus on our business community**. Approximately 400 responses were received and these are being used to shape our economic recovery.

Ayrshire Growth Deal The signing of the Ayrshire Growth Deal in November 2020 marked the culmination of five years' work by the three Ayrshire councils, partner organisations and Scottish and UK Governments. The UK and Scottish governments are each investing £103 million in the deal, along with a further £45.5 million from the three Ayrshire Councils. The deal will galvanise efforts to develop key strategic sites and sectors in Ayrshire. It will help leverage private sector investment of more than £300 million, with the potential of creating up to 7,000 new jobs over the next 10 years.

During 2020/21, the Full Business Case for the Ayrshire Growth Deal **Community Wealth Building** Fund was approved by the Ayrshire Joint Economic Committee in February 2021. The £3m Scottish Government funding will go towards new CWB officers across the whole of the Ayrshire region to support local businesses and community organisations deliver CWB ambitions and a dedicated **Fair Work Ayrshire** team who will work closely with Ayrshire Anchor Institutions and major employers to establish Ayrshire as a Fair Work region.

The Full Business Case for the 'Working for a Healthy Economy' project was approved by the Ayrshire Joint Economic Committee in February 2021. Scottish Government will commit £5 million to the project. This proposal forms part of the wider £251 million Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) plans and is seen as a vital element in **reducing the impact poor health can have on employment**. Over the next five years, the AGD team hope to support nearly 10,000 people, which will include helping approximately 1,300 unemployed people across Ayrshire back into work.

We believe that this programme will impact significantly on the local drivers of child poverty, bringing significant, high quality employment opportunities to local people. Consequently, Community Planning Partners in East Ayrshire have identified the Ayrshire Growth Deal as a strategic priority for 2021-24, and have committed to working collaboratively to maximise its potential benefits and to making sure that everyone in East Ayrshire is able to access the opportunities presented.

2020/21 Progress Update: Planned Activity

A detailed 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 [2020/21 Children's Services Plan Annual Report](#) was developed in partnership with our Children and Young People's Cabinet and includes further updates on partnership work to address child poverty.

A detailed update on NHS Ayrshire & Arran's pan-Ayrshire child poverty analysis and action is available in the NHS Ayrshire & Arran [State of Child Health Child Poverty Update Report](#), August 2021.

Our LOIP Annual Performance Report 2020/21 contains details of the full range of partnership activity taken forward over the last year, including a range of work to address the drivers of child poverty (link will be added)

[Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2019-21](#) also includes details of targeted activity to address poverty and barriers to employment opportunities faced by families with protected characteristics.

As demonstrated at Appendix 1, the majority of the actions identified in our original LCPAR have now been achieved or are being implemented on an ongoing basis across our partnership.

In line with the three year planning cycle that we have adopted for Community Planning in East Ayrshire, our plans will now be reset during 2021/22, to ensure that we challenge ourselves to do more to lift children out of poverty and create the social and economic conditions required to support this work.

Looking ahead to 2021/22

Understanding the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Local impact analysis was undertaken to assist partners to identify, assess and understand the impact of the pandemic on children and families who had already been struggling, even before the public health crisis unfolded. The **East Ayrshire Wellbeing Community Conversation** was delivered by a range of partners in 2020, providing residents with an opportunity to share their circumstances and experiences in relation to various wellbeing topics. A number of key themes were identified from this engagement, including the negative impact on people's finances / economic status, with more than one-quarter (28.8%) of respondents indicating that their household finances were affected by the pandemic.

Similarly, findings from the **East Ayrshire Residents Survey** also indicate a negative impact on economic status and finances during the pandemic, with 30% of respondents highlighting the effect on household finances to be a main concern (top concern for 12%). The Residents Survey also asked people how their household was managing financially, both before the Covid crisis and during it. 72% of people said they were managing financially before the crisis, compared with 66% saying they were managing now.

Recalibrating our Partnership Activity to meet these Emerging Challenges

The previously referenced Community Plan Review sets the context for our future work to address child poverty, articulating our partnership priorities for the next three years. During 2021/22 our focus will be on implementing the work programmes set out in the new thematic Delivery Plans and our Children and Young People's Service Plan, which include the key actions that we believe will maximise our partnership impact on child poverty.

Through our [Wellbeing Delivery Plan](#) we have committed to address child poverty with **ambitious targets and actions to shift the child poverty curve**, and this work will be taken forward during 2021/22 by our **Wellbeing Delivery Group**, which has a dual function also being the Strategic Planning Group for our **local Integration Joint Board** and the **Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership**. This will form the core of the programme of work which will be reported in our future Local Child Poverty Action Reports, making **better use of data** to inform this future activity, and ensuring that our ongoing response is commensurate with the challenges presented.

This approach will include building on the things that we are already doing, continuing with the things that we know are working well and are important to children and families who are struggling, but also thinking innovatively about how we can further **maximise the impact of our partnership resources** on lifting children and families out of poverty.

We will continue to.....

- **Break Down the Barriers to Affordable Transport:** in partnership, we will continue to lobby for change to enable financially challenged parents, carers and young people to access employment, benefits, support services and other amenities. We will support the ongoing exploration of options for developing a **municipal bus service**.
- **Support Meaningful Employment:** we will ensure economic benefits for major developments are distributed fairly across our communities, we will continue to have **fair working practices** and employ, commission and procure in line with, for example, **Scottish Living Wage commitments**.
- **Promote Financial Inclusion:** we will ensure financial inclusion services have maximum reach, working together with Social Security Scotland to tackle child poverty and provide up-stream, early advice and support through children's health services.
- **Address Every Day Living Costs:** we will continue to support **free school meals** and expanded **early years provision**; delivery good quality **affordable housing** for families; and rapidly rehouse people and families who are at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness.
- **Raise Awareness:** we will improve information sharing and promote a consistent **anti-poverty** message across East Ayrshire.

These commitments are articulated in our [Children and Young People's Service Plan 2020-23](#).

But we will also do more.....

We will

- Drive forward **inclusive economic recovery and growth** through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the actions set out in our [Economy & Skills](#) Delivery Plan for 2021-24.
- Focus our ongoing response, renewal and recovery from Covid19 on helping **our most vulnerable and disadvantaged people and families**, prioritising tackling poverty and inequalities, recovery from drugs and alcohol and social isolation and mental health, and as part of this, we will recover in partnership, involving people who are vulnerable or socially disadvantaged as well as delivery partners in all sectors, making the most of their strengths.
- Adopt the **Scottish Approach to Service Design** to understand the needs of our citizens, workforce and stakeholders and create opportunities through a range of perspectives and collaboration in redesign solutions.

- Take forward place-based redesign through the Doon Valley Community Campus in Dalmellington, together with partners **in Education, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and the East Ayrshire Leisure Trust.**
- Design and implement **a wellbeing-focussed service delivery model** with children and families, to get it right for every child.
- Progress **service redesign across children’s services, financial and welfare benefits and our support services.**
- **Build on the learning over the Covid19 pandemic** to improve interventions to protect people through our **multi-agency public protection** arrangements.
- Invest in **a new wellbeing focussed website** for East Ayrshire, so people can easily access information and support.
- 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.

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.

Support for Priority Groups

The development of **Ayrshire Shared Equality Outcomes** has contributed to developing a broader understanding of the equality agenda and building the capacity of our communities and employees to work in a way which promotes equalities. This is of particular relevance to our child poverty work, as we know that families with protected characteristics are among those who experience disproportionate levels of child poverty.

During 2020/21 a review of these shared outcomes was undertaken, through consultation with local equalities groups, and [Shared Equalities Outcomes 2021-25](#) were agreed. Two of the agreed outcomes are of particular significance in relation to our work to address child poverty: Equality Outcome 3: In Ayrshire, people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life; and Equality Outcome 4: In Ayrshire, public bodies are inclusive and diverse employers

Identified actions include planning effectively for interventions across East Ayrshire to support identified protected characteristic groups to gain access to and **sustain training/employment**; and the establishment of an **East Ayrshire Council Human Resources Equality Forum**, to further develop a **diverse and inclusive workforce**. Further work to address transport barriers is also planned. The equalities outcomes and activity have been aligned with and, where appropriate, incorporated within our planned community planning activity for 2021-24, and will be reported through our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

Tackling the Disability Employment Gap

As part of the **Disabled Parents Employability Support Fund**, East Ayrshire - PESF team have received funding from the Scottish Government to identify and address barriers faced by unemployed disabled parents in entering and sustaining employment. This funding is part of the commitment within A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People – Employment Action Plan (2018).

East Ayrshire are seeking to procure a service which will support **unemployed disabled parents and carers** to progress towards and into employment (including paid work experience opportunities and key worker support). Recognising the significant changes to working practices and employment opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the intervention will look to address these challenges while mitigating barriers to support disabled parents into full or part-time employment. This investment will support new and innovative action including consultation to support disabled parents and help drive progress both towards **halving the disability employment gap** and helping achieve the ambitious child poverty targets. It is recognised that we require a specialist service which recognises the diverse employability needs and barriers facing parents with disabilities

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 2020/21

ACTION	TIMESCALE	PARTNERS	PROGRESS AT MARCH 2021
TRANSPORT			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An enhanced strategic focus on transport as a key local driver of child poverty, commencing with a CPP Executive Officers' Group 'Spotlight Session' on Transport, August 2019. 	Spotlight session: August 2019 Follow up actions developed and Implemented: 2019/20 onwards	Core community planning partners plus Ayrshire Roads Alliance and SPT.	Achieved and Ongoing: As previously reported, the Spotlight Session led on to the development of a consistent partnership lobbying position on strategic transport developments, and this shared agenda continues to be taken forward through all appropriate forums. For example, sustainable, accessible transport provision is a key element in the Ayrshire Growth Deal and in the Caring for Ayrshire agenda, our shared CPP and Council strategic priorities for 2021-24.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An options appraisal will be undertaken in relation to the establishment of a municipal bus service. 	2019/20	EAC, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, SPT, Stagecoach, Coalfield Community Transport	Ongoing: An initial options appraisal report was presented for consideration by Members of East Ayrshire Council in October 2020. Discussions are ongoing with SPT and a public consultation exercise is due to be completed in September 2021, to identify the improvements in bus service delivery that our local residents want to see. This will allow us to take account of changing work practices as a consequence of the pandemic and the further opportunities emerging through our recovery and renewal work. Following the conclusion of this consultation activity, a further update report will be presented to Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consistent lobbying position in relation to transport for East Ayrshire developed to maximise the leverage of our CPP in relation to those transport issues which are out with the direct gift of our partnership. 	2019/20	All community planning partners	Achieved and ongoing: As previously reported, a consistent lobbying position has been developed across our CPP which has informed, among other things, the partners' responses to the Transport Scotland consultation on the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) and our ongoing engagement with national partners. Ayrshire Roads Alliance continue to engage regularly with SPT on public and school transport issues, to ensure that where possible service improvements can be delivered in

			response to identified need. ARA also work as part of the CPP to leverage grant funding to improve local transport infrastructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act on the findings of the planned comprehensive review of an extension of discounts on public transport currently available to those aged 16-18 and extending it to those under the age of 26. 	To national review timescales	All community planning partners	Achieved and being implemented: Legislation was approved by the Scottish Parliament in March 2021 enabling the introduction of a new statutory scheme to allow 5-18 year olds resident in Scotland to access free bus travel through the National Entitlement Card (NEC) and the Young Scot branded NEC. Following a further commitment made by the Scottish Government, legislation to allow the scheme to be extended to include those aged under 22 was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 23 August 2021. Partners are now working to support local delivery of the scheme, which will become operational on 31 January 2022.
EMPLOYMENT			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners in the Ayrshire Growth Deal to ensure that the economic benefits are genuinely 'inclusive'. 	2019-2030	All community planning partners AGD partners	Achieved and Ongoing: The signing of the AGD in November 2020 marked the culmination of five years' work by the three Ayrshire councils, partner organisations and Scottish and UK Governments. The UK and Scottish governments are each investing £103 million in the deal, along with a further £45.5 million from the three Ayrshire Councils. The deal will galvanise efforts to develop key strategic sites and sectors in Ayrshire. It will help leverage private sector investment of more than £300 million, with the potential of creating up to 7,000 new jobs over the next 10 years. The Full Business Case for the Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund was approved by the Ayrshire Joint Economic Committee in February 2021. The £3m Scottish Government funding will go towards new CWB officers across the whole of the Ayrshire region to support local businesses and community organisations deliver CWB ambitions and a dedicated Fair Work Ayrshire team who will work closely with Ayrshire Anchor Institutions and major employers to establish Ayrshire as a Fair Work region. The Full Business Case for the 'Working for a Healthy Economy' project was approved by the Ayrshire Joint Economic Committee in February 2021. Scottish Government will commit £5 million to the

			project. This proposal forms part of the wider £251 million Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) plans and is seen as a vital element in reducing the impact poor health can have on employment. Over the next five years, the AGD team hope to support nearly 10,000 people, which will include helping approximately 1,300 unemployed people across Ayrshire back into work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Barclays to deliver a three-year economic growth initiative in Kilmarnock, as part of the 'Thriving Local Economies' scheme 	2019-2022	Barclays, East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise, Local Businesses.	<p>Ongoing: In September 2020, as part of the Thriving Local Economies Initiative, Barclays prepared an internal summary report describing the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on Kilmarnock. The report helped inform a range of actions that were being taken forward through the Council's Recovery and Renewal work. This included the continued support of Barclays for the HALO project as a location for a Barclays Eagle Lab which will drive digital skills development and help grow the economy through innovation and change. Other shared priorities that were identified, included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-imagining our Town Centre, building on our commitment to community led regeneration and community wealth building. Supporting the development of alternative education qualifications to meet the future needs of employers. Building on existing employability frameworks. Promoting digital supports and resources aimed at helping everyone get the most out of digital and life skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role model good employer practices across our CPP and work with colleagues in the third and private sectors to promote fair working practices 	2019/20 and ongoing	All community planning partners, Scottish Government.	<p>Achieved and ongoing: In April 2020 the Council secured accredited living wage status after undergoing a rigorous application process. Following agreement by Council, in April 2021 the '2020 real living wage' was introduced, ensuring that the Council continues to meet the requirements of Living Wage Accreditation and to pay the real living wage. Partners also continue to encourage our supply chains to adopt payment of the living wage.</p>

			NHS Ayrshire & Arran has signed the Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Charter and is committed to the initial 3 strands of work – procurement, fair work and land and assets. In relation to fair work the NHS has been refreshing their Employability Strategy to focus on employing locally and targeting those from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. There will also be a significant commitment to modern apprenticeships across the organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate the impact of child poverty through our employment, commissioning and procurement practices. 	2019/20 and ongoing	All community planning partners	<p>Achieved and ongoing: East Ayrshire Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy 2021/22 continues to complement the Regional Economic Strategy and reinforce our support for the priorities which will contribute to the delivery of inclusive growth, community wealth building and sustainability.</p> <p>The Council's Procurement Team continue to take a proactive approach to the wider Community Wealth Building agenda and are actively involved in various working groups and meetings to progress the Community Wealth Building action plan which has been developed and supports the local supply chain.</p> <p>NHS Ayrshire & Arran has signed the Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Charter and is committed to the initial 3 strands of work – procurement, fair work and land and assets. In relation to procurement the NHS is looking at ways to work within the confines of national procurement strategies to procure locally where they can. In addition a Community Benefits Gateway has been established which allows local third and voluntary organisations to draw down benefits from these national contracts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link tackling child poverty with the national commitment to halve the 'disability employment gap'. 	2019/20	All community planning partners	<p>Ongoing: Employability Pipeline activity continues to be targeted at individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, and the service is committed to closing the disability employment gap.</p> <p>As part of the Disabled Parents Employability Support Fund, East Ayrshire - PESF have received funding from the Scottish Government to identify and address barriers faced by unemployed disabled parents in entering and sustaining employment. This</p>

			<p>funding will be used to procure a service which will support unemployed disabled parents to progress towards and into employment (including paid work experience opportunities and key worker support). The intervention will seek to mitigate barriers to disabled parents entering full or part-time employment, through a specialist service which recognises the diverse employability needs and barriers of parents with disabilities.</p> <p>The Financial Inclusion Team have also re-launched an Employability Team, funded by ESF to December 2022, designed to assist those with multiple barriers to overcome those issues, particularly in relation to income maximisation, transport and childcare and to help them on their employability journey. Partnerships have been created with various employability partners who make referrals into the project.</p>
FINANCIAL INCLUSION			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and streamline our financial inclusion services to ensure maximum reach to excluded groups and communities. 	2019/20	EAHSCP, Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership, Social Security Scotland	<p>Achieved and ongoing: Focus Groups were established in a number of key areas, including child poverty, food poverty, housing, affordable finance and debt with actions carried forward with partners and via the Financial Health and Wellbeing Partnership. The Financial Inclusion Team has undertaken a temporary restructure pending a full Best Value Service Review to allow it to be more proactive rather than reactive, and to establish a more targeted approach to challenging poverty. This will lead to a more localised service and better links with community organisations and GP services.</p> <p>Work has been also undertaken to establish a pilot project basing a Financial Inclusion Officer within a Secondary School establishment to support families whose children attend the school and its' cluster and early years establishments. This project became operational on 30 August 2021.</p> <p>Another initiative is being developed to base a Financial Inclusion Officer within six Deep End GP Practices on a two year pilot basis.</p>

			It is anticipated that this project will be up and running by the end of 2021.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise and implement joint working arrangements with Social Security Scotland. 	2019/20 and ongoing	EAHSCP/Social Security Scotland	<p>Achieved and ongoing: As a result of Covid-19, Social Security Scotland staff have been working from home but have retained their base in The Johnnie Walker Bond alongside the Financial Inclusion Team, which they anticipate returning to in the near future. This has not prevented a close working relationship between Social Security Scotland and the Financial Inclusion Team or EAHSCP with promotional work on all Scottish Social Security benefits. This partnership will develop further once they return to the office and develop their visiting programme.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote take-up of new Social Security Scotland benefits including the recent Best Start Grant for low income families in infancy and early years, and the Scottish Child Payment for under 6s by 2021 and remaining under 16s by 2022. 	Best Start 2019/20 Scottish Child Payment 2020/21	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership	<p>Achieved and ongoing: The Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership have supported promotion of the Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grants and Foods agenda via all partner organisations, with a high level of take up in East Ayrshire. This will continue on an ongoing basis with preparations currently underway to support the launch later this year of the Child Disability Payment</p> <p>Promotion of the Best Start Food Scheme continues in NHS Maternal and Infant Nutrition (MIN) action plan. Midwives and Health Visitors discuss with pregnant women and families at universal contacts to support uptake.</p> <p>There is also a central source of support on benefits and financial inclusion through the Better Health Hub – with information being available to staff and the public.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote outreach support from Citizens' Advice Bureau in communities that are in the 0-5% most deprived areas in East Ayrshire identified by the 	2019/20	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership	<p>Ongoing: Outreach services have been significantly restricted due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Staff from partner organisations including East Ayrshire CAB have been working from home, although the Financial Inclusion Team have still maintained a home visiting service when absolutely necessary. CAB's main office in Kilmarnock is currently closed due to safety reasons and they are presently looking for new premises. They also have a small office</p>

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2016.			in Cumnock and are looking to resume outreach services in the 0-5% range of most deprived areas in East Ayrshire of Muirkirk and Dalmellington. CAB also provide outreach services in other areas of deprivation in the 10% and 20% range, Drongan, New Cumnock, Patna and Newmilns, all of which have been temporarily suspended. Strengthened signposting arrangements across all public facing partners and online resources continue to ensure that support is accessible at the point of need.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maternity Services and Income Maximisation joint working to integrate direct referral into new e-system, BadgerNet. 	2019/20 and ongoing	NHS Maternity Services & Public Health EAHSCP ICYP transformational Change Programme Board	Achieved: Badgernet developed and in use since November 2020. Information related to financial support available to pregnant women electronically.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with RSLs through the Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership to better support tenants in relation to financial inclusion supports 	2019/20 and ongoing	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership – EA, Local RSLs	Achieved and ongoing: The Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership established a focus group to look at poverty related Housing issues, however it became apparent that many of the issues were being addressed by other similar groups within the Council and the focus group work was merged with the Safer Homes group. Due to Covid-19, Kilmarnock Sherriff Court was closed to public and Scottish Government policy regarding the eviction of tenants resulted in no court cases, although work to address key issues such as rent arrears continued. In Court Advice staff have worked from home during this period and will return as the Court opens. East Ayrshire Safer Communities have also confirmed the continuation of their Universal Credit Team to support East Ayrshire tenants and residents to claim UC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work across partners in registration, midwifery, health visiting, early years, school nursing and others 	2019/20	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership	Ongoing: The Financial Inclusion Team are currently working with Health Colleagues and the Improvement Service to establish a two year pilot to base a Financial Inclusion Officer within six Deep End

to provide up-stream, early advice and support to tackle child poverty.			practices in East Ayrshire. This will allow close working relationship with colleagues across the health sector to challenge poverty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appraise the options available around alternative local currencies and access to affordable credit through the Poverty Action Group. 	March 2020	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership	<p>Ongoing: Discussions are ongoing with the Town Centre Partnership regarding the potential use of the EA Gift Card as a form of local currency. This would benefit the local economy and provide a cash based alternative to tackle the growing dependency on foodbanks and treat people with dignity. Options currently being looked at include a range of payments being made this way, including social work hardship payments.</p> <p>Discussions between CAB and Ayrshire Credit Union have initiated a partnership agreement to work together with referrals between organisations, and further progress on this is anticipated in 2021/22.</p> <p>Through the Affordable Credit & Debt focus group, Ayrshire Credit Union and Sovereign Credit Union worked together to create a low cost loan product to Ayrshire College students and to new East Ayrshire tenants.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Post Office financial services in communities poorly served by ATMs or affected by bank closures. 	2019/20	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership	<p>Ongoing: Sovereign Credit Union are willing to take over the management of the Post Office in Cumnock which may otherwise face closure due to retirement. At present discussions still ongoing to find appropriate premises on both a short term and longer term basis. The preferred option would be to utilise the premises for a former bank in partnership with East Ayrshire CAB, however this has been put on hold due to building issues. An additional premises has been potentially identified and a site visit planned.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a tiered anti-poverty training programme across the workforce modelled on the Protecting People Framework. 	March 2020	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership	<p>In progress: It has not been able to progress development in this area due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New ways of delivering training online are being investigated by the Financial Inclusion Team at present. The Financial Inclusion Team have undergone training in delivering bite sized animations for publicity use.</p>
EVERY DAY LIVING COSTS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to roll out national initiatives in relation to free 	2019/20 and ongoing	East Ayrshire Council	<p>Achieved and ongoing: Free school meals were introduced for P4 children with effect from August 2021, which means that a two-course meal is now provided to all children from P1 to P4 across</p>

<p>P1-P3 meals and Early Years expansion.</p>			<p>East Ayrshire schools. Surplus food also continues to be put in take away containers, labelled and placed in a specified area for young people to pick up and take home.</p> <p>Achieved: Early Years Expansion - At August 2021 all 36 Early Childhood Centres (ECC) in East Ayrshire are now delivering 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), after the completion of the Early Learning and Childcare expansion programme. In addition, 7 funded Early Learning and Childcare providers and 40 childminders are on the Council's contract framework to deliver funded ELC.</p> <p>This means that all 3 and 4 year olds, and eligible 2 year olds, in East Ayrshire can benefit from 1140 hours a year of funded Early Learning and Childcare. This works out at about 30 hours a week if parents and carers use it during school term-time, or just under 24 hours a week if used all year-round.</p> <p>Entitlement to funded ELC provision for 2 year olds whose parents are care-experienced has also come into effect from August 2021.</p> <p>The ELC expansion has supported an increase in the number of full time equivalent (FTE) places for 2 year olds with 21 out of 36 ECCs providing 250 FTE places for 2 year olds from August 2021 onwards. 5 of the 7 funded providers and the majority of childminders on the contract framework will also be able to provide funded places for eligible 2 year olds.</p> <p>A new online application for eligible 2 year olds with a built in Benefit check has reduced barriers to access and has increased uptake.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver good quality, affordable housing for families across East Ayrshire 	<p>2019/20 and ongoing</p>	<p>East Ayrshire Council and key partners</p>	<p>Achieved and ongoing. The Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) continues to deliver a mix of homes across sizes and types, in response to aims and objectives set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house condition across all tenures. Site completions</p>

			were achieved for the delivery of 56 Council homes, with 49 completions also achieved by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support vulnerable individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness through the implementation of the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. 	2019/20 and ongoing	East Ayrshire Council and key partners	Achieved and ongoing. The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) sets out the key actions and timescales which Housing Services and RRTP partners have identified to achieve our vision for rapid rehousing, with aims to increase focus on early intervention and prevention, reduce homeless presentations and applications, ensure a settled housing options is reached as quickly as possible, reducing any time spent in temporary accommodation. The Council's Housing Options service has continued to support vulnerable individuals and families who are, or are at risk, of homelessness. The Child Wellbeing Protocol was launched in November 2020 to prevent homelessness and mitigate transitions and trauma for families, young people and children, whose Council tenancy is at risk, by ensuring prompt notification to the Named Person Service. In addition, the Council's updated RRTP for Year 3 and Funding and Activity Monitoring Report 2020/21 was submitted to the Scottish Government on 25 June 2021.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work proactively with Citrus Energy to address local issues surrounding fuel poverty. 	2019/20	Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership and Citrus Energy	Ongoing: East Ayrshire Council provided funding to Citrus Energy to support residents facing fuel poverty and a referral pathway with the Financial Inclusion Team to refer clients with additional financial and benefit issues. Focus Group meetings on fuel poverty commence but were disrupted due to Covid-19 and related pressures. This work is now being led by the main Financial Health & Wellbeing Partnership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further align free sanitary provision and dignified food provision and continue to work across partners to reduce the reliance on foodbanks. 	2019/20	EAC, HSCP, CVO East Ayrshire, Centrestage	Achieved and ongoing: The Dignified food programme has been accelerated during the response to COVID 19 and played a key role in the support for children and families throughout the pandemic. During this period, Council's Facilities and Property Management Service catering teams have delivered over 1.5million meals across our communities in multiple different ways from direct food in school to daily home deliveries to grocery boxes.

			<p>Free school meal holiday support is provided to all children and young people eligible for a free school meal, at primary and secondary school, due to low income or qualifying benefits. This has been provided in addition to the £100 family pandemic support payment.</p> <p>The development of Food Larders has been accelerated during the pandemic, with 16 Larders now operational across the authority area. To ensure the ongoing support and development of local dignified food provision, Dignified Food Groups have been set up with strategic and larder representatives and achievements to date include the production of handbooks and membership of Fareshare.</p> <p>Free sanitary provision has also expanded, with robust distribution arrangements are in place across statutory, third and community sector partners. Education Services have played a key role in this. Online access to free sanitary provision was launched with effect from August 2020 and is hosted on the East Ayrshire Council Website.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Cost of Pregnancy research project to identify barriers pregnant women and women with infants face when accessing midwifery and Health Visitor services 	June-October 2019	NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health and Maternity services. East HSCP – Health Visitors and Early Years Services NHS GGC Health Scotland	<p>Achieved: Research completed and report published. Learning from Pilot being used to inform future practice and future activity.</p>
COMMUNICATION			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and relaunch the EA Money digital platform as central 'one stop shop' 	2019/20	Financial Health and Wellbeing	<p>Achieved: New designed website www.eamoney.co.uk launched in March 2021 as a digital platform designed to provide benefit information, with links to other websites to allow people to make</p>

for financial support across East Ayrshire.		Partnership, led by EAHSCP	claims or obtain contact details. Website also allows clients and organisations to make referrals to EA Money team who triage referrals to give advice or refer to appropriate partner organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage use of locally developed referral tool to enable NHS staff to directly refer families in need to appropriate specialist services, and incorporate this into routine practice. 	2019/20	NHS Public Health, Communications and other services, and EAHSCP	<p>Achieved and ongoing: Maternity Care Assistant syllabus created; Assistants recruited; Clinics established and running for 1 year. This clinic is now integrated into the pregnancy pathway.</p> <p>During 2020/21 this action will continue, explore whether model and learning from implementation is transferable, and explore role of Better Health Hub in referral to FIS.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a child poverty impact assessment tool for NHS strategies, policies and service improvement, as part of Fairer Scotland Duty work 	2020	NHS A&A Public Health West of Scotland Public Health Child Poverty Leads (GGC, D&G and Lanarkshire)	Achieved and ongoing: Health Inequalities Impact Self-Assessment Tool (HISA) developed to raise awareness within NHS teams on potential impact of social determinants of health in practice. Ongoing promotion of the HISA and explore where it fits with other tools including the Rapid Scoping Assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a shared approach to increasing awareness amongst CPP staff about the impact that child poverty has on access to services 		All Community Planning Partner Agencies	Ongoing: training to be developed across digital platforms to overcome pandemic-related barriers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a national “once for Scotland” Child Poverty Communications Plan 	2019/20	NHS A&A Public Health and Communications Department CPAG Poverty Alliance Health Scotland NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Achieved: The Child Poverty communications plan was developed jointly by Health Scotland (now Public Health Scotland, PHS), and several Health Boards, including NHS Ayrshire & Arran, and shared with partners in 2019 as part of work around Challenge Poverty Week.

		NHS Lanarkshire	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Challenge Poverty Week across East Ayrshire in October 2020 	October 2019	All Community Planning Partners	<p>Ongoing: Due to Covid, 2020 Challenge Poverty Week activity was restricted to promotion on social media.</p> <p>Planning is already underway for Challenge Poverty Week 2021, with the Financial, Health and Wellbeing Partnership looking to organise a series of week-long events in Dalmellington, Cumnock, Newmilns and Kilmarnock, focusing on a different aspect of poverty each day.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby, advocate and seek to influence wider change across all systems, including focus on new National Public Health Priorities: Priority 5. 	2019/20 and ongoing	NHS A&A Public Health NHS A&A CPP HSCP 3 rd Sector	<p>Achieved and ongoing: Briefing note for partners on Public Health Priority 5 developed.</p> <p>Awareness raising and engagement in partnership.</p> <p>Colleagues in Public Health sit on this forum seeking to share best practice and influence wider change across the system in striving for an inclusive economy.</p>
New Actions in 2020/21			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that child poverty is a central focus of the Community Plan Review 2020/21 and that this is reflected across the new thematic delivery plans 2021-24. 	2020/21	Community Planning Partners.	<p>Achieved: Community Plan Review concluded and future priorities identified which will address the identified drivers of child poverty. Specific actions relating to child poverty reflected throughout the new partnership Delivery Plans for 2021-24.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the emerging child poverty agenda with the Shared Equalities Outcomes which are being developed on a pan Ayrshire basis. 	2020/21	Community Planning Partners.	<p>Achieved: New Shared Equalities Outcomes identified, and additional activity which will assist to address the drivers of child poverty in relation to the priority groups identified in the Child Poverty Act. This commitment to the Shared Equalities Outcomes also reflected in our new Delivery Plans for 2021-24.</p>

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
- **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