

Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Work and Economy – Ayr Project Town



Work and Economy can have a positive impact on wellbeing when everyone has equal access to:

- Essential goods & services produced or procured locally.
- Good quality paid and unpaid work.
- Access to assets such as wealth & capital and the resources that enable people to participate in the economy such as good health and education.
- A balanced value ascribed across sectors such as female dominated sectors and the non-monetary economy.

This is why Work and Economy is one of Scotland's Place & Wellbeing Outcomes within the theme of Resources.

The evidence tells us¹:



Work is beneficial to health and wellbeing, if it is 'good' work; improves income, job security and does not negatively impact on mental health.



People need local, affordable accessible facilities and services to live and enjoy healthy independent lives.



The cost and accessibility of public transport can affect access to employment opportunities, which can disproportionately disadvantage those on the lowest incomes.



Unemployment can harm health, drive inequality, impact negatively on mental health and poverty and lead to unhealthy coping behaviours.



Individuals can experience a loss of social connections or a sense of structure and purpose if they are not in 'good' work.



Volunteering has been associated with improved self-rated health, mental health, life satisfaction and wellbeing, and decreased depression and mortality.



If a place is lively and vibrant it can provide work opportunities and will encourage people to visit the area, use it and encourage people to invest in it.



The vibrancy of a place can help to improve the wellbeing and resilience of a community.

1. Source: [Evidence Behind Place Standard Tool & Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)

Work and Economy Data - Ayr²

Approximately one third of people are income deprived (2019) with 41% population are in receipt of out of work benefits.

Nearly two-fifths of children in Ayr North Harbour, Wallacetown & Newton South are living in poverty.

13.3% of the population aged 16+ in receipt of Universal Credit.

7.9% of the population aged 16-74 in receipt of Personal Independence Payment .

2.6% of the population receive Carers Allowance.

What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Ayr in 2023

Inequalities in accessing work

There are multiple factors that can influence people's chances of 'good' work/volunteering opportunities. Based on local conversations, suggested reasons include:

- Transport cost is a barrier to accessing work opportunities for people in Ayr.
- Walking and cycling routes for North Ayr do not connect well with Ayr town centre. This has a negative impact on Town Centre work and volunteering opportunities for young people, and those who experience inequality most.
- Experiencing issues with mental health, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and social isolation negatively impacts people's capacity to access work and volunteering opportunities in Ayr.
- People in Ayr report feeling unsafe outdoors in their community due to anti-social behaviour and substance use issues. This impacts negatively on the vibrancy of communities and potential for future investment of businesses.
- Young people living in low-income households in Ayr face a financial barrier to accessing work opportunities or college interviews.

Negative impact of not accessing work opportunities

- In Ayr North and Newton South one third of people are income deprived. Living in a low-income household is a form of disadvantage that leads to worse health outcomes and is associated with higher rates of mortality.³
- An increase in in-work poverty is an issue in Ayr and this has worsened since the inflation crisis; this has resulted in an increase demand on foodbanks. This negatively influences on population health as where people are born, brought up, live and work influences health and wellbeing throughout the life course.³

“We provide support to low-income households to access more stable and secure hours of employment. People quite often do not know which services are available to help access better quality work or how to access services to support issues related to low-income”. (Team leader, Employability)



Knowledge and confidence around work and economy

- An emerging theme from discussions with groups and organisations was that mental health issues are experienced by people; poverty, increase energy cost, food cost, social isolation, issues with housing, substance use issues, homelessness and caring responsibilities were mentioned as factors that influenced mental health.
- Low-paid jobs for a single- parent family can worsen their financial situation and it is suggested in local conversations that in some cases people report that they are 'better off' on benefits. Community organisations stated that people have a lack of awareness of how and where to access services to support such issues.



Two young people who are not engaging in school and from a low-income family are volunteering at our group; with a view to apply to the local college. However, they did not have any clothing other than their school uniform. We took them to Primark and bought clothing for the interview, otherwise they could have been branded or judged at the interview. (Community Group Manager)



Collaboration and communication on working and economy

- There are a range of community organisations who support people with issues relating to work and economy. Many groups provide volunteering opportunities and opportunity to complete training courses such as First Aid and Food Hygiene courses. Also, financial support (from hardship funding) can be provided for clothing and transport costs for interviews.
- Thriving Communities Family Engagement Programme provides support to families experiencing poverty to improve their household income and take their first steps to employment; checking benefit and grant entitlement and identifying flexible training and work opportunities.



On access to support into work there is a requirement of improved awareness amongst people of services and how and where to access those services. People often do not know what is available or where to access the support they need, and quite often come to our service looking for support. (Project Coordinator, Charitable Organisation)



The Thriving Communities Evolve Programme provides paid-work opportunities to support people into employment; employers include South Ayrshire Council and Third Sector organisations. We also provide, "better off" calculations to ensure that people are better off financially in work. (Team leader, Employability)

