



Shaping Places for Wellbeing

Ayr Project Town

What we are hearing in our communities

A qualitative report on the findings from stakeholder conversations and a review of engagement documentation

Created September 2023

Updated March 2024



Introduction

This report presents the work of the Community Link Lead working on the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme in Ayr. It reviews existing qualitative data and formal community engagement and gathers insights from conversation with community organisations and stakeholders. It provides a sense check of the quantitative inequalities data profile of Ayr prepared by Public Health Scotland Local Intelligence Support Team and adds qualitative narrative and experiential data to the Programme's understanding of inequality, place and wellbeing in Ayr.

Key themes and insights emerging from the review and engagement with community organisations/third sector included:

- Mental health and social isolation are key issues experienced by people.
- A sense of identity and belonging experienced by people who attend community groups.
- A lack of trust in formal services, community groups viewed as a safe space.
- Poverty (food, energy and in-work) has worsened since inflation crisis; particularly impacting on those who are already experiencing inequalities.

The [qualitative infographic for Ayr](#) includes the key topics we have captured in Ayr as they relate to the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes. This report provides further information on the key topics and details the process undertaken by the Community link lead.



Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Who we are

Shaping Places for Wellbeing is a 3-year programme, running until March 2024, which is being delivered by Public Health Scotland (PHS) and the Improvement Service (IS) jointly with local authorities and NHS local boards. The programme has funding from The Health Foundation and Scottish Government.

Programme Ambition

The ambition of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme is to: improve Scotland's wellbeing by reducing the significant inequality in the health of its people while addressing the health of our planet.

The Programme is anchored in embedding the evidenced features in every place that, if we get them right, enable those using that place not just to stay healthy but to experience wellbeing. These are called Scotland's Place and Wellbeing Outcomes; more information on the Programme Outcomes can be found here in a [briefing paper](#). Places are proven to have a positive and/or negative impact on our wellbeing, and, in many cases, a negative impact is the result of the unintended consequences of well-meant decisions. Local councils and their partners have a key opportunity, when making decisions, to consider the impact their choices have on their places and the opportunity to consider improving places as part of delivering on their overall ambitions.



Project Towns

The Programme is supporting seven 'Project Towns': Alloa, Ayr, Clydebank, Dalkeith, Dunoon, Fraserburgh and Rutherglen. Each has a steering group made up of local authority and local health board representatives to provide oversight and direction. The Programme provides a Project Lead and a Community Link Lead to support activity.

Ayr

The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme has been working in Ayr since 2021. Since then, the Programme has undertaken three Place and Wellbeing Assessments; Wallacetown Housing Regeneration, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, and Local Housing Strategy.

The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Ayr Steering Group agreed on four priority areas that would be a focus for the Programme. These are informed by the quantitative inequalities data profile of the town provided by Public Health Scotland Local Intelligence System Team (LIST). The four priority areas are:

- Geographic split of up to 12.5 Years in life expectancy if living in North or South Ayr
- Premature mortality in those aged 15-44 living in North Ayr
- People who experience a substance use disorder
- People experiencing poverty to include a focus on children

This infographic provides a summary of the quantitative data profile which can be viewed [here](#).



Approach

This report and the [accompanying infographic](#) aim to bring to life the above data. Taking a qualitative approach to augment our understanding of the data and better understand Ayr residents experience of their places. A qualitative and informal approach was taken to capture the lived experience and experience of place of people impacted by health inequalities. The two key methods used for this report were a review of existing qualitative data and conversations with community groups and stakeholders; this is described in more detail in sections **Documents** and **Conversations with stakeholders and local groups**.

Purpose

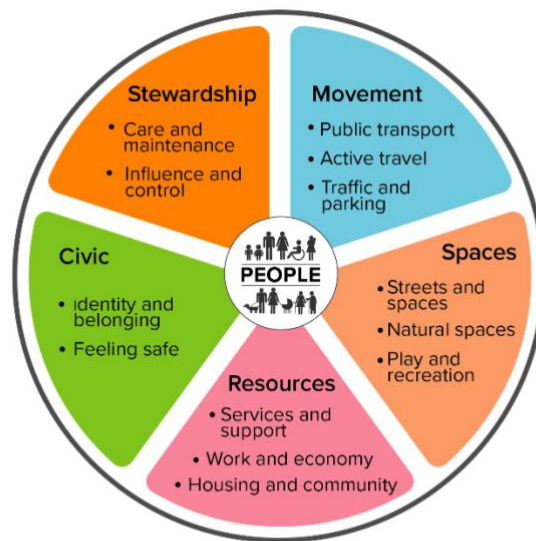
The Community Link Lead was tasked to:

- Connect with existing community groups and organisations to understand the needs of the demographics most impacted by key inequalities, using an asset-based approach.
- Undertake a review of existing qualitative data to identify key priorities around place for people, and particularly those most impacted by inequalities.
- Promote understanding of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes amongst local organisations.
- Support ongoing data gathering related to key inequalities to identify demographics most impacted and connect with community organisations to sense check this data.

The work of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme is anchored in the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes to improve Scotland's wellbeing and reduce inequality. These Outcomes are based on comprehensive research. More background and context to the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes can be found in this _____

The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes were used as a lens to frame conversations and to capture and interpret the key findings of conversations with stakeholders/community organisations and documents and reports.





The principles of equality, net-zero emissions and sustainability underpin all of these themes, and all themes should be embedded in policy and action

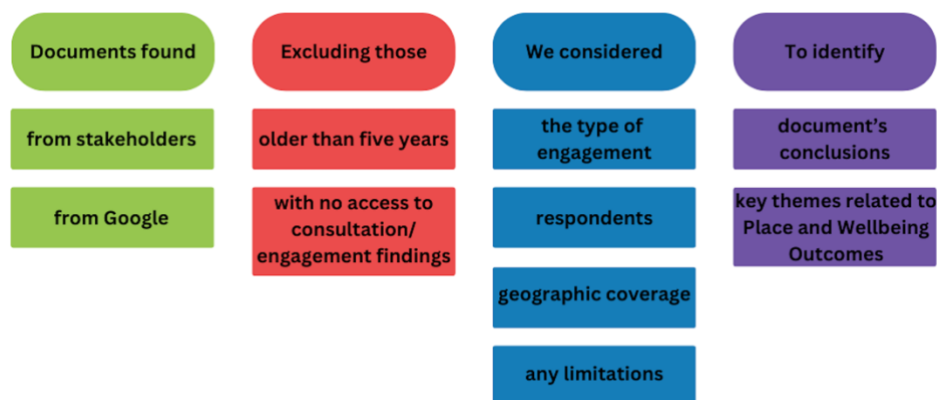
Documents

Nine documents containing formal engagement/consultation were reviewed and a list is provided in Appendix 1. Documents that were specific or included Ayr were reviewed. The aim of the review was to identify key priorities of place and capture the lived experience of health inequalities impacting on the people of Ayr, particularly those most impacted by inequalities.

Shaping Places for Wellbeing Ayr Steering Group members, local stakeholders and third sector organisations were asked to identify any relevant documents. This provided links to key strategies and action plans containing community engagement.

A desk-based search showed limited results as not all documents reviewed are publicly available. Searches included, but not exhaustive, “Ayr + community +engagement”, “Ayr + poverty + report”, “Ayr + health and wellbeing + report”, “Ayr + housing + engagement”, and “Ayr Neighbourhood Survey”.





Community groups/organisations are often required to report to their funders; included within reports is qualitative data/case studies which captures lived experience. This is used to evaluate the impact of the service in reducing inequalities and improving the wellbeing of people who attend. These reports are not readily available online. However, for the purpose of this report one community group/organisation shared their last two annual reports which provided insight to existing qualitative data capturing lived experience from communities. This could be a useful tool in improving partnership working with an aim to reduce the impact of inequalities and improving the wellbeing of people in Ayr.

Conversations with stakeholders and local groups

Conversations with stakeholders and community groups/organisations have been the most effective method to gain insight into the impact of inequalities on communities. Thirty-seven informal interviews and meetings were held with a variety of local stakeholders and community groups/organisations who work to address the priority areas of inequality identified by the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Ayr Steering Group. The meetings with community groups/organisations are listed within Appendix two.

Meetings were used to gather information and gain insight to the local communities' experience of the place they live, work and relax, through conversations with community group leaders/managers. Also, the meetings provided an opportunity to build relationships with the community groups/stakeholders and introduce or update on Shaping Places for



Wellbeing Programme. Information on the quantitative data health profile of Ayr was used as a discussion point in sense checking the data from the perspective of the lived experience of people who attend the community groups.

The aim of the meeting was explained to community group leaders, and it was clarified that the information discussed and agreed upon would be used for the purpose of the qualitative report.

Sense checking

The themes identified from each conversation were interpreted by the Community Link Lead. Therefore, to sense check and reduce any personal bias from the Community Link Lead or misrepresentation of the community group, emerging themes of the discussion were sent to each community group for review. This provided an opportunity to check the interpretation was accurate and individuals were encouraged to add further comments or explanation. Stakeholders were also invited to share any quotes or case studies for inclusion within the report. Following this process, further meetings were set up with groups who responded to discuss the emerging themes in more detail, this part of the process supported the process in reducing the risk of bias, misinterpretation and enriched and clarified existing findings. The emerging findings were also sense-checked with the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Ayr Steering Group, which validated the main themes.

The publication of this report also offers an opportunity to further sense check with readers who work in or with Ayr communities. The Community Link Lead invites feedback from any relevant stakeholders reading this report, whether you were involved in an original conversation or not. This report should be refined as further comments and insight are shared, helping develop a richer understanding of the experiences of people who live, work and play in Alloa, especially those facing the greatest inequality.



Emerging themes

The following information details the recurring themes emerging from documents reviewed and conversations had with stakeholders and community groups as they map against the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes. Also, what people told us that they want decision makers to know about their place, health and wellbeing.

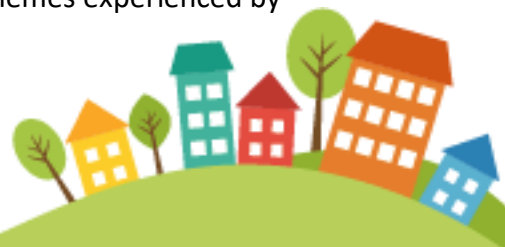
The work of the Community Link Lead provides an opportunity to explore the data and capture the lived experience of how inequalities impact the lives of people who live, work and relax in Ayr.

The quantitative inequalities data profile of Ayr provides a focus on the identified priority areas for the work in Ayr and highlights challenges within the town. This report will explore the reasons behind these statistics and will also highlight the positive assets of the community of Ayr such as, a strong third sector. There are many community groups/organisations in Ayr who are addressing the identified priority inequality areas and have knowledge and understanding of the issues that their group participants are experiencing. Furthermore, the report will highlight areas for improvement based upon the conversations had.

The report is not an exhaustive list of all topics raised in conversations but reflects those raised by multiple stakeholders and community groups and therefore represents a more collective shared experience of place. It is a snapshot of what we have heard from community groups and stakeholders between March 2023 and September 2023.

People

People are at the centre of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes. The priority inequality areas identified by the quantitative data process was highlighted as a focus in conversations and it was generally agreed by stakeholders and community group/organisations that they were an accurate representation of the issues in Ayr. The four recurring themes experienced by



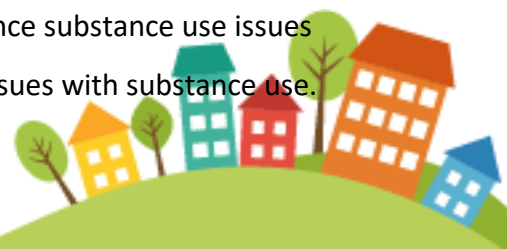
people are detailed in the following sections; the themes mainly map against the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes Themes of Civic and Resources.

Mental health and social isolation

An emerging theme from discussions was that mental health issues are experienced by people who attend community groups/organisations; poverty, increase in energy cost, food cost, social isolation, issues with housing, substance use issues, homelessness and caring responsibilities were mentioned as factors that influenced mental health. The Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023) sets out the aim that everyone should have the best mental health and wellbeing possible; to achieve that there is a need to prevent mental health occurring or escalating by tackling or addressing causes, adversities and inequalities wherever possible. An emphasis on early intervention and prevention is key.

The community groups/organisations discussed in this report are providing a service which addresses the inequality priority areas for the Project Town of Ayr and generally located within walking distance for people. Some individuals reported improved mental health and participation in social activities; attending community groups provides opportunity to participate in activities, be socially connected to others, volunteer, and develop training and skills. The Five Ways to Wellbeing (New Economics Foundation, 2008) informs that connecting with others, being active, taking notice, embracing new opportunities, giving time or to others (volunteering), improves mental health and wellbeing. Attending community groups provide opportunity for people to adopt the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

Gaps in service - Two community groups/organisations supporting people who experience issues with substance use and homelessness highlighted barriers to accessing mental health services and identified gaps in provision of these services; they highlighted the requirement for a 7-day service. Also, that access to mental health services can be challenging for people with addiction issues as the Community Mental Health Team and Addiction Services sit separately. In addition, it was highlighted that people who experience substance use issues are unable to access mental health services whilst having ongoing issues with substance use.



Example of model of care/support - People who experience issues with substance use or homelessness could benefit from a “one-stop shop” service which addresses both mental health and substance use as both can be influencing factors with the other. A model of care/support of an organisation providing a 7-day service “one-stop shop” approach is Simon Community Scotland, a homeless charity; Support and Access Hubs provide advice, information, care and support for anyone experiencing or at risk of homelessness. People can access the support they need under one roof.

A lack of trust in formal services

A lack of trust in formal services was one of the emerging themes from the findings of documents and discussions; community groups are viewed as a safe space where people can be open about issues. Common themes are that people feel judged, unheard, stigmatised and this was given as a reason for people not accessing formal services. However, there are examples of community services engaging well with communities whilst addressing inequalities such as mental health and social isolation.

Thriving Communities provide a History Club group which is run at Lochside Community Centre in North Ayr. The community group worked in partnership with a professional theatre company and created a video on the topic of violence against women. The group attendees starred in this video which was focussed on the witches of Ayr and incorporated local history in the context of violence against women. Many of the group attendees had experienced mental health issues and social isolation prior to attending the group (the team leader informed that attending the group reduced social isolation and improved the wellbeing of individuals).



People have a sense of belonging and identity

People having a sense of belonging and identity is not evident in the community engagement within documents reviewed for this report, however it has been identified within people who attend community groups. An example being the Vics Community Wellbeing Programme in North Ayr. It provides health walks, wellbeing drop-in sessions, signposting service and Mums and Toddlers. The groups provide opportunity to volunteer, develop skills and gain training opportunities; which aims to improve confidence and reduce social isolation. People who attend the service have a sense of belonging and identity within the groups and have benefitted from opportunities to volunteer, train in First Aid and Food Hygiene courses and develop new skills.

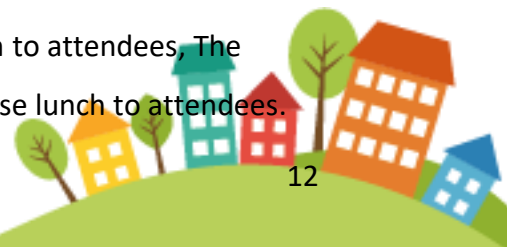
Attending the groups provides a sense of belonging and identity. Also, it supports mental health and reduces social isolation. A participant from one group highlighted that they had improved confidence and mental health. In addition, they had become more socially active in other groups/activities within the local area. Furthermore, another participant stated that they felt a sense of pride in achieving a volunteering opportunity and training in new courses.

People experiencing poverty

This was a common theme in most community group discussions. People are experiencing issues with food poverty, energy price increases, in-work poverty (causing an increase demand in people using foodbanks); heightened since the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is a growing need for foodbanks, and pop-up clothing banks in community groups as people struggle to cope with the impact of cost-of-living crisis. An example of a community group addressing the issue of poverty is Vics in the Community – Wellbeing Group who provided pop-up food events for families through Cash for Kids funding and a pop-up free clothing event to provide children with winter jackets (clothing donated from community).

In addition, many community groups provide free Breakfast or lunch to attendees, The Riverside Church Trust, Share and Care Group provide free two course lunch to attendees.



There is an increase in in-work poverty; Thriving Communities Employability provide wraparound support to ensure people/parents are better off in work. Some services highlighted that people “often do not know where/how to access necessary services” and attend community groups looking for support.

There is a need for improved awareness of community services to ensure that people know where and how to access appropriate services. This could be achieved through improving partnership working between statutory services and community groups/organisations.

Co-production approach with communities

Further insight may be gained through discussion/engagement with individuals in communities to hear directly about the impact of inequalities and what people need from their place. A co-production approach between statutory and third sector/community groups could progress the work from this report; combining everyone’s strengths and working together to achieve positive change and supporting communities playing a part in how decisions are made.

This approach not only supports communities to influence decisions, also to have a say in what is needed, how it is developed and how it is delivered. Co-production done well can shift the balance of power and can influence how communities view their services, therefore supporting the issue of lack of trust in formal services. The emerging themes could be used as focus for conversations and the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes used as a lens to find out what people need from their place to improve their health and wellbeing through reducing health inequalities.



Themes mapped against the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes

Movement

Public Transport – bus routes and cycle routes need improved in Ayr North to improve connectivity to services. Transport and travel costs are barriers to work opportunities, accessing formal services and worsen in-work poverty.

Active travel – cycle routes do not connect well with schools and unsafe walking routes are an issue. People report feeling unsafe outdoors in their community due to anti-social behaviour and substance use issues.

Traffic and parking – not viewed as a priority for groups due to other inequalities such as issues relating to poverty, mental health or housing taking priority in peoples' lives.

“Most people who attend this group can't afford a car and traffic and parking is not a priority either as they are more concerned about how they are going to feed their family or pay their bills.” - Community Wellbeing Coordinator

Spaces

Streets and spaces – Working for Wallacetown have set up Community Hubs where people can access essential services in their community and under one roof. Services such as Employability, Homeless Nursing Team, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Quit Your way. The hub also provides community groups/activities. This work is in development and aligns to the Wallacetown Delivery Plan.



Natural spaces – people feel that they have green space, and it is used for funded community events and gardening groups.

Play and recreation – finance is a barrier to accessing leisure activities and recreation out with community groups.

Resources

Services and support – a recurring theme across community groups/organisations was that there is a lack of trust in formal/statutory services; community groups are viewed as a safe space to access support for issues. Fear of being stigmatised, judged or unheard are the reasons given why people have a lack of trust in formal services. Also, gaps in service were highlighted for substance use issues and homelessness; need for a 7-day service that addresses substance use issues and mental health as both are influencing factors on the other. People who have issues with substance use and who experience issues with mental health often get passed to Addiction Services and mental health needs are not always addressed.

Work and economy – an increase in in-work poverty is an issue and this has worsened since the inflation crisis; this has resulted in an increase demand on foodbanks. Transport cost is a barrier to accessing work opportunities.

Housing and community – there is stigma attached to living in poor housing. People are aware of the negative impact that housing has on their health and wellbeing. This was detailed within community engagement and highlighted within conversations.

“People don’t access services due to feeling dismissed or stigmatised.” - Service Manager



Civic

Identity and belonging – there is a sense of identity and belonging from people who attend community groups. This is supported by opportunities to volunteer which provides the chance for people to train in courses and develop skills. Volunteers have completed courses such as First Aid and Food Hygiene and individuals reported that volunteering brought a sense of pride and achievement. Attending groups supports mental health and reduces social isolation; the group participants reported having made social connections and friendships within the group.

Feeling safe – people in North Ayr do not feel safe in their community due to issues with anti-social behaviour and drug related issues; this negatively impacts on mental health. “Working for Wallacetown are working on a ‘Weekly Day of Action’ with Police Scotland Wellbeing Team and Housing Services to address the issue of people feeling unsafe in their community. This is having a positive impact on tackling crime, antisocial behaviour in the area and residents are benefiting by feeling safe and more secure at home. They are also linking in with a variety of services such as health, cost of living support, housing, and social inclusion”.

“Two people who have just completed a Food Hygiene course are now volunteering and making lunches for the group. They are so proud in their achievement and in being issued with aprons with the charity logo.” -

Community and Wellbeing Coordinator



Stewardship

Care and maintenance - community engagement within documents reviewed for this work inform that people feel that their streets are uncared for and littered. Also, that there is an issue with anti-social behaviour; community groups/organisations highlighted that this impacts negatively on mental health of people who experience it.

Influence and control – people feel their voices are unheard, this was reflected in the documents reviewed and through conversations with community groups/organisations. There is a lack of trust in council services to make changes; people reluctant to voice opinion on matters as they do not see the point. Also, people often do not know how or where to access support for issues and seek support from community groups/organisations. These services are often giving advice/information and signposting to appropriate services or on occasions accompanying people to appointments.

*“Access to mental health services for people with addiction issues is challenging as Community mental Health Team and Addiction Services sit separately.” -
Development Worker*



Shared learning across the Project Towns

Across the seven Shaping Places for Wellbeing Project Towns, the Community Link leads were meeting regularly to reflect and capture learning from across the Project Towns. We have identified some shared messages about ways of working; the following are the key themes that summarise the feedback from stakeholder conversations.

- Communities value joint working and partnership approaches between community groups and organisations.
- Communities want strong and consistent communication from and between all stakeholders, so that people know where and how to access services and what services are available. With an emphasis on clear communication and transparency.
- Decision making between all stakeholders will strengthen partnerships and help to build trust in formal services.

Additional common themes across the Project Towns are:

- It can be challenging to gain feedback on some of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes such as Space and Movement when peoples priorities are food or fuel poverty – there is a need to recognise these as barriers to engagement rather than assume that people are satisfied.
- Short-term funding can have a negative impact on community group/organisations. However, generally community groups in Ayr did not view this as a negative issue. Although two Service Manager stated that short-term funding does have a negative impact on service provision; stating one year is not enough to make any real impact.

“People build trust with services, and this can be damaging when one service loses funding after one year, and another new project appears and people, must start all over again. Also, it can impact



negatively in service duplication in the same area.” -

Service Manager

- Community stakeholders value community engagement that goes beyond traditional consultation towards co-creation and co-design. This could be achieved through improving partnership working in Ayr between statutory services and community groups/organisations and taking a co-production approach.
- Community stakeholders value information sharing across organisations (shared learning, data sharing and support). This has been evident in the level of interest in the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme data and learning so far (Qualitative Infographic and full report) when available, from community groups/organisations and statutory services.
- Language can be a barrier for some people participating in community engagement processes. Community groups/organisations in Ayr often support people to complete application forms for benefits/housing or other support services.



Next Steps

Social determinants of health - Health and wellbeing is influenced throughout the life course by the social determinants of health; where people are born, brought up, live and work. Factors such as housing, employment, social support, education, income, food insecurity, early childhood development and access to quality health services and our communities can influence health and wellbeing positively or negatively. The process of this qualitative work and through discussions with community groups/organisations has evidenced that people in Ayr who are most impacted by health inequalities are often experiencing more than one factor that has a negative influence on their health and wellbeing. This increases risk of poorer health outcomes for people.

Early mortality in North Ayr - According to The Health Foundation (2023) living in a deprived area, living in a low-income household and living in poor housing are some of the forms of disadvantage that lead to worse health outcomes and are associated with higher rates of mortality. Experiencing two or more of these factors creates an even greater risk to people's health. Severe forms of disadvantage such as homelessness, opioid dependency, imprisonment and psychosis present an even greater risk to mortality.

The findings of this report will be used to inform the Place and Wellbeing Assessments for Ayr; ensuring that the lived experience captured by the Community Link Lead is being considered within the recommendations of the assessments. Also, the work will be used to ensure the Place and Wellbeing Programme is embedded in the continued work of the Steering Group to create system change; with an aim to improve the wellbeing of people through reducing inequalities.

The Community Link lead will continue to engage with stakeholders and community groups/organisations for the duration of the programme and continue to build on the trust and strengthen relational working that has been developed through this process, and to support delivery of the recommendations from Shaping Places for Wellbeing assessments. Also, reviewing new data and exploring opportunities for data sharing and collaboration as raised by the stakeholders contributing to this work.



Gaps and limitations

This report is based on the findings from conversations with stakeholders and community groups/organisations and documents that contained any form of consultation/engagement with community. However, the Community Link Lead was unable to have discussions with all key community groups/organisations and stakeholders due to capacity of all parties.

Meetings to capture lived experience of inequalities will be an ongoing process and the report will be updated accordingly on review dates. Some stakeholders did not reply to confirm sense check of conversation, however these conversations were considered and included within the report.

Some themes of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes such as traffic and parking and streets and spaces were not viewed as a priority for community groups/organisations due to other issues such as food poverty and energy prices being priority for people who are most impacted by inequalities. However, it should not be assumed these outcomes are not a priority for the community. These aspects have been reviewed within community engagement/consultation in documents such as Accessible Ayr and therefore have been included within this report.

Some key sectors and population groups such as Education and Older People groups within the community are not represented within this report due to capacity of organisations and the Community Link Lead, and others are perhaps overrepresented, and the report should be read in this context. However, this work is ongoing, and the report will be updated accordingly.

The documents reviewed for this report did not all contain feedback on community engagement or survey/questionnaire results; however, the results were used to inform and influence the document/Strategy/Action Plan.

Community group/organisations are often required to collate case studies/video qualitative evaluation for their annual report to their funders, this could be used to capture lived experience of inequalities. For this report, it was not used due to capacity of the Community



Link Lead; the reports are not readily available online and rely on community groups/organisations agreeing to data sharing. Also, there are community groups/organisations using creative ways to engage and address the issue of health inequalities for those who experience them most.

Examples include, the Riverside Church Trust, Ayr Gaiety Partnership, Thriving Communities and Working for Wallacetown; all have used culture and arts to improve wellbeing and address inequalities in those who are most impacted. Ayr Gaiety Partnership are working with communities to find out “what does community mean to you?” This is a creative way to engage with communities and could be utilised to explore the impact of inequalities in those most impacted by them.

Review date: January 2024

Contact

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Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme



Appendix 1. Documents reviewed

Organisation/document	Key findings/considerations
<p>South Ayrshire Council Ayr North Place Plan (2021), Thriving Places</p>	<p>The plan sets out the local community priorities and actions for making North Ayr a better place to work, live and visit. A good example of community engagement as it utilised the place standard tool for the first part of community engagement; 170 people took part in conversations across a range of ages.</p> <p>One of the key concerns raised from the community was the lack of control and influence they have over their own area and the issues it faces.</p> <p>The five key areas of concern (scoring below 3.4 on the PS tool) identified as needing most improvement is, streets and spaces, traffic and parking, influence and a sense of control, care and maintenance, and play and recreation.</p>
<p>Wallacetown Community Survey Key Findings (2021)</p>	<p>Designed to start a conversation with people living, working and visiting Wallacetown. Shared online and media but responses mainly collected through door-to-door sessions which captured peoples' views of their community. Although a quantitative approach was taken via a survey, several questions were open-ended and provided text box for response.</p> <p>Top three priorities identified were, drug dealing, crime and anti-social behaviour and safety when out and about. Other priorities included negative perceptions of the area. Themes included the need for a community centre for people to meet socially and access services such as health and wellbeing, housing and community safety issues.</p> <p>The document contains the survey results and comments and quotes from participants. Comments</p>



mentioned that people need support with mental health to prevent addiction issues.

Wallacetown Improvement Strategy 2022 to 2024, Making Wallacetown a place where people are safe, healthy and want to live, South Ayrshire Council

Informed by Wallacetown Community Survey – Priorities/Next Steps:

1. Developing a multi-agency team within the community with staff working from a shared space.
2. Listening to community and working with residents to improve the area; gardening club to improve and brighten up the area, litter picking group and more activities for young people; fun day, girls' group, dance and sports.
3. Continue to engage with communities to deal with emerging issues.
4. An Action Plan to be developed to support the implementation of local outcome (this may change due to restructure).

'Working for Wallacetown' project is currently carrying out multi-agency work which addresses inequalities from two bases; George Street Hub and Room@Wallacetown.

Ayr Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan (2019), South Ayrshire Council

This is a good example of consultation, however, using a quantitative approach (survey) to find out how community prioritise areas for the Town Centre.

South Ayrshire Council's aim at the time of the Action Plan was for 4 strategic zones in Ayr town centre; cultural and heritage, leisure and recreation, retail and Burns Statue Square. Consultation was a drop-in event at Town Hall over 2 days and an online survey ran over 4 days to capture public opinion. 200 people attended the events and 2700 responded to surveys.

"Do you think the Citadel should be replaced by a more modern facility": 46% - yes, 24% - no, and 30% - unsure.

"Do you think empty shops in the high Street should be converted for people to live in" – 57% - yes, 20% - no, and 23% unsure. "Do you consider a public space at



the Riverside site a good use of the space” Also, “What would bring you into Ayr Town Centre more often” 57% responded modern entertainment complex. 18% art gallery, 21% museum, 43% regular events, 38% sports and leisure facilities and 25% other.

Not sure of how this strategy is being implemented – citadel plan is not going ahead. An event space has been developed at the Riverside and a community event space centre (The Cutty Sark Centre).

South Ayrshire Council,
Community Planning
Partnership (2019), Child
Poverty Action Plan

The document does not contain any community engagement with Ayr residents. However, it provides examples (through case studies) of initiatives that services are providing to mitigate child poverty.

It contains a small qualitative study of the Scottish Government’s Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland – current mechanism for tackling fuel poverty and increasing the energy efficiency of domestic buildings.

Evidence of links between fuel poverty and health and wellbeing; linked to respiratory conditions, cardiovascular conditions, mental health and excess winter deaths.

Case studies on fuel poverty; anecdotal reports of health improvements after insulation of homes in: COPD and other respiratory conditions (n=12), arthritis (n=5), and improved mood and wellbeing (n=39). Limited study due to sample size and not measuring longer term benefits, however some respondents reported “I don’t get as much pain with my arthritis because the house is warmer” and another respondent stated that with the house being warmer has improved breathing and sleeping.

South Ayrshire Council, Community Planning
Partnership (2021), Local Outcome Improvement Plan;
Annual Progress Report

The report provides an update on the progress made by the Community Planning Partnership whose priority is reducing inequality and improving outcomes for people.



The report relates to South Ayrshire and is not specific to Ayr, however, it contains some good examples of community engagement processes.

The areas of focus for the plan are the impact of deprivation and quality of life for older residents.

The report contains many case study examples which capture improved outcomes for individuals after accessing services such as benefits, mental health, housing, digital skills, befriending, falls prevention.

A good example of a project using community engagement included within the report is 'Champions for Change'; it has developed a co-production approach to engaging with care experienced young people.

Accessible Ayr Round 1 – Public Consultation Summary of Feedback (2023)

A good example of community engagement/consultation through survey and opportunity for comments; 1105 participants responded and 74% of those lived in Ayr.

Consultation was undertaken via a variety of methods aimed at a wide demographic including a stakeholder forum, attendance and college and university, Ayr Town Centre – Business and Resident Survey, business consultation events, public consultation events, young person consultation at schools, Accessible Ayr website and social media accounts and pop-up surveys.

Some of the results include:

- 71% of respondents think that green and open space is important.
- Car is the main way people get around.
- Volume of traffic impacts on desire for cycling.
- People want to see free parking close to main shopping area.
- Main reasons for travel around or to Ayr – 1. Shopping, 2. Work 3. Visiting family.



- People would like to see improved footways and pathways.
- People are concerned about cleanliness in Ayr.
- People do not feel safe cycling due to a lack of segregated cycle routes and wider cycling network.
- People feel unsafe on the streets due to issues with people using drugs or begging – a feeling that more needs to be done to police this.
- Improved retail areas and festivals and themed events would bring more people into the Town Centre.
- Number of cars and conditions of pavements were the main barriers to walking and cycling.

South Ayrshire Council, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (2019–2024)

No consultation process with community/public – some mention of the need to raise awareness with the public with and aim for public to “play their part”.

Ayrshire Growth Deal Annual Performance Report (2021)

Does not contain any community engagement.

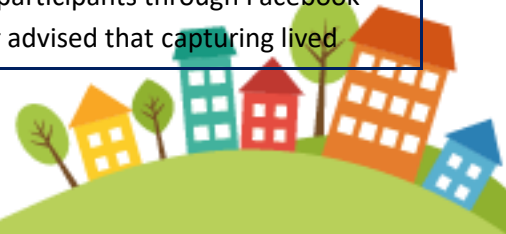


Appendix 2. Conversations with stakeholders and community groups/organisations

Organisations/ Community Groups	Notes from discussion
Vics in The Community Wellbeing Project	<p>Overview of the Wellbeing Programme; Health Walks, Drop-in sessions, Mums and Toddlers, Free breakfasts and lunch provided, funding (Cash for Kids) to provide pop-up food events in summer, volunteer and training opportunities provided, signposting service.</p> <p>Focus of conversation on the high level of mental health issues, social isolation and the impact of poverty experienced by group attendees.</p> <p>Learning points: The programme addresses the key inequality areas identified for Shaping Places for Wellbeing - Ayr. The Wellbeing Coordinator post is funded for 1yr (Mar 2024) through VASA. All activities are well attended by north Ayr community residents. Volunteer and training opportunities provide a sense of pride and purpose.</p>
South Ayrshire Council, Alcohol and Drug Partnership	<p>Overview of the service; Training and Development, Peer Worker Programme – Ayrshire College SVQ, arts and crafts, recovery focus, justice groups, LGBT group, women group, yoga. Opportunities to volunteer and work placement from Peer Worker programme.</p> <p>Learning Points: The importance of a recovery community in sustaining recovery for individuals with addictions issues – the relevant services being in place are key in recovery for individuals. South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership are looking for a new building and are currently involving their group members in the decision of where it should be.</p>
South Ayrshire Council, PING (Peer Involvement Networking Group)	<p>Overview of the service; addiction service for justice system, prison or police involvement. Work in partnership with 5/6 rehab centres, pathways to prison, 5-a-side football, Branching Out programme</p>



	<p>(12-week woodland craft course) for justice, mental health or offending behaviour. Various activity groups on offer, allotments at Craigie, and four recovery groups throughout SA.</p> <p>Learning points: EAP (email a prisoner) service provided 8 weeks prior to release. Not enough capacity to accommodate all requests. Offer of support for prisoners to navigate all support services that are required on release; it can be challenging for people accessing key services on release date. Also, can be a contributing factor of people returning to substance misuse if the required support is not in place for release date.</p>
<p>South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership – Partnership Facilitator (adults and older people)</p>	<p>Overview of role within HSCP and provided information on the different locality planning and steering groups that would be relevant/useful to the Programme. Talked about new Ageing Well Strategy and highlighted the importance for Ayr; high rate of older people in Ayr. Potential for Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme to be involved in from early stage.</p> <p>Susan Beattie, Project Lead now sits on the Ageing Well Board, supporting activity from the Programme.</p> <p>Learning points: Launch of Age Friendly event in June. Phil shared contact details of key stakeholders for the Programme.</p>
<p>Health Improvement Lead, NHS Ayrshire and Arran</p>	<p>Overview of service and role also, discussed the inequality issues experienced in Ayr. Provided details of key stakeholder contacts.</p>
<p>Three Sixty Project, Ayr</p>	<p>Overview of service; a programme of mental health activities referral/self-referral. Walking, Mental Health and Wellbeing, allotments, football, and arts & crafts. Venues: Riverside Church, Lochside CC, Annbank. Project changes regularly to reflect interest and location of members.</p> <p>Funded through HSCP. Activities are decided through communicating with participants through Facebook poll. Service manager advised that capturing lived</p>



experience through case studies is something that the service is considering carrying out in the future.

Learning points: Key issues for project are mental health, isolation and poverty; all align to the four key inequality areas of Shaping Places for Wellbeing - Ayr. Short-term funding can have a negative impact on community projects in terms of duplication of services and losing trust of members. Service manager discussed other projects being delivered by Salvation Army and Care and Share at Riverside Church.

Vics in The Community – Football Academy

Overview of the service; 24 football teams (male all ages and two female football teams). Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) funded projects throughout Covid-19 pandemic lockdown 2020 and brought groups together July 2020 to share experiences. Some of that legacy continues in community projects.

Vics in the Community Wellbeing project and the Food Pantry emerged from Covid-19 response projects. The Wellbeing Coordinator post is funded through VASA until March 2024.

Service Manager shared Vics in the Community annual reports. The reports contain case study examples capturing lived experience of individuals within the community who attend and have improved wellbeing from participating in the service.

Key issues discussed are social isolation, poverty, club bringing a sense of identity and belonging, club easily accessible as central to North Ayr community.

Learning Points: Case Study examples are key in capturing lived experience and evaluating the programme to funders. At the time of this conversation the service was in the process of applying to funding sources (Sports Scotland, SFA) to regenerate derelict building into community hub.

CEO, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA)

Overview of services; funded through HSCP. Conversation around community projects funded through VASA (align to the four key areas of health inequalities for Ayr).



Focus of discussion was around Age Friendly Community.

Learning points: there is a need for reducing social isolation and for a focus on the needs of older people to support the ageing population in Ayr. Identified Ageing Well Strategy as priority for future Place and Wellbeing assessments.

Harbour Ayrshire, Project Manager

Overview of services; pan-Ayrshire addictions support services. Funded through National Lottery. Service provided by 25 volunteers with lived experience, 1 Volunteer Coordinator and a Support Worker. Discussed P&W outcomes. Out of hours helpline (10 volunteers deliver) refers onwards to other services and to Harbour. The service had a van donated and provide a relocate service to help people move home.

Common issues that people are experiencing:

- Recovery from alcohol and drug issues.
- Impact of homelessness and housing issues (eg people not being allocated accommodation on discharge after a residential stay).
- Mental health services are inaccessible until an individual is in recovery.
- Social isolation
- Lack of trust in formal services (volunteers with lived experience are viewed as understanding and non-judgemental).
- People not referred to mental health services if in recovery treatment.
- Gaps in statutory services (out of hours and rural areas).

Learning points: gaps in service provision, and people falling through the cracks due to a lack of coordination of services. Mental Health Services inaccessible if in recovery treatment, gaps in service provision at weekends, people being discharged after residential treatment with no offer of accommodation (increasing the risk of person falling into previous behaviours of



substance misuse). Need for a 'one-stop shop; where people can access necessary services under one roof.

Riverside Church Trust, Service Manager

Overview of service; provides services to people in recovery from alcohol and drug issues and people affected by homelessness. Services such as Care and Share drop-in service where people can access health, social care and financial services, furniture service and a peer led out-reach service.

Three course meals are provided free of charge. Day trips and art activities are provided with an aim to reduce social isolation. Volunteer opportunity is meaningful to members and provides a sense of purpose and belonging as evidenced in videos of the programme. [This is Mark's Story](#) a case study video of Mark the Peer Support Worker and the positive influence that volunteering had on his wellbeing.

Partnership with Gaiety to facilitate a creative writing group and an arts and crafts group. An example of the success of this group was production of the play ["Junkie Miracles"](#) sharing stories of their experience and bringing it to the stage to perform. A further event is planned later in 2023 to showcase joint work between the two creative groups.

Common issues that people are experiencing:

- recovery from alcohol and drug issues
- impact of homelessness
- mental health
- social isolation
- Lack of trust in formal services; not accessing health services due to fear of judgement.
- People not referred to mental health services if in recovery treatment.
- Access to mental health services can be challenging for people with addiction issues as the Community Mental Health Team and Addiction Services sit separately.



Learning points: People with addiction issues who experience problems with their mental health often automatically get passed to Addiction services and mental health needs are not always addressed. Gaps in services at weekend (health/social care/housing) are unavailable over weekends other than emergency/NHS24. People could benefit from a more person-centred coordinated approach from services.

Community Link Practitioner (Ayr GP Practice), NHS Ayrshire and Arran

Overview of Community Link Practitioner role; social prescribing service referral and self-referral basis. Supports people with issues such as housing, debt matters, mental health, social isolation, financial issues, informal carer responsibility, alcohol and drugs, living with long-term conditions, employment, volunteering, stress and anxiety, healthy eating and weight loss, stopping smoking and connecting with activities and groups.

Common issues that people are experiencing:

- Issues relating to housing which impacts on mental health and wellbeing; drug taking, anti-social behaviour. If people are offered alternate housing it is often in another undesirable area with the same issues. Finance is a barrier for people finding other housing.
- Older people caring for partners which impacts negatively on their mental health.

Learning points:

- Lack of befriending service for older isolated people. Previously there was a service in place which ran for 5 years; delivering 1:2:1 session, telephone service and group service. The service was volunteer led and was managed by a coordinator.
- A lack of activities in general for older people. Used to be various activities held in the Book and Bun (space currently being used as Food Pantry).



- Barriers facing some older people accessing activities and services; mobility, finance, and transport for older people who are unable to travel by bus.
- “Lack of Care Workers and Social Workers mean that people are waiting a long time for assessments”. Therefore, family members waiting long periods of time to have a care package in place. This impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of family members who often take responsibility for caring roles.

South Ayrshire, Walking Development Officer

Overview of the role and service; part-funded through Paths for All. The focus is on the development of health walks; low level accessible walks with an aim to address the issue of mental health and social isolation. 14 walks across South Ayrshire, attendees are mostly retired older adults.

Groups include dementia friendly, church groups, sensory impairment, disability groups, new Scottish family. Volunteer led and leaders are trained with Walk Leader accredited qualification.

Learning Points: the group provides opportunity for volunteering and volunteers can improve quality of walks by incorporating their own special interest to walks (football, local history etc). Also, provides other volunteering opportunity roles for attendees such as litter picking, and gardening groups. Volunteering brings a sense of value and purpose and inclusion.

Project Coordinator, Ayrshire Women’s Hub

Overview of service: the hub provides emotional and practical support on a range of issues; domestic abuse, substance misuse, housing, financial. There is a café and drop-in space for women to come and have a coffee and chat with others. Also, offers activities such as mums and toddlers and health walks.

The key issues people experience:

- Issues with finances



- People experience issues with budgeting for household costs.
- People concerned about energy and food costs.
- Post Covid-19 pandemic lockdown people experiencing issues with relationships and seeking emotional and financial support.
- People need support with completing forms; benefits, housing and passports.

Learning points: the same issues that people are looking for support as other community groups. The service has a referral partnership with We are With YOU (a charity providing support for alcohol, drugs and mental health). However, there is a lack of awareness of other projects/community groups in Ayr who provide service to address inequality areas; highlighting the need for improved partnership working.

Project Manager, Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex

Overview of service: a charity ski slope which offers skiing and snowboarding tuition and tubing. It is a volunteer led community social enterprise organisation who use snow sports as a mechanism for positive health, wellbeing and social change in the local community.

Key issues experienced:

- Difficult to engage with families
- Issues with poverty; children more living in survival mode; where next meal is coming from.
- Children do not want to participate due to low self-esteem and lack of trust.
- Funding: 1 year funding not enough to make long-term changes.

Community Safety Team, Thriving Communities, South Ayrshire Council

Overview provided of activities delivered at Lochside Community Centre (North Ayr) by Thriving Communities. It provides many groups, activities and events such as gardening group, drop-in space (hot food and coffee provided).



Key issues experienced:

- Mental health
- Social isolation
- Substance misuse
- Food poverty
- Housing
- Substance misuse
- Environmental issues such as gardens
- Crime related issues
- Youth disorder

Learning points: Sense of belonging and identity with people who attend. The work addresses the priority inequality areas identified by the Programme Steering Group. Attendees of services often experiencing more than one factor that influences on health and wellbeing.

Employability Services, Thriving Communities, South Ayrshire Council

Overview of service: provide support to families to ensure that people are better off in work; supporting families to navigate issues whether they are in work or thinking about returning to work. The support is tailored to individuals and includes financial, and employability outcomes are linked to child Poverty and closing the attainment gap. Support includes income maximisation, benefit and grant applications, they complete better off calculations and identify flexible work opportunities. They provide support to access childcare.

Key issues experienced:

- Increase in poverty and in-work poverty (worsened since inflation crisis)
- Increase demand on Foodbanks
- Transport cost is a barrier to accessing work opportunities
- Issues with housing; poor area, drug related issues, anti-social behaviours
- Stigma attached to living in poor housing



- Impact of poor housing on mental health and wellbeing; people are aware of the impact.

Learning points: people accessing services seeking support as they are experiencing the impact of the same inequalities; poverty, housing, barriers to work and transport.

Salvation Army, George Street, Ayr

Overview of service: Food bank (Mon, Wed and Frid), Digital Skills (support with CVs and benefits), Parent and Toddler Group, hosts South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership Café, Hope recovery café, Broken Chains recovery group, and Seascape befriending group. Works in partnership with Department of Work and Pensions and provides employment courses.

Issues: substance misuse, unemployment, food poverty, impacts on families and most clients are single.

Learning points: Salvation Army is self-funded and works in partnership with other organisations/groups as a host venue/hub for people to access services/groups for support.

Chief Executive, Ayr Gaiety Partnership

Overview: it is a charity and social enterprise that runs The Gaiety Theatre in Ayr and leads creative engagement across South Ayrshire. Two sides to the organisation: putting things on stage and touring rural Ayrshire and using the power of culture to transform and change lives to participate in culture and arts.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the Partnership coordinated the Community Recovery Fund; 16 groups applied for this.

Examples of activities:

- The Partnership made a film about Ayr capturing peoples' feelings about where they live.
- They are working on developing work in Wallacetown in partnership with Community Safety/Justice.



- They worked in partnership with Riverside Church Trust in creating a short film “Junkie Miracles” (People who were experiencing issues with substance misuse or recovering starred in the video; this was performed at The Ayr Gaiety theatre to an audience).
- Creative Writing Group; one person published a book because of participating.
- Next steps are to expand work with schools and a long-term piece of work in Wallacetown around community and what does community mean.

Learning Points: The Partnership is working with communities in Ayr including those most impacted by inequalities to improve wellbeing. Art and culture have the power to transform lives and improve wellbeing in communities through the power of storytelling and sharing experiences with other people.

Community Coordinator, Working for Wallacetown,
South Ayrshire Council

Overview: two hubs are providing essential services to community; Room@Walacetown (Newton Primary School) and Working for Wallacetown Community Hub (George Street). Services such as Alcohol and Drug Partnership, food and clothes bank, smoking cessation, Fire Safety, Police Scotland, Housing, Riverside Church Trust, Social Security Scotland, NHS Health Improvement and Thriving Communities Employability.

The “Weekly day of action work” in partnership with Working for Wallacetown and Police Scotland is having a huge impact on tackling crime, anti- social behaviour in the area and residents are benefiting by feeling safe and more secure at home. They are also linking in with a vast variety of services such as health, cost of living support, housing, social inclusion.

Common issues experienced by the community are:

- Food poverty
- Financial issues
- Housing
- Mental health
- Social isolation



- Impact of anti-social behaviour
- Impact of substance misuse
- Impact of unemployment/lack of opportunity to access employment due to barriers.

Learning points:

- People access community hubs due to trusting and developing relationships with services.
- Community hubs are accessible and remove some barriers to accessing formal services; travel cost, within walking distance for many people.
- The Working for Wallacetown work is addressing the inequality areas identified by Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme and aligns to the Wallacetown Delivery Plan and is influenced and informed by the community engagement/consultation feedback of the Wallacetown Survey (2021).

