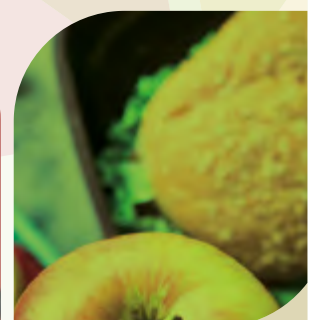
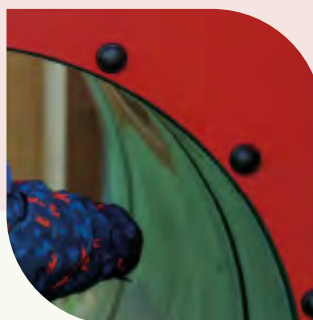


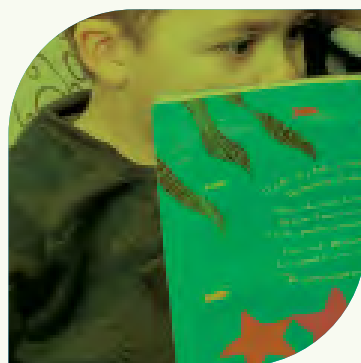
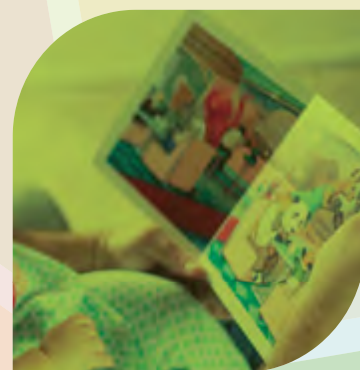
North Ayrshire Community
Planning Partnership

North Ayrshire

Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report

2020/21





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Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21

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The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic saw an unprecedented situation for us and the whole country. Overnight, this created a vast challenge for all Partners in supporting our residents, communities and businesses.



Foreword and Introduction

In North Ayrshire we are fully committed to becoming a fairer and more equal society. Our shared strategic approaches shape everything we do and we focus our work on tackling inequalities and creating a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.

Our ambition is shared by all our Community Planning Partners and is demonstrated in our partnership working and joint commitment to the priorities and actions outlined in this report. Our multi-agency partnership approaches are recognised as a key strength in North Ayrshire.

The past twelve months from March 2020 have been heavily focussed on the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time we have experienced the benefit of our trusting relationships with communities and partners. And above all, we have witnessed the dedication of our teams, communities and partners in supporting the people of North Ayrshire in the most difficult of circumstances.

From a Public Health perspective, the focus was on testing pathways, Test and Protect and mass vaccination. This universal crisis has impacted upon children

of all ages. During the pandemic we were acutely aware of the impact on our most vulnerable children and their families and carers which includes those already living in poverty, and those who have not previously experienced poverty but are now living in poverty due to the effects of the pandemic.

Our third annual Child Poverty Action Plan is key to our commitment to mitigating the current and lasting impacts of the pandemic and to demonstrating our determination to reduce child poverty in the longer term.

There are a number of recent areas of work which have a direct impact on each of these ambitions.

Over the past year our new North Ayrshire Food System has been developing and is gradually ensuring that no-one finds it difficult to access food in our area and that we have a more sustainable approach to food with dignity.

We have also made considerable progress with our Cost of the School Day Policy which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2021. The Policy is a partnership approach and in line with our co-design and co-production approach, key areas of action will be agreed at a launch conference in June 2021. The policy and actions will start



Professor
Hazel Borland
Interim Chief
Executive NHS
Ayrshire and Arran



Councillor
Robert Foster
Cabinet Member for
Health and Social
Care (and lead
Member for Poverty)



Craig Hatton,
Chief Executive,
North Ayrshire Council

to make a real difference to the lives of our families in the coming year.

A new fund has launched to help relieve some of the financial pressures facing the third and voluntary sector in North Ayrshire. The Community Renewal and Recovery Fund has come to fruition thanks to £100,000 set aside from the North Ayrshire Ventures Trust Board. This is in recognition of the challenges the crucial sector is facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.

At the February meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee, the Full Business Case for the Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund was approved. The £3m Scottish Government funding will resource new Community Wealth Building officers across the whole of the Ayrshire region to support local businesses and community organisations to deliver Community Wealth Building 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.

Approval has now been granted to fund over 450 Kickstart jobs for young people in the area. As part of the NHS commitment to Community Wealth Building across Ayrshire, linked to the Growth Deal,

and to the NHS operating as an anchor organisation, the NHS Employability Strategy is being refreshed and an aspect of this will focus on young people, including a commitment to increasing the number of Modern Apprentices, with the guarantee of job availability at the end of the apprenticeship and a focus on Care Experienced Young People, further assisting the NHS in relation to its Corporate Parenting commitment.

We have embarked on a two-year financial inclusion demonstrator project 'Better Off Hub' following North Ayrshire Cabinet approval in October 2020. The project will see the creation of a Public Social Partnership, to develop a new model through co-production with the third sector. The Better Off Hub would deliver vital financial advice services, in a new holistic way, focused on the whole person with an objective to build capacity and reduce future demand on services. The proposals align with Community Wealth Building ambitions and support our economic recovery.

We hope you will find our Child Poverty Action Report informative and ambitious. Please let us know your thoughts. You can email us at: info@northayrshire.community



National Context

Eradicating child poverty is fundamental to ensure Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up as well as meeting the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of the children who experience it. Poverty also has a wider cost for society. For example, Scottish Government [statistics](#) show:

- **61%** of low-income families with children in Scotland can't afford to make regular savings of £10 a month or more.
- **51%** report that they don't have a small amount of money to spend each week on themselves.
- **10%** can't afford to have friends of their children round for tea or a snack once a fortnight.

The Fairer Scotland Duty is an overarching strategic duty on public bodies (including local authorities). It has interactions with the Equality Act 2010; Scotland Act 2016; and came into force on 1 April 2018.

The Duty requires that: "An authority to which this section applies must, when

making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage."

Local Action Plans and Reports

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 introduced a new requirement for local authorities and each relevant Health Board to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report, as soon as practicable after the end of each reporting year.

National Child Poverty Targets

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out four measures of relative poverty and statutory targets for Scotland to reach by 2030. This establishes Scotland as the only part of the UK with statutory income targets on child poverty. These targets are:



Figure 1: National Child Poverty Targets

Target	Description	Rationale
For less than 10% of children to be in relative poverty	The proportion of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median (middle) UK income in the current year.	Recognises that individual and household needs are relative to societal standards of living and measures whether the incomes of the poorest households are keeping up with growth in average (middle) incomes in the current year.
For less than 5% of children to be in absolute poverty	The number of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median UK income in 2010/11, adjusted for inflation.	Assessment of whether living standards at the bottom of the income distribution are rising or falling (keeping pace with inflation) irrespective of those elsewhere in the income distribution.
For less than 5% of children to be in combined low income and material deprivation	The number of children living in households with incomes below 70% of the median UK income AND going without certain basic goods and services (such as a warm winter coat, a holiday away from home, money to replace worn out furniture etc.)	Enables an analysis of a household's ability to use resources to buy essentials as well as of the income coming into the household.
For less than 5% of children to be in persistent poverty	The number of children who have lived in relative poverty in 3 of the last 4 years.	Living in poverty for a significant period of time is more damaging than brief periods spent with a low income.

Source: Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2017-20 (data.gov.scot)

National Child Poverty Levels

It is estimated that 24% of children (240,000 children each year) were living in relative poverty after housing costs in 2017-20. Before housing costs, it is estimated that 21% of children (210,000 children each year) were in relative poverty.

After a decreasing trend between the late nineties and 2010-13, which slowed briefly just before the recession, child poverty rates have been gradually rising again.

Two thirds of children in poverty live in working households. While the poverty risk is much lower for children in working households compared to those in non-working households, not all work pays enough to lift the household above the poverty threshold.

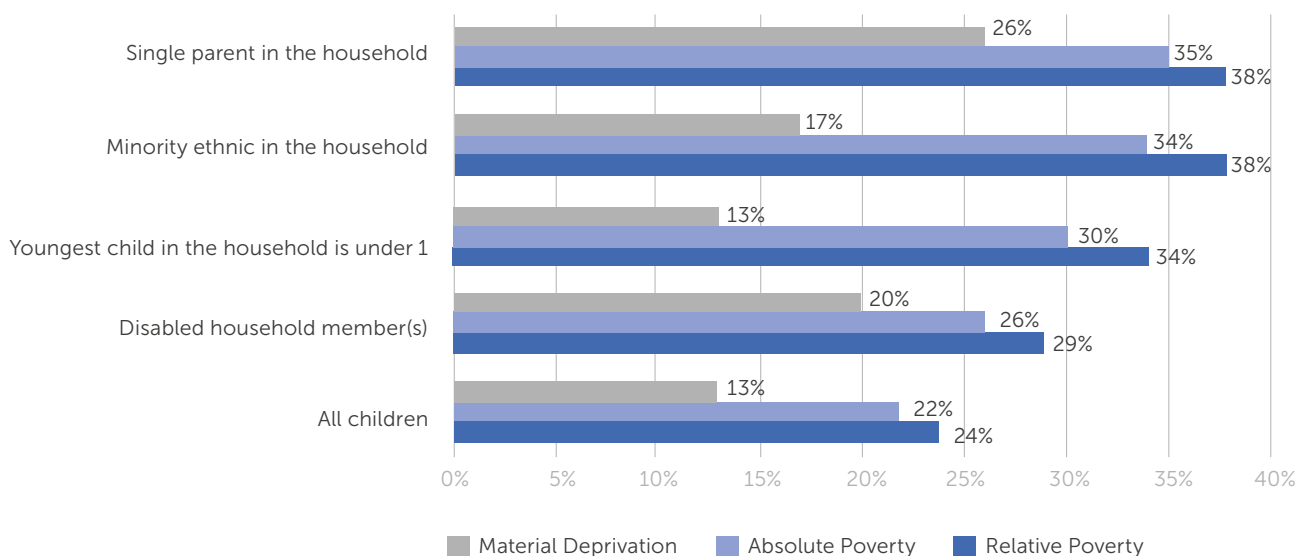
It is estimated that in 2017-20, 68% of children in relative poverty after housing costs were living in working households (160,000 children each year). This data suggests that after a steady and steep increase of in-work poverty since 2007-10, reflecting high employment rates, in-work poverty is now stable at a high level.

Who is affected?

Figure 2: Priority Groups

Figure 2 below shows the proportion of children living in poverty in Scotland by the priority group status of their household.

Proportion of Children in Priority Groups in Relative Poverty after housing costs, Absolute Poverty after housing costs and Material Deprivation (Scotland 2017-20)



Source: [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2017-20 \(data.gov.scot\)](https://data.gov.scot/publications/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2017-20/pages/10/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2017-20-figures) (as at March 2021)

The priority groups are households with children that are known to be at high risk of poverty. These groups have been identified by the Scottish Government using available data, but we know this does not cover all groups at higher risk of poverty.

However, the following groups when viewed together cover the majority of households in poverty:

- Having a lone parent (mainly women)
- Having two or more siblings (3+ children)
- Being disabled or having a disabled sibling or parent
- Being from a minority ethnic background
- Having a young child in the household (less than 1 year old)
- Having young parents (using data for households where the mother is aged under 25 years)

The chart on page 8 (Figure 4) shows the projected trend of child poverty for each target. By 2030/31, it is estimated that 38% of children will be in relative poverty, 32% of children will be in absolute poverty, 17% of children will be in combined low income and material deprivation and 16% of children will be in persistent poverty.

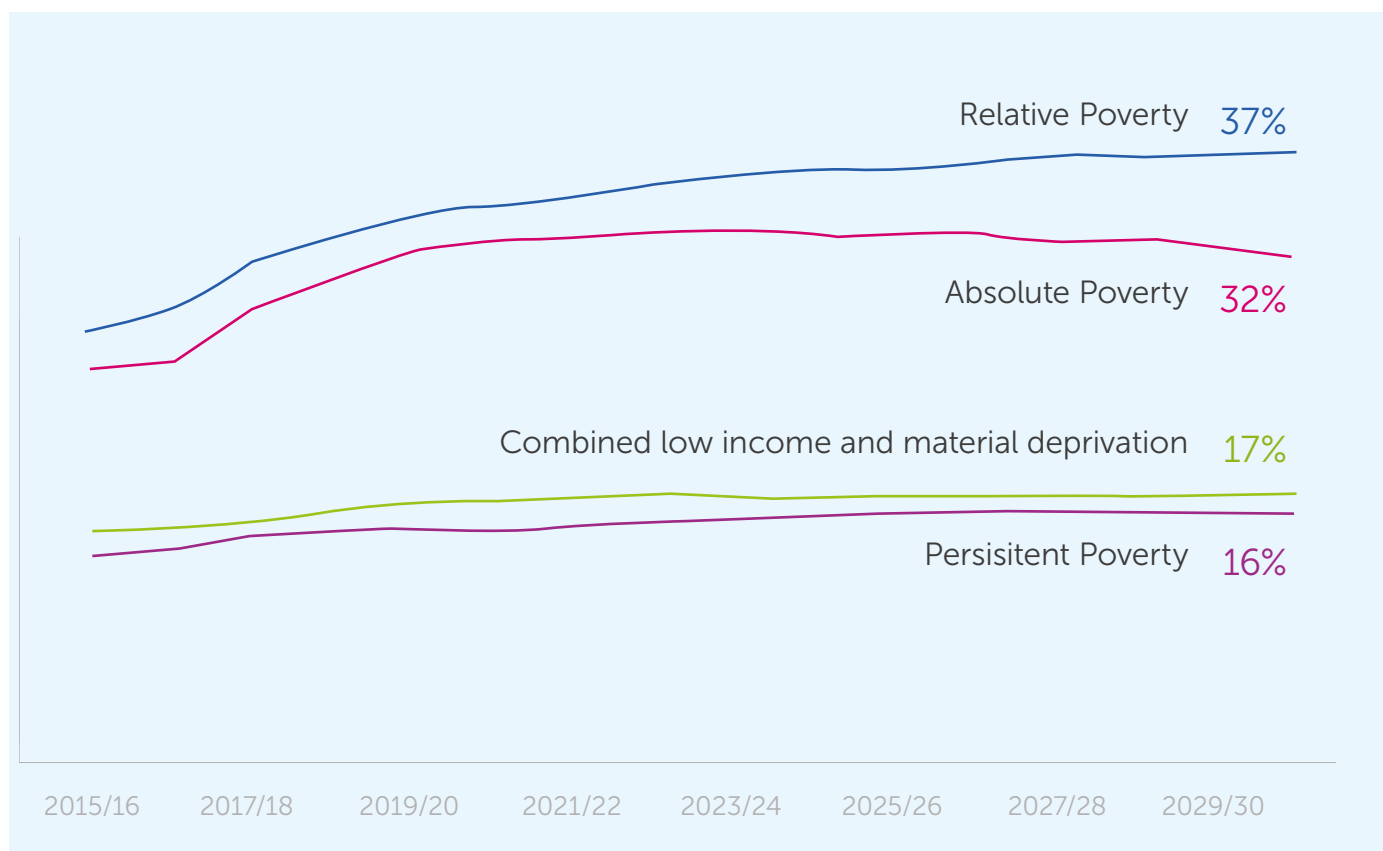
The key reason for these projected rises is the impact of welfare reform, primarily the benefit freeze and the two children limit on tax credits.

The Scottish Government recognises that in the context of these projections the child poverty reduction targets within the Act are ambitious. However, Scottish Ministers are clear that in the current environment, which threatens to make many families worse off, there is a strong case for intensive action at national and local level to tackle child poverty.





Figure 4: Projected Child Poverty Levels to 2029/30



Source: Reed and Stark 2018



What are the drivers of child poverty?

The direct drivers of poverty fall into three main categories – income from employment, costs of living and income from social security.

Figure 5: Direct Drivers of Poverty

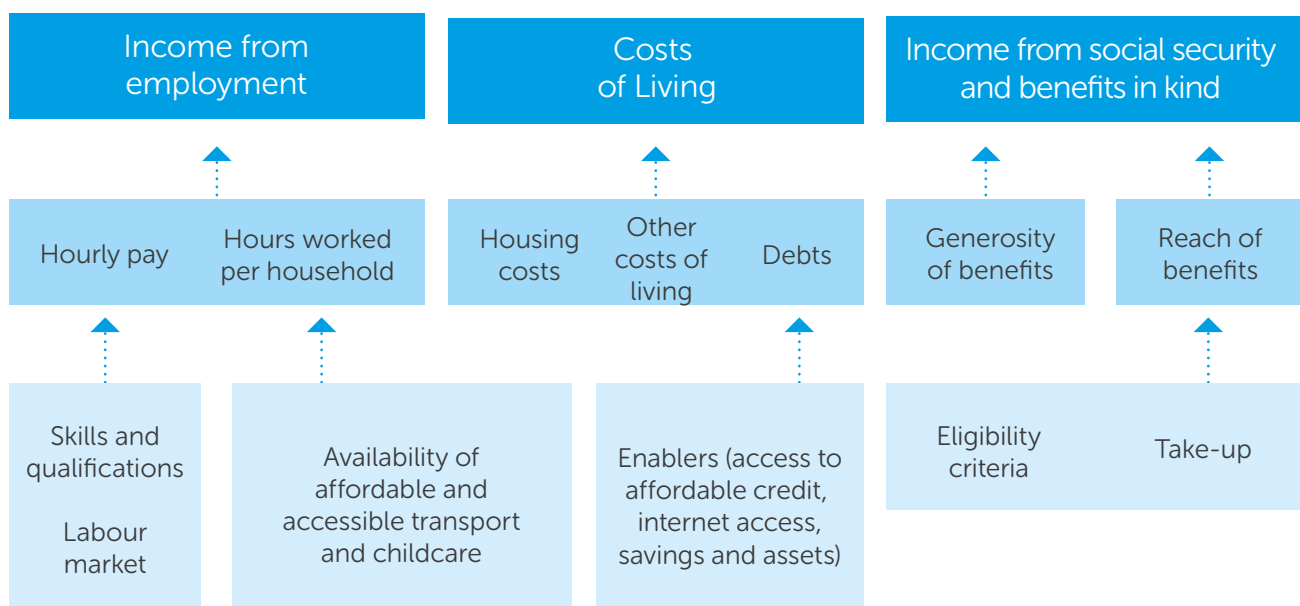




Figure 6 below shows the links in our Children's Services Planning approach.



North Ayrshire Strategic Context

Figure 6 below shows the links in our Children's Services Planning approach.

Figure 6: Children's Services Planning Dashboard

Children's Services Planning 2021





We recognise that high levels of inequality, particularly poverty exist in North Ayrshire. In our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2022, we have increased our focus on child poverty.

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is a strong and effective collaboration of a wide range of organisations. Through working together, we continue to realise the benefits of sharing our resources, knowledge and skills to improve the lives of local people. All partners have a shared commitment and partnership vision: *"North Ayrshire – A Better Life"*.

We recognise that high levels of inequality, particularly poverty exist in North Ayrshire. [In our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(LOIP\) 2017-2022](#), we have increased our focus on child poverty. This is in response to very concerning local trends in child poverty levels.

Underpinning this we have four priority areas:

- A Working North Ayrshire
- A Healthier North Ayrshire
- A Thriving North Ayrshire – Children and Young People

Our cross-cutting themes influence our approach to these priorities:

1. Building stronger communities – empowering communities to increase control over their lives, being supported to do things for themselves and having their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services.

2. Prevention – being proactive to avoid negative outcomes and early intervention in existing issues to mitigate their future impact.

These do not operate in isolation. We draw from a range of partner plans to support these priorities. Our six Locality Partnerships alongside our Connected Communities Service are fundamental to ensuring that plans are built on lived experience.





Figure 7: Community Planning Structure in North Ayrshire





We became the **first Child-Centred Council in Scotland**, putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do and making sure that we give our young people the best possible start in life.

The [2019-24 North Ayrshire Council Plan](#) was approved in June 2019. The plan titled 'North Ayrshire: A Council that is Fair for All' describes our vision, mission and priorities. It sets out our new strategic approach which is focused on making North Ayrshire a fairer and more equal society.

We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.

Our plan has three strategic priorities linking all of the work we do:

[Aspiring Communities](#)

A society where everyone, has the same life chances to grow, prosper and have fulfilling and healthy lives.

[Inspiring Place](#)

An enterprising, vibrant and sustainable environment, appealing to investors, attractive for visitors and a place where our residents are proud to live and work.

[A Council for the Future](#)

Our Council is forward thinking – motivated to transform and improve the services we provide for our communities, through innovation and reshaping our approach. We will focus investment towards our priorities.



[We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.](#)



The focus of the group is on prevention and early intervention and the role it has to play in improving child health outcomes, breaking the cycle of health inequalities in Ayrshire and Arran.



NHS Ayrshire and Arran continues to work in partnership to reduce the impact of poverty on children's lives. The Health Inequalities Impact Assessment Tool was developed and work to promote the use of this alongside increasing awareness of child poverty amongst NHS staff is an ongoing priority.

The Pan-Ayrshire Infant, Children and Young People's Transformational Change Programme Board (ICYPTCPB) provides the partnership vehicle to support and improve the health and social outcomes for infants, children and young people in Ayrshire and Arran and provides a strategic view across Ayrshire for children's health and social outcomes and health inequalities. The focus of the group is on prevention and early intervention and the role it has to play in improving child health outcomes, breaking the cycle of health inequalities in Ayrshire and Arran. It proposes ways of encouraging all agencies to work together to offer infants, children and young people the best start in life and realise their full potential. This begins before birth and continues through the early years of life, school years and transition to adulthood supported by the national practice model, 'Getting it Right for every Child' (GIRFEC). The work of the Board is intrinsically linked to the vision of Caring for Ayrshire and places the person at the centre of care.

Other strategies which tie in to reducing child poverty and its wider impacts and contribute to equity of outcome for all in Ayrshire and Arran include: Caring for Ayrshire, CWB Pledge signed by NHS, our Employability Strategy, Population Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and our tobacco, oral health and sexual health strategies. NHS have continued to prioritise improving health information and health literacy to support our most vulnerable families in obtaining, communicating, processing, and understanding health information and services.

Our [Children's Services Plan 2020-23](#) was launched by our North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership in October 2020. This Plan details how North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership aims to give our children the best start in life and to make North Ayrshire the best place in Scotland to grow up.

To ensure our plans link together to tackle Child Poverty, we have a number of priorities which relate to our ambition to



Our Children's Rights approach will ensure that children's rights continue to be at the centre of our Children's Services Planning, including our Child Poverty Action Plans.

address poverty and equality. They focus on working with parents and carers to build capacity, enabling them to provide the most positive start for their child and improve their future life chances.

Our Children's Services Strategic Partnership provides the strategic governance for our Children's Services Planning and this includes the Child Poverty Action Plan.

Children's Rights

The [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 1st September 2020 and was passed unanimously on 16th March 2021. The main purpose of the Bill is to bring the UNCRC into Scots law. The Bill aims to ensure that:

- children's rights are respected and protected in the law in Scotland
- public authorities are legally required to respect and protect children's rights in all the work that they do

In 2020 we published our Children's Rights Report which demonstrates our commitment to the articles of the UNCRC and delivering them through The Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, which encompasses 8 Wellbeing Indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included). GIRFEC recognises that

all children are unique and that each child should be helped to reach their full potential.

Our Children's Rights approach will ensure that children's rights continue to be at the centre of our Children's Services Planning, including our Child Poverty Action Plans.

In February 2015, the **Scottish Attainment Challenge** and the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund was launched. This initiative aims to provide targeted support to increase the educational attainment and outcomes of children in Scotland's highest concentrated areas of deprivation. An allocation of £120m is allocated directly to schools in the form of the Pupil Equity Fund to support schools to use additional resource to target a reduction in the poverty-related attainment gap. North Ayrshire had made significant demonstrable progress in reducing the gap.

Every council area benefits from **Pupil Equity Funding** and 95% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding for pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible for free school meals. For every child that is registered, the school receives £1,200 in addition to their normal budget.

Inclusive Growth

We worked with the Scottish Government to develop and pilot the “inclusive growth diagnostic”. The main purpose of the diagnostic was to see how economic growth could benefit all our residents by identifying any barriers, such as access to transport as well as opportunities. Our award-winning North Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Diagnostic identified job density, health and skills as key issues that the Council and partners need to tackle if we are going to achieve an inclusive economy.

This significant piece of work gives us the information we need to prioritise actions, such as investing in a supported employment programme to help more disabled people access and sustain employment. The diagnostic has been rolled out across Ayrshire and is central to the Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal.



Ayrshire Growth Deal

The Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal was signed On 19 November 2020 and secures £251.5 million worth of funding to help realise Ayrshire’s potential as a world-class business region for the aerospace and space, energy, tourism, manufacturing and engineering industries, and reaffirms our commitment to the region and the collective desire to support ambitious plans for renewal and long term sustainable growth.

The aim is to marry business growth opportunities to employment progression, developing the future workforce and community development, ensuring all our communities and residents benefit from economic growth.

Community Wealth Building

Together with our Community Planning partners, we have launched our first [Community Wealth Building Strategy](#) for North Ayrshire. We are the first Community Wealth (CWB) Council in Scotland.

Community Wealth Building is a radical and bold approach that will see key institutions use the economic levers available to us to support our local economy. The result will be a more resilient local economy with more diverse businesses and well-paid jobs for our residents. Key to this approach is partnership working and we are working alongside the CPP and wider regional partners to deliver inclusive economic outcomes that will benefit all our residents.

Community wealth building is key to tackling poverty and deprivation.

Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach

In September 2020 our [Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach](#) was agreed and published. This approach to an inclusive and green economic recovery is framed within the wider strategic framework for the Council including the Council Plan – focusing on our priorities of Community Wealth Building and climate change, and within these the need to create an inclusive local and regional economy. Our approach will see a re-framing of our capital investments through a Community Wealth Building lens.

We will use our economic levers across the Council and our new economic model of Community Wealth Building to develop a Green New Deal for North Ayrshire. We will use our capital investment to accelerate our recovery and wider regeneration of our area, at the same time as tackling climate change. We will support our existing businesses and social enterprises to rebuild, diversify and become more resilient, green and inclusive. We will support our communities who have lost their jobs or are in insecure work, and encourage community entrepreneurship.

The twin priorities of a North Ayrshire Green New Deal to build back better, fairer and greener are to:

- Ensure an inclusive economic recovery and renewal by delivering our Community Wealth Building mission; and
- Ensure a green economic recovery and renewal focussed on achieving our net zero carbon ambitions through the creation of sustainable infrastructure and regeneration projects and creating fairer jobs.

North Ayrshire Fairer Food

As part of our Community Wealth Building Strategy, we have established our North Ayrshire Fairer Food approach to ensure that demand for emergency food provision is reduced and that residents can access affordable and nutritious food.

The Community Support Hubs act as brokers who can signpost to local food provision. Using a community wealth building approach, third sector organisations provide low cost or free food to local people who need it with local businesses being partners in this.

Working with the North Ayrshire Foodbank and a range of community partner organisations, networks of community fridges, larders, community shops and food coops have been developed to ensure a more sustainable approach to food with dignity.





Lived Experience of Poverty – Fair for All Commission

Lived experience is known to be the most valuable consideration when addressing areas as complex and challenging as child poverty. By creating a shared insight of lived experiences, we not only begin to understand how to tackle real life issues, we also gain knowledge of how to measure whether a positive impact is really being made.

Our North Ayrshire Fair For All Commission consists of:

- Community Commissioners – representatives of our communities who have knowledge of poverty and insecurity.
- Civic Commissioners – representatives from a wide range of policy areas including universities, public services, health services and businesses.
- Fair for All Commission Officer – provides support to the Commission.

The four key themes identified are:

- Poverty and Health
- Poverty and Housing

- Poverty and Benefits
- Poverty and Cost of the School Day

The Commission also agreed that the theme of stigma was cross cutting and affected all four themes. It explores the causes of the issues raised through the stories shared by the Community Commissioners, the unintended consequences on communities of policies, procedures and decisions and what possible changes or improvements can be made.

Get Heard Scotland Discussions

Get Heard Scotland (GHS) is designed to help people on low incomes get their voices heard on the policies and decisions that most impact their lives and their communities. The programme is coordinated by the Poverty Alliance and funded by the Scottish Government as part of Every Child Every Chance, the Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. By holding discussions with people affected by poverty they find out what is working in their community, what is not working and what needs to change to better support



people living on low incomes and loosen the grip of poverty on their lives.

A total of 37 GHS discussions took place across Scotland between August 2019 and December 2019, with more than 200 people taking part in these discussions. Ten discussions took place in North Ayrshire.

In North Ayrshire, discussions took place in partnership with organisations, services and projects such as:

- Stevenston Library
- Garnock Valley Men's Sheds
- North Ayrshire Disability Alliance
- Garnock Valley Youth Forum
- Kilwinning Junior and Senior Youth Forum
- Kilwinning Academy Accredited Learning Group
- Café Solace
- North Ayrshire Youth Conference
- Centrestage

The full report can be viewed [here](#).

Most of the recommendations raised in the report are already in progress or are

being considered as part of our future actions. The recommendations are a key resource to enhance our understanding of the impact of our actions on local residents.

Social Renewal Advisory Board Listening Events in North Ayrshire August/September 2020

The pandemic and the associated lockdown has been a difficult time for many, and we know that the impact has not been felt equally. We also know that the effects will not be short lived. However, during this time, we have also seen inspiring efforts within North Ayrshire's communities – volunteers stepping forward, neighbours reconnecting with one another, organisations working together to tackle access to food, loneliness and all forms of disadvantage.

A Social Renewal Advisory Board has been set up by Scottish Government to advise on how best to tackle poverty and inequality as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Members of the board include experts in housing,



disability, poverty, homelessness and the third sector. The Social Renewal Advisory Board held listening events to hear and learn from individuals, community groups and organisations around Scotland.

The published principles for the Board state that the work will be 'participative and informed by a wide range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience'. They also state that 'a detailed programme to bring in the voices of lived experience will sit alongside the Board. This will inform every decision taken as part of this process, ensuring that those with lived experience are right at the heart of discussions.'

To capture the experience of those with lived experience from life under lockdown, the Connected Communities team organised a series of six virtual meetings with representatives from local community groups and organisations. Special events were organised with young people and the Fair For All Commission. These Community Based Listening Events were a great opportunity to hear about communities where we have seen growing leadership and community

resilience as a result of the pandemic and associated lockdown.

The learning gained from these listening events will not only feed into Scottish Government's Social Renewal Advisory Board to re-form and re-shape local government in Scotland but will provide North Ayrshire Council an opportunity to inform our own renewal plans too.

Cost of the School Day

We are fully aware that costs associated with attending school can be major barriers for families living on low incomes. Families can often struggle to afford uniforms, trips, school lunches, gym kits, pencils and pens, and dress down days can be difficult or impossible. This can have an impact on children's ability to learn and have an impact on how children feel and engage with school.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted children and young people's learning due to school closures. The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the economy, resulting in a reduction in income for many of our families.



Poverty can have a lasting impact on children and young people's health and wellbeing as well as the significant and persistent gap in attainment from lower and higher income families. Education can represent a route out of poverty, but crucially only if children and young people can access education as fully and equally as possible.

The cost of the school day has been and will continue to be a major priority for us. In 2020 we established a working group comprising of Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers.

North Ayrshire has previously participated in work with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.

The aim of the Cost of the School Day (COSD) Working Group was to further drive forward a whole systems approach

to reducing the cost associated with education. We already have strong approaches to this across North Ayrshire and we continue to look for new whole-system commitments from the Council and its CPP and community and business partners.



North Ayrshire has previously participated in work with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.



Inequalities in outcomes can be seen across all sectors including education, employment, income and health and wellbeing



Poverty in North Ayrshire – what do we know?

High levels of inequality exist in North Ayrshire, particularly poverty and the associated effects this has. North Ayrshire is one of the most deprived areas in Scotland. Deprivation levels are significantly higher than the Scottish average. The latest 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) highlighted continuing levels of deprivation in North Ayrshire. 52 of our 186 datazones now fall within the 15% most deprived in Scotland. 39,139 people live within these deprived areas representing 28.8% of North Ayrshire's population, significantly above the Scottish average.

In addition, unemployment levels in North Ayrshire are high, there are significant numbers of people on low income and almost a third of children live in poverty.

Inequalities in outcomes can be seen across all sectors including education, employment, income and health and wellbeing. They are the result of an imbalance in power, money and resources across society, further compounded by the recent economic conditions of recession, austerity and welfare reform.





The new data shows that an estimated figure of over 6,200 children (27.9%) age 0-16 could be living in poverty in North Ayrshire in 2019/20.

Local child poverty indicators (After Housing Costs) 2019/20

New data on child poverty was released in May 2021. This new estimate is based on Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) data but is based on family income levels, after housing costs. The data only covers the age group of 0 to 16-year olds. This analysis, by Loughborough University can be viewed [here](#).

The new data shows that an estimated figure of over **6,200 children (27.9%) age 0-16 could be living in poverty in North Ayrshire in 2019/20.**

When comparing local authority areas in Scotland, North Ayrshire has the second highest level of child poverty of any area in Scotland (27.9%) and is higher than the national average of 24%. North Ayrshire has seen a 3.2 percentage point increase in child poverty levels since 2014/15 and is above the Scottish percentage point increase (2%). However, seven local authorities have seen slightly higher percentage point increases (between 3.3 and 5.1 percentage points). Please note that previous years figures have been recalculated to comparisons with previously released data will not be accurate.

Local Poverty Related Indicators

Further analysis of local data available to us provides further insight into our local context. The information has been displayed below. The main issues highlighted in terms of employment are more 'lower paid' jobs, higher underemployment levels and higher unemployment compared to Scotland as a whole. In terms of benefits, there are higher level of out of work benefit claims. In terms of other related issues that impact on people's lives, we have higher levels of children looked after by the authority, higher rates of children admitted to hospital due to asthma and higher levels of domestic abuse incidents. This analysis aids our understanding of issues impacting local residents and families.



This analysis aids our understanding of issues impacting local residents and families.

Figure 8: Local Data Overview

Indicator	North Ayrshire	Scotland	Source
% Households managing well financially (2018)	62%	55%	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey – Adults dataset
Children in working households (2018)	62.4%	62.0%	ONS, Annual Population Survey, Workless households for regions across the UK
% Employees (18+) earning less than the Living Wage (2019)	16.0%	16.9%	ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
% P4-P7 pupils registered for free school meals (2018)	25.2%	17.0%	Healthy Living Survey
Employment in 'lower paid' occupations (% of all in employment) (2019)	35%	29%	ONS, Annual Population Survey, year to Jun 2019
Underemployment of 16+ population (%) (2018)	13%	7%	ONS, Annual Population Survey
% Adults reporting a limiting long-term physical or mental health problem – household with children (2018)	21.6%	14.9%	Scottish Government, Scottish Surveys Core Questions
Age of first time mothers – 19 and under (% of all first time mothers) (2015/16 – 2017/18)	12.6%	7%	NHS Information Services Division, Age of First Time Mothers
% Single parent households (2018)	6%	5%	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey
% Large family households (2018)	4%	5%	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey
Employment Rate	72.7%	76.5%	Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (Oct 2019-Sep 2020).
Unemployment Rate	6.0%	3.5%	
Working age population claiming out-of-work benefits (2016)	14.6%	10.56%	Public Health Information for Scotland

Figure 8: Local Data Overview (cont.)

Indicator	North Ayrshire	Scotland	Source
Households with children living in fuel poverty (2014-16)	18.1%	16.7%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Children admitted to hospital due to asthma, rate per 100,000 population (2016/17- 2018/19)	268.55	151.97	Public Health Information for Scotland
Children looked after by Local Authority, rate per 1,000 (2019)	20.4	13.1	Public Health Information for Scotland
Domestic Abuse Rates, per 10,000 population (2018)	123.5	111.5	Public Health Information for Scotland
Annual Participation (in education, training or employment) measure for 16-19 year olds (2019)	90.5%	91.6%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Proportion of Working age population employment deprived (2019)	17.1%	12%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Children referred to the Children's Reporter for offences, rate per 1000 children age 8-15 (2018/19)	7.36	6.12	Public Health Information for Scotland
Young people living in the most income deprived quintile, age 0-25 (2018)	47.64%	21.75%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Proportion of people earning less than the living wage (2019-20)	16.0%	16.9%	Local Government Benchmarking Framework

*All Data correct as at March 2021.

Sources:

- <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/IncomePoverty/LAPovertyData/LAdashboard>
- <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157425/report.aspx>
- <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/>
- <https://scotland.mylocalcouncil.info/>

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Impact of Covid-19 in a UK and Scottish Economic Context

Total economic output (GDP) in January 2021 was 9.0% below the levels seen in February 2020 (the last month before the effects of the pandemic were felt in the economy), compared with 4.0% below October 2020 (the initial recovery peak). In Scotland, economic output is 8.4% below the levels of February 2020.

In the UK, the number of payroll employees has fallen by 693,000, with the largest falls seen at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Analysis by age band shows that under 25s contributed over 60% of the fall seen since February 2020.

The Economic Impact of Covid-19 on North Ayrshire's Labour Market

North Ayrshire's claimant count (estimate of people claiming unemployment related benefits) is 6,835, that is 49% higher than February 2020. The North Ayrshire rate for claimants as a proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64) remains the highest in Scotland at 8.4% – Glasgow City is second at 8.2% and Orkney is lowest on 2.8%. The ratio of male to female claimants in North Ayrshire is roughly three to two. This pattern of notably more male than female claimants is observed across all age groups.

Although people aged 16 to 24 account for only 10% of North Ayrshire's total population, they account for 20% of all claimants in North Ayrshire. Analysis using population data shows that roughly 12.4% of all males and 8.1% of all females aged 16-24 are captured in the claimant count statistics.

Economic inactivity is a persistent issue in the North Ayrshire economy, unfortunately Covid-19 has worsened this picture further. Over the year since the latest data release the economic inactivity rate has increased by 10%, bringing it up from 24.8% (Oct 2018-Sep 2019) to 27.3% (Oct 2019-Sep 2020); the North Ayrshire rate is 16% higher than the Scottish rate (23.5%).

This increase over the past year potentially highlights a rise in those discouraged from searching for work due to Covid-19, and this could be exacerbating an already persistent problem in North Ayrshire.



The North Ayrshire rate for claimants as a proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64) remains the highest in Scotland at 8.4%.

A note on Furlough

At the end of January 2021 over 360,000 jobs remained on furlough in Scotland, meaning that many people who might otherwise have become unemployed have instead been furloughed. This is why North Ayrshire's unemployment rate has not increased significantly over the past year and remains at 6% – although this still the highest rate in Scotland. However, once furlough ends in September it is uncertain how many furloughed staff will be welcomed back to their workplace and how many will be made redundant. For local context, the number of people on furlough in North Ayrshire as of the 31st of January is 7,700.

North Ayrshire's Economic Resilience

In terms of economic resilience, a Scottish Government report found that North Ayrshire ranked as the least resilient local authority in Scotland; however, this reflects the potential resilience of areas based on pre-crisis characteristics, and it does not account for the relative severity of the impacts that regions will face, for example due to sectoral exposure.

Separate analysis by SDS, ranks North Ayrshire as the 10th most vulnerable local authority to the impacts of Covid-19. Poor broadband quality, low rates of home working and a high reliance upon sectors more heavily impacted by Covid-19 were sighted as the most prominent factors for North Ayrshire's vulnerability in the analysis. North Ayrshire's business environment contributed to resilience, suggesting that there is a lower share of small firms and self-employment. The differences in the results between the SDS and Scottish Government analyses likely reflects differences in methodologies between the two studies.

Sectoral Picture in North Ayrshire

Analysis by the Fraser of Allander Institute shows that around 11% of businesses in North Ayrshire are in the hospitality sector, this is the second largest number across all Scottish local authorities (Argyll and Bute have the highest concentration at roughly 13%). Areas with higher than the national average concentration in hospitality are particularly reliant on tourism, making them more vulnerable to the economic impact of Covid-19. At a Scotland level economic output in this sector is only at 34% of the level it was at in February 2020.

Encouragingly, in North Ayrshire's largest sector in terms of economic output (GVA), manufacturing, economic output at a Scottish level is estimated to have recovered to around its pre-Covid-19 levels. For local context, manufacturing is estimated to account for roughly 27.2% of local economic output (2020), and it accounts for 11.2% of North Ayrshire's total employment (2019).



North Ayrshire Economic Context

The North Ayrshire economy faces major structural challenges that require significant national and local investment, policy change and innovation, and strategic long-term approaches to address them. Despite sectoral strengths in manufacturing, North Ayrshire has a low job density, faces a weak labour market, as well as evidence of certain groups within North Ayrshire being particularly excluded from the labour market. This briefing provides an overview of the key socioeconomic challenges in North Ayrshire with a specific focus on the labour market and regional inequality.

We understand that at this time we need to focus even more on reducing child poverty. Both the Fairer Scotland Duty and the requirements of the Child Poverty Act will remain at the heart of our decision making, to ensure we provide support to those most in need.

Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

In response to the Covid-19 situation, we provided immediate support for our communities. Working with our communities and partners we were well placed to provide this.

Community Hubs

North Ayrshire acted early to set up Community Support Hubs in each of our local areas to respond to and intervene early in issues related to the Covid-19 crisis. Our “Humanitarian Hubs” across North Ayrshire were established during the week of 23 March 2020 to prepare for and respond to the crisis. These are run by the Council staff and third sector partners including Vineburgh, Fullarton, Cranberry

Moss, Whitlees and Woowynd community centres, North Ayrshire Foodbank and Café Solace, with support from Health and Social Care Partnership staff and a range of community and staff volunteers.

Our Community Hubs remained operational and were there to support those who needed support, including those who were previously shielding. If residents needed help, with food, heating, prescriptions or other matters, residents were asked to reach out to their local hub. With the creation of our Community Hubs at the start of lockdown this has allowed our communities to remain connected and our most vulnerable supported. Numbers of support requests from the Hubs have declined since the shielding requirements ended and lockdown rules changed.



North Ayrshire acted early to set up Community Support Hubs in each of our local areas to respond to and intervene early in issues related to the Covid-19 crisis. Our “Humanitarian Hubs” across North Ayrshire were established during the week of 23 March 2020 to prepare for and respond to the crisis.

Trauma

The ultimate impact of the Covid-19 crisis on children is dependent upon time and we know that prolonged exposure to toxic stress, particularly during the critical window of early childhood development can impact across the life course. By using a trauma informed lens across the whole system we can realise the widespread impact of trauma, stress and adversity and recognise the signs and symptoms for our citizens, their families and our staff.

Trauma and adversity profiles which examine the levels of exposure to and effects of childhood adversity and trauma across the life course will be updated as we move into the next phase of the pandemic. This will allow for a baseline measurement of the issues related to trauma and adversity, including newly updated figures on those experiencing poverty, in North Ayrshire. The profiles will be used to help to raise awareness and stimulate discussion about how to respond appropriately.

The Health and Social Impacts of Covid-19

The Infant Children and Young People's Transformational Change Programme Board provides a Pan Ayrshire Platform for discussion of the issues affecting Infants Children and Young People. The work streams are being re-evaluated to ensure that they take into account the health and social implications of the virus on Children's health.

There will be a new work stream added which will look at the impact of Covid-19 on ICYP health specifically and will measure and monitor impact and outcomes in several key areas including:

- Impact on access to healthcare and other services

- Impacts on learning and education
- Impacts on Mental Health
- Impact on Families
- Impact on Inequalities
- Impact on Commercial Determinants of health (Drugs, Alcohol, Unhealthy Commodities Industries)
- The UNCRC and the opportunities it affords us to mitigate these impacts.

The long-term health and social impacts are unknown and emerging, however these will require to be measured and monitored accurately and closely moving forward.

North Ayrshire Community Book(s)

We have developed six locality-based [community books](#) and a North Ayrshire wide Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that signpost and guide people in relation to issues such as access to food, prescription delivery, and financial advice.





North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan

Understanding Inequalities – Our Approach

Inequalities in individual outcomes are directly linked to wider socio-economic inequalities in society. The distribution of power, money and resources has a direct influence on environmental influences such as:

- Availability of health enhancing work
- Access to good quality and affordable housing
- Social and cultural experiences
- Transport
- Education and learning opportunities
- Availability and quality of services

While there will be some fundamental causes of poverty which are out with the control of North Ayrshire CPP, there are many areas where an impact can be made. In order to be most effective, interventions need to be taken at all three levels:

- Undo the fundamental causes
- Prevent the wider environmental influences
- Mitigate the individual experiences

As well as needing to ensure that our approach intervenes at all three levels described above, research also demonstrates that a combination of approaches across three areas of the population is essential to effectively tackle inequalities. These three approaches are:

1. Targeting – targeting the worst off in society
2. Enhanced – reducing the gap between groups
3. Universal – reducing the gradient across the population

Our Action Plan will reflect these approaches where relevant.

Our Action Plan approach was developed in order to ensure clear links to our LOIP and to reflect the above approach. This, our third annual Action Plan, builds on the work done to date, develops some of the existing work, and introduces new actions.

Our key actions have been identified and included in the following sections of the report. Our key actions have been linked to and summarised in **Appendix 1**. We have included actions where the greatest impact will be made, taking into account scale and pace.

The six priority groups (lone parents; families where a member of the



household is disabled; families with three or more children; minority ethnic families; families where the youngest child is under one year old; and mothers aged under 25) have been considered in developing our Action Plan. They will continue to be a focus as part of the development of our future actions.

Poverty Impact Assessment Approach Pilot

On 19 February 2020, we held a Child Poverty Workshop for senior managers across the Council, Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Ayrshire and Arran. This event was designed to bring senior managers together to look at actions through a poverty lens and to encourage consideration of any poverty implications of their work. The session also facilitated partnership working and discussions. The event included the Fairer Scotland Duty, including the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, our Financial Inclusion Referral Pathway and Rights Based Approaches. Feedback from the event was very positive and this remains a focus for 2021/22.

Facilitating Multi-agency Working

A key theme in North Ayrshire is our strong partnership and multi-agency working approaches. In May 2021 we held our second Senior Manager Child Poverty Workshop. This session facilitates our partnership and multi-agency working and

allows connections to be made. This way of working informs our plan and brings the content into focus for all services. Feedback from the sessions have been positive.

Monitoring of this plan

This report requires agreement and monitoring by the Community Planning Partnership. Reporting will link to other strategic groups as required. Our Performance Framework has been created and is monitored regularly. This ensures consistency in reporting across all our plans and strategies. We report on our progress every six months to the Community Planning Partnership to ensure we are achieving our ambition of a fairer and more equal society.

In 2020 it was agreed that the Child Poverty Action Plan and Report would be included within the governance of the Children's Services Strategic Partnership. This ensures we have aligned Children's Services Planning and that children, young people and their families continue to be at the heart of all we do.



Our Employability Support Services will continue to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.



2020/21 Key Highlights – What have we been doing to tackle child poverty in North Ayrshire?

Section 1 – Maximising Income from Employment

Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Income from Employment

1. We will continue to use procurement powers and increased quick quote thresholds to help more local suppliers win contracts. Our activities aim to stimulate the local economy, by securing jobs or generating community benefits.
2. Our Employability Support Services will continue to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.
3. Develop employability skills through adult and community learning opportunities.

In addition to these priorities, our work will continue in:

- ✓ Inward Investment Strategy
- ✓ The Ayrshire Growth Deal
- ✓ Living Wage
- ✓ In-Work Support Programmes
- ✓ Employment Support
- ✓ Employability Hubs
- ✓ Disability Employment Support
- ✓ Early Years and Childcare:
 - Delivery of 1140 hours
 - 2-year old nursery provision



Develop employability skills through adult and community learning opportunities.

How we will monitor our progress – Income from Employment

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of jobs created by businesses in North Ayrshire supported by Business Development	555	524	163
Percentage of people in North Ayrshire earning less than the living wage	24.3%	16.0%	Not Available
Percentage of working age population in employment	69.7%	70.2%	69%
Employment Rate – percentage women age 16-64	64.4%	65.5%	64.2%
Employment rate – percentage aged 16-64 EA core or work limiting disability	44%	49.2%	46.7%
Youth Employment Rate (16-24)	60.00%	58.30%	55.6%
Participation Rate for 16-19-year olds (per 100)	90.53%	90.56%	Not Available
Women's Median Gross Weekly Pay	£501	£518	£596
Gross weekly earning of full-time employees in North Ayrshire (Median)	£563.60	£550.10	£599.00
Cumulative number of unemployed disabled residents supported into employment	Data not available	18	18
Number of employed modern apprentices recruited to North Ayrshire Council	87	54	40
Number of Modern Apprentices recruited by North Ayrshire Council, who are care experienced or disabled	Data not available	10	8
No of weeks employment through using Community Benefit clauses	2093	2864	2882
Percentage of learning disability service users accessing employment support activities	23.88%	23.84%	24.18%
Percentage Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council operated/funded Employability Programmes	16.97%	20.1%	Not Available

What we are doing

Bringing new and better jobs to the area

- Our **Ayrshire Growth Deal** was signed in March 2019 with c. £200M of investment in aerospace and space, energy, tourism, manufacturing and engineering industries
- In February 2021 the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee approved the Full Business Case for the Ayrshire Growth Deal **Community Wealth Building Fund**.
- The £3m Scottish Government funding will go towards new Community Wealth Building officers across the whole of the Ayrshire region to support local businesses and community organisations deliver Community Wealth Building 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.
- A range of targets have been set to ensure that hundreds of Ayrshire **businesses are supported** over the next three years, subject to Scottish Government final approval and following the recruitment of project staff.
- We have led the development of a major **Kickstart programme**. Approval has now been granted to fund over 450 jobs for young people in the area – the jobs will be advertised and filled from March to December 2021.

A Green New Deal for North Ayrshire

- As part of our **Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach**, we will use our capital investment to accelerate our recovery and wider regeneration of our area, at the same time as tackling climate change.
- At the heart of this is the **£8.8m Investment Fund** which will support an inclusive and green economic recovery.
- We will maximise **renewable energy generation**, using the Council's existing land assets
- We will invest in our **commercial estate** including improving the sustainability of assets
- We will tackle vacant and derelict land and building in our town centres by **investing in town centre living**
- We will support community economic development through **community regeneration and ownership**
- We will implement Community Wealth Building town centre priorities identified through **Place Plans** for our major town centres; and
- We have created a £500,000 **Green Jobs Fund**.
- We will work with community groups and businesses to explore **renewable energy generation and circular economy schemes** that would create local fair green jobs.
- We will support green business adaptation to encourage and support local businesses to adapt their processes and business models to **support industrial decarbonisation and meet net zero**.

Encouraging the Payment of Living Wage Across the Area

- We have developed our Community Wealth Building Strategy, to **enhance local wealth and create fair jobs**, and will utilise a £3M Ayrshire Growth Deal Fund to progress this agenda.
- Part of this will be encouraging and supporting local businesses to pay the Living Wage. **Currently 24 businesses in North Ayrshire are accredited as Living Wage employers.**

Providing In Work Support

- Our North Ayrshire employability services are moving to focus more on in-work support. **Employed parents on low incomes** are now being targeted through new funding available from the Scottish Government.

Employment Support Programmes

- We continue to invest in services to support unemployed residents back to work. The **We Work for Families** programme is targeting parents with key worker support to get them into secure and fair work. The Council currently invests over £1.5M a year in such schemes and utilises EU funding to enhance this further.
- Our **Skills for Life** initiative is an intensive skills and training programme that helps support the long-term unemployed get back into employment. It is a partnership approach where the Council, Ayrshire College, Department for Work and Pensions, CEIS Ayrshire and Childcare and Recreational Information Service (CARIS) all work together to provide participants with a meaningful and valuable experience.
- The **We Work for Families** Programme specifically engages with parents of young children under five, particularly

women, who may find it difficult for a range of reasons to take the next step to realising their potential. The programme is delivered using a partnership approach. **194 referrals were received with 112 registrations. 22 people went into employment, 108 entered education or training and 60 were upskilled.**

- The programme works closely with health visitors and family nurse practitioners.
- Our **Equal Supported Employment**, for people with additional support needs, has been working on an online basis using Teams meetings, What'sApp calls and Zoom groups. 52 residents have been supported and 16 of those have entered into work. Of these 7 parents were supported and 4 entered work.
- Our **employability services** have moved online through CEIS Ayrshire. We intend to re-open hubs once Covid-19 restrictions make this viable. Between April and December 2020 over 527 participants were registered and assisted.
- As part of the Youth Work Education Recovery Fund a priority focus is around Youth Employability. This includes an employability roadshow that rotates around our secondaries to provide information, signposting and access to employability support and programmes. This gives information further education, work placements, Playback ICE, Kickstart, Ambition Agreement and informal awards and opportunities. This will be replicated across our summer programme with pop ups that will allow young people to access the same information during events and activities already taking place in the community.

Case Study: We Work For Families Programme



Our client resides with his wife and 3 children in a private let, the family are supported by their Health Visitor and Early Years Social Worker. The main barrier identified for the referral was under employment and no regular hours of work; one week he would work 46 hours per week and for the next few he would only work 6 hours per week. These fluctuating hours were due to Covid-19 restrictions and were having a detrimental impact on the families already low income and on our client's mental health.

Not long after our client was registered on We Work for Families he was let go from his job which really took a toll on his mental health. He was referred to ANCHO's Small Steps project who keep in touch weekly to offer support with mental health.

The family has also been issued with a notice to quit their private let tenancy, so they were referred to the Community Housing Advocacy Project for support. Support is being put in place not just for this but to arrange payment plans to assist the family with their finances to try and make things more manageable for them.

The employability toolkit was used to support the client to get ready to look for sustainable employment. CV assistance was provided as well as supported job searches. An employer asked if he would be available for an interview. We ensured our client knew how to get to his interview and gave support with interview preparation. He has now successfully secured full time paid employment with regular hours with this company and has built friendships with his colleagues.



Procurement

- We have been working with suppliers to help them through the Covid-19 situation by allowing more time to **complete existing contracts** and allowing more time for completion of tenders.
- We have continued to use **emergency powers to buy local** where appropriate, particularly PPE and we have increased the quick quote threshold on a number of contractions contracts to try and help local suppliers win more business.
- We support fair working practices by actively encouraging the **payment of the real living wage** and encouraging **fair work practices within contracts**.
- We also require suppliers to agree to **community benefits** for contracts over £500,000 which insists on local employment, apprenticeships, work experience or educational activities.



Section 2 – Maximising Income from Benefits

Our Priorities and continuing work

Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Maximising Income from Benefits

1. We will hold further sessions with senior managers to encourage poverty impact assessment approaches in our work.
2. Continue to take forward the single shared assessment project
3. Upgrading our online customer services system and implementing one point of contact.
4. Take forward automation of payment of some benefits where possible.
5. Planning for additional free school meals provision
6. Work will be commencing Welfare Rights Officers based within GP surgeries.
7. We will further consider locating Welfare Rights Officers within schools and education settings.



Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Maximising Income from Benefits (cont.)

8. Roll out of training in financial inclusion direct referral pathways for maternity services in the first instance.
9. Provision of information relating to financial inclusion via the Better Health Hub.
10. Provide access to free quality assured health information materials on financial matters via the Health Information & Resources Service including continued provision of access to non-digital versions (and free print and post service).
11. Provide training and capacity building for staff on the most effective ways to have conversations with residents about financial matters.
12. Monitor and support benefit automation and portal, being implemented by the end of 2022 by Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland.

In addition to these priorities, our work will continue in:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Money Matters Service | ✓ Cashless Catering in schools |
| ✓ Free School Meals and Clothing Grants online application | ✓ Housing Welfare Reform Advice Team (WRAT) |
| ✓ Encourage EMA uptake | ✓ NHS – Referral tool for NHS staff to sign-post families to appropriate specialist services |
| ✓ Social media promotional campaigns | ✓ Best Start payments cards |
| ✓ Free School Meals uptake campaigns | |
| ✓ Healthy Breakfast service in secondary schools (as well as primaries) | |

How we will monitor our progress – Maximising Income from Benefits

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Speed of processing Housing Benefit (New Claims) days	8.51	7.38	8.89
Speed of processing Housing Benefit (Change of circumstances) days	10.46	7.63	7.59
Speed of Processing (Council Tax Reduction) new claims (days)	28.28	24.96	19.05
Speed of processing (Council Tax Reduction) changes of circumstances (days)	7	5.8	5.13
Number of Crisis Grants Paid	4579	3856	3539
Uptake of EMAs (Academic Sessions)	835 young people applied, 729 young people received at least one payment.	806 young people applied, 718 young people received at least one payment.	785 young people applied, 716 young people received at least one payment.
Uptake of Free School Meals (Primary)	87.5%	82.72%	63.79%
Uptake of Free School Meals (Secondary)	75.45%	61.49%	44.87%

What we are doing

Income Maximisation

- In 2020/21 the amount of income generated (£) for service users by the **Money Matters Service** was **£15.9m**, despite the changes in working practices due to the Covid-19 restrictions.
- The Team have found new ways of working including Appeals Tribunals via video and telephone calls.
- **Money Matters received 3,601 enquiries/referrals in 2020/21.** The team had a **76% success rate for appeals** which proceeded.
- Training was provided for the Child Protection Team, Health and Social Care Partnership staff and the Family Learning Team. This has increased knowledge of the benefits families are entitled to and increased confidence of staff.
- The Money Matters Team continue to keep up to date with the changing landscape and prepare for future changes such as the end of the furlough scheme. There may also be consequences to rent arrears and universal credit claims.
- Since January 2021 ,North Ayrshire Foodbank have part funded the employment of a HSCP Money Matters Welfare Rights Officer. Both organisations are working in partnership to ensure everyone who receives a Foodbank parcel is offered a Benefits check and receive any advice, assistance or representation to ensure they receive their legal entitlement to benefits. From February to May 2021, 161 referrals were received with overall financial gains of £34,358.73.

Case Study

Money Matters 1

Money Matters Welfare Rights Officer represented at Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Appeal Tribunal for a 4-year-old boy with behavioural issues and language delays but no diagnosis. DLA Middle Rate Care awarded £59.70 pw and arrears £5,662.97. Parent claimed backdated carers allowance and carers element in Universal Credit, £37.59 per week and arrears £3,979.16 paid

Our Welfare Rights Officer also assisted our client to claim backdated Scottish carers supplement £8.85 and arrears £1,150 paid and Scottish child payment £10 per week and arrears £50 paid. Weekly financial gain £116.14 and arrears £10,842.13



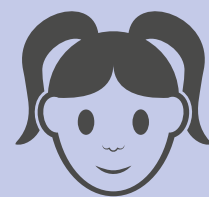
Case Study

Money Matters 2

Our client contacted Money Matters for assistance with Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for her daughter aged 2 years who has Cerebral Palsy. Previously refused DLA and did not challenge decision. Client was in receipt of Universal Credit; she was working but had to give up her work due to shift work and difficulties with childcare.

Money Matters Welfare Rights Officer assisted with completion of DLA form. Her daughter was awarded DLA High Care Rate Care and as a result, has entitlement to Disabled Child Higher Element of £400.29 per month and Carers element of £162.92 on her Universal Credit. Carers Allowance is also in place and will be entitlement to Scottish Carers Supplement twice yearly.

Weekly benefit increase of £227.95 was received as well as £820.35 of arrears of DLA and £1,169.64 of Universal Credit. Our client no longer needs to worry at this time of returning to work and can focus on looking after her daughter who requires additional support.





Improve access to information and advice about benefits

- Money Matters receive direct referrals from Health and Social Care colleagues such as GPs, Health Visitors, Social Workers, Community Link Workers, Nurses, Alcohol and Drug Workers as well as other agencies including North Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, The Ayrshire Community Trust and others.
- We have a financial inclusion pathway in place. During 2019-20, training has been provided to Health Visitors and other Early Years staff, and a pilot session with other managers took place to raise awareness.
- Information leaflets are available at a variety of locations promoting the work of the Money Matters Team. The team is also promoted on Twitter and Social Media.
- The Housing Welfare Reform Advice Team (WRAT) provide support to manage claims, maximise income and make rent payments to avoid arrears. The Team provide a 'live' Welfare Rights

messenger service through Facebook messenger. WRAT also have regular Facebook posts on the Housing Services Facebook Page to promote the service, advertise new benefits particularly Scottish Social Security benefits as well as outcomes achieved for our tenants.

- We have embarked on a 2-year financial inclusion demonstrator project '**Better Off Hub**' following Cabinet approval in October 2020. The project is a Public Social Partnership, developing a new model through co-production with the third sector. The Better Off Hub delivers vital financial advice services, in a new holistic way, focused on the whole person and set out with an objective to build capacity and reduce future demand on services.

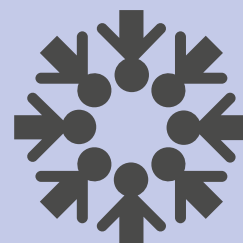


Case Study

Involvement Of Recovery Development Workers Alongside Service Access & MAASH

Our Service Access and MAASH (Multi-Agency Assessment and Screening Hub) teams had identified that during initial assessments for drug/alcohol misuse at the pre-contemplative stage for change, Service Users were at times reluctant to become involved with services to address their addiction. Various issues often led to appointments being offered and declined. It is recognised this is an extremely difficult time for individuals.

It was agreed that Recovery Development Workers (RDW's) with lived experience would make immediate and timeous contact with Service Users at the earliest opportunity. This aimed to mitigate risks for people struggling with addiction, help adults previously difficult to reach and prevent further harm. This would be person-centred approach to engage individuals with addiction issues.





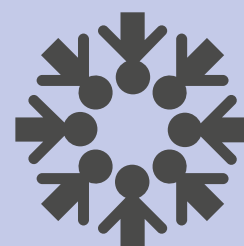
Case Study (cont.)

Outcomes

This process was received extremely positively by all workers involved and to date there have been 14 individuals supported by this process. Twelve were adults living in the community either on their own or with a partner and two were parents residing with their children.

The Recovery Development Workers have lived experience and extensive knowledge of the local areas and are relatable to Service Users. As well as advice, guidance and support with regards to addiction, Service Users were offered additional practical supports including engaging with Money Matters and other services such as utility companies. They offered emotional support, improving Service Users overall wellbeing.

Service Users who were affected by poverty were supported to engage to have benefits maximised. People were encouraged and signposted to supports within their own Communities including on-line supports as well as Turning Point and groups which aided with their recovery. This has also brought a level of autonomy for most of the Service Users and prevented statutory measures which further relieves pressure on services.





School Clothing Grant, Education Maintenance Allowance and Other Grants/Benefits

- We have been issuing **supermarket vouchers** to all children eligible for Free School Meals during school holidays. This has encouraged an increase in Free School Meals applications. We are currently exploring the possibility of system integration which would enable a degree of automation between benefits and Free School Meals.
- Customer Services administered the **Winter Hardship** payment of £100 per child in receipt of free school meals in December and further Spring Hardship payment of £100 is due to be issued from 1st April and will also include Early Years Children.

Measure	2019/20	2020/21
No. of Applications for Free School Meals/ Clothing Grants	2,326	3,007
No. of Children	3,931	4,923

- Over the last year we have been applying maximum discretion on applications for Crisis Grants in cognisance of the impact of Covid-19.
- We received funding from the Scottish Government to help towards food poverty and this was used to purchase supermarket vouchers which have been used to provide support to those in most need.
- The **Single Shared Assessment** project is in development. This work is expected to take around 18 months.



Our Family Learning Team also supports parents and carers in the completion of the application, if required



Encouraging the Uptake of Free School Meals

- Facilities Management has issued **over 60,000 shopping vouchers for children eligible for free school meals** (from July 2020 – end March 2021). The value of these vouchers totals £1.7 million.
- All **school handbooks and websites** contain information on accessing Free School Meals. Schools also provide leaflets to parents and carers at P1 Registration. Schools use their regular newsletter to promote our school meals.
- Our **Family Learning Team** also supports parents and carers in the completion of the application, if required.
- Our Facilities Management Team are **Gold level “Food For Life Served Here”** certificate holders, awarded by the Soil Association Scotland. We are the highest awarded local authority in Scotland for the number of schools holding this accreditation. This award recognises the use of local suppliers and quality produce. We have retained this award every year since 2013.

Emergency Food Response

- During the first week of lockdown we delivered 852 food boxes on the mainland and 25 on Arran. The **food box was for a household** rather than individual children eligible for free school meals. This ensured most if not

all people in the household benefited from this pack. Most of the food was fresh produce and the supply was enough for 4 people for 5 days of the week.

- By week 2, we were distributing almost 2,000 packs. During the second week we also started a **community food distribution hub** which was to serve those who were not eligible for free school meals but who were still struggling with their own food provision.
- The food boxes ran until the beginning of July and over that time we delivered the equivalent of **1.26 million meals**.
- Facilities Management were also supporting the food requirements of the **childcare hubs** at schools across North Ayrshire which were set up for children of key workers and those children who required additional support. Almost 8,000 hot meals and snacks were provided over this time.
- Food boxes were replaced by **shopping vouchers** and provided £20 per child per week for those eligible for free school meals. This has continued and covered all school closures and holiday periods.
- For children and young people returning to school in August 2020, we wanted to ensure that **hot meals** were available from the first day and a good selection was available to encourage pupils back into the dining halls. It was also important for us to have primary school children back in the



We will now be working towards the extension of universal free school meals (UFSM) to primary 4 children in August 2021 and the future provision for primaries 5 to 7.

dining hall in their bubbles to benefit from the hugely important social and well-being aspect of their lunch break. More staggered lunch breaks were introduced to facilitate the numbers safely and to ensure children felt safe in this environment. Making them feel comfortable and confident that it was a safe space was our main objective to ensure we maximised uptake.

- During the **phased return of secondary school** pupils in early 2021, we provided both a full menu selection in schools as well as the £20 shopping voucher to all eligible for free school meals.

Forthcoming Changes for School Meals

- We will now be working towards the extension of universal free school meals (**UFSM**) to primary 4 children in August 2021 and the future provision for primaries 5 to 7. This will have a huge impact on uptake. Currently the UFSM for primary 1 to 3 is around 80%, if this is replicated across the other year groups, this represents a significant increase in children accessing healthy and nutritious food during the school day. This will also have an impact on local employment by increasing the number of jobs and on local suppliers.
- Legislation relating to food made available during the whole school day, will change on 8th April 2021. This will mean that food made available via the catering teams, tuck shops and

Education led projects will comply with new legislation. The changes are designed to ensure our children and young people have access to **the healthiest and most nutritious food** throughout the school day. The new legislation increases the amount of fruit and vegetable available each day to pupils as well as increasing fibre, reducing sugar, salt and harmful fats.

- During the new school year (2021/22), we will be introducing a new **pre-order system for school meals** across primary and secondary schools. This will have a home order facility and for primaries, it will also have an in-classroom ordering system. This will encourage conversations with pupils on food, how it is sourced and hopefully encourage children to try new menu items to widen their palates.
- We will be reviewing our **holiday meals programme** in the future to see if and when we can return to providing our Wrap, Run and Fun programme in partnership with Connected Communities.
- We are actively working across other Services to analyse debt accruing from **non-payment of school meals**. The objective is to introduce support interventions where required to assist families in the provision of school meals e.g. assisting them to apply for free school meals or information regarding other benefits or financial support available.



Take forward the Cost of the School Day actions with schools, services and partners.'



Section 3 – Reducing household costs

Our Priorities and continuing work

Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Reducing Household Costs

1. We will progress our Solar PV Farm project
2. We will seek approval of our first EV Strategy with tariff proposal.
3. We will progress the Local Heat Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) project. The aim is to identify areas suitable for heat networks and to focus on energy efficiency measures.
4. Our housing allocation policy will be reviewed to ensure there are no unintended consequences for child poverty.
5. Continue to address food with dignity opportunities in our localities including launching an interactive map.
7. Take forward the Cost of the School Day actions with schools, services and partners.
8. Explore the use of the new Community Benefits Gateway (Portal).

In addition to these priorities, our work will continue in:

- ✓ Affordable Housing programme: Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2020-2025
- ✓ Rent levels – value for money
- ✓ Corporate Sustainability Team – general energy efficiency advice
- ✓ Referrals to Citrus energy for any fuel related issues
- ✓ Referrals to Home Energy Scotland.
- ✓ Wrap, Run and Fun holiday meals initiative
- ✓ Bookbug programme
- ✓ Period Poverty Initiative
- ✓ Travel initiatives



How we will monitor our progress – Reducing the Cost of Living

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Percentage of lets to homeless	22.38%	29.97%	57.9%
Number of tenants referred for support with energy costs (cumulative for reporting year)	95	96	24
Households in fuel poverty	26%	28%	28%
Number of new build Council housing units reaching completion (cumulative)	296	381	437
Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year	3.34%	3.65%	5.46%
Percentage of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as homeless sustained for more than a year	81.48%	84.07%	92.48%
Number of early learning establishments offering 1,140 hours	2	13	Not available
The % of Peoples Panel respondents who say that food is available but too expensive	Data not available (every two years)	10%	Data not available (every two years)
The % of Peoples Panel respondents who have access to email or internet from home			
Data not available (every two years)	90%	Data not available (every two years)	
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	93.7%	96.8%	Not Available
Out of term school meals – number per annum	21,967	22,914	Not Available

Increase Availability of Affordable Housing

- Our Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021-2026 sets out the priorities for affordable housing investment in North Ayrshire over the next five years including to build **1,732 new homes by March 2024**.
- In the last 6 months we have completed the last 16 units of supported accommodation at Watt Court, Dalry. The £7.66M project supported by a Scottish Government Grant of £2.891M created 49 new units, comprising of a Sheltered Housing Complex (22 homes), amenity bungalows (8 homes), supporting accommodation (15 homes plus one unit staff base) and a new local housing office for Dalry (3 units). The heating for the sheltered housing complex and bungalows is provided by a sustainable Biomass district heating system which also serves Dalry Primary School.

Rent levels

- Our robust Housing Revenue Account Business Plan results in our **rent levels remaining lower than the national average** and neighbouring authorities and landlords and we continue to invest significantly in our existing stock and new house building programme. We face challenges in for example, changes to welfare reform, demographics and the housing stock profile. We are committed to delivering services in new, improved and more cost-effective ways.

Energy Costs

- We have installed **Solar Panels** where appropriate to assist with energy costs. The number of PV systems installed on properties is 290 (895kWp) and

165 of these installations (518kWp) were installed before the deadline and successfully registered for the Feed in Tariff (FIT) subsidy. All properties are monitored remotely to ensure that faults are identified and resolved.

- The Sustainability Team also continue to deliver **replacement and top up loft insulation and cavity wall insulation** for council properties, supporting Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) compliance and other housing programmes.
- Our third **Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy** has been developed, detailing actions towards achieving the net-zero carbon emission by 2030 target.
- We received Cabinet approval on 26 January 2021 for the development of a **£6.768m solar PV farm installation** at Nethermain's former landfill site.
- We continue to work with the Energy Systems Research Unit University of Strathclyde to support innovation and climate change action in North Ayrshire for example, Ardrossan Campus project to act as a sustainability engineer and i3 development to input energy master plan.



- During the pandemic vulnerable groups were supported. For example, our Gypsy/Traveller community were supported by the site manager in Irvine. The **electricity tariff for the site was set to zero**, due to the residents being unable to purchase power cards.
- Our Teams work with other Services to plan digital publications sent to tenants via our tenant magazine (**Tenants Chat**) and social media posts will include areas that would help address child poverty. We have been hosting live 'Messenger' sessions where customers can contact services and ask for money advice.
- Area Housing Office staff have maintained **regular telephone contact** with tenants throughout lockdown to offer advice, assistance and reassurance. When required, these tenants have been referred to appropriate specialist teams or agencies.
- Since March 2020, the Council's Housing Officers have continued to review **rent accounts fortnightly**.



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- Area Housing Office staff continue to **prioritise housing allocations** to those with the greatest housing need, working closely with both our Housing Advice Team and Throughcare to ensure the best possible outcomes for applicants.
- A **Housing Youth Matters Group** was set up in conjunction with Youth Services to give an opportunity for young people to get involved in housing and related services. We also deliver homeless prevention and housing advice to all 4th, 5th and 6th year pupils across all our Secondary Schools.
- We provide Housing Support and Housing Options Advice to prevent homelessness, ensuring households are accessing appropriate benefits and any other assistance that can help them sustain their tenancies or access alternative accommodation.
- Our **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan** details our drive to reduce the duration of homelessness, provide self-contained dispersed furnished flats within the community from where a household presents to ensure children can retain their Social Networks and minimise disruption to education.
- We provide **furnished tenancy grants** or assist with access to the Scottish Welfare Fund for homeless households to ensure they have access to furniture on rehousing.
- For **families** experiencing homeless, we provide a package of support to ensure young people have space to do homework, can attend school and are registered with primary health care and a local dentist. We can also arrange free travel to school for a period of 6 weeks while families are living in temporary accommodation.

- Our focus remains on care leavers and vulnerable families and we are committed to reducing the impact of Adverse Childhood Effects (ACES) and disruption to education caused by periods of temporary accommodation.

North Ayrshire Food System

- During 2020/21, a **Food System** – North Ayrshire Fairer Food – has been established across all localities in a co-production model with our community partners, small community based organisations and community associations, many who have been key partners supporting their local communities throughout the pandemic providing emergency food. The vision that has been agreed is the demand for emergency food provision is reduced as North Ayrshire residents can afford and access good food.
- **Community Support Hubs** act as brokers who can signpost to local food provision. Using a community wealth building approach, local businesses and third sector organisations provide low cost or free food to local people who need it. The current system looks different in all localities and is based on need, resources available and also volunteers. To date community larders, a community shop in a vacant unit and shops in a local community centre has opened. These are all membership based and provide food with dignity and also access to advice services if required.
- A key part of this development has been the **co-production of a toolkit** to support the various organisations, in terms of food supply, risk assessments, and environmental health guidance.

- As part of Challenge Poverty Week, we focused on our work to tackle food poverty and supported Whitlees Community Centre who officially launched their new Pantry. This initiative allows local residents to become members and get access to low cost food. ACES community group opened the Woodwynd Shoap in Kilwinning in Woodwynd Hall. We now have eight Fairer Food locations within North Ayrshire.



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Case Study: Low Cost Food in Irvine



Residents in Irvine with a KA12 postcode can now get local access to a variety of low-cost food produce, ready-made meals and other essential items. We have been supporting community organisations as they co-produce a North Ayrshire community food network known as “North Ayrshire Fairer Food,” following on from the initial coronavirus lockdown.

Choices Community Shop, on Fullarton Street in Irvine, is the newest community food project launched by Fullarton, Castlepark and Vineburgh Community Associations and Fullarton Connexions, with the support of the Council. The facility works on a membership basis and provides a mini supermarket-like environment where residents have the opportunity to choose food specific to their own preferences, and dietary requirements. This is a dignified approach to food insecurity and helps money go further by giving access to quality food at a lower cost.

Residents visiting Choices will be asked to pay an annual membership fee of £1 and a weekly charge of £3 per week for individuals and £5 per week for larger families. Unlike a food bank, Choices is not emergency food provision, and no referral is required to access the community shop.

The volunteers at Choices Community Shop will also be able to signpost individuals and families to other services that can provide support on a range of topics including managing money, budgeting, cooking on a budget, accredited learning, community learning, volunteering opportunities and employability support.



Health Visiting in North Ayrshire

- In North Ayrshire, the foodbank and the community hubs are encouraged to either **signpost a family to their Health Visitor** where they have requested baby formula or notify the Health Visitor on behalf of the family, where consent to share information has been agreed. Where this happens, and a family is in need of financial support, the Health Visitors can link with the Early Years' Social Workers, who form part of the integrated Universal Early Years' service and who have access to wider funds and grants to support families with cash payments.
- In line with the national financial inclusion pathway for health visiting, and to provide more longer-term support, a Health Visitor or Social Worker can request assistance from North Ayrshire's **Money Matters** service, which can support households to maximise their incomes.
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran Midwives and Health Visitors promote the Best Start Foods scheme, which provides a nutritional safety net for the most vulnerable families.

- Beneficiaries of **the Best Start Foods** scheme can purchase cow's milk, infant formula, fresh, frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh or dried pulses and fresh eggs in any supermarket or smaller shop displaying the Mastercard logo. All infants in Scotland up to the age of one are entitled to **free vitamin drops** containing the daily recommended amount of 10 mcg. These are provided to families by NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

Family Learning Team – Advice and assistance with Costs

- Our Family Learning Team provided **Family Food Programmes** based on the CAN (cheap and nutritious) toolkit training from the NHS as well as some budget busting cooking sessions that include parents shopping with the budget.
- During the Covid-19 Pandemic the Family Learning team helped families to access Food Vouchers, Free School Meals and/or uniform. Approximately 90 families received **regular contact** throughout the school closures which included support with learning, digital advice and help with accessing the Community Hubs and School Hubs.



- Our Family Learning Team worked with a range of organisations to apply for grants to distribute to some of our families. This included over £7000 of Asda schools back on track grants for uniform and food support, Cash for Kids for additional family **grants** and school jackets and with Children 1st to access vouchers for families to spend on clothing, outdoor equipment and two iPad and MiFi. Family passes were also provided for the Heads of Ayr Farm Park for 6 families.

Providing Advice on how to Minimise Costs for Energy

- Our Corporate Sustainability Team provide general **energy efficiency advice** to the public on a weekly basis, by responding to enquiries and by using our referral process with internal and external agencies (current average three referrals per week).
- The team is also an active member of the Local Energy Advice Forum (LEAF), a partnership which aims to increase **domestic energy efficiency**, and reduce fuel poverty within North and East Ayrshire.
- The Welfare Reform Advice Team visit our tenants and complete a survey offer **referral to Citrus energy** for any fuel related issues such as debt, switching suppliers etc. Warm Homes Discount is also discussed and assistance to apply is provided if applicable.
- As part of the Financial Inclusion Pathway, referrals can be made to Home Energy Scotland.

Scottish Child Payment

- The new Scottish Child Payment, which is unique to Scotland opened for early applications in November 2020. Eligible families will get £40 every four weeks for each child under six years old.

Real Nappy Incentive Scheme

- We became the first Council in the UK to **provide free "birth to potty" real nappy packs**. The new enhanced nappy scheme could save families up to £1,300 per child on the cost of disposable nappies, whilst reducing the environmental impact of nappies by 40 per cent. The free trial tester pack of 'Real Nappies' contains; an easy to use, adjustable, one-sized Birth to Potty

nappy, a microfibre nappy (size one or two), and a bamboo nappy (size one or two), two waterproof wraps, one packet of biodegradable liners, and a handy laundry bag.

Digital Access

As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have supported children and families to have **access to digital devices**. We have purchased over 1200 iPads and 900 Chromebooks as well as connectivity in the form of individual pupil SIMs or MiFi Units for families to share. This amounts to connectivity for 512 pupils. E-Sgoil and remote learning were developed to ensure pupils were able to continue their learning and we put in place other free resources such as books, stationery etc.

- **Virtual Community Centres** were set up on Facebook. There's one for each locality. Sign up has been extensive. Virtual Community Centres were established to replicate the community centre offer on a virtual platform. This included access to on-line learning, signposting to services and specific topic rooms such as mental health support spaces and funding workshops.
- During lockdown all face to face **youthwork activities** were cancelled. Having consulted with our young people and partners we created the live Wednesday online quiz on Facebook. This allowed us to host the quiz and have live chats with the young people by answering their comments and questions. We adapted the format of the quiz to include two British Sign Language interpreters, to support our deaf young people to take part. The Wednesday Quiz has had 46,559 attendees with 4,648 people interacting

with the posts. We have 35 to 40 families regularly taking part in the quiz.

- Our first fully **online Joint Cabinet** took place in November and involved 110 young people from across our secondary schools. They were joined by our Council Cabinet, senior officers, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) and the Youth Council Executive. Our young people shared their views on the issues that really matter to them including their community, digital connectivity, employability and health and wellbeing. The views of our young people will inform our post Covid-19 recovery and renewal.
- We received 639 devices to support families and care leavers in the second phase of the Connecting Scotland initiative. Twenty organisations benefitted from this initiative, including Connected Communities service and the Health and Social Care Partnership. The devices are in the final stages of being delivered to the families and the organisations will be part of a North Ayrshire network to share good practice, an approach already benefitting phase one recipient organisations.

- North Ayrshire Council has provided an additional £250,000 of funding per annum for a **Digital Families Fund** to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.
- Our Public Health Teams continue to recognise that many of our most vulnerable groups experience digital exclusion. We will continue to support and prioritise addressing digital inequalities within public health and we will support partners to utilise digital inequalities impact assessment moving forward to identify where these may exist.

Reducing the cost of the School Day

- During 2020, a formal **Cost of the School Day (COSD)** working group was established comprising Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers to further drive forward a whole systems approach to reducing the cost associated with education.
- We have previously participated in **pilot work** with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.
- The Working Group agreed a set of **North Ayrshire Commitments**.
- We will hold an annual COSD Conference. In line with our co-design and co-production approach, key areas

of focus for the forthcoming year from the draft action plan will be agreed at a launch conference in June 2021.

- The **voices** of and the contribution from young people, our school representatives and partners has been extremely valuable in shaping the overall Policy. We have had contributions from national experts and external partners including the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and their support and guidance has been much appreciated.
- As part of the policy development and our budget commitments, it was agreed that there will be a recurring annual investment in a Children and Families Fund of £500,000 which will focus on:
 - **Food:** £150,000 to extend our school and community food network across all schools to support children and families;
 - **Clothing and sustainability:** £100,000 for a School and Family Participatory Budget Investment Fund for educational establishments to respond to local needs in relation to school uniforms, outdoor clothing, sports kit and recycling and reuse equipment; and
 - **Digital inclusion:** £250,000 in a Digital Families Fund to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.
- In relation to the Cost of the School Day, the NHS are exploring the use of the new **Community Benefits Gateway (Portal)** which allows the voluntary sector to draw down community benefits from large national contracts. Voluntary groups may wish to put bids into this portal for school clothing and books.

Attainment Challenge

- North Ayrshire Council is a Challenge Authority and we have made good progress towards improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap in 2019/20. Improvements can be seen across indicators for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Our Scottish Attainment Challenge workstreams continued to make good progress and we are adapting delivery approaches to continue to meet learner needs across the local authority.

Pupil Equity Funding

- Every council area benefits from **Pupil Equity Funding** (PEF) and in total, in North Ayrshire, the Pupil Equity Fund in 2017-18 amounted to £4.39m. This rose to £4.41m in 2018-19 and £4.46m in 2019-20.
- Pupil Equity Funding must provide **targeted support** for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential. Although the funding is allocated on the basis of free school meal eligibility, Head Teachers can use their professional judgement to bring additional children into the targeted interventions.
- All schools work with their school community to decide on how to invest PEF in order to impact positively on pupil outcomes. Plans are developed, which are incorporated into the annual School Improvement Plan. Schools are taking a participatory budgeting approach to the allocation of PEF in their school communities.

- Head Teachers have reconsidered budget expenditure due to the Covid-19 pandemic and have realigned budgets to such areas as:
 - Outdoor learning to promote health and wellbeing
 - Providing support to children and young people on remote learning
 - Providing additional resources to support home learning
 - Purchase of digital software and IT equipment
 - Providing online activities and personalised support for the most vulnerable.
 - Targeted interventions for Primary 1-3 in response to poor engagement with remote learning.
 - Practical science resources to enable more focus on health and wellbeing.
 - Purchase of e-Books.



All schools work with their school community to decide on how to invest PEF in order to impact positively on pupil outcomes. Plans are developed, which are incorporated into the annual School Improvement Plan.

Case Study: Largs Academy

– Developing the Young Workforce Teacher – Supporting Digital Provision

Approach and Intended Impact

The objective of the project was to evaluate Lockdown 1 and create the contingency plan for working with pupils, staff and parents –

- To provide support to those young people most in need who are identified through class teachers and pupil support teachers.
- To support parents in their role relating to home learning.
- To support staff within the school to provide devices and assist in the use of digital technology.

We wanted to ensure each young person has the equipment and information they require to participate in digital learning. Some examples of supports provided are:

- Twilight training sessions for staff.
- Parental Help Guides in the use of digital platforms.
- Leaders of Learning – S6 pupils supporting pupils in lunchtime training sessions.
- Working closely with parents/carers to facilitate remote access.
- Working closely with the IT Technician in school to provide digital software and hardware where required.

Our intention was there would be no disadvantage to any young people due to the lack of digital equipment or knowledge and information required to participate in learning. Trackers of engagement are monitored i.e. digital class registers, review of homework being returned to teachers. This allows teachers to target certain groups of young people who may be struggling with technology or another reason and provide appropriate support.

Evaluation

Feedback from surveys to parent/carers have been much more positive than in the initial lockdown with regard to accessing digital technology and also the structure to teaching and learning. Staff have an increased confidence in the use digital technology for teaching and learning. We plan to carry out further monitoring and engagement with staff, parents/carers and young people and we will be aiming to include digital wellbeing activities for pupils.



Developing our nurturing approach across all Children's Services

- We continue to work towards our vision of being a nurturing authority through our **"Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery"** approach by building emotional resilience in children and develop stronger relationships. Following lockdown, it was found that children who had experienced nurture approaches coped well with the return to school.
- We aim to establish **emotional resilience** in children and train teachers to foster stronger and productive relationships with children and young people through a nurturing approach and increasing engagement in the learning process. Evidence shows that this is reducing instances of non-engagement with children and young people and is contributing towards raising attainment.

Childcare Provision

- Throughout 2020-21 the focus for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) has been on managing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on **children's**

learning and development and on the health and wellbeing of children and their families.

- All efforts have been focussed on **maintaining provision** where guidance has allowed. During periods of lockdown, service has been maintained for **vulnerable children and the children of key worker families**.
- **Remote learning** has been utilised successfully to support those learners who have not been able to attend. At all other times ELC provision has been maintained for all children with a strong focus on nurture and health and wellbeing. The service has continued to **support ELC funded providers and childminders** through the Scottish Government's Temporary Restrictions Fund.
- We are gearing up to deliver **1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)** to children and families across North Ayrshire from August 2021. A full review of the planned provision has been carried out in light of the Covid-19 related impacts to ensure our delivery is in the right places to meet the needs of our children and their families.



- All our extension and refurbishments projects aim to create **indoor and outdoor learning environments** which are beautiful, calm spaces which inspire curiosity, wonder and excitement for play and learning.
- Our **Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme (ELCEP)** has reached some key milestones. 25 separate projects have now been completed. A contractor has been appointed to carry out the refurbishment of Marress House, the most significant project within the programme.
- The ELCEP has provided a range of **local employment opportunities** and last year fourteen Modern Apprentices completed their training and secured employment from August 2019.

Period Poverty Initiative

- We continue with our **Period Dignity project** to support the dignity and respect of our residents. Initially established in 2017, we were the first local authority in the UK to offer free sanitary provision in its schools, libraries, community centres and public buildings and we continue to lead the way in our fight against period poverty.
- During the Covid-19 response phase **via our food box distributions**, we also took orders for period products which would be added to the delivery for those in need. Alongside this we were supplying local community hubs for their local communities.
- In December we **piloted a bulk home delivery for secondary age pupils**. This was hugely popular. As part of this pilot, we offered access to reusable products which can have long term financial benefits to the user as they no longer need to buy disposable products each month. The reusable products will last around 5-10 years. Reusable products were popular, and we hope that these help to alleviate some financial pressure in households each month.
- The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill was approved in November 2020 and places a duty on local authorities to ensure period products are available to “anyone who needs them”. Facilities Management



Face to face interventions

continued for our most vulnerable children and young people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.



will be working over the next year to design a service which meets the requirements of the Bill. Our children and young people will be a key part of this service delivery.

Children and Families

- **Face to face interventions** continued for our most vulnerable children and young people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, many virtual and 'Near Me' digital appointments and visits have, and continue to be undertaken, utilising technology. Since March 2020, Children and Families teams have undertaken an average of 529 home visits per week to offer support, guidance and respond to safeguarding issues and vulnerabilities.
- In addition our teams have contacted children and their families by **phone** (402 per week on average) and virtually (23 per week on average). The number of vulnerable families being identified has steadily grown throughout the periods of lockdown.
- Utilising the **Get Connected Fund** a number of children and families experienced enhanced participation in learning and an ongoing connection with those offering them essential support.
- In order to ensure that young people could be digitally connected especially during the pandemic, 265 devices including 54 Chromebooks, 45 laptops and 25 iPads were distributed to children who are **looked after, as well as care leavers**. The devices were supplied by Who Cares?, our Corporate Parenting Team and Community Development.
- Our staff provided a range of **activities** to our children and families throughout the pandemic, including arts and crafts activities, scavenger hunts and booklets.
- Applications to the Cash For Kids Emergency Grant Fund raised £10,500 for our most vulnerable families **providing essential items** during the lockdown period.
- Donations of bicycles were received and distributed to families, assisting with mobility and **outdoor opportunities** to enhance well-being.
- Donations of children's clothing were collected and distributed to families who required them.
- Money received from the **Winter Care Social Funding** was used in a variety of ways to go directly to vulnerable children and families across North Ayrshire. This included vouchers for local cafes, cinema, supermarkets and gym memberships. All Care Experienced young people were written to with



Funding was also provided for music tuition, horse riding, crisis counselling, dance lessons, football coaching for children and young people in all locality teams,

packs of resources, wellbeing activities and treats. All foster carers were given vouchers at Christmas time. Caravan breaks and treat days are being planned and purchased post Covid.

- The Service Access and Multi Agency Assessment Screening Hub (MAASH) teams recently provided **Hope Bags**, with vouchers for local supermarkets, cafes, mobile phone, as well as other information and support guidance, all packed into the same emergency pack and offer invaluable support at a very worrying time.



Food vouchers, clothing vouchers and electricity cards were distributed, and our very successful Chicken Dinners project and Christmas Toy Appeal took place with £1200 being awarded as a grant from West Sound radio station.

- Food vouchers, clothing vouchers and electricity cards were distributed, and our very successful Chicken Dinners project and Christmas Toy Appeal took place with £1200 being awarded as a grant from West Sound radio station. We received numerous and generous donations of toys and money from far and wide to ensure all our families in need had a full Christmas dinner delivered to them before Christmas day.
- Funding was also provided for music tuition, horse riding, crisis counselling, dance lessons, football coaching for children and young people in all locality teams, as well as two extensions for family homes to support kinship placements (placements at risk of breaking down).
- All Care Experienced young people have a **KA Leisure card** that they can use when the gyms open up again.
- A joint funding submission with the National Portrait Gallery, North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and North Ayrshire Youth Services was successful in securing £60,000 from the **Youth Recovery Fund**. The Youth Recovery Fund has been set up to support the wellbeing of all children and young people impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular those young people from disadvantaged



The Innovative Employment Programme will create an opportunity for parents and carers involved with the Rosemount Project.



backgrounds and will enable the youth work sector across Scotland to support educational recovery in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. This funding will support an exciting range of art programmes, initiatives and exhibitions that will have a choose life message and encourage positive mental health and wellbeing amongst our children and young people. This involved art packs being posted out to over 200 children and young people across North Ayrshire.

- A **Care Experienced Quality Improvement Officer** was appointed on 1st March 2021 whose sole role will be to focus on the attainment and achievement of care experienced young people.
- During the Pandemic our **Service Access Team** realigned their service within a week linking Health and Social Care Partnership staff to all Community Hubs to work in collaboration with Community Development, the Third Sector and volunteers to support vulnerable families at risk of isolation in our communities. This responsive and collaborative approach enabled staff to deliver individualised support, meet food and health needs with dignity, tackle loneliness and support families with managing finances. Over 600 additional families who contacted the Community

Hubs were supported by the Service Access team during the first month of the pandemic.

- This co-location and joint working initiative has developed a strong partnership across services and is a model which we continue to build on to improve local health and wellbeing and to ensure that the services provided in each locality are meeting the specific needs of families and communities.
- Following the legacy and learning that was developed from the partnership work with our Community Development colleagues in the Community Hubs an exciting opportunity to support parents and carers into employment, training and further education post pandemic has arisen. The **Innovative Employment Programme** will create an opportunity for parents and carers involved with the Rosemount Project who are on low income and who have lost employment and training opportunities due to the pandemic to participate in person centred employment and training programmes. These programmes will enhance parents' and carers' experience of training and employment and provide them with a variety of bespoke learning programmes, that are interactive, confidence building and which cover a vast range of topics. Furthermore, this innovative programme will take parents



Our Throughcare Team fund accommodation costs for young people who are undertaking education courses at HNC level and above.

and carers on their own learning journey with each programme incorporating literacy and skills development, health and well-being and support to work towards adult learning awards and volunteering opportunities.

- Additional benefits from this creative intervention will be an introduction to **what's on at a local level** to encourage and increase the circle of support that parents and carers have in their local area and opportunities for delivery of intergenerational and joint family learning programmes, initiatives and events. It is anticipated that these programmes will commence in July/August 2021.
- Our Throughcare Team fund **accommodation costs for young people who are undertaking education courses at HNC level and above**. This allows the young person to use their care experienced bursary to cover all their other costs. This allows young people to concentrate on the course without necessarily looking for part time employment to meet their basic needs. One young man who went on to study for a PhD said that providing finances to give him the space to concentrate on his coursework was the best thing we did.
- In line with the increase in Universal Credit payments during the pandemic, **Throughcare raised the weekly Care Leaver Payment by £20**. Along with the regular distribution of vouchers for supermarkets and clothing suppliers as well as crediting power supplies, this was a way to try to ensure that care leavers were able to maintain their homes and meet their basic needs. Although the Care Leaver Payment increase was a direct response to the pandemic, the offering of vouchers and financing power supplies are a frequent, long standing practice of the team to alleviate some of the financial hardships suffered by care leavers. In addition, the council tax exemption for care leavers until their 26th birthday, is another financial pressure that young people don't need to worry about.

Case Study: Qualitative Research undertaken (September 2020) into the cost of pregnancy in Ayrshire and Arran

The relationship between lack of material resources and poor health, including during pregnancy, is well established, and the birth of a new baby can result in those close to the poverty line falling below it. Evidence shows that there can be cost-related barriers to accessing universally provided, and free at the point of access services

In Ayrshire and Arran a qualitative study (jointly commissioned with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Health Scotland) to explore the financial impact of pregnancy on low-income families was undertaken. This was with a view to establishing any cost-related barriers to accessing antenatal healthcare and to explore what health services can do to support the financial wellbeing of expectant parents and their families. An important aspect of the study involved capturing the real voices of lived experience from participants.

Findings

Financial pressures of pregnancy for expectant and new families caused cost-related barriers in accessing antenatal and postnatal care. The impact was apparent on families who were both in employment and out of work. Many families relied on the welfare system and family support. Issues were identified in the way in which Universal Credit operates, understanding entitlement and applying for support.

"My husband's not well and he's not able to work. Suddenly we had zero income (just applied for Universal Credit). All we

had were a couple of beds and someone had given us a sofa. We literally had to rely on the kindness of other people to get us through that – it restores your faith in humanity!"

New mum, experienced, A&A

Some groups found specific barriers e.g. asylum seeking families who were ineligible for welfare system payments found that their support parents were insufficient, meaning they relied on charity. A range of factors contributed to the financial pressures experienced by expectant and new families in receipt of low income, the most significant of which were:

- an increased burden on overall household income levels, particularly for asylum seekers, single parent families, and those in receipt of Universal Credit
- additional costs associated with preparing for the arrival of a new baby and ensuring the child's wellbeing once born
- the social pressure to 'buy the best' for the baby.

"H- was working at the time and I was pregnant, but we found out we weren't entitled to anything until she was here. So that was like a kick to the teeth actually. We were kind of struggling then to make ends meet, just with bills and things... Getting everything ready for her coming was a problem – we had to borrow money off H-'s cousin because we were in dire straits really."



New mum, first time, A&A

"I buy for the baby when I have money... when I got the Baby Start Grant I just went out and got loads – I buy when I see them on offer. Some things are hard to buy on a budget... Mum's buying the pram for me – £100 off Amazon – but you see people spending like £800 – it's mad!"

Pregnant, first time, A&A

While families experienced a sudden and intense financial pressure during pregnancy, varying degrees of financial support were accessed for 'baby-focused' spending such as clothes and equipment. This support was provided primarily by close family, and (for those eligible) by the availability of the Scottish Government Baby Box and the Best Start Grant.

Antenatal (and to a lesser extent postnatal) healthcare needs added a further layer of financial pressure on the income of these families, particularly those living in rural locations. The key impacts of accessing this care related to:

- travel costs for attendance at centralised venue appointments, whether for antenatal clinics or for scans/specific monitoring – again a particular issue for those in rural areas
- loss of earnings due to partners attending antenatal appointments
- cost, or lack of availability of free, childcare to address the restrictions on having children present at assessment centres or to facilitate travel to appointments
- additional costs incurred as a result of the ineffective or uncoordinated scheduling and running of appointments (parking, travel costs, food)

"It's three buses to get to Crosshouse... Nine pounds eighty single all the way. So nearly £20 return – £40 for us both – just to get a scan!"

Pregnant, experienced, A&A

"Getting appointments closer. I think for anybody in Girvan who would be travelling to Crosshouse it's a nightmare."

New mum, Experienced, A&A

"He works set hours so trying to get a babysitter was difficult... for scans you're allowed to go to two but his boss didn't allow him more time off... so I had to take her (toddler) too."

New mum, experienced, A&A

"No one asks you if you can get to appointments – they just send out details and expect you to work it out! It's not good... it's not easy."



Pregnant, experienced, A&A

These findings supported several recommendations for action, as summarised below, and will contribute to future Child Poverty action planning:

- Greater opportunities for meaningful engagement with midwives at the antenatal stage will provide for continuity of care and time to build relationships of trust and provision of financial advice.
- The provision of clearer awareness-raising and signposting of specialist money advice/welfare rights services is needed. This includes staff training.
- Proactive discussion of the financial support that is available must take place early in the antenatal care process.
- The provision of vouchers or passes ante-natal care.
- Greater ease of accessibility to welfare foods and tackling of associated stigma
- Local second-hand buying options, third sector services, and online platforms which provide equipment for new parents should be promoted.
- Access to childcare facilities, specifically for those attending more frequently for additional care appointments.
- Greater flexibility to accommodate individual circumstances when arranging appointments.
- A more decentralised service delivery model, for example, a hub-and-spoke model, particularly in rural areas.



Travel Initiatives

- We secured £400,000 of funding from the **Spaces for People** programme managed by Sustrans to enable temporary infrastructure projects to reallocate road space to facilitate **safe walking, wheeling and cycling** during the Covid-19 emergency. The funding will enable the following works to be undertaken by the end of May 2021:
 - Creation of new cycle parking at strategic locations.
 - Delivery of a range of behaviour change activities including school travel materials and maps.
 - Path works to reclaim full path widths on existing routes and remedial surfacing works on key active travel routes.
- We have developed a partnership project with Sustrans Scotland to deliver a street design project in Ardrossan which will design and implement **high-quality public space in the town centre and upgrade the National Cycle Network (NCN)**. The Ardrossan Connections project will be delivered over three years, with construction planned in 2022/23. This will focus on:
 - Providing safe, accessible and attractive walking, wheeling and cycling route for residents and visitors and improve the attractiveness of the NCN between the Three Towns.
 - Creating a sense of place in Ardrossan that celebrates heritage and encourages more visits.
 - Improving awareness of the NCN and the benefits of active and sustainable travel
 - Alleviating transport poverty and allow more people to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of travelling actively and sustainably.
- We have secured £1.31M for 2021/22 from the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) Capital Programme towards the delivery of **active travel and public transport improvements** across North Ayrshire

Covid-19 Vaccination Travel Vouchers

- In response to the challenges faced accessing clinic appointments for Covid-19 vaccination we implemented a 'travel voucher' that provided the financial assistance for citizens to travel to their clinic appointment. Although children and young people are not currently receiving the vaccine their health and wellbeing is inextricably linked to their family and carers and this helped to reduce barriers to accessing protection from the virus via vaccination and the financial burden of cost of travel. This is being considered nationally as an exemplar of good practice.

Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

Increasing Income from Employment

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Support the creation of new jobs in North Ayrshire through business development and the Inward Investment Strategy and Ayrshire Growth Deal.	NAC Team North Ayrshire working with local and regional partners	Universal	Percentage of working age population in employment – 69% (2020/21) Number of jobs created by businesses in North Ayrshire supported by Business Development – 163 (2020/21)	All Residents
Encourage and support local businesses to pay the Living Wage	NAC Economic Development	Universal	Percentage of people earning less than the living wage – 16.0% (2019/20)	Employed residents
Increase participation and positive outcomes across a range of employment programmes including: • Skills for Life Programme • Family Futures • We Work for Families	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes and number of participants entering employment	Lone parents, unemployed parents
Provide In-work Support Programmes	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants	In work parents
Employability Support Services will continue to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes	Unemployed people, people with disabilities
We will deliver our Disability Employment Support Service: Equal	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes	Unemployed people, people with disabilities
Continue to use procurement powers and increased quick quote thresholds to help more local suppliers win contracts. Our activities aim to stimulate the local economy, by securing jobs or generating community benefits.	NAC Procurement Business Development Team	Targeted	N/A	Local businesses and residents
Develop employability skills through adult and community learning opportunities.	NAC Employability services and Connected Communities	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes	Unemployed people
Support care leavers with employment and training opportunities	NAC Throughcare support team	Targeted	Care leavers in positive destinations	Care leavers
Modern Apprenticeships for young people leaving care or have disabilities	NAC	Targeted	Number of Modern Apprentices	Care leavers of young people with disabilities
Maintain a specific focus on reducing the poverty related attainment gap and maximise the learning potential of specific groups of learners, including Looked After Children.	NAC Education Services	Universal	Average total tariff score of pupils living in SIMD 30% most deprived areas Average tariff score: All Leavers	Looked after children, children in poverty
Childcare/ Out of School Care Roll out of 1140 Early Years Expansion to aid Covid-19 recovery and enable parents to work	NAC Education Services, HSCP, partner providers	Universal	Centres providing 1140 hours provision	All parents
Work in partnership with Ayrshire College a range of vocational programmes are on offer to pupils in the Senior Phase.	NAC Education Services, Ayrshire College	Universal	Numbers attending vocational programmes	Senior pupils
Activity Agreements - Activity agreements provide 1:1 support to help young people overcome barriers they may face when taking the next step to employment, training or further education.	NAC Education Services, NACHSCP	Universal	Number of activity agreements	Senior pupils
Develop the Young Workforce (DYW) - All North Ayrshire schools are broadening the range of wider qualifications and experiences available in secondary schools.	NAC Education Services and Partners	Universal	N/A	Senior pupils
Strengthen the links between schools and partnership organisations and employers	NAC Education Services and Partners	Universal	Participation rate of 16-19 year olds (90.56% in 2019/20)	Senior pupils

Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

Maximising Benefits

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Undertake income maximisation by Money Matters Team to assist clients to receive their full legal entitlement to benefits	NAC Money Matters Team and referring services	Targeted	Income generation for service users – Over £15m in 2020/21 Success rate for appeals – 76% in 2020/21	Parents
Welfare Rights Officers based within GP surgeries.	NAC Money Matters Team and referring services	Universal	N/A	All families
Hold further sessions with senior managers to encourage poverty impact assessment approaches in our work.	NAC, NHS Ayrshire and Arran	Targeted	N/A	Raise awareness for Staff
Process Free School Meals and School Clothing and Footwear Grant – continue to automate annual process	NAC Customer Services	Targeted	N/A	Families entitled to free school meals and clothing grants
Continue to encourage uptake of Free School Meals in Primary and Secondary Schools including planning for additional provision	NAC FM Team and Education	Targeted	% uptake of free school meals (Primary) – 63.79% in 2020/21 % uptake of free school meals (Secondary) – 44.87% in 2020/21	Families entitled to free school meals
Ensure that our Customer Services Team are prepared to deal with any increase in demand for Benefits, Council Tax Reductions, EMA, FSM/ SCGs and Scottish Welfare Fund applications.	NAC Customer Services	Universal	Speed of processing Housing Benefits and Council Tax reductions	All residents entitled
Transformation Project, to assess the possibility of a “Single Shared Assessment”.	NAC Customer Services and Transformation Team	Universal	N/A	All residents
Digital support to residents – • Assisting with benefits claims • Assisting with digital upskilling	NAC Tenant Welfare Team	Universal	Number of residents assisted with digital skills Number of tenants provided with face to face UC digital support (cumulative for reporting year)	All residents
Roll out of training in financial inclusion direct referral pathways for maternity services in the first instance.	NHS Maternity Services and Money Matters	Targeted	Referrals to Money Matters from Maternity Services	Pregnant women and families
Provision of information relating to financial inclusion via the Better Health Hub	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Families
Provide access to free quality assured health information materials on financial matters via the Health Information & Resources Service including continued provision of access to non-digital versions (and free print and post service).	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Vulnerable families
Provide training and capacity building for staff on the most effective ways to have conversations with residents about financial matters.	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Vulnerable families
Monitor and support benefit automation and portal, being implemented by the end of 2022 by Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland.	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Vulnerable families

Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

Reducing the cost of living

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Implement the Local Housing Strategy including – • alleviating fuel poverty through our new build Council housing programme (latest insulation standards, use of renewable and energy efficiency technologies)	NAC Housing Services	Targeted	Number of households in fuel poverty (28% in 2020/21) % of council dwellings that are energy efficient	Vulnerable families
Focus on keeping our Council housing rent levels affordable	NAC Housing Services	Universal	Weekly rent rates compared to Scottish average	Council residents
Homelessness Prevention – Rapid re-housing Transition Plan.	NAC Housing Services	Universal	Number/ % of presentation that did not make a homeless application and were able to sustain current accommodation or secure alternative	Vulnerable families
Review our housing allocation policy to ensure no unintended consequences for child poverty	NAC Housing Services	Targeted	N/A	Vulnerable families
Energy advice – • Corporate Sustainability Team - general energy efficiency advice • Referrals to Home Energy Scotland.	NAC various teams	Universal	N/A	All residents
Progress the Solar PV Farm Project	NAC Sustainability Teams	Universal	N/A	All Residents
Seek approval for our first EV Strategy	NAC Sustainability Teams	Universal	N/A	All Residents
School holiday meals programme	NAC Facilities Management, KA Leisure, Community Partners	Universal	Number of young people accessing holiday meals programme	Vulnerable families
We will further work on our food waste project which makes surplus food available for children.	NAC Facilities Management	Universal	Uptake figures	Vulnerable families
Period Poverty initiative – providing free access to sanitary products at secondary schools and in all council buildings.	NAC Facilities Management	Universal	Provision figures	Vulnerable families/ young people
Welfare Reform Advice Team offer debt services to NAC Tenants	NAC Welfare Reform Advice Team	Targeted	Tenants engaging with service	
Reduce transport poverty by ensuring that local communities and families have sustainable and active travel opportunities to enable them to easily access services, facilities, employment and school.	NAC Travel and Transport with Partners	Universal	Measures for Transport usage	All residents
Travel Smart project aims to promote sustainable and active travel and reduce transport poverty in local communities.	NAC Travel and Transport with Partners	Universal	Measures for Transport usage	All residents
Family Learning Team funded to work in partnership with schools and the extended community – including food and budgeting support	NAC Education Services, Family Learning Team	Universal	Numbers of families engaged in programmes	Vulnerable families and all families
Continue to support digital learning with access and devices in Education.	NAC Education Services and partners	Universal	N/A	All children and young people
We will continue to build on the Participatory Budgeting approach to Pupil Equity Funding.	NAC Connected Communities Team and partners	Universal	N/A	Children and young people
We will raise awareness of the North Ayrshire Community Book(s).	NAC CPP Team	Universal	N/A	All residents
Continue to address food with dignity opportunities in our localities including launching an interactive map.	NAC Connected Communities Team and partners	Universal	N/A	All residents

Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

Reducing the cost of living (cont.)

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Explore the use of the new Community Benefits Gateway (Portal).	NAC Procurement Teams	Universal	N/A	All residents
Support development of early literacy through management of Bookbug in libraries and communities, provision of training for partners and staff and provision of four Scottish Book Trust story bags each year from birth to Primary 1 for all children	NAC Connected Communities Team	Universal	Number of bags distributed to areas of deprivation	All families
Take forward the Cost of the School Day actions with schools, services and partners.	NAC Education Services and Partners	Universal	TBC	Vulnerable families
We will take forward the Action Plan from the Cost Of Pregnancy Pathway research programme	NHS Teams	Targeted	TBC	Pregnant women

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