



North Ayrshire
Community Planning Partnership

Community Planning Partnership Board

Thursday 22 June 2023 at 11.15 am

Council Chambers, Cunninghame House, Irvine

Time	No.	Page	Item	Presenter	Ask of CPP Partners
11.15 – 11.20	1.		Welcome & Apologies	Cllr Burns Chair of CPP, North Ayrshire Council	
11.20 – 11.25	2.	Pg 4	Minutes of Previous Meeting Submit minutes and action note of 13 March 2023 (copy enclosed)	Cllr Burns, Chair of CPP, North Ayrshire Council	Confirm that this is an accurate record of the meeting and actions have been completed.
World					
11.25– 11.45	3.	-	Climate Change Steering Group Receive update and presentation from Jennifer Wraith.	Jennifer Wraith, Team Manager, Energy and Sustainability, North Ayrshire Council	Receive update and consider opportunities to support the work taking place across North Ayrshire.
Governance					
11.45 – 12.20	4.	Pg 10	Children’s Services Strategic Partnership Receive update and presentation from Audrey Sutton & Caroline Cameron.	Audrey Sutton, Executive Director (Communities & Education), North Ayrshire Council & Caroline Cameron Director, North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership	The CPP Board are asked to endorse the Children’s Services Plan, approve the Child Poverty Report and Action Plan and the Children’s Rights Report .
World					
12.20 – 12.40	5.	-	Green Health Partnership Receive update and presentation from Gillian Jennings and David Meechan.	Gillian Jennings, Health Improvement Officer, NHS Ayrshire & Arran/David Meechan, Senior Project Officer.	Receive update and consider opportunities to support the work taking place across North Ayrshire.

For further information please contact Jacqui Greenlees, Senior Manager Policy, Performance and Community Planning

North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE
Email: jacquelinegreenlees@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

12.40 – 13.00	6.	-	Active Travel Receive update and presentation from Claire Fitzsimmons.	Claire Fitzsimmons, Manager Regeneration, North Ayrshire Council	Receive update and consider opportunities to support the work taking place across North Ayrshire.
13.00 – 13.10	7.		Cost of Living Receive update from Audrey Sutton	Audrey Sutton, Executive Director (Communities & Education), North Ayrshire Council	Receive update and consider opportunities to support the work taking place across North Ayrshire.
Future Developments					
13.10 - 13.25	8.		Partner Discussion and Sharing on Key Developments and Opportunities	All	Partners share developments and partnership working opportunities.
13.25 - 13.30	9.		AOCB	Cllr Burns, Chair of CPP, North Ayrshire Council.	
			Reports for information Minutes of Locality Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arran LP • Garnock Valley LP • Irvine LP • Kilwinning LP • North Coast LP • Three Towns LP Integration Joint Board Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IJB Minutes 		

**North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board
Board Membership**

<p>Ayrshire College Angela Cox, Chief Executive and Principal</p>	<p>Scottish Government Sam Anson, Location Director</p>
<p>Health and Social Care Partnership Margaret Johnson, Elected Member (Chair, IJB) Caroline Cameron, Director</p>	<p>Skills Development Scotland Shona Mitchell, Head of Operations (Southwest Scotland)</p>
<p>Jobcentre Plus Sheila Lynn, Service Lead</p>	<p>Scottish Fire & Rescue Ian McMeekin Area Manager</p>
<p>KA Leisure Lorraine Tulloch, KA Leisure Board Member</p>	<p>Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Allan Comrie, Senior Transport Planner</p>
<p>NHS Ayrshire and Arran Lesley Bowie, Chair (Vice Chair) Claire Burden, Chief Executive Ruth Mellor, Consultant Public Health</p>	<p>North Ayrshire Council Marie Burns, Elected Member (Chair) John Bell, Elected Member Timothy Billings, Elected Member Scott Davidson, Elected Member Alan Hill, Elected Member Amanda Kerr Elected Member Shaun Macaulay, Elected Member Craig Hatton, Chief Executive Audrey Sutton, Executive Director Rhonda Leith, Head of Service</p>
<p>Scottish Enterprise Brian Connolly, Specialist - Partnerships (Innovation and Place)</p>	<p>Police Scotland Chief Supt Farouque Hussain Supt Derek Frew</p>
<p>Third Sector Interface Vicki Yuill, Chief Executive Officer, Arran CVS</p>	

Community Planning Partnership Board

Monday 13 March 2023 at 1.30 pm

Via Microsoft Teams



North Ayrshire
Community Planning Partnership

Present

North Ayrshire Council

Cllr Marie Burns, Elected Member (**Chair**)

Cllr Timothy Billings, Elected Member

Cllr Scott Davidson, Elected Member

Cllr Alan Hill, Elected Member

Cllr Shaun Macaulay, Elected Member

Craig Hatton, Chief Executive

Audrey Sutton, Executive Director

Rhonda Leith, Head of Service

Ayrshire College

Angela Cox, Chief Executive & Principal

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

Bob Martin, Chair North Ayrshire IJB

Thelma Bowers, Head of Service (Mental Health) *sub for Caroline Cameron, Director*

Department for Work and Pensions

Pamela Holmes, Customer Service Lead *sub for Sheila Lynn, Service Lead*

NHS Ayrshire and Arran

Lesley Bowie, Chair, NHS Ayrshire and Arran (Vice Chair)

Claire Burden, Chief Executive

Ruth Mellor, Consultant in Public Health

Police Scotland

Chief Superintendent Faroque Hussain

Superintendent Derek Frew

Scottish Enterprise

Brian Connolly, Engagement Partner

Scottish Government

Sam Anson, Location Director

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Ian McMeekin, Local Senior Officer

Skill Development Scotland

Shona Mitchell, Head of Operations South West

Scottish Partnership for Transport

Allan Comrie, Senior Transport Planner

Third Sector Interface

Kaileigh Brown, Executive Director, The Ayrshire Community Trust

In Attendance

Jacqui Greenlees (NAC), Jennifer McGee (NAC)

Apologies

Cllr John Bell (NAC), Cllr Amanda Kerr (NAC), Caroline Cameron (NA HSCP), Sheila Lynn (DWP),

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies for absence were noted.

2. Minute of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 8 December 2022 were approved and the following updates were provided:

- **Scottish Police Authority Pilot** – Derek Frew and Audrey Sutton advised the Board that this work was ongoing, and a report would be brought to a future Board meeting.
- **Cost of Living** – Audrey Sutton advised that the next regular report on the Cost of Living would be presented to the Cabinet in May 2023. A copy of this report will be shared with the Board also for information. **Action: A Sutton**

3. Health and Wellbeing Alliance

Malcolm McPhail provided the Board with an update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance.

M McPhail highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic, energy crisis and cost of living crisis has accelerated the appetite for local authorities and their partners to look at leisure services more broadly and re-examine purpose of their provision. The key consideration is aligning the broader strategic outcomes, particularly Health and Wellbeing. In North Ayrshire, the establishment of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance (HWBA) by consensus is the chosen approach to actively deploy transformational change in relation to strategy, partnership relationships, programming and monitoring.

M McPhail advised that a HWBA Steering Group has been formed and is making good progress in shaping the landscape for the new HWBA Board. The Terms of Reference for the Board have generally been accepted with a few minor adjustments to be approved. It is anticipated that the Steering Group will be looking to establish the HWBA Board by mid-summer and the Working Group soon after with initial pilot programmes in place by late summer/early autumn.

The key aim of this work is to support all public services in North Ayrshire to be access wellbeing through:

- Identifying what is needed to target services, transform workforces and physical assets into Key Alliance partners.
- Identify how public leisure can pivot to support prevention and self-management of priority long term conditions through active wellbeing.
- Bring together the knowledge from all parts of the system, all roles, and localities so the solutions are designed by the many, for the many in order to maximise best fit for the range of N.A needs (scalability) and optimize uptake (sustainability).
- Using meaningful data to articulate service usage and capture effects on this new whole systems approach and how this adjustment has the potential to create transformation. Develop a set of KPI's that then measures these changes at a population level.
- Articulating issues, immediate risks and opportunities facing public services delivery partners within the alliance.
- Identify practical steps to reduce costs, improve efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

M McPhail then shared a short video with the Board highlighting the impacts KA Leisure have made within the community.

Thelma Bowers commented that having a collective knowledge will ensure this work is sustainable and will have the biggest impact for people in North Ayrshire.

Kaileigh Brown asked M McPhail how could some smaller grassroots groups and organisations get involved? M McPhail highlighted that this is something that has been raised at the Steering Group and the Team have been reaching out to Third Sector Agencies directly.

Audrey Sutton commented that in the past this work operated via Active Community Strategic Partnership which links in the smaller groups such as community sports clubs. M McPhail and Lesley Forsyth are in the process of re-energising this partnership which will sit alongside the HWBA.

Faroque Hussain asked M McPhail asked whether there has been any benchmarking and learning from other areas across the UK, such as [Coventry](#) who have adopted a health and wellbeing strategy. M McPhail commented that from discussions he has had with other organisations across the UK, North Ayrshire's propose model and scaling this up from pilot to core delivery is where the impact will be felt.

The Chair thanked M McPhail for his update.

4. Police and Fire Wellbeing

Police Scotland

Derek Frew provided the Board with an update on Police Scotland's approach to wellbeing.

D Frew advised that through the journey taken with Police Scotland's trauma informed work and do things with compassion, kindness and lead to better outputs in the community

Community Wellbeing is part of Local Police Plan and there are two dedicated officers to this support this work in North Ayrshire and deliver better outcomes. PCs Fiona Gibson and George Bradbury carry out a phenomenal amount of work around wellbeing in North Ayrshire. The Campus officers also link in with this work, with an officer based in each of the secondary schools (excluding Arran) to support young people.

D Frew also commented that Police Scotland have a mental health resolution team to support people in an active way, getting direct support from mental health practitioners. This in turn can reduce demand on not only the Police but other services.

PCs Gibson and Bradbury proactively engage with children's houses once/twice per week. They engage with the staff and young people and explain the importance of managing safety. D Frew highlighted that two years ago, 175 young people were reported as missing from children houses, within the last year this has reduced to 85. This shows the positive impact the work PCs Gibson and Bradbury have made. D Frew highlighted that over last two months they have carried out 42 engagements with wide range of people to get better outcomes and pathways and they are also proactively supporting people and looking at ways to collectively come together for better outcomes.

Scottish Fire and Rescue

Ian McMeekin with an update on Scottish Fire and Rescue's approach to wellbeing.

I McMeekin advised the Board that Scottish Fire and Rescue purpose is to work in partnership with organisations to improve the safety and wellbeing in our communities. In North Ayrshire there are 75 whole time employees, 144 on call employees and a dedicated community action team.

Through working in partnership SFRS have focussed on who are our communities and issues impacting our communities. SFRS have also brought in a number of agencies to speak with staff around a wide range of topics such as domestic violence and dementia. This ensures officers understand community needs through the lens of the agencies working with those groups closely.

I McMeekin advised the Board that a new revised Local Fire Plan for North Ayrshire is in development.

I McMeekin highlighted that in terms of land and assets in North Ayrshire, there are 14 community fire stations. There has been investment in creating community gardens at community fire stations alongside the Green Health Partnership. Three safe spaces have been created across Ayrshire with the North Ayrshire base being Kilwinning Community Fire Station.

I McMeekin highlighted that in terms of employability development activity:

- they have launched a second youth volunteer scheme in Ayrshire which looks at supporting young carers and care experienced young people.
- Linking in with Ayrshire College with the uniformed services course.
- Delivering CPR training
- Step into Business – first member of staff joining next week and working 2.5 days per week for six months contract to learn new skills and build confidence.
- Reinvigorate the positive steps for partners programme with TACT.

I McMeekin advised that around 800 home safety visits were carried out over the last three-quarter period in North Ayrshire. The main cause of accidental dwelling fires is relating to cooking, visits include information on this also. All stations across Ayrshire now have crisis boxes to support people in crisis.

In terms of next steps there is a need to let innovation grow within the Service and have the ability to link with different fora is key.

Thelma Bowers commented that there is a phenomenal amount of community prevention work taken place and how the police triage pathway has helped shape the vision for mental health assessment hub at Woodland View to help prevent hospital admission.

Craig Hatton commented that he really welcomes this work and reflects what we are about as a Community Planning Partnership.

Chair thanked both D Frew and I McMeekin and commented that the role of Police and Fire is less traditional and contribution both organisations make to the local community is amazing.

5. Cost of Living and Child Poverty

Audrey Sutton provided the Board with a presentation on Child Poverty and Cost of Living.

A Sutton advised the Board that North Ayrshire's approach to Child Poverty and Cost of Living has been participative with communities and partners. It has been agreed that there will be shared responsibility for actions with some being thematic and locality based. Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board sits at the heart of the work we do.

The last report provided to Cabinet and the North Ayrshire IJB on this work, there was a commitment to make a step change. The strategic actions within the Child Poverty and Cost of Living work based

on mini-enquires has meant that through the Community Planning Partnership the team have been able to design actions which (a) form the critical mass of the work we do together and (b) add to the work we can individually do as partners.

A Sutton highlighte the regular overview to the CPP Board with an invitation to all Partners to contribute to this report.

A Sutton advised the Board that in terms of progress, the mini enquiry action plans have been drafted based on the three thematic approaches: - No Wrong Door, Employability, Food and two locality approaches; – North Ayrshire Islands: Arran and Cumbrae. A Sutton advised that an invitation from the Council Leader will be issued to Partners to pledge their support to the No Wrong Door.

A Sutton highlighted that the Council are developing a ‘tell us once’ approach where information is shared between services and partners to prevent duplication alongside automation of benefits and the use of data.

A Sutton highlighted that in terms of resources being developed for all partners:

- Postcards for use by all partners
- Video case studies
- Roadshows in localities – welcome support of all partners
- Support Q&As

ext steps:

- Review of mini-enquiry action plans with partners
- Report on progress
- Identify appropriate KPIs
- Child Poverty Report and Action Plan to Cabinet, IJB and CPP Board before summer recess
- Locality mini-enquiries and local action plans.

Thelma Bowers commented that having the collective evidence and data will help prioritise and target our approach accordingly around this work.

Craig Hatton commented on the importance of data that improves outcomes for the people in North Ayrshire.

The Chair thanked A Sutton for her update.

6. LOIP Action Plan

Jacqueline Greenlees provided the Board with a presentation on the development of the LOIP 2022 -2030 Action Plan.

J Greenlees advised the Board of the key focus for each of the LOIP priorities:

Wellbeing

- Addressing inequalities
- Enabling Community Wellbeing

Work

- Increase employment.
- Developing volunteering
- Better support for young people to develop the skills they need to play a strong role in our local economy.

World

- Work together to reduce carbon emissions.
- Increase Active Travel
- Increase carbon literacy with our organisations and communities.

J Greenlees highlighted that in term of reporting arrangements it is proposed that:

- There will be a performance focused special CP SOG meeting every 6 months to discuss progress on LOIP measures, actions, achievements, and gaps with an update on the outcome delivered to the Board.
- Thematic reports continue regularly to CPSOG and Board
- Power BI dashboard to be developed for the Impact Measurement Tool, with detailed performance report available for circulation.
- Overarching CPP Performance Report published annually.
- Refresh of Locality Partnership Achievement documents annually

The Board agreed to this approach. **Action: J Greenlees**

J Greenlees highlighted that in terms of next steps, measures are to be agreed with partners for LOIP Impact Measurement Tool. This will be done virtually. Annual reports are under development for last year of LOIP 17-22 and first year of LOIP 22-30.

The Chair thanked J Greenlees for her update.

7. Partner Updates

Scottish Fire and Rescue - Ian McMeekin advised that the industrial action ballot mentioned at the December meeting was averted.

Scottish Partnership for Transport – Allan Comrie highlighted that the uptake for the under 22 bus travel was saving the average family over its lifetime around £3000. The Chair commented that the difference this initiative has made to families was mentioned at mini enquires.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran – Ruth Mellor highlighted that with the implementation on the United Nations Rights of the Child coming into place, is there is anything CPP should be doing together. The Chair welcomed this.

8. AOCB

No other business was discussed.

The next meeting of the North Ayrshire CPP Board will be held on **Thursday 22 June at 11.30 am in the Council Chambers, Cunninghame House, Irvine.**

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

13 June 2023

Cabinet

Title:	North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26
Purpose:	To present the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26
Recommendation:	That Cabinet endorses the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26 and agrees to submit to the Scottish Government

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Every local authority and its relevant Health Board are required to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority for each three year period, whilst the overall responsibility rests with the Council and Health Board it is expected that we will work collaboratively with other members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as with children, young people and their families at various stages of the development and review of the Plan.
- 1.2 This report presents the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26 (Appendix 1), the Plan builds on the progress made since the previous Children's Services Plan 2020-23, in addition the plan reports on progress during 2022-23 against the previous plan.
- 1.3 The Children's Services Plan should be read in conjunction with the Children's Poverty Strategy and Action Plan and Children's Rights Report which form part of our suite of children's services planning documents.

2. Background

- 2.1 Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated, focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches, and dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and promoting child wellbeing. It aims to ensure that any action to meet need is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, this is taken to prevent need arising. The aims are about creating and maintaining a local environment which facilitates Getting it Right for Every Child Practice (GIRFEC) for individual children and young people.
- 2.2 Section 8(1) of the Act requires every local authority and its relevant health board to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority, in respect of each three-year period.

- 2.3 The publication of the new plan brings the 2020-2023 Children's Service Plan to a close. A recent progress report was published for the period 2021-22 and previously presented to Cabinet, progress for 2022-23 is incorporated into the new plan and formally concludes the previous plan.
- 2.4 The 2023-26 plan builds on the work of the previous plan. The plan maintains its previous vision that in North Ayrshire, 'For all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up'.
- 2.5 To achieve this vision, the plan has identified five priorities to progress:
1. The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected.
 2. Acting early to improve what happens next.
 3. Making Things Fairer
 4. Promoting good mental health and wellbeing
 5. Inspiring children and young people to be active
- 2.6 In supporting these priorities, a suite of actions has been identified that will be delivered by CPP partners, progress will be monitored through the Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) with work undertaken across partners to establish a set of outcomes indicators to measure progress.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That Cabinet endorses the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26 as attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 That Cabinet agrees that the North Ayrshire Children's Services can be submitted to the Scottish Government and published on the Community Planning Partnership website.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 None. All commitments are aligned with existing resources, the report contains information specifically on how the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund will support delivery of the Plan.

Human Resources

- 4.2 None. All commitments are aligned with Council and Partners agreed resources.

Legal

- 4.3 Section 8(1) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires every local authority and health board to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority, in respect of each three-year period.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The Children's Services Plan assists us to meet our Socio-Economic Duty set out in the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Plan aims to reduce inequalities and make things fairer and better.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 None

Key Priorities

4.6 The Children's Services Plan and Children's Rights Report links directly to the key priorities contained the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, the Council Plan 2019-2024 and the HCSP Strategic Commissioning Plan 2022-30.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None

5. Consultation

5.1 To inform the plan a period of engagement was carried out with local children and young people. During the 2022-23 service year, engagement activity was undertaken across a number of North Ayrshire Schools (Primary and Secondary), and across a number of local youth forums. In total, engagement took place with 195 children and young people.

5.2 Methods adopted included the use of the Jamboard engagement tool with school pupils, and focus groups, conversation cafes and surveys to engage with youth forums and modern apprentices. Young people were asked their views on the proposed priorities and asked to suggest what work could be undertaken to ensure the priorities were actioned. In addition to the CSP focused engagement, learning was also taken from other children and young people engagement groups, such as the North Ayrshire Champions Board.

5.3 CSSP partners have been fully engaged on the priorities and contributed to the actions described in the Plan.

Caroline Cameron
Director, (Health and Social Care Partnership)

For further information please contact **Scott Bryan, Interim Programme Manager, Strategic Planning (HSCP)**, on **01294 317747**.

Background Papers

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North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26

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Foreword

Welcome to our Children’s Services Plan 2023-26. Collectively across Community Planning Partners we want North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up, our 2023-26 plan builds on earlier plans and continues our focus on promoting children and young people’s wellbeing, underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Our Children’s Services Plan is part of a suite of plans which outline how we are actively supporting the wellbeing and wellness of our children and young people. These include our Child Poverty Action Plan, Children’s Rights Report, Corporate Parenting Plan, The Promise implementation, and our Child Protection Plans, all of which are at the centre of everything we do to support and nurture children and young people. Our Children’s Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) leads on the development of these plans and consists of representatives from across our Community Planning Partners.

We have a duty under the **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014** to produce a Children’s Services Plan every three years to demonstrate how we will improve the lives of our children and young people. Focussing on how services will work together to best safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of all children in the area, have a local workforce that is trauma informed, ensuring that action is taken to meet needs at the earliest appropriate time, that we have an integrated approach and make the best use of our collective resources. Central to plans is ensuring children and young people’s voices are heard and their rights are respected. We engaged with our children and young people to confirm our five priorities for the next three years and ensure they should be the key areas of focus. Our priorities are:



More information on how we identified these priorities, including how they align with GIRFEC, can be found in appendix 2.

These priorities directly link to our CPP [Community Plan](#) (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) vision of North Ayrshire – Fair For All. It also directly aligns with the Scottish Government Outcome for Children: We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential, as well as the National Performance Framework. Of course, underpinning our approach is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The last few years have been some of the most challenging for everyone, the impact of the Covid-19 Coronavirus Pandemic on our children, families and services was significant and continues to affect all our lives. The economic outlook remains uncertain and the cost of living situation has further impacted on the wellbeing of our residents in North Ayrshire – which is covered in great detail in our

Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-26. As we continue to adapt to our very changed environment, we are seeking opportunities to work differently and more effectively, and we will require to be agile and adaptable to addressing the challenges which our communities and services face.

During the pandemic our Children's Services were inspected in relation to those children who were at risk of harm. The inspectors concluded - *'Leaders in North Ayrshire were driving forward a coherent, shared vision, 'North Ayrshire – a Better Life'. This was underpinned by the following key priorities: a working North Ayrshire, a thriving North Ayrshire – children and young people, a healthier North Ayrshire and a safer North Ayrshire. This provided the strategic direction for improving the lives of people in local communities and protecting children and young people. Partners had an acute understanding of the persistent inequalities that existed in the area and had a purposeful focus on improving outcomes for children living in poverty.'*

We recognise the strong partnership foundation in North Ayrshire provides a strong commitment to continue to collectively focus on improving outcomes for our children, young people and their families. We will continue to strive to ensure we place them at the very heart of delivery of services so we can get the right support at the right time. There is no doubt that supporting our children and young people and their families will be one of the most valuable long-term investments we can make, through focussing on early intervention and preventative approaches we have the opportunity to make a real difference to life outcomes.

The plan provides a framework for partners to shape and improve how we work together to ensure services are planned and delivered in a way which best meets the needs of children and families, our focus being securing a joined-up approach, between local partners, to service planning and delivery, with collaboration at every level and across all service providers. We thank all those who contributed to the plan and their ongoing commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people in North Ayrshire.

Caroline Cameron – Director North Ayrshire HSCP
(Chair of North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership)

Craig Hatton

CEX North Ayrshire Council

Claire Burden

CEX NHS AA

National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework (NPF) sets out the government’s vision for Scotland and its overarching approaches, which apply across all the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and outcomes for children, young people, and their families. These are summarised as SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included).

The 11 national outcomes are interlinked, and actions taken to drive progress in each area are crucial to improving the lives of children and young people and into adulthood. Focusing on national wellbeing outcomes will help us understand what we need to do to make North Ayrshire the best place to grow up and contribute to the achievement of this vision. The improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing is one of the key priorities in the framework, recognising the need to improve outcomes and support the wellbeing of our children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people.



Policy Context and Strategic Themes

Improving outcomes and life chances for children and young people is a key priority for the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and all its partner organisations. It is also a key priority at the national level too. This section will help provide some of the context around the policy direction to help improve the lives of young people.

National Policies

The Promise

An independent review into the children's care system in Scotland resulted in a publication called the 'Promise' that focused on changes that should be made to Scotland's care system to ensure that more families were looking after their own children and when this was not possible their alternative living arrangements met their needs including family contact if appropriate.

Although the Promise implementation is aimed to address the needs of all our Care Experienced children and young people, the fundamentals outlined in the Promise are relevant to all our work across prevention, early intervention, and targeted specialist services. In all that we do we will take account of these in our approach to planning and service delivery. These are:

- **What matters to Children and Families?**
- **Listening**
- **Poverty**
- **Children's Rights**
- **Language.**

We are fully committed to the promise made to Scotland's infants, children, young people, adults and families. Our specific activities around the Promise and our Corporate Parenting Duties are highlighted in our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) and our Promise 3 Years On Report where the needs of our Care Experienced community are at the forefront of our planning and delivery around the five priorities of the National Promise plan, namely, **Care, Family, Voice, People and Scaffolding**.

Children's Rights and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

In North Ayrshire we are progressing Getting it Right for every Child (GIRFEC), a national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by identifying the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports working in partnership with services that can help.

The main aim of *Getting it right for every child* is to make sure that when children and/or their families have additional needs everyone gets the right help when they need it.

Getting it right for every child is a fundamental way of working that builds on research and practice to help practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people and act to deliver these improvements. *Getting it right for every child* thread through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and families.

To meet the diversity of needs of all children and young people, early intervention and prevention are at the centre of our planning and delivery of children's services. We look to strengthen families and communities to support their own children, supplemented by universal services, and providing additional support when needed.

GIRFEC puts children's rights at the heart of the services that support them – such as early years services, schools, and the NHS –ensuring that everyone works together to improve child or young people's outcomes.

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child \(UNCRC\)](#) has 54 articles. Many of them relate to children's basic rights regarding protection, health and education. Some are about the key principles which drive this plan, especially:

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children (article 3)

- Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously (article 12)
- Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law (article 13)
- We will make sure that every child in North Ayrshire learns about their rights, and what they can do if they feel that any of their rights are not being recognised or respected.

Children's Services Plan 2020 - 2023

Our previous Children's Services Plan was published in 2020.



Many of the aspirations and priorities established in that plan remain relevant, so have carried over into this new plan. Tackling the challenges in North Ayrshire require short, medium and longer term approaches, so each plan builds on progress.

The priorities identified in the 2020-2023 plan were:

- Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.
- Acting early to improve what happens next.
- Making things fairer and better.
- Supporting Mental Health.
- Helping children and young people to be active and healthy.

Each priority was supported by a suite of actions that would be delivered by our partner organisations. A summary of progress against those actions can be found in [appendix 1](#).

North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire has many strengths and assets including; welcoming people, a strong sense of community, many local libraries, community centres, fantastic parks and shops all set against the backdrop of the stunning, picturesque landscapes, coast and beaches.

However, the area also has a number of challenges. The population of North Ayrshire is shifting, over the years the area is seeing a decrease in the number of people who live here. Within that decreasing population, we are seeing a shift towards higher number of older people offset by a decreasing working age and children's population. These changes will have a significant effect on the priority focus of public sector organisations, with more resources being required to support the growing older population.

In addition, North Ayrshire also has high levels of poverty and deprivation. In the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, of the 186 data-zones (very small areas with about 800 people living in them) across North Ayrshire, almost 40% are amongst the most deprived in Scotland. As of 2021, North Ayrshire has 26,246 people aged between 0 to 18 years. Of those, over 45% live in those most

deprived areas. As a result, it is likely that these young people are likely to face additional barriers and challenges in achieving positive outcomes.

In addition, information published by the charity EndPovertyNow in June 2023, suggests that 29% of local young people in North Ayrshire are living in poverty. This more than 1 in 4 young people. This is the second highest rate of child poverty in Scotland, second only to Glasgow City.

Covid-19 Recovery

Following the major impact and restrictions imposed on us all by the Covid-19 Pandemic, the return to community life and normal social interactions is welcomed by all. As we return to school and work it may be easy to think that the worst of the pandemic is now behind us. However, the long-term impact of the pandemic is not yet well understood. In addition to the possibility of long-term effects on physical health, the mental and social impact legacy of the pandemic is still unclear.

Research from Public Health Scotland ([How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected children and young people in Scotland?](#)) highlights that a substantial proportion of children, parents and carers perceive the pandemic to have had a negative impact on child and family health and wellbeing. Around 3 in 10 children have experienced difficulties with their emotions, behaviours and mental health, with the majority of parents reporting the pandemic to have had a negative impact on their own physical and mental health.

Going forward, we must be mindful of these impacts and our services work together to support children, young people and families who have been adversely affected by the Pandemic.

Cost of Living

Following COVID-19, it now appears that post pandemic recovery is underway. Employment levels across the country are exceeding those recorded in 2019, with lower levels of unemployment and economic inactivity. However, many families in North Ayrshire and across the country still face many economic challenges. Due in part to rising inflation, and increases in cost of food and day to day products, the cost of living crisis is placing additional pressures on individuals and families. Despite higher levels of employment across Scotland, wages are not increasing in line with the levels of inflation.

This situation is effectively squeezing the resources of people both in and out of work. This is placing greater pressure and stress on local families, and likely having adverse impacts on children and young people.

Rural and Island Communities

Many areas in North Ayrshire are considered rural, with poorer access to services when compared to the larger rural areas. This is also true for our island communities living on Arran and on Cumbrae. While these areas have higher populations of older people, the challenges of rural life also impact on children and younger people.

Research from the University of Edinburgh has found that children and young people living in rural communities are more likely to suffer from feelings of loneliness and isolation. An article on the report can be found here: [Young adults loneliest in rural Scotland during Covid | The University of Edinburgh](#).

In terms of general health of young people, on Arran there is a lower uptake of the 6 in 1 Immunisation and the 24 month MMR Immunisation compared to North Ayrshire as a whole. In

addition, the percentage of primary one children with no dental cavities, and being of a healthy weight has decreased in recent years.

Information supporting our strategic needs assessment

To help improve outcomes for young people in North Ayrshire, it is important that we understand the local environment and the challenges that local children face. To do this, we collect valuable information that helps us better understand what life is like for a young person living in North Ayrshire.

This information contributes towards our strategic needs assessment, helping us identify the key areas for action.

Population

National Records of Scotland publish estimates of the population of each Local Authority area, by age. These publications show that the number of children and young people in North Ayrshire have been continually declining over several years. Between 2001 and 2021, the North Ayrshire population of people under 18 has dropped by 20%, from over 30,000 in 2001, to under 25,000 in 2021.

Similarly, the pupil census shows that the number of school pupils in North Ayrshire also declined over the last twenty years; having decreased by 17%, from 21,374 in 2002 to 17,691 in 2022.

School pupil attainment

In North Ayrshire we continue to make progress in raising attainment for school pupils.

- The performance of North Ayrshire leavers in attaining SCQF level 5 or above in literacy remained broadly consistent with the previous year at 84% in 2021/22. This remains above the national level (82% in 2021/22).
- For numeracy, the North Ayrshire rate increased from 69% in 2018/19 to 72% in 2021/22 which is in line with Scotland-wide figures.
- 96% of school leavers in 2021/22 progressed to a positive destination which is in line with the national rate.
- For Care Experienced children, there has also been improvement in attainment and destinations. In literacy 51% of North Ayrshire care experienced school leavers attained level 5 or above in 2021/22 (increased from 40% in 2020/21, above the Scotland figure of 45%)
- A notable increase in numeracy for Care Experienced children from 25% in 2018/19 to 33% in 2021/22 (above national figure of 30%)
- 95% of Care Experienced school leavers in North Ayrshire progressed to a positive destination in 2021/22 - an increase from 83% in 2018/19 and above Scotland-wide figure of 94%.

Looked After Children

Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, 'looked after children' are defined as those in the care of their local authority, which is sometimes referred to as a 'corporate parent', the public bodies which constitute the CPP are all corporate parents. Children can become looked after for many reasons, including:

- Facing abuse or neglect at home.
- Having a disability that requires special care.
- Being an unaccompanied minor seeking asylum, or who having been illegally trafficked into the UK.
- Having been involved in the youth justice system.

In North Ayrshire the number children and young people looked after has decreased in recent years, following a national trend. At the latest national snapshot taken for the Children Looked After Survey North Ayrshire had **447** Looked After Children and Young People, which is the lowest the authority has seen for several years.

However, at **18 per 1000** of the local 0 to 18 population, North Ayrshire still has one of the highest rates of children and young people looked after in Scotland, ranking 4th highest in in Scotland. The national rate for children looked after is 12.3 per 1000.

Over the last couple of years there have been notable decreases specifically in children and young people being looked after at home, with friends/relatives, and with foster carers. However, the number of formerly Looked After young people requesting to stay in their placement under Continuing Care is increasing. In April 2023, there were 58 young people in these placements, which as a rate of the population (2.3) is the highest in the country.

Children and Young People with Disabilities

A key focus for all partners in the CSSP is to support local children and young people to achieve positive outcomes as they move into adulthood, whether it be into employment or further education.

This is also true for children with learning or physical disabilities or additional support needs. School leavers are provided transition support as the move from children's and young people support services to adult support services.

Transition pathways are complex and often involve multiple organisations supporting and planning for individuals. These transition processes have faced challenges over the past few years. In particular being able to support people at an early enough stage to identify what their future, post school destination will be.

During 2023, a project team with representation from many partner agencies will work to identify How will we improve the experience of Children and Young People with disabilities and their families through the life-course.

Child Protection

Across Scotland, the number of Children on the Child Protection Register has decreased from over 2,500 in July 2020 to around 1,900 in March 2023, a decrease of around 25%. This decrease has also been experienced locally, with **93** children recorded on the Child Protection Register in July of 2023, the lowest figure since 2017.

Expressed as a rate per 1,000 of children and young people aged under 16, North Ayrshire's 2022 rate of **4.2** was the highest in the country (despite decreasing from 5.3 in 2021 which also ranked highest), comparing unfavourably to the national rate of 2.2. However, in recent months, numbers on the register have continued to decrease and the rate in April 2023 was **2.7**, comparing more favourably with the national average.

Young People's Health

In the last year, we have seen the highest rates of breastfeeding across the last 5 years in the following performance measures:

- % Overall breastfed at Health Visiting first visit **40.5%** vs 36.3% in 20/21
- % Of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-to-8-week visit **22%** vs 20.9% in 20/21
- % Overall breastfed at 6-to-8-week visit **31.1%** vs 27.9% in 20/21

There has also been the lowest reduction in five years of breastfeeding drop off rates between birth and first visit (4.8% reduction since 20/21) and between first visit and 6-to-8-week visit (reduction of 1.1% since 20/21). There is also evidence of sustained improvement in the percentage of babies exclusively breastfed at first visit with figures for 21/22 being 25.6% (25.7% in 20/21 was the highest rate in 4 years).

Immunisation uptake at 24 months remains high (97.2% in 2022 for 6-in-1 and 94.9% for MMR), although like the national picture has decreased slightly over the past few years.

2022 also saw improvements in child's dental health – 73% of primary 1 children had no obvious decay (highest figure reported from Public Health Scotland since it started reporting this in 2013). This mirrors the national picture which also saw an increase in 2022 to 75%.

Healthy birth weight for children decreased to 81% in 2022 (82.4% last year) while the figure for all Scotland decreased marginally to 84.1%. For primary 1 children the most recent data published in 2021 shows a decrease across the country – 70% in Scotland and 65% in North Ayrshire with a healthy weight.

Young People's Mental Health

Poor mental health is a growing concern across all our communities. This is also true for children and young people, where we have seen a growing demand for children's mental health services over the past few years. Information provided by CAMHS demonstrates year on year increases in referrals to the service. In March 2023, North Ayrshire CAMHS received 166 referrals for young people. This was a significant increase on the 77 referrals recorded for previous March.

There is also a high correlation between levels of deprivation and referrals to the service, with higher proportions of young people being referred to CAMHS coming from areas considered those amongst the most deprived in Scotland.

What was also highlighted, of all 1042 referrals between April 2022 and March 2023, **42.54%** were for a Neuro-developmental assessment. Children with neuro-developmental concerns are often referred to CAMHS but do not always meet the mental health criteria described in the CAMHS national service specification criteria. Additional services are required for those with neurodiversity to fully meet the National Neurodevelopmental Specification for Children and Young People. [Children and young people - national neurodevelopmental specification: principles and standards of care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/nns-specification/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

Speech and Language Therapy

Recent Public Health Scotland publications have underlined the importance of early childhood language development for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, educational outcomes, and employment opportunities later on in life. Public Health Scotland further highlighted the impact of the implementation of public health measures – necessary to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 – on the speech, language and communication of infants, children, and young people across Scotland (Public Health Scotland, 2023). Beyond the impact of the pandemic, the 'Equity for All' document (Scottish Government, 2022) outlined that in Ayrshire we have the highest predicted speech, language, and communication need in Scotland, across the 0-18 population. Addressing this need locally has proven challenging in the context of local workforce capacity and national SLT recruitment issues. This has led to significant waiting times for speech and language therapy input for children and young people in North Ayrshire with the service having to close to new, non-high-risk, referrals for a period of time in 2022/23. This pause in acceptance of new routine referrals was to enable the SLT service to prioritise the ability to safely manage high risk requests for

assistance, to implement service and process improvements, and to progress recruitment to vacant posts. With the SLT service now re-opened to routine referrals, more than 160 children and young people are now waiting for an average of 18 months for specialist intervention.

Meeting the speech, language, and communication needs of our children and young people takes a whole system approach. Partners are actively encouraged to continue to use the universal and targeted resources already available to support speech, language, and communication development in North Ayrshire. Ongoing advice and support are available to young people, their families, and other partners through a local help line and drop-in sessions led by experienced speech and language therapists.

Vision and Key Priorities

We have identified key priorities to address over the lifetime of this plan. These priorities will help us to achieve our vision, which is:

For all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up

To identify and agree on our priorities for this plan, we collated information from a number of different sources and service areas. Yet, the most important factor in agreeing priorities is the feedback we have received through our ongoing engagement with children, young people and their families. These voices are central to our activity and to this plan, as well as our wider activity. We engage with children, young people and families in a variety of ways on an ongoing basis.

We involve young people through their participation in several engagement and decision-making groups. This includes our Champions Board for Care Experienced Young People, our Youth Cabinets, Community groups, pupil councils and we work in partnership to advocate and support children and young people with specific needs. This includes those with care experience, young carers, additional support needs and those subject to child protection measures.

We have a robust Youth Participation Strategy which was jointly developed with young people and seeks to be inclusive of all children and young people no matter where they live or what their situation may be. Our young people are also encouraged to apply for funds through our Participatory Budgeting Framework and through our Locality Planning Forums.

Close collaboration exists between the Statutory and Third Sectors and through our Third Sector Providers forum both sectors are brought together on a regular basis. The Third Sector have also had the opportunity to specifically comment and contribute to the priorities and actions in this plan.

Since 2021 we have also organised and facilitated conferences and events, such as our 'Cost of the School Day' and 'The North Ayrshire Annual Promise' conferences where the voices of young people addressed the selected priorities in this plan.

There was overwhelming agreement with all priorities. These priorities are:

1. The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Implement the North Ayrshire UNCRC plan actions, ensuring the rights of all children and young people are protected.
- Ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and influence the work of the Community Planning Partnership.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to develop their citizenship skills, including active democratic participation opportunities.
- Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA) will be carried out on all new policies that affect the lives of our children and young people
- Through the engagement workstream of the care experienced task force, work proactively with Children and Young People

- Co-create with children and young people new, systematic mechanisms for maximising learner participation and voice and create a new Learner Participation Policy
- Ongoing consultation with children and their families on service design and delivery.
- Ensure that Children’s engagement forums focus on rights, helping children and families understand UNCRC and what this means.
- Work with local partners / members to identify opportunities for children and young people to become involved locally.
- Through our Advocacy Strategy prioritise community-based advocacy to children and young people ensuring they are aware of their rights and are appropriately represented.
- Implement learning and improvements identified through the HSCP SDS Learning Review Board for the Children with a Disabilities Team.
- Include young carers in the planning and shaping of their services.
- Develop a young people users forum for KA Leisure and ensure their views and opinions are considered when developing programmes and initiatives.

2. Acting early to improve what happens next.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Work with our partners to keep all children and young people safe, with the robust implementation of the new National Guidance for Child Protection.
- Support families with children aged 0-5 through our integrated universal early years’ service.
- Increase access to early learning and childcare.
- Work together with parents or carers to provide support to their children.
- Improve outcomes for care-experienced young people.
- We continue to develop and implement the Childsmile programme, focussing on early referral and preventive advice for all families.
- We will continue to deliver Jumpstart, a family centred healthy lifestyle programme for children aged 2-17, who are above a healthy weight.
- Expand our peer support service to all breastfeeding mothers as part of our integrated infant feeding service working alongside the Breastfeeding Network
- Continue working with whole families, whole systems and whole communities to provide early intervention support to all of North Ayrshires Children.
- Providing training / guidance to families, schools, partners and communities that enhances the understanding of early intervention & provides skills needed for families to feel confident and equipped to manage family life.
- We will implement the Signs of Safety approach to social work practice.
- Improve planning for transitions of care to ensure children and young people are able to thrive moving into adulthood.
- Invest in premises infrastructure to support children and young people experiencing distress in appropriate environments.
- Work across partners to develop robust pathways of support for infants, children and young people and their families seeking support for speech, language and communication development support.
- Improve access to Speech and Language therapy for children and young people who require specialist support.

- Develop a trauma informed workforce by rolling out trauma aware and trauma skilled resources.
- Develop an evaluation framework to maximise resources to support children and young people, to enable system partners to invest and sustain early intervention approaches.
- Reach and identify all young carers earlier in their caring role and promote increased uptake of Young People’s Carer Support Plans.
- Expand and develop the Health & Wellbeing Service to accommodate children and young people, with a focus on partnership working within the Mind and Be Active programme to establish an early intervention approach that provides supported physical activity opportunities for children and young people who are experiencing poor mental health.

3. Making things fairer.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Implement the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan
- Improve attainment and achievement for all.
- Close the poverty related attainment gap.
- Implement the recommendations from the Independent Care Review (Scotland), The Promise.
- Implement the recommendations from the Additional Support for Learning Review (Scotland)
- Build strong collaborative partnerships in local areas to ensure we deliver high-quality services for all of our children, young people, and families.
- Create a new 3 year raising attainment strategy.
- Maximise opportunities to work with Third Sector providers to provide early intervention and prevention supports, with a particular focus on primary prevention approaches.
- Providing a robust ‘peer’ support model that upskills parents and carers, providing training and volunteering opportunities and enhances employability skills as well as building self-esteem and confidence.
- Take an asset-based approach to communities / children and families and build upon the skills and strengths that exist.
- Establish a Financial Inclusion Partnership in North Ayrshire to better support access to support for families.
- Develop peer support models.
- We will strive for parity of access to support and services for our Island Communities including for Children and Young People.
- Provide multiple points of access for young carers into carer support services.

4. Promoting good mental health and wellbeing.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Develop our nurturing approach across all Children’s Services
- Work with children, young people, families, and communities to improve mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social participation.
- Continue to have appropriate pathways in place for supporting mental wellbeing.
- Work together with children, young people, and their families to help build resilience.

- Improve services for children with neuro-developmental conditions, implementing a whole system approach with partners across Health, Education, Social Services and the Third Sector. (Implementation of the National CAMHS and Neurodevelopmental Specifications)
- Public Health will implement a life course approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing, focusing on the first thousand and one days, infancy and Children and Young People.
- Support services that are nature based to encourage connection with nature and the outdoors.
- Build on services that encourage parenting skills and interactions with between family members.
- Build on the National CAMHS Specification through the 3 established pathways (core, unscheduled care, neuro), ensuring young people are on the correct pathway at a much earlier stage.
- Continue to provide ‘worry workshops’ e.g. identifying key issues raised as worries by North Ayrshire children and using this to develop targeted workshops on these issues.
- Establish a CPP led Health and Wellbeing Alliance to bring key partners together to co-ordinate approach to targeting support to improve individual, family and community health and wellbeing.
- Be responsive and pro-active in responding to and learning from Young Person’s Suicide through our Young People’s Suicide Taskforce.
- Deliver the new National Secure Adolescent Inpatient Secure Unit (Foxgrove) for children across Scotland, which will also benefit young people in North Ayrshire.
- Explore opportunities to ensure young people are not admitted to non-specialist environments including options to develop and in-house CAMHS inpatient provision.
- Building on the success of the Kilwinning Wellness Model, the Revised Wellness Model working group will now seek to roll out the approach across all North Ayrshire localities.
- Enable young carers to have a quality of life outside caring and ensure support when moving through key life stages.

5. Inspiring children and young people to be active.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Create innovative physical activity and sports opportunities with communities and partners.
- Adopt a whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight.
- Design opportunities into the whole system to enable children, young people, and their families to access supported physical activity opportunities and have a healthy lifestyle.
- Ensure all our early years indoor and outdoor learning environments and activities enable children to be physically active.
- Promote access to leisure services for children and young people to encourage participation in physical activities.
- Promote the introduction of the INSPIRE programme to improve opportunities for alternative activities, including arts, drama and music.
- Create and protect safe space for children to play and enjoy being outdoors.
- Support parents to understand the importance of movement and enjoyment for children and young people.
- Work with local small business/ fitness team to provide access to activity and nutrition information.
- Creation of new and local growing spaces to support communities to grow foods, to upskills families, enhance family time and connection.

- Ensure all primary, secondary and ASN schools are provided with quality extra-curricular opportunities in sport and physical activity that are open to all.
- Ensure all young people have the opportunity to compete and perform regardless of what level they are at.
- Create and support a school to community club pathway for sport across North Ayrshire.
- Ensure an effective leadership pathway is developed for P6 through to S6 and beyond to develop transferable skills.
- Ensure we remove any barriers to participation for care experienced young people to take part in sport and physical activity.
- Expand and develop the Health & Wellbeing Service to accommodate children and young people, with a focus on partnership working within the Mind and Be Active programme to establish an early intervention approach that provides supported physical activity opportunities for children and young people who are experiencing poor mental health.

We will work across CPP partners to establish a set of outcome indicators to measure progress on each of the priorities and actions.

Further rationale behind the decision to focus on these priorities can be found in [appendix 2](#).

Children's Services Strategic Partnership

Improving the life chances and opportunities for all children in North Ayrshire cannot be achieved by any one organisation or service. In fact, it requires support and dedication from many partners across the public and third sector.

This is what the Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) is, a collaboration of local organisations that work together to achieve our vision for local children and young people.

The members of CSSP are:

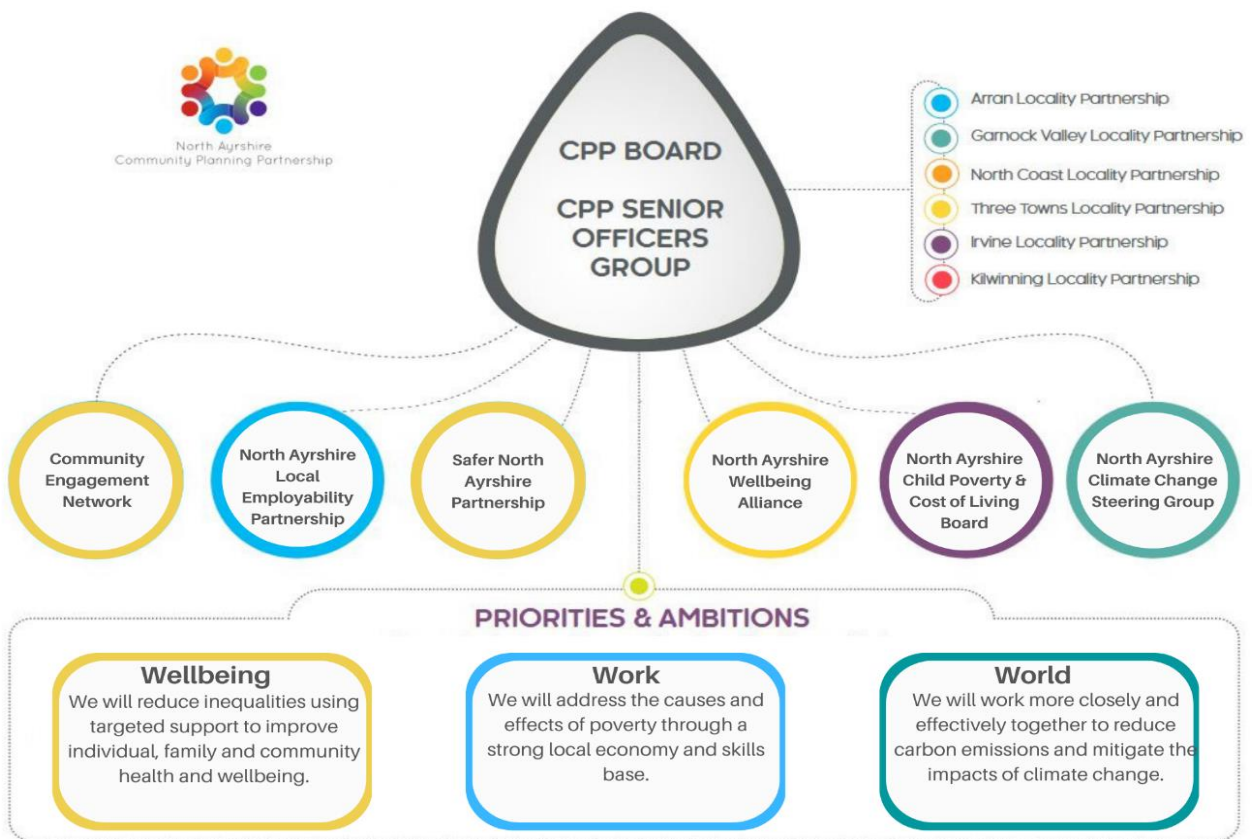
- North Ayrshire Council
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration (SCRA)
- Children's Panel Area Support Team
- Ayrshire College
- The Care Inspectorate
- Voluntary Sector

More information on the CSSP Partners and their vision in relation to improving services for children can be found in the on page 10.

Relationship with North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership

The CSSP is part of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP), primarily sitting under the 'Wellbeing' strategic priority of the North Ayrshire Partnership Plan alongside the work of the Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board and Wellbeing Alliance. This CPP has overall responsibility for this Children's Services Plan and will ensure partners work together effectively to help achieve our vision and improve outcomes for children and young people across North Ayrshire.

In addition, the CSSP is supported by a suite of multi-agency sub-groups. These groups ensure collaborative working across our key themes, enhancing our planning arrangements to the benefit of local young people.



(Please see [appendix 3](#) for textual description of Community Planning Structure image)

Local Policy

This section highlights some of the key policies considered in the development of this plan.

Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan)

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) produces the [Community Plan](#) (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan), that sets out a strategic vision and direction for improving the lives of the people living in North Ayrshire. Published in April 2022, the plan covers the eight-year period up to 2030.

The CPP has identified three key areas for focus through the Partnership Plan:

- **WELLBEING** – providing a focus on the health and wellbeing of local people, with an aim of reducing local health inequalities through targeted support to improve individual, family and community health and wellbeing. This area will aim to:
 - Address health inequalities
 - Promote children and young people’s wellbeing, and
 - Enable community wellbeing
- **WORK** – focussing on the local economy and improving the local skills base to help address the root causes of poverty and deprivation. This area will aim to:
 - Better support our young people to develop the skills they need to play a strong role in our local economy
 - Increase local employment
 - Develop volunteering
- **WORLD** – focussing on efforts to address climate change, reduce carbon emissions and improve the local natural environment.
 - Work together to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change
 - Increase active travel, and
 - Increase carbon literacy within our organisations and communities

With a key focus on health and wellbeing and on addressing social, economic and health inequalities, the LOIP 2022-30 has the focus of improving the lives of local families and young people at its core.

Going forward CPP partners will continue to collaborate to identify and deliver on joint actions to achieve our shared goals.

Child Poverty Action Plan

The Child Poverty Action Plan is produced by North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The development of the Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-26 coincides with the development of this Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 and the Children’s Rights Report, with a joined-up approach taken to their development and delivery.

In North Ayrshire 24.7% of children are living in poverty after housing costs (2020/21, though this figure is caveated due to issues with data collection during the pandemic). Addressing child poverty, is one of the key focus areas of North Ayrshire Council, particularly with the current cost-of-living crisis. The Child Poverty Action Plan sets out the key ambitions and priorities for the CPP partners to help reduce the levels of poverty experienced by children and young people locally and improve the wellbeing of our children and their families. In June 2022, North Ayrshire Council established the

[Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board Chaired by the Leader of North Ayrshire Council](#). The Board ensures a joined-up approach across our Community Planning Partners to addressing child poverty and the wider impacts of the cost of living.

Further details on the Child Poverty Action Plan can be found on the North Ayrshire Council Website.

Children's Rights Report

North Ayrshire Council is a child centred Council, focussed on the wellbeing and life chances of our children and young people. In doing so, the Council champions the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that all children in North Ayrshire have their fundamental Rights met, protected and advocated for. The Council has a duty under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to produce a Children's Rights Report every three years which details the activities undertaken to secure and promote children's rights in North Ayrshire.

The current report is being developed in parallel with the Children's Services Plan and Child Poverty Action Plan, as recognising the rights of our children and young people is central to improving their lives. Examples of what has been achieved so far include:

- The appointment of a policy officer to drive forward the UNCRC within the Council and ensure it is recognised throughout our operations.
- Embedding Children's Rights into the Equality Impact Assessment Framework.
- Participating in the Rights Respecting School Programme, with ten schools now achieving this status.
- Developing our [Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-25](#) alongside our young people called 'Step Up, Speak Out'. This shows how we are supporting [youth forums and youth participation](#) including our Joint Cabinet where our North Ayrshire Youth Council Executive Committee (our young people aged between 12 and 25 years) meet with the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council to have their voices heard.
- Providing a strong focus on child protection and support services.

North Ayrshire Council Plan

The Council Plan 2019-24 aim is 'A North Ayrshire that is Fair For All' and has equality at its heart. The mission 'Working together to improve wellbeing, prosperity and equity in North Ayrshire' aligns directly with the priorities within the Children's Services Plan while emphasising the importance of partnership working. The three priorities 'Aspiring Communities', 'Inspiring Place' and 'A Council For The Future' ensure our children and young people experience the best start in life.

Following the Local Government Elections in 2022, a new Council Plan is in development and is expected to be published during the summer of 2023. It is anticipated the new plan will have the wellbeing of our residents, equity and advocacy of rights at its core, so will continue to be in line with the suite of children's plans.

North Ayrshire Education Service Improvement Plan

Almost all children and young people in North Ayrshire will be supported by Education Services throughout their school lives. Our Education Service is ambitious for our local young people. The services aim is to improve educational outcomes for all learners and to the most disadvantage learners in our schools.

In its most recent service improvement plan (2022-23), the service has identified five key priorities to deliver to improve the educational attainment of pupils:

1. Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
2. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
3. Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
4. Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
5. Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Each of these priorities are supported by operational themes and supporting actions.

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Commissioning Plan 2022-30

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care partnership (HSCP) provides locality-based health and social care services for people throughout their life. As an integrated partnership, the majority of HSCP services are delivered by North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran under the governance of the North Ayrshire Integration Joint Board.

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) published its latest strategic commissioning plan, 'Caring Together (2022-2030)' in April 2022. The plan maintains the same vision for local people that has been in place since the HSCP was first launched in April 2015, that is:

All people who live in North Ayrshire are able to have a safe, healthy and active life

The plan sets out the key priorities for the HSCP to help improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of local people, recognising the impact social and economic inequalities has on long-term health outcome. As a key provider of statutory health and social care services for children and young people, they are prominently featured in the strategic plan.

To help improve the opportunity for positive outcomes for children, young people and their families, the HSCP identified a number of key ambitions to achieve by 2030. These ambitions are aligned to the partnership's strategic priorities. The full suite of ambitions can be found on the HSCP Strategic Plan Caring Together, a sample of those include:

- All families in North Ayrshire provide nurturing and loving support to their children and have fast and effective support to continue doing so when it is needed.
- Fewer of our young people are cared for in a placement outside of North Ayrshire. Through greater local support and resource, more young people who require to be looked after can remain in their own community.
- Adults and young people who provide care and support to family members, or other people in their community, are offered a carers assessment and have access to a range of meaningful support options, including respite provision, affording them a short break from their caring activities, and supporting them to continue in their caring role.
- Children, young people and families who experience, or are at risk of, poor physical and mental health, substance use, or involvement in the justice system are fully supported as soon as possible.
- By delivering 'The Promise', our care system prioritises working closely with families to ensure their experience is as supportive and positive as it can be. The experience and journey of young people in care is greatly improved and informed through meaningful conversations with family and professionals.

HSCP Workforce Plan

In Children, Families and Justice Services, we will seek to build our workforce and processes to ensure delivery of the Promise. This will include further developments in:

- Early help and intervention approaches
- Whole Family Wellbeing
- Co-located, multi-disciplinary team working
- Supporting local families address poverty
- Child protection procedures (Signs of Safety and Safer and Together)
- Trauma informed practice

The HSCP are implementing the Signs of Safety strength and safety organised approach to social work case work that analyses detailed information for a balanced risk assessment. It will provide a practice framework that revolves around balanced risk assessment, risk management and effective safety and care planning.

Signs of Safety integrates professional knowledge with knowledge from families and their wider networks to rigorously explore harm and complicating factors alongside existing strengths and safety.

Partnership working with families to reduce risks and increase safety by building upon the family's strengths, resources and networks to change the everyday lived experience of the child so that we are confident the child is safe. As a consequence of working in a risk sensible approach with families more children will be supported to remain within their family network.



Preparation for implementation commenced in April 2022, with a 2 year intense implementation period concluding in October 2024, fully embedding the approach in every day social work practice for future years.

Resourcing the Plan

To ensure we can work towards achieving our vision and priorities, the CSSP and its partners will require to allocate appropriate financial and service resources.

Financial Resources

In 2021/22, we spent more than £218 million in Education, Child Health and Social Care, on services to improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people living in North Ayrshire. This includes almost £140 million on Primary and Secondary education, over £22 million on pre-primary education, over £13 million on special education, over £5 million on community learning and over £38 million on Children and Families Social Work services. (Source: [Supporting documents - Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics 2021-22 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2022/06/Supporting_documents_-_Scottish_Local_Government_Finance_Statistics_2021-22_-_gov.scot_(www.gov.scot))))

Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) is a Scottish Government programme that provides investment to Local Authorities across Scotland to support the development of holistic, whole family support services. The programme has the ambition that by 2030, at least 5% of community-based health and social care service budgets should be focused on preventative, whole family measures.

For the 2023/24 service year, an allocation of £959,000 has been confirmed.

Local community groups and third and independent sector organisations can apply for funding to deliver support services to families in North Ayrshire. To improve this application process, a scrutiny panel is being established that will provide robust oversight of the distribution of the funds locally.

To date the funding has supported the many approaches including:

- Scaling up our Family Centred Wellbeing Service
- Providing therapeutic counselling support for care experienced and vulnerable young people
- Scaling up support to families in the early years
- Recruiting a Dad's Support Worker to support local Dads as they care for their children
- Investing in whole system supports for children and young people with neuro-developmental conditions

Support Services and Committees

Throughcare and Aftercare Services

The Throughcare and Aftercare teams support young people transitioning from being accommodated by the Local Authority away from home onto living independently within the community or Supported Care. The team offer wide ranging supports in line with the identified needs of the Young Person. This may include support to access college or work, build and promote healthy relationships with friends and family, support access to additional funding such as Benefits and Care Leavers payments; promote engagement with services such as Legal, Housing and Health and finally provide advice, guidance and emotional support to the young person in times of worry or problems. The team pride themselves in being both creative and flexible within their approach so as Young People can achieve their journey to successful independent living.

Named Person Service Evaluation Workstream

Part 4 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which was revoked in September 2019, required local authorities and the relevant health board, to put in place arrangements for the provision of a 'Named Person' for each young person from birth to 8. The legislation indicated each Named Person would act as a single point of contact for each child with responsibility for providing advice, information and support where required.

While it is no longer a statutory requirement to provide a Named Person for each young person, GIRFEC policy continues to describe the benefits of a service supporting Named Persons, Lead Professionals and wider integrated, multi-agency working, in order to meet the needs of all children, young people and their families through early intervention and preventative action. North Ayrshire's Named Person Service adopts an approach that complements North Ayrshire's Child Protection processes and procedures to safeguard vulnerable children by supporting families through early intervention and preventative non statutory measures.

A review of the Named Person Service function was concluded in 2022, and included the views of stakeholders from across health, social care and education. Stakeholder feedback was very positive with the majority of NPS users rating the efficiency, effectiveness, speed and reliability of the service as excellent. Specifically, the Named Person Service for children under the age of 5, and their families, is highly regarded by a range of staff working within early years. The usage data and the processes which involve the NPS, show the integral role the service plays in the early intervention and preventative approach advocated by North Ayrshire.

Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework Workstream

The Children and Young People's Community Mental Health Supports and Services Framework was published in February 2021, the framework provides a set of principles for community- based services to support children and young people's mental health, wellbeing, and distress. Additional funding was provided to local authorities to implement the framework and is used to strengthen existing integrated working between Services and partners to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and enhancing existing supports as well as identifying the need for additional or new supports.

New supports in North Ayrshire include the Family Centred Wellbeing Support Service, Welfare Rights Officer in our Secondary Establishments, and the appointment of 2 MHWB Project Delivery Officers within our Connected Communities Team. We have continued to collaborate with Third Sector Partners to deliver mental wellbeing support. Communication of supports and services available is a priority and details can be found.

During 2022 more than 4,000 children and young people across North Ayrshire accessed services to either promote positive mental wellbeing or to receive targeted support.

Our Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework Workstream will provide formalised governance arrangements for the coordination of our Community Mental Health Framework allocation and to build upon existing practice to embed early intervention and preventative supports as well as promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Child Protection Committee

The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (NACPC) is a locally based inter-agency strategic partnership which leads on child protection policy and practice. The Committee has an Independent Chair and is comprised of senior staff from across key services in North Ayrshire, including both statutory services and the third sector. The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee adheres to Protecting Children & Young People: Child Protection Committees and Chief Officer's responsibilities. As such the NACPC has a range of day to day business activities to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities. Current priorities include implementation of the updated National Child Protection Guidance (2021), implementation of North Ayrshire's Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and taking forward priority outcomes identified by the CPC within the 2022 – 2025 CPC Business Plan.

Corporate Parenting Steering Group

The Corporate Parenting Steering Group provides strategic leadership for the Corporate Parenting Partnership. This Group receives reports from the Promise Operational Group (PrOG) on the implementation of the Promise and is responsible for overseeing the six Corporate Parenting duties, ensuring close collaboration between Corporate Parents. The Group also ensures that our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) meets the needs of all our Care Experienced Community, and that all actions are evaluated and reported on.

The Group is chaired by an Elected Member (Deputy Leader of North Ayrshire Council) and is comprised of Senior Managers from across the Community Planning Partnership including local Corporate Parents.

Scottish Attainment Challenge

North Ayrshire Council benefits from Attainment Scotland Funding to reduce the poverty related attainment gap between pupils living in North Ayrshire's most and least deprived areas. Locally, North Ayrshire benefits from Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), Strategic Equity Funding, and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding. To support effective use of funding the Education Service has recently reconfigured programme governance through a new Attainment Scotland Fund Improvement Forum, which acts as a mechanism to encourage collaboration and integrated use of funding to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people. A number of workstreams have been established to review professional learning and leadership development; redesign family learning supports; further integrate whole school nurturing approaches; and promote collaborative use of PEF to maximise impact at school level.

Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board

North Ayrshire Council established a new Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board in June 2022, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council and supported by NHS Ayrshire and Arran, the North Ayrshire HSCP, the Third Sector Interface and Community Planning Partners. The Board is developing the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26 to maximise learning and guidance from the Scottish Government's National Plan – 'Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026'. With the escalation in cost-of-living concerns this Board now also oversees the Council's response to the current cost-of-living crisis and provides a strategic approach to the themes in relation to child poverty and cost-of-living, which are agreed by the Board and explored in conjunction with Community Planning, third sector partners and residents through a series of innovative mini-enquiries. This demonstrates one of the Board's key strategic priorities, which is to ensure greater

involvement of residents, including children and young people, in service design. As outlined in the Board's of terms of reference, this groups priorities are:

- To provide leadership in the development and delivery of the Tackling Child Poverty Strategy for North Ayrshire.
- To oversee the implementation of the Child Poverty Action Plan to tackle the inequalities affecting the outcomes for children and families, with a clear focus on early intervention and prevention and a whole system approach.
- To monitor the Child Poverty Action Plan, including a performance framework linked to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Council Plan, on progress in delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- To advise on and agree an annual report for Cabinet approval and submission to Scottish Government
- To consult with children, young people and families on the priorities and actions within the plan so that they influence the design and delivery of policies and services.
- To promote effective partnership and whole system working and information sharing between services and organisations.

[Self-Directed Support Learning Review](#)

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 was implemented on April 1st, 2014. Self-Directed Support (SDS) is the national approach to social care delivery in Scotland ensuring people have the fundamentals of participation and involvement, collaboration, dignity, control over their support needs and informed choice when making decisions on the support they need to live their life.

During the 2022-23 service year, North Ayrshire HSCP undertook a learning review of the implementation of SDS locally. The review was established to help services, teams and partners share information, engage, challenge operations, and provide collective learning points on key issues relating to the current practice of SDS. It was also to ensure there was local capacity and ability to deliver on the National SDS Standards and relevant legislative frameworks for the provision of assessment and social care support.

The review identified several areas of recommendation, this included improvements around:

- Continuing the Social Work Conversation
- Developing Ethical Care Frameworks
- Clear information, early help and support
- Progressing a community social work model, and
- Improving Transition planning

Evaluating this plan

This Plan provides details of our activities and how this will contribute to the achievement of our priorities and better outcomes for children. Our framework will include a range of performance measures to help us track our progress. All of our Children's Services Strategic Partners are committed to contributing to our success. A smart action plan, aligning service area actions to this plan's key priorities will also be developed. This action plan will form the basis for the on-going performance and review framework.

Our performance will be driven and monitored by the Children's Services Strategic Partnership. An annual performance report on our progress of this Plan will be published by the Partnership and reported through the Community Planning Partnership governance structures, as well as being submitted to the Scottish Government to meet our legal requirements.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Progress against the previous plan

Priority 1: Young people’s rights and views are respected and listened to.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
<p>CPP partners, notably Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue, will continue to build relationships with the Champions Board, Education and other partners and further support activity in relation to care experienced young people to ensure that they are active contributors in Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>CWU officers in North Ayrshire have linked in with the Champions Board and intend on making this a regular scheduled meeting as we are keen to seek further partnership working. CWU are regular attendees at Children’s Homes which has had a clear and positive impact on the number of young person’s being reported missing. Future engagement will take place at community open days in collaboration with Donna Anderson, the first of which will take place on 02/06/23 in line with the Joint Cabinet action.</p>
<p>We will introduce new models of provision for free period products across schools and communities</p>	<p>Through our free period product provision, every pupil who menstruates, will have access to free products in their school. Products are also available in libraries, halls and centres and can be located via a free app – Pick Up My Period.</p> <p>We regularly provide bulk products to pupils in secondary schools ahead of longer school holiday periods to ensure there is continued access. The products are given to every pupil to ensure no one feels targeted or stigmatised.</p> <p>Pupils were consulted on the free period products provision in schools as well as community settings to ensure the model met their needs.</p>
<p>We will review our approach to nurture across our educational establishments.</p>	<p>30 primary schools and 8 secondary schools are benefiting from targeted Nurture support in the 2022-23 academic year. Nurture support is specifically focused on enabling pupil readiness to learn with data indicating this has a strong impact on delivering better outcomes for learners. The data analysis continues to illustrate the importance of nurture in supporting the health and wellbeing of identified pupils. Almost all schools have elected to continue with the NAC approach to nurture for 2023/24. We have piloted a few variant models and are liaising with establishments moving forward. We have undertaken full quality assurance visits and analysis. We have</p>

	<p>trained 56 nurture practitioners in the Lets Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM) intervention and most have started the intervention with young people. In addition to targeted Nurture, schools without a dedicated Nurture teacher and classroom assistant benefit through the Whole School Nurture framework that has been further developed in the current academic year.</p>
<p>We will raise the awareness of children’s rights (UNCRC) across all our partners.</p>	<p>We have employed a Policy Officer who will drive the implementation of UNCRC throughout North Ayrshire</p> <p>We have established a young people’s UNCRC group, which is led by North Ayrshire’s Young People’s Champion.</p> <p>We are working with our learning and development team and the Improvement Service team to identify and implement the best way to develop training materials and guidance on UNCRC. Identifying the target groups and their specific needs will allow us to know the level of training needs required.</p> <p>An Education Service UNCRC Policy and Operating Procedure was drafted in late 2022 and is in the process of being finalised ahead of sharing with education establishments to support further embedding of children rights within education settings. In addition, a realising children’s rights policy insert has been drafted that is being considered as a proposal that will enable alignment between future Education Service policy and UNCRC requirements.</p> <p>We have developed a communications plan, the remit of which is focussed on raising awareness.</p>
<p>Police Scotland are building on the excellent work already carried out by Campus Officers in school by identifying other ways that they can provide mentor support and enhance life skills for school leavers. This will be extended to include young people who have already left school or further education.</p>	<p>Our PSYV coordinator carried out numerous inputs to schools in North Ayrshire with a view to recruiting new volunteers whilst providing positive role modelling and support for youths in addition to that of Campus Officers. North Ayrshire PSYV group currently has 16 youth volunteers and will begin their annual recruitment campaign in partnership with Campus Officers after the summer break with a view to having a further 8 join. The optimum age for recruits is between 13-15 to allow them the best opportunity to complete their induction and deploy to as many events as possible, however candidates are welcome up to and including 17 years.</p>

	<p>The Ayrshire Division Senior Leadership Team have had an initial meeting with MCR Pathways to learn more about mentoring opportunities.</p>
<p>Police Scotland will work with partners over the coming three years to conduct focussed activity with individuals and support them into employment or other positive destinations. They have identified an Inspector to lead on this work and engagement has already begun with partners.</p>	<p>Community Wellbeing Unit (CWU) officers in North Ayrshire work closely with the Eglinton Growers, referring those in the community who have an interest in gardening to them, particularly those who are looking for connection and who may have underlying poor mental health. School leavers are also referred to assist with enhancing their CV and building social skills.</p> <p>Regular referrals are made to CEIS in Bank Street who assist with CV writing, first aid courses and interview preparation. Further engagement is planned for the Kilwinning Campus of the Ayrshire College with a view to opening up opportunities for those in the community who may not have considered further education.</p> <p>CPP partners, notably Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue, will continue to build relationships with the Champions Board, Education and other partners and further support activity in relation to care experienced young people to ensure that they are active contributors in Corporate Parenting.</p>

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
<p>Refresh and strengthen the focus of the school-college partnership and provide enhanced opportunities for achievement, e.g. through the Regional Improvement Collaborative, in the senior phase</p>	<p>Ayrshire College has continued to work with Secondary Schools to develop skills mapping from Senior Phase courses to College Pathways. This has been shared with young people and parents to enhance and inform career choices.</p> <p>Through the school / college partnership forum, a series of engagement opportunities were planned for completion during April-June. For example, all schools have been offered campus tours for groups of S1 & S2 pupils and also Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) 'Vocational Bursts' for various college courses.</p>
<p>Design tailored programmes with partners to provide enhanced support for specific groups of</p>	<p>Working with the Local Employability Partnership, identification and tracking of vulnerable leavers has increased. Schools are</p>

<p>school leavers, including those with identified needs</p>	<p>increasingly using the school management information system (SEEMIS) 16plus tab which helps to inform Skill Development Scotland (SDS) Data Hub. This data is used by SDS and other partners for early intervention and support in advance of anticipated school leaving date.</p> <p>The Employability Team has an identified Ambition Agreement worker to offer individualised support. This feeds into a programmes, partners and referrals process which offers various pathways for vulnerable leavers and supported by partner agencies. For example, Barnardos are employed for targeted and outreach work with young people, including care experienced, facing significant challenges in accessing a positive destination.</p>
<p>Improve the quality and accessibility to services for children and young people who themselves (or whose parent/care givers) are at risk of the harmful effects of alcohol or drug use, by establishing a specialist support team in partnership with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.</p>	<p>Child & Adolescent Specialist Substance Team (CASST) is a joint funded venture by North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP). The service aims to support children and young people aged 5-20 years old who are impacted by substance use. That could be from either the young person's own or a carer's substance use. The aim is to reduce harm/risk, meet needs, improve outcomes. In a bid to contribute to the reversing current trends of chaotic and fatal drugs and alcohol use. Interventions take place across an array of care plans including statutory, court ordered, child protection, kinship, looked after, vulnerable young person, and intensive support services. The service aims to support vulnerable children, young people, and families; many of whom face complex and multiple challenges as result of substance use. This is done by providing evidence-based and tailored interventions to address need. The team provide support and interventions in areas including substance use, parenting through substance use, promoting/improving mental health/wellbeing, diversion strategies/activities, holistic therapies, community links, accessing peer recovery, groups, local assets/resources. In addition to providing support to access. training/employment/education. While promoting pro-social skills and lifestyle choices. More recently the team have been working with</p>

	young female adolescents who are caught up in sexual exploitation and drug use.
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Priority 3: Making things fairer and better.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
Develop a three-year Raising Attainment Strategy to improve outcomes for all learners and reduce inequity of outcomes, including a focus on accelerating progress in early primary and early learning centres following the implementation of 1,140 hours of funded childcare for all 3–5-year-olds.	Work continues across the education service to gather views from across early years, primary and secondary schools to inform the raising attainment strategy. Engagement with identified key partners will inform the longer-term strategic development and implementation of a Raising Attainment Strategy in the 2023-24 academic year.
Reprioritise our targeted interventions to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap in North Ayrshire, maximising the coherence and impact of our work.	Following announcement of a significant reduction in local authority Scottish Attainment Challenge funding by £1.1m each year until 2025-26, work has been undertaken to streamline approaches utilised within North Ayrshire to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. This has included a review of the Professional Learning Academy and commencement of work to target Nurture and data literacy support for practitioners in education establishments.
Continue to work collaboratively in partnership across the local authority, South West Education Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) and national networks to support sharing of highly effective practice that reduces the poverty related attainment gap.	The education service to work collaboratively with a range of partners at a local, regional and national level to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. This year this has included showcasing the work of Nurture at a national conference, leading a range of SWEIC offered leadership programmes, and sharing good practice through a range of professional networks.
Work closely across North Ayrshire services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.	The COSD action plan was launched at a COSD conference in June 2021, with educational establishments, families and partners, including CPP and third sector partners and local businesses. A further COSD Conference aimed at children and young people took place on the 30th of May 2022. This year's conference included representation from staff and children across almost all Primary, Secondary and ASN schools, including children from as young as P4 through to S6. The children and young people participated in a full day of activities, led by Education staff and the Youth Services team. Elected Members and Community Planning Partners joined the pupils and staff to allow the

	<p>continued co-design and co-development of a renewed action plan to mitigate the impact of child poverty in North Ayrshire</p> <p>The learner voice of the 174 children attending the conference has been used to inform North Ayrshire schools on the Council's approach to reducing the Cost of the School Day (COSD) action plan 22-23 and support school staff to take on board the voice of children and young people as to how the COSD plan will be implemented throughout North Ayrshire schools. The conference's collaborative approach to putting the learner voice front and centre to decision making and planning. This supports North Ayrshire schools' approach to placing children at the centre of decision-making.</p>
<p>The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) will develop a strand of mentoring within the Positive Steps with Partners Project employability project. The project will have volunteer mentors who will support new referrals, supporting them to attend volunteer interviews and placements helping mentees to overcome worries and fears and helping to increase confidence in individual abilities and be more included in their communities.</p>	<p>TACT employ two sessional Project Mentors to work alongside the Positive Steps Team. We have one Project Mentor delivering our Cooking on a Budget Programme, working with 15 individuals. This support comprises of support with budgeting and nutritional advice, as well as teaching basic cooking skills. Positive Steps are keen to continue to develop this role and are looking to implement Mindfulness Sessions in the near future. Our other Project Mentor offers support and advice for our participants at Eglinton Community Garden. They have been supporting 16 different individuals with a range of advice and support around planting their own fruit and vegetables at Eglinton Garden and also at home. The Project Mentor has been a great support for all participants, easy to approach and offers a huge amount of support for all people with their own personal issues.</p>

Priority 4: Supporting Mental Health.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
<p>Review the impact of school counselling services and external counselling/ community wellbeing supports and refresh provision, strengthening the relationship between school counselling and other available supports.</p>	<p>Over the past year we have undertaken a number of activities to review both our external and internal counselling supports as well as trying to align these further with wider community wellbeing supports. This has included a short survey to all schools, Education Psychologists, counselling staff and a range of children and young people. We have explored the data we have on the use of our counselling services over the last few years and also aligned this with the data we have on requests for</p>

	<p>assistance for wider wellbeing supports. This review has already resulted in a few actions being taken forward including: an update of our school counselling guidance; the streamlining of the evaluations we currently gather for school counselling and an update of the post counselling questionnaire we use. Our next steps include: an update of our service delivery in line with the feedback from stakeholders; the completion of our school counselling guidance and an exploration of how our school counselling funding can be utilised to support wider awareness of mental health and wellbeing supports which may require the reprioritisation of the funding currently used to support primary counselling.</p>
<p>Assist education establishments to implement the national mental health and wellbeing Whole School Approach, including curricular, professional learning, and parental supports</p>	<p>An audit of establishment improvement plans and analysis of the Health and Wellbeing Survey took place. In addition, work is underway to support establishments who have highlighted the whole school approach to support mental health as a priority. One Primary school cluster (10 schools) have been supported to utilise the Whole School Approach MHWB self-evaluation tool against the eight principles. A whole staff session around the approach was delivered to 82 participants with positive feedback. Staff highlighted the principles they found particularly useful to improve practice. Professional Learning was identified as a key priority and we have developed a professional learning programme to meet the needs of all education staff. Staff have been encouraged to engage with the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Professional Learning resource developed by the Scottish Government Mental Health in Schools working group. This academic year, an additional 118 members of staff across the authority have completed the training with senior leaders supported to develop an action plan and evaluation will take place during term 4 of the 2022-23 academic year.</p>
<p>Promote staff mental health and wellbeing in a range of ways, including through the development of a programme of supported reflective practice sessions.</p>	<p>Reflective SW Supervision 4 weekly</p> <p>Whole Family Wellbeing Funding has provided vicarious trauma counselling sessions to a small number of staff within children's services. This will be expanded in 2023/24 to include increased availability of sessions as well as</p>

	<p>training for children' services' staff on vicarious trauma.</p> <p>PRI sessions via CPC</p> <p>Staff wellbeing funds for Health and wellbeing activities as a team e.g. yoga sessions.</p> <p>An Education Senior Leaders collaborative day took place in September 2022, attended by representatives from all establishments. Presentations were delivered on the psychological theories underpinning staff wellbeing and staff contributed their thoughts on concerns and proposed support. We listened to staff and identified key themes, these included concerns around working practices that impact on wellbeing and that staff valued being listened to. We were able to share current measures in place to support staff, for example the Head Teacher's Reference group which listens to and responds to education staff views on working practices. We signposted staff to e-learning modules we have developed around staff wellbeing and shared the spotlight on our research around what works to support Staff Wellbeing.</p> <p>It was clear from this event, that staff welcome and find peer support valuable and we have continued the conversation around wellbeing with a number of establishments.</p> <p>As we move into next session we plan to build on this work and develop a model/framework of support which focusses on validation, identifying strengths and empowerment, we aim to ensure this model is co-created with staff.</p>
<p>Review approaches to promoting positive relationships and whole school nurture and continue to adapt our approaches based on an analysis of need.</p>	<p>Feedback has been gathered from Head Teachers, children and young people, educational psychologists, and wider education staff to help determine where the main strengths and needs lie with regard to the whole school nurturing approach. This feedback is being used to make improvements in the education service's Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) approach. In addition, the education service has continued to develop, implement, and evaluate its 'Building on Positive Relationships' approach, which is a more targeted approach to whole school PPR.</p>

	<p>Support has now been provided to education practitioners, including area inclusion workers, in primary and secondary schools. Two parents' groups have also been run and evaluated using this approach with positive results. A service improvement group has been used this year to progress whole school nurture work and a collaborative session with this group was run in early May 2023 to evaluate progress to date and develop future plans.</p>
<p>We will continue to prioritise mental health and wellbeing in schools and communities.</p>	<p>We have supported education establishments to further develop their Health and Wellbeing curriculum and have shared evidence based curricular resources.</p> <p>We have continued to focus on the importance of respectful relationships and have now fully implemented the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme across all our Secondary Schools, an MVP staff network meets regularly and shares good practice; senior pupils have led PSE lessons to S1 and S2, evaluations are positive with younger pupils responding well to the input.</p> <p>The See Me See Change programme goes from strength to strength, with over 200 pupils trained by See Me in September 2022, to develop their understanding of mental health, stigma and discrimination and were supported to create an action plan to implement learning in their own schools. Examples of their progress includes, delivering learning to junior pupils, becoming mental health champions and ambassadors, holding bake sales, creating posters to raise awareness and influence change. To ensure ongoing sustainability 23 members of staff have been trained as See Me trainers and a further 200 senior pupils will be trained in June 2023.</p> <p>Our MHWB Project Delivery Officers (PDO) funded through the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health Supports and Services Grant Funding (CYP CMHWB) have continued to build on their successful community-based work. This year has seen them develop a strong partnership with Ayrshire College, as we work to reach 16–24-year-olds. They have delivered the Your Resilience programme to 60 college students with 37 completing the full course.</p>

	<p>In partnership with the Family Learning Team, they have developed a programme which promotes positive mental health and wellbeing aimed at primary aged children and their families “Take Time Families”. This was piloted in 2 of our Primary Schools and in partnership with locality officers from the Community Learning and Development Team has since been rolled out to libraries.</p> <p>The Bee-You Ambassadors have been supported by the MHWB PDOs, to deliver Resilience Programmes both in the community and in a number of Primary Schools where pupils have had the opportunity to train as Mini Mental Health Ambassadors, they are encouraged to role model positive wellbeing.</p> <p>During the summer months, the MHWB PDOs assisted and supported the summer food programme, delivering a Wellbeing that visited centres and halls across North Ayrshire.</p> <p>The aim of the Wellbeing Roadshow was to deliver interventions and activities that promote wellbeing methods, tips and strategies that could be used when the young people most needed it. Building resilience in these young people and giving them the skills to better their own mental health and wellbeing. In total the PDOs have engaged with over 2000 children and young people with almost all reporting they had improved MHWB.</p> <p>Engaging with at-risk groups remains a priority and the team have continued to deliver wellbeing sessions and run groups with New Scots, Care Experienced, LGBTQI. This reporting period they have also developed sessions to support Young Carers.</p> <p>Through the CYP CMHWB grant funded projects we have engaged with and supported an increasing number of children, young people, and families. We have continued to collaborate with multi-agency partners, third sector organisations and children, young people, and families to co-construct supports and services.</p> <p>Communication remains a priority and our Community MHWB Supports blog (NA community WB supports and services (glowscotland.org.uk)) has had 8506 webpage views with our bespoke MHWB education staff blog having 14725.</p>
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Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
<p>Recruit additional dental health support workers to support vulnerable families across NHS Ayrshire and Arran focusing on minority ethnic and our most deprived communities</p>	<p>Following additional funding from the Scottish Government, NHS Ayrshire and Arran was able to recruit three WTE additional DHSW workers to support children across the Health Board area. There had been natural turnover in the team leading to additional vacancies and therefore 8 individuals were offered posts. All have either completed or are in the process of completing their NES accredited training and will be working across the Health Board to support families as part of the Childsmile programme.</p>
<p>As the cost-of-living increases, we are working to ensure that the whole family can be active for one affordable price. Our family membership will launch later in the year and provide a tailored package of opportunities which suits each individual family's circumstances</p>	<p>"We've been working with further partners to remove/reduce financial barriers to participation. The introduction of our Inspire children's membership has been a product which provides a range of sport, arts/drama and social opportunities as well as facilities. This offers best value for and the easiest way to access more.</p> <p>We continue to support the school meals programmes during the summer break with free activity provision.</p> <p>We are proud to report that our Inspire membership numbers have continued to grow, reaching 334 members in total. Not only have we attracted more members, we have also developed strong relationships with partners who will be referring young people for memberships. These include Justice Services, Phoenix Futures and the Childhood Obesity and Health Weight Group.</p> <p>Our North Ayrshire Community Sport Hub officers are finalising plans for a clothing and equipment recycling programme. It will focus on redistributing them throughout North Ayrshire in order to reduce participation-related obstacles. The programme will be promoted amongst partners and clubs will be encouraged to get their members involved in the scheme.</p>

	Donors will be able to use bins at KA Leisure venues to drop off their clothing and equipment.
We are working closely with Active Schools to develop a community programme on Arran. The recruitment of key delivery staff will allow us to ensure that residents have opportunities to stay active.	<p>We have secured a full-time person for the post of Active Schools Co-ordinator who is from the Island. Their key focus has been to provide more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, and to develop effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community. The post holder has established a comprehensive extra-curricular programme of activities across all primary and secondary schools. The opportunities are led by North Ayrshire Sports Academy pupils, Clubs, school staff and volunteers. The Secondary school has on average 21 different opportunities each school term on offer. The primary schools depending on size have been 2-5 opportunities weekly on offer to them.</p> <p>Over and above, the islands Multi Sports Club that runs weekly at Arran High school for P6's and P7's bolsters around 50-60 participants weekly. This club is supported but Stagecoach to allow any young person who would like to attend can and doesn't have transport as a barrier.</p>

Appendix 2a – Agreeing Our Priorities

1. The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected

We Asked: How can we better ensure that children and young people’s rights and views are respected and considered in North Ayrshire?

“Don’t just listen actually do” Going forward with the new plan our children and young people thought time should be given to reviewing if their voices resulted in tangible actions ‘What is done that proves young people were listened to’.

Children and Young people voiced they want to be listened to on an individual and collective basis and gave good examples. The young people we heard from preferred that they were part of small groups where more outcomes could be achieved and they themselves needed a forum where they can ask challenging questions to prompt change.

We will take the learning from our pilot activity around ‘One Good Adult’ and apply across all our services.

Moving forward they said, ‘Look into having a committee of pupils from all the secondary academies across North Ayrshire which would allow pupils to give an input into the plan’, and indeed the review of the plan.

We are reviewing our participation and engagement strategy to ensure voices are heard and acted upon if appropriate.

Awareness raising activities designed by children and young people that help in understanding rights and can be communicated to all children, young people and their families could be progressed.

It was stated by Third Sector colleagues that an annual survey of all children, young people and their families could be sent to address changing priorities and throughout the lifetime of the plan.

2. Acting early to improve what happens next.

We asked: How can we act sooner to improve the lives of our children, young people and their families in North Ayrshire?

Our children and young people tended to focus on their education setting when considering this priority with a greater focus on life skills and wellbeing through the Personal and Social education curriculum.

We will continue to review our Personal and Social Education curriculum, ensuring that a broad range of subjects are addressed.

They indicated that one of the keys for schools is to identify issues early and have the structures in place to respond with either personally structured pathways and/or clear support structures to address common themes, e.g school attendance, sexual health, exclusions.

Early intervention – ‘everyone in the community should be offered this when it’s needed not just when in crisis.’

Third sector colleagues mentioned that many families with children who have additional support needs struggle during the school breaks as the same level of support isn't always available when schools are open.

Stigma – Asking for help can often be stigmatizing and a message to say, 'we all struggle at times and that it's ok to seek help!' needs to be communicated to all parents, children, carers, young people etc.

3. Making things fairer.

We asked: How can we make things fairer for our children and young people in North Ayrshire?

Young people were acutely aware of the impact of poverty and the cost-of-living crisis and expressed their wish for a greater choice over what to spend their money during the school day.

A reduction in the price of school trips, school uniforms, free school bags, meals, sports equipment and clothing were all called for as well as more access to food and toiletries, and swimming lessons.

We are embedding knowledge and understanding of Child Poverty in the curriculum and focusing on learning about managing money and budgeting, help available for families and the cost-of-living crisis and its impact

There was also a call for family learning activities to be available out with school hours so the whole family could benefit and would allow support to be given to the people who may need it.

We will review how family support is delivered out with school hours.

The importance of taking a 'Youth work' approach to education, with a greater focus on those who need the most support including those with additional support needs.

We will explore youth work approaches within mainstream and additional support needs establishments.

'Thinking of aspirations, how to build them for parents to filter down to C&YP. Can't just work in schools to close the poverty gap – got to reach outside the school gates.'

Third sector colleagues mentioned the positive relationship they have with partners that is built on trust. To take community asset-based approaches forward commissioning will need be flexible enough to cater for collaborative workstreams.

4. Promoting good mental health and wellbeing.

We asked: How can we further improve the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people in North Ayrshire?

This priority gained the most discussion and interest amongst our children, young people and third sector comments and covered a wide range of areas pertaining to mental health and wellbeing.

There was an overwhelming call for sports to be central to activity around this area for all those who wish to participate. Calls for more time outdoors, more sports clubs, access to better equipment and more funding for sport were all mentioned.

There was also a call for more 'clubs' in schools and in the community to meet the needs of those who had a particular interest in either a particular area or just spending time with their peers.

We will review our Open Space Strategy, Physical activity strategy and our Active Communities strategy to ensure sports and other outdoor activities are meeting the needs of our children, young people, and their families.

There was also no shortage of discussion on how emotional and mental health support could be delivered, including enhancing peer support, quicker access to school counsellors, shorter CAHMS waiting times and more awareness raising and advice in times of need.

We will continue to explore ways to support mental and emotional health within our schools and communities.

5. Inspiring children and young people to be active.

We asked: How can we better inspire children and young people to be active?

Some of this discussion replaced other views expressed especially surrounding mental health and wellbeing. Sports, leisure, accessibility to resources and activities were all mentioned.

There was an acknowledgement that activities were accessible and beneficial, 'Continue to offer opportunities through groups like active schools who offer young people to become positive role models for young children'. There was also a call though to expand the range of opportunities, 'Expand on opportunities outside of Active Schools to allow those from a non-sporting background to get involved in other activities.'

We will explore, with Active schools, KA Leisure and Connected Communities, the scope for providing additional activities, not just for individuals but for family groups.

We were told that this should include fun days, concerts, dedicated areas for different skill and confidence levels, gender separated activities if appropriate and most of all free.

Volunteering was also mentioned as a way to engage with our children and young people, and we should be actively promoting these opportunities in our schools and communities.

Appendix 2b – Aligning our priorities to GIRFEC

Using the principles of GIRFEC and wellbeing approach was identified that identified eight indicators of wellbeing that should be considered when working with children, young people and their families. These eight SHANARRI indicators are:

SAFE – HEALTHY – ACHIEVEING – NURTURED – ACTIVE – RESPECTED – RESPONSIBLE – INCLUDED

How they align to our Children’s Services Plan Priorities are as follows.

CSP Priority	SHANARRI Indicator
The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected	Respected Nurtured
Acting early to improve what happens next	Safe Nurtured Included
Making things fairer	Healthy Respected Included
Promoting good mental health and wellbeing	Healthy Nurtured Safe Responsible
Inspiring children and young people to be active	Active Included Responsible

Appendix 3 – CPP Structure Description

Provides a description of the CPP Structure image publish on page 9:

Image shows the following structures:

1. Community Planning Board as the primary overarching body (with direct links to Community Justice Ayrshire).
2. Feeding into the Community Planning Board is the CPP Senior Officers Group.
3. Feeding into the CPP Senior Officers Group is the following boards:
 - Children’s Services Strategic Partnership
 - Safer North Ayrshire Partnership
 - Economic Development and Regeneration Board
 - Community Engagement Network
 - Health and Social Care Partnership
4. Feeding into each of those structures are the six CPP Locality Partnership.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

13 June 2023

Cabinet

Title: Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26; Progress report 2022-23 and Action Plan 2023-24.

Purpose: To seek approval for:

- a) The North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy covering the period 2023-26;
- b) The North Ayrshire Child Poverty Report 2022-23
- c) The North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-24;
- d) The submission of the report to the Scottish Government and the publication on the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership website.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

- a) Approves the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy covering the period 2023-26;
- b) Approves the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Report 2022-23 and Action Plan 2023-24; and
- c) Agrees that the report can be submitted to the Scottish Government and published on the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership website.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the draft North Ayrshire Local Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26, Report 2022-23 and Action Plan 2023-24 which has been attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The report and action plan are statutory requirements by Scottish Government and are the responsibility of local authorities and NHS Boards. The North Ayrshire action plan has been developed using a collaborative approach with internal and external partners. The report summarises the existing and planned activity intended to reduce child poverty in North Ayrshire.
- 1.3 The report also reports on the establishment and activity of a board to lead the development and implementation of a Child Poverty and Cost of Living strategy to reflect the Scottish Government delivery plan.

2. Background

2.1 The current Government Spending Review Consultation is to inform how Scottish Government will prioritise its resources for the next three years (2022 – 2025).

2.2 The three priorities are:

- to support progress toward meeting child poverty targets;
- to address climate change and
- to secure a stronger; fairer, greener economy.

2.3 Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026

The Scottish Government's second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan covering 2022-2026 was presented to Parliament on Thursday 24th March 2022. It is projected to deliver the lowest levels of child poverty in Scotland in the last 30 years. This means that by 2023-24, the year of the Scottish Government interim targets, using current projections, it is anticipated that around 17% of children will live in relative poverty, with more than 60,000 fewer children living in poverty since the Act was passed in 2017.

2.4 North Ayrshire

According to figures released by [End Child Poverty in Scotland](#) in July 2022 **there are 5,394 or 24.7% of children in North Ayrshire living in poverty**. However, these figures were sourced from the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) and came with a caveat that data collection was impacted due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and that statistics should not be compared with previous years. Therefore, the true figure is likely to be greater. North Ayrshire currently has the second highest levels of child poverty in Scotland.

2.5 Key themes and areas of action within the Scottish Government delivery plan

2.5.1 Scotland's Offer to Families: Working together to deliver differently. Scottish Government is committed to working together to ensure that systems work for the people who need them most, trialling and evaluating new approaches, adapting ways of working, and investing in rigorous monitoring to understand how changes are impacting on priority families.

2.5.2 This includes the following themes:

- Pathfinders
- Social Innovation Partnership
- Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work
- Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs
- Supporting the next generation to thrive.

2.6 Local Child Poverty Action Plan

2.6.1 Local authorities and NHS boards are required to publish their annual joint local Child Poverty Reports and Action Plans in June of each year. This provides a retrospective review of progress against previous actions and sets priorities for the forthcoming year. This report contains, for Cabinet approval, its proposed three year strategy (2023-26), its annual report for 2022-23 and an action plan covering the period 2023-24.

2.6.2 The Child Poverty Action Plan and Report ([Appendix 1](#)) was developed using a collaborative approach with internal and external partners and summarises the existing and planned activity intended to reduce child poverty in North Ayrshire. The National Co-ordinator for Child Poverty Action Reports from the Improvement Service has supported this work and has published, with CPAG, our Cost of the School Day work as national good practice.

North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26

2.7.1 The proposed areas of focus are:

Our Objectives 2023-2026	LOIP Priority
<i>We will provide local leadership in tackling child poverty</i>	Wellbeing
<i>We will have greater involvement of residents, including children and young people, in service design and delivery</i>	Wellbeing
<i>We will ensure our services are human and kind</i>	Wellbeing
<i>We will commit to taking a No Wrong Door approach with partners</i>	Wellbeing
<i>We will advocate for our residents in accessing resources and funding to tackle child poverty</i>	Wellbeing
<i>Within the Community Planning Partnership, we will continue to take a system wide approach to child poverty within our Wellbeing priority and use our resources strategically to focus on better outcomes</i>	Wellbeing Work World
<i>Across the Council, NHSAAA, our Community Planning Partners and our third and voluntary sector partners in our communities, we will ensure our workforce planning enshrines a No Wrong Door approach to access to services and that poverty impact assessments are embedded in our policy and practice</i>	Wellbeing Work World
<i>We will examine how economic development, transport, skills and childcare provision can combine to break down barriers to employment with parents as a priority group, ensure local economic practices (Community Wealth Building) support tackling child poverty, and implement key actions.</i>	Wellbeing Work
<i>We will understand and address where possible the cost-of-living challenges that our families face</i>	Wellbeing Work World
<i>We will use data to inform place-based approaches to interventions and targeted use of resources</i>	Wellbeing Work World
<i>Wellness, family support, parental employability</i>	Wellbeing Work World
<i>We will improve access to affordable childcare</i>	Wellbeing Work
<i>We will encourage greater job quality through Fair Work</i>	Wellbeing Work

<i>We will ensure accessibility to employment and services through support for priority families</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>
<i>We will maximise the uptake of benefits and support financial inclusion</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>
<i>We will drive further progress in removing financial barriers to education (COSD)</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>
<i>We will improve whole family wellbeing outcomes, supported by the Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Fund</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>
<i>We will better link adult and children's services to improve outcomes for families living in poverty</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>
<i>We will improve the use of data and performance measures in relation to what the local issues are and what actions need to be taken around child poverty</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>

2.7.2 Key areas of activity over the past year include:

- **Establishment of our Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board**, to develop and challenge the Council and partners to tackle the current challenges, chaired by the Leader of the Council and supported by NHSAAA, the North Ayrshire HSCP, the Third Sector Interface and Community Planning partners;
- The introduction of a strengthened participatory approach through a **series of mini enquiries**;
- **A refreshed focus on local data, supported by the Improvement Service**;
- Ongoing **automation and streamlining of access to benefits**;
- Innovative **employability initiatives** with partners, including health visitors and the third sector, supported by the Parental Employability Fund;
- Our ongoing **cost of the school day** work, identified as national good practice and developed with our young people;
- Collaborative, effective approaches to continuing to address the **poverty related attainment gap, including through the Regional Collaborative**;
- A refreshed **Housing Allocation Policy** through the lens of child poverty
- Maximising **access to transport for under-22 year olds**;
- Innovative ways of tackling the rising **cost of home energy** for residents through our Energy Smart initiative, funded by the Council's investment fund.

2.7.3 Key actions for the forthcoming year include:

- Further maximising parental employment opportunities through a **Parental Employment Coordinator**;
- Implementing the recent review of **financial inclusion services**;
- Continuing to **support families where disability is a factor** through the Equal Programme;
- **Further aligning schools' PEF resources** to interventions we have shown to be effective in reducing the impact of poverty on learning;
- **Reviewing Early Years and Out of School Care provision** through a mini-enquiry, co-production approach;
- Maximising the opportunities provided by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, for example in relation to **supporting dads and male caregivers** and **extending the Family Centred Wellbeing Service**;

- Work with the Third Sector and community partners to scope our current provision for whole family support and identify where our gaps are, to create a **fund for partner activity** through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.
- Improving support for **young mums**;
- Further supporting activity in relation to **care experienced** young people through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund;
- Further extension of **mental health and wellbeing** in schools and communities.
- Extending our action plan in relation to the national **cost of pregnancy**;
- Extending financial inclusion and advice opportunities in the NHS, for example further developing **Maternity Services Income Maximisation** joint service;
- Progressing **support for New Scots** young people and families;
- Providing additional support to vulnerable families and children impacted by **fuel poverty, including on our islands**;
- Explore, in partnership with the Improvement Service and Glasgow City Council, opportunities to undertake a **data sharing pilot** with Social Security Scotland on use of Scottish Child Payment data to help identify need; and
- Progress a **Pathfinder** project with the Improvement Service to explore ways of obtaining consent to process data for the benefit of our residents, to intervene early to identify unmet need.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) Approves the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy covering the period 2023-26;
- b) Approves the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Report 2022-23 and Action Plan 2023-24; and
- c) Agrees that the report can be submitted to the Scottish Government and published on the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership website.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 There are no financial implications for North Ayrshire Council contained within the current report.

Human Resources

4.2 There are no HR implications for North Ayrshire Council contained within the current report.

Legal

4.3 The Council has a statutory duty to publish its Child Poverty Report and Action Plan each year, preferably by June.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 Tackling child poverty sits at the heart of our equalities and socio-economic duty and there are wide ranging implications related to our approach.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 Key areas of the report such as transport, connectivity and warm and affordable homes have direct positive links to climate change and carbon.

Key Priorities

4.6 The proposals relate to the Council Plan in its entirety.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The Scottish Government commits within its plan to developing a Community Wealth Building Strategy with all local authorities.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Council and NHSAAA consult with a wide range of partners to deliver the local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan, including young people, CPP partners and national agencies. The strengthening of this approach through mini enquiries leading to co-production has been a notable feature of this year's report.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director (Communities & Education)

For further information please contact **Dr Audrey Sutton, Executive Director (Communities & Education)**, on **(01294) 324415**.

Background Papers

Appendix 1: Draft Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26; Report 2022-23 & Action Plan 2023-24

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY 2023-26

CHILD POVERTY PROGRESS REPORT 2022-23

AND CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN 2023-24

Contents

1. Foreword
2. Links to generic background document (local plans and policies – used for all children’s strategies)
3. Background and local context
4. Child Poverty: Our Priorities
5. North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy (2023-26) – delivering on long term objectives
 - North Ayrshire:
 - Leadership of Tackling Child Poverty
 - Co-design and co-production: a participatory approach
6. Our Tackling Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26
7. Priority Families: progress report and action plan: Summary of actions and progress: 2022-23 and new actions for 2023-24
8. Child Poverty progress report and action plan: Summary of actions and progress: 2022-23 and new actions for 2023-24
 - Section 1 – Maximising Income from Employment
 - Section 2 – Maximising Income from Benefits
 - Section 3 – Reducing household costs and mitigating the effects of poverty.

1. Foreword

Addressing child poverty, in the context of the current cost-of-living crisis, is one of the key priorities of North Ayrshire Council.

Targeted investment in social security to reduce child poverty through increasing the value of the Scottish Child Payment and extending eligibility is already contributing towards reducing relative child poverty, however, one in four children in North Ayrshire is still experiencing the impact of lack of resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions which are the norm in 21st century Scotland.

As Leader of North Ayrshire Council, I chair North Ayrshire Council's Child Poverty and Cost-of-Living Board, which includes NHSAAA and North Ayrshire HSCP, and which is supported by a three-year £1.4m Child Poverty and Cost-of-Living fund allocated by the Council in the 2023-24 budget. This enables North Ayrshire to continue to make local interventions to support children and families.

Participation by our residents, and listening to people with experience of poverty, underpins our approach to co-producing mitigating actions. Mini enquiries - thematic and place-based – are used to inform our action plans and enable us to share learning and responsibility for improvement with partners from across the Community Planning Partnership and public services, the third and community sectors and Scottish Government.

We have made a significant impact on the lives of our families through our joint work to date and we are committed to intensifying our efforts over the next phase of our work through our ambitious Child Poverty strategy for 2023-26.

Leader of the Council

'Our ambition is to make North Ayrshire 'fair for all', a great place where people can live, work and visit, and young people can grow up without inequity. However, with one in four of our children living in poverty, we have significant work to do. Poverty has negative impacts on children's health, social, emotional and cognitive development and educational outcomes. We know that poverty puts an additional strain on families, which can lead to further challenges.

The Council and its partners at local level can have significant influence through their range of services and resources, and we are determined to target those resources available to us to reduce the impacts of poverty on our children and families.

The dedication of our workforce and of our communities can combine to change outcomes for our residents and we are determined to continue to work together to make a difference.'

Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council.

NHSAAA CEO Foreword to follow

2. Generic background document (local plans and policies – used for all children’s strategies)

3. Background and local context

Although recent data indicates that rates of child poverty in Scotland appeared to be stabilising, the effects of the recent cost of living crisis have exacerbated the structural challenges which exist in many of our communities in North Ayrshire, the most challenging symptom of which is the second highest level of child poverty in Scotland.

According to figures released by [End Child Poverty in Scotland](#) in July 2022 **there are 5,394 or 24.7% of children in North Ayrshire living in poverty**. However, these figures were sourced from the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) and came with a caveat that data collection was impacted due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and that statistics should not be compared with previous years. Therefore, the true figure is likely to be greater! **North Ayrshire currently has the second highest levels of child poverty in Scotland.**

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report ‘UK Poverty 2023’ found that: “We are in the midst of a profound cost of living crisis with huge implications for society. Many of us are having to make difficult choices on what spending we prioritise, but some of us face increasingly bleak choices.”

They found that in October/November 2022:

- Around six in ten low-income families are not able to afford an unexpected expense
- Over half are in arrears
- Around a quarter use credit to pay essential bills
- Over seven in ten families are going without essentials
- Around four in ten families with children are spending less on food for their children.

They also forecast that whilst inflation is expected to fall during 2023, prices are expected to continue to rise along with rents and mortgage payments, and wages are not expected to keep up. Scottish Government figures from 2019-20 showed that more than one in four of Scotland’s children are living in poverty. The Resolution Foundation forecasts that the rate of child poverty in Scotland will be 29% by 2023-24 and Scottish Government projections indicate that, without significant change in national policy, the figure could reach 38% by 2030-31.

The Scottish Government’s 2022 publication ‘The Cost-of-Living Crisis in Scotland: An Analytical Report’ found that low-income households with little or no savings are most impacted and also made reference to the higher costs of living for people in rural and island households for some goods and services, including off-gas-grid fuel and transport. While the most vulnerable members of our communities are continuing to access advice services in the largest numbers, there is evidence nationally, echoed by local advice services, that there are more people seeking help now who were traditionally less likely to access advice services e.g. homeowners and professional people. Many people who sit just above the benefits entitlement threshold are facing financial difficulties. Increasing numbers of people who are in a debt solution (payment plan/debt arrangement scheme etc) are finding that they can no longer afford their contributions and more clients are presenting with complex debt.

North Ayrshire

For the most recent time period available, North Ayrshire had:

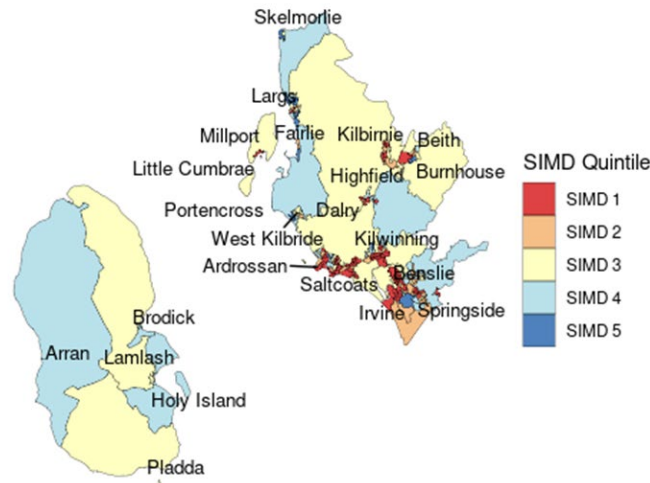
1. A total population of **134,220** people, where **47.5%** were male, and **23.3%** were aged over 65.
2. **9.7%** of people lived in the least deprived SIMD quintile, and **40.9%** lived in the most deprived quintile.

Table 1: Percentage of the North Ayrshire population living in the 2016 and 2020 SIMD Datazone Quintiles in 2016 and 2021 respectively.

Quintile	Percent of 2016 Population (SIMD 2016 Ranking)	Percent of 2021 Population (SIMD 2020 Ranking)	Difference
SIMD 1	40.9%	40.9%	0.0%
SIMD 2	20.0%	18.5%	-1.4%
SIMD 3	14.1%	15.8%	1.7%
SIMD 4	15.9%	15.0%	-0.9%
SIMD 5	9.2%	9.7%	0.5%

Source: Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, National Records Scotland

Map of Data Zones within North Ayrshire coloured by SIMD quintiles:



Source: Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland

The population in North Ayrshire is estimated to decrease by 1.7% from 2021 to 2026. Although the overall population is projected to decrease, the older population of North Ayrshire is expected to increase, while the population aged under 65 is expected to decrease.

The dependency ratio is the number of people aged 0-15 and 65+ as a percentage of those aged 16-65. For North Ayrshire, the figure was 65.6% for the most recent year. For North Ayrshire, the projected figure for 2031 is 77.2%.

Income from employment

North Ayrshire is particularly vulnerable to economic crisis, with the 7th lowest employment rate, (which has improved from the 2nd lowest in Scotland (73.6%) compared to a Scottish average of 74.4%). This most recent data release reflects the period January – December 2022 and shows a 8.7% increase from the previous data release.

The North Ayrshire rate for claimants as a proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64) is 4.6%. This compares to regional figures of 4.3% for East Ayrshire and 3.7% for South Ayrshire and a Scottish average of 3.3%. This dataset is for March 2023 and shows the rate has remained the same compared to other areas where figures have increased.

In comparison to other local authority areas North Ayrshire has significantly higher levels of youth unemployment at 6.4% (youth claimant count), the 2nd highest rate in Scotland and is significantly higher than the Scotland average rate of 4.1%. Addressing youth employment remains a priority given its impacts on future life chances.

Mental Health

the Mental Health Foundation reports that more than one in nine (13%) adults in Scotland are feeling hopeless, four in ten (40%) feeling anxious and one-third (33%) feeling stressed, when thinking about their financial situation in the past month. The Mental Health Foundation is warning of a significant rise in mental health problems without adequate support.

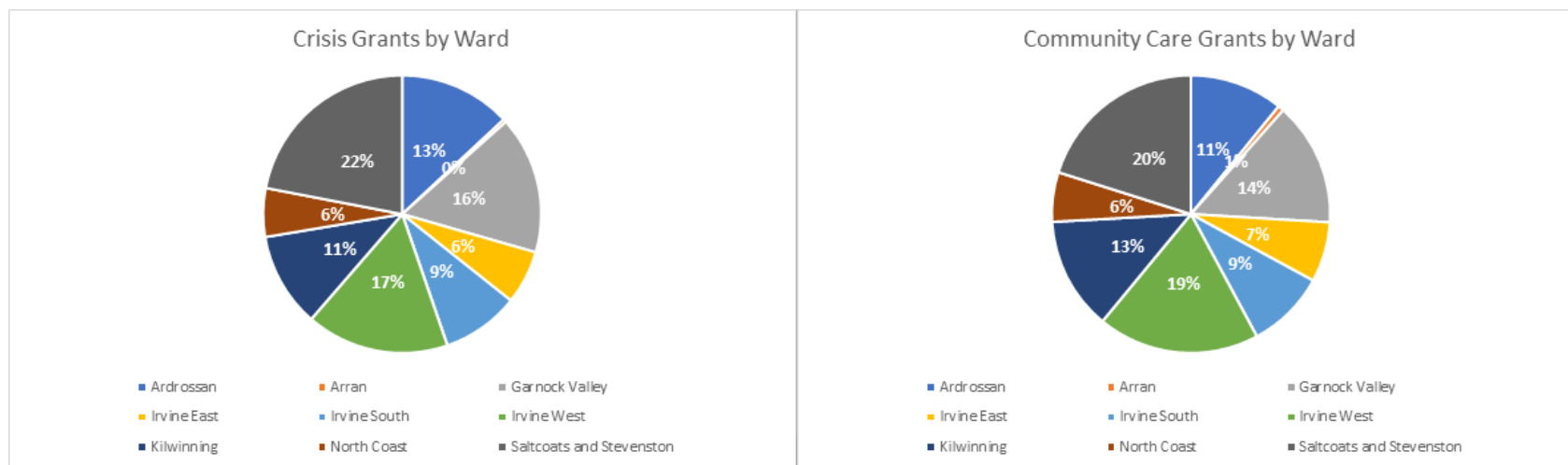
In 2020/21, 22% of people in North Ayrshire were prescribed medication for anxiety, depression, or psychosis in North Ayrshire HSCP. This is a 35.3% increase from the rate 10 years prior in 2010/11.

Many adults in Scotland are concerned about not being able to maintain their standard of living (75%), heat their home (70%) or pay general monthly household bills (65%). Significantly, more than half (52%) of adults in Scotland were at least a little worried about being able to afford food over the next few months, rising to 69% of those aged 18 to 34.

Costs of living

It is estimated that around 62% of Scottish households are now living in fuel poverty (paying more than 10% of their income on energy). This figure rises to 80% for low-income households. Another significant change is that almost half of all 'non-income' poor are now also likely to be fuel poor, up from 9.5% in 2019-20.

How does this manifest itself in North Ayrshire in 2023?



Recently, the Council has agreed funding packages to support our communities during the current cost-of-living crisis. These included:

1. A £1.4m Child Poverty and Cost of Living Fund
2. More than £2 million for an Energy Support Scheme which offers advice and support to help people lower their energy bills, as well as practical help to install energy-saving features in homes. This support will be directed to those who need it most and more details on this initiative will be announced in the coming weeks.
3. Two additional payments of £100 per child to increase the two separate Scottish Government Child Bridging Payments of £130 for families of children who are eligible for a free school meal, due to be distributed in October and December. The £100 payments will also be extended to low-income families with children of pre-school age, with approximately 3,300 families across North Ayrshire due to receive payment.
4. £500,000 to build on our existing Community Food Network to ensure basic food provision is available to anyone who requires the support, recognising the growing membership and anticipated increase in demand due to the impact of the rise in the energy cap.

The package also included a Public Transport Travel Scheme to support travel to work, a community transport initiative, support for the delivery of the Council's Modern Apprentices Programme, new Skills for Life Work placements and Employer Recruitment Incentives.

Other recent interventions include:

1. Support for our Community Food Larders and specific Community Centres in relation to ‘**warm spaces/banks**’, with co-located advice services, encouraging our communities to use already available, halls, centres, community cafes and libraries better, ensuring they feel comfortable in order to stay longer.
2. A business review of our Community Larders and testing of **bulk buying scheme to reduce the costs** of food purchase.
3. A partnership with the **local credit union** to provide low-cost loans to higher risk groups.
4. Community Planning ‘**Community Books**’ which will focus on supporting the most vulnerable to find warm places, low-cost meals and so on.

The Scottish Government Local Child Poverty Dashboard showed, between 2018 and 2019, a significant drop in the number of people in North Ayrshire who felt they were managing well financially, having gone down from 62% to 49%, whilst across Scotland numbers remained fairly static. In addition, since 2017, the statistics show an increasing number of adults with no savings, against a slight reduction across Scotland.

In North Ayrshire we are fully committed to becoming a fairer and more equal society. The Council shapes its strategies and focuses its 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 Community Planning Partners e.g., NHS A&A, Police and Fire Services, Third Sector Interface, etc. are committed to this ambition.

4. Child Poverty: Our Priorities

Community Planning and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

We recognise that high levels of inequality, particularly poverty, exist in North Ayrshire. In our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2022-30, we continue our focus on child poverty.

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Plan

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership recently refreshed the North Ayrshire Partnership Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan). The Partnership Plan has an overarching focus on reducing inequalities through partnership working and has three key priorities, these are:

- **Wellbeing:** Reduce inequalities by targeted support to improve individual, family and community health and wellbeing by addressing inequalities and enabling community wellbeing.

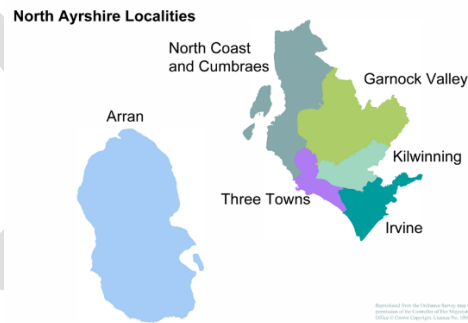
- **Work:** Address the causes and effects of poverty through a strong local economy and skills base by increasing employment, developing volunteering and providing better support for young people to develop the skills they need to play a strong role in our local economy.
- **World:** Work more closely and effectively together to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change by working together to by increasing active travel and carbon literacy with our organisations and communities.

There are several targeted outcomes within the Partnership Plan that focus on reducing inequalities and improving the wellbeing of children, young people and families through partnership working. These include a focus on financial supports, employability and health and wellbeing.

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.

Our Locality Partnerships are the means by which we fulfill duties under the Community Empowerment Act to have locality arrangements. There are six Locality Partnerships in North Ayrshire which cover the whole local authority, based on targeted responses to inequalities supported by the social capital of our wider communities.



In the **North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Survey on Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Report**, 3rd February 2022, the overall priorities relating to supporting children and to the local economy were most likely to appear in respondents' top three priorities (this being the case in 57% and 51% of cases respectively). The supporting children priority received the highest share of respondents' selections for the top overall priority (35%). The priorities relating to reducing poverty and to supporting communities then sit slightly below this, with 36% and 35% respectively placing these in their top three priorities.

What did North Ayrshire residents say?

We asked local people to rank 9 statements. While all are important for North Ayrshire we wanted to know which areas we can do better on, and where we can make the biggest impact as a local partnership.

1 

Supporting children to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their full potential

2 

Creating a local economy where people can access good jobs with fair pay and conditions

3 

Reducing poverty

Understanding the needs, circumstances and aspirations of people living in North Ayrshire

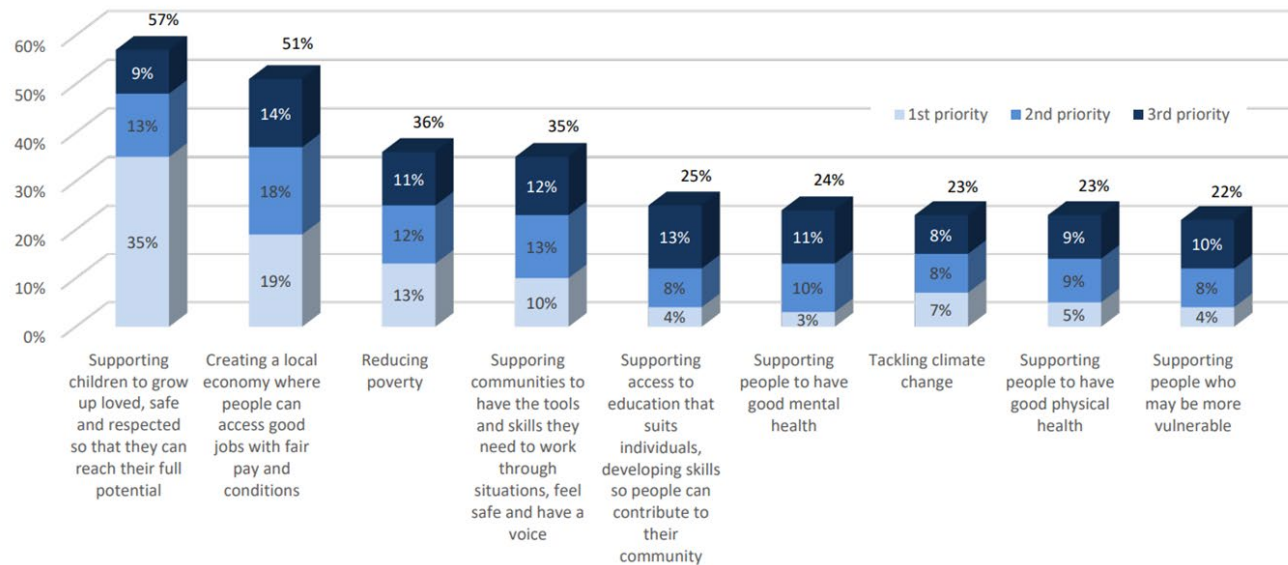
In developing this plan we were influenced both by the feedback from local people on what they think the key issues are as well as a range of statistics and analysis. This included a [Strategic Needs Assessment](#) written by Public Health Scotland which is available on our website.



Our People’s Panel survey resulted in the following prioritisation which has informed our 2023-26 child poverty strategy:

Figure 2.1: Overall Priorities

Base: 645



Definition of Poverty

A family is considered as in poverty if, **after housing costs**, they are living on:

- **Less than £333 a week** or £17,400 a year for a single person with children aged between five and 14 years
- **Less than £450 a week** or £23,400 a year for a couple with children aged between five and 14 years.

Experiencing child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of children.

Child poverty is caused by a range of factors (or themes) which work together and result in inadequate household resources. Factors which contribute to insufficient income include:

- **Inadequate income from employment**
- **Inadequate income from social security benefits and**
- **Living costs.**

North Ayrshire is one of the most deprived areas in Scotland, with deprivation levels significantly higher than the national average, and has the second highest level of child poverty - after housing costs - of any area in Scotland. Child poverty statistics for 2019-20, released by Loughborough University, based on DWP and HMRC data, shows that an estimated 6200 children aged 0 to 16 years were living in poverty in North Ayrshire.

According to Children in low-income families: local area statistics, financial year ending 2022 Updated 23 March 2023, North Ayrshire absolute poverty has risen from 5,300 in 2017 to 5,951 in 2022. We use the local data to identify how we target our resources at sub-local authority level, for example our Wellness model, our Family Centred Wellbeing service and commissioned family support services from third sector partners.

5. North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy (2023-26) – delivering on long term objectives

In a recent publication, the Improvement Service (IS) said:

“Local commitment is increasingly vital at a time when – though rates of child poverty appear to be stabilising across Scotland – ongoing rises to the cost of living continue to push more and more families towards deep poverty, instability and crisis. “

The IS produced 4 key messages, with a number of key components, which include a focus on outcomes, the use of a wide range of policy levers, leadership and partnership at a local level, strategic use of resources, better use of data, the importance of a dignified approach through cash payments, local entitlements and universal approaches to income maximisation.

Our approach to developing our strategy takes into consideration:

- a focus on shared outcomes across partners
- the data available to us to inform our priorities
- the views of our residents.

North Ayrshire: Leadership of Tackling Child Poverty

At its meeting on 7 June 2022, Cabinet agreed to the creation of a **new Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board chaired by the Leader of the Council** and supported by NHS Ayrshire and Arran, the North Ayrshire HSCP, the Third Sector Interface and Community Planning Partners.

The Board is developing the **North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26** to maximise learning and guidance from the Scottish Government's National Plan '[Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026](#)'. The Board has already demonstrated that one of its key strategic priorities is to ensure greater involvement of residents, including children and young people, in service design.

With the escalation in cost-of-living concerns this board now also oversees the Council's response to the current cost-of-living crisis. The board is chaired by the Council Leader. The strategic approach to the themes in relation to child poverty and cost-of-living are agreed by the Board and explored in conjunction with Community Planning, third sector partners and residents through a series of innovative mini enquiries.

North Ayrshire Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board: Terms of Reference

- *To provide leadership in the development and delivery of the Tackling Child Poverty Strategy for North Ayrshire*
- *To oversee the implementation of the Child Poverty Action Plan to tackle the inequalities affecting the outcomes for children and families, with a clear focus on early intervention and prevention and a whole system approach*
- *To monitor the Child Poverty Action Plan, including a performance framework linked to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Council Plan, on progress in delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and their families*
- *To advise on and agree an annual report for Cabinet approval and submission to Scottish Government*
- *To consult with children, young people and families on the priorities and actions within the plan so that they influence the design and delivery of policies and services.*
- *To promote effective partnership and whole system working and information sharing between services and organisations.*

We've listened to partners and residents and focused on how we improve the whole system through a "No Wrong Door" approach – how public services and partners can all be responsible for ensuring that we make the right support available.

The Cost-of-Living themes are as follows:

x



- Energy Advice and Support
- Food, Clothing and Essentials
- Finance and Benefits
- Children and Families
- Health and Wellbeing
- Business and Community including transport to work
- Support for Communities
- Employee Wellbeing

We need to continue to work more closely with communities – and as a result we’ve also created our Community Planning Partnership Wellbeing Alliance – where a North Ayrshire wide approach to early intervention and prevention activities are led by KA Leisure and partners. This enables people to have access to support and opportunities to improve their health as close to home as possible.

Co-design and co-production: a participatory approach

Our Locality Partnerships have all agreed local priorities. This work is led by local people supported by the Council and Community Planning partners. A £5.6m Community Investment Fund supports a range of initiatives which are focused on reducing inequalities. The links between the locality priorities and those in the LOIP are outlined below, alongside of an infographic that shows the work that takes place across our localities outside of each Partnership meeting to progress the locally agreed priorities:



Strategic Theme Mapping: LOIP, Child Poverty and Locality Priorities

North Ayrshire Partnership Plan (LOIP) Themes	Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy Themes	Child Poverty & Cost of Living Themes	Locality Priorities
<p>Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Environment Affordable Warmth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing household costs and mitigating the effects of poverty Maximising Income from Benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing our mental health and wellbeing (Irvine) Alleviating poverty (Irvine) Increasing civic pride and community engagement (Three Towns) Improving community wellbeing (Three Towns, Kilwinning) Improving access to financial services (North Coast) Increasing social inclusion (North Coast) Improving mental wellbeing (North Coast)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleviating poverty and promoting equality of access to opportunities (Kilwinning) • Community (Arran, Islands Plan)
Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Green Economy • Transport & Travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising Income from Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting skills and work opportunities (Irvine, North Coast, Kilwinning) • Promoting the local economy and tourism (Three Towns) • Work & Local Community (Garnock Valley) • Economy (Arran, Islands Plan)
World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Operations • Carbon Absorption • Climate Change Adaptation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Championing green health and the natural environment (Irvine) • Regenerating community facilities (Three Towns) • Moving Around (public transport, traffic & parking) (Garnock Valley) • Facilities & Amenities (Garnock Valley) • Improving our local environment (Kilwinning) • Environment (Arran, Islands Plan)

Mini-Enquiries

Our key commitment is to ensure that residents' needs and views inform our approach to child poverty and cost of living interventions has been strengthened by the introduction of a range of innovative mini enquiries, which have become a key part of our Participation Strategy. Under the leadership of the Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board, to date we have explored the following themes, agreed partnership action plans and are progressing the associated actions, which form part of the ongoing child poverty strategy:

- No Wrong Door
- Employability
- Food
- Childcare

Place-based approaches

Two place-based mini-enquiries have been concluded on Arran and Cumbrae to align with the Scottish Government Island Cost Crisis Emergency Fund. Further locality mini-enquiries are planned for August 2023.

This local focus on child poverty reinforces the data and priorities which have emerged from the thematic discussions and utilises the social capital in our communities to help address the significant inequalities that exist in our communities in North Ayrshire.

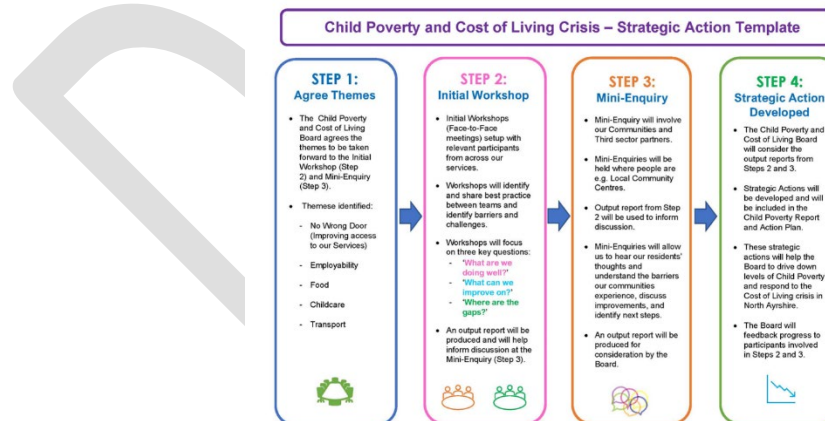
North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy and the Cost-of-Living Action Plan
Cumbrae

We recognise that those living on the islands face a unique set of circumstances and challenges when dealing with the cost of living and child poverty. On 15 February 2023, island officials and island residents came together with staff from island-based partners and groups like the Cumbrae Island Council to discuss how everyone can work together to help to address these issues. The following actions were developed from this consultation and are the core of our strategy for Cumbrae and our work of supporting strong and active communities.

The action plan will form part of the Child Poverty Strategy and the Cost-of-Living Action Plan. Actions will be delivered across our Community Planning Partners.

Themes	Timescale	Actions	Evidence of success	Owner(s)	Partners	Progress against action
Developing growth activities on the island	0-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out youth engagement Include children Train visitors based on the island for young people Academic Support Trail map for area Provide advice and support on island safety plan (in development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from Engagement Visitor statistics Training materials Young people's feedback Young people operational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLL Chernogorh Coast and Countryside Localities Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Partners Parents Statutory Services Island Schools Island Youth Centre Community Clubs Island College Island Council Island Council 	
Support home and recycling	0-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate potential issues and recycle point on Cumbrae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation completed Recycle point operational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localities Team 	
Employability support	0-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and support on island safety plan (in development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and support provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localities Team 	
Energy advice and support	0-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and support on island safety plan (in development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and support provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localities Team 	

A consistent approach to identifying expected outcomes and actions from our mini enquiries is ensured by the following approach:



Joint Cabinet

In North Ayrshire we have a very well-developed Youth Participation approach which ensure young people's voices are heard and that they influence our work. This includes a recent Cost of the School Day conference and our regular Joint Cabinets, where the Council's Cabinet has joint sessions with young people from every secondary school and our ASN campus. The action plans produced from Joint Cabinet inform our work.

The outputs from the above engagement (and more) with our partners and communities have informed the three-year Child Poverty strategy and annual report.

6. Our Tackling Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26

By 2026 we will have improved the outcomes for children and families living in poverty through the following:

<i>Our Objectives 2023-2026</i>	<i>LOIP Priority</i>	<i>Action Ref 2023-24 – to be completed in final version</i>
<i>We will provide local leadership in tackling child poverty</i>	<i>Wellbeing</i>	
<i>We will have greater involvement of residents, including children and young people, in service design and delivery</i>	<i>Wellbeing</i>	
<i>We will ensure our services are human and kind</i>	<i>Wellbeing</i>	
<i>We will commit to taking a No Wrong Door approach with partners</i>	<i>Wellbeing</i>	
<i>We will advocate for our residents in accessing resources and funding to tackle child poverty</i>	<i>Wellbeing</i>	
<i>Within the Community Planning Partnership, we will continue to take a system wide approach to child poverty within our Wellbeing priority and use our resources strategically to focus on better outcomes</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>	

<i>Across the Council, NHSAAA, our Community Planning Partners and our third and voluntary sector partners in our communities, we will ensure our workforce planning enshrines a No Wrong Door approach to access to services and that poverty impact assessments are embedded in our policy and practice</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>	
<i>We will examine how economic development, transport, skills and childcare provision can combine to break down barriers to employment with parents as a priority group, ensure local economic practices (Community Wealth Building) support tackling child poverty, and implement key actions.</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>	
<i>We will understand and address where possible the cost-of-living challenges that our families face</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>	
<i>We will use data to inform place-based approaches to interventions and targeted use of resources Wellness, family support, parental employability</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>	
<i>We will improve access to affordable childcare</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>	
<i>We will encourage greater job quality through Fair Work</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>	
<i>We will ensure accessibility to employment and services through support for priority families</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>	
<i>We will maximise the uptake of benefits and support financial inclusion</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>	
<i>We will drive further progress in removing financial barriers to education (COSD)</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>	
<i>We will improve whole family wellbeing outcomes, supported by the Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Fund</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>	
<i>We will better link adult and children's services to improve outcomes for families living in poverty</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work</i>	
<i>We will Improve the use of data and performance measures in relation to what the local issues are and what actions need to be taken around child poverty</i>	<i>Wellbeing Work World</i>	

7. Priority Families

The Scottish Government identified six groups (or priority families) most at risk of poverty in Scotland. These are:

1. Single parent households
2. Households where an adult and/or a child is disabled
3. Households with three or more children (large households)
4. Minority ethnic households
5. Households with a child under one year old
6. Households where the mother is under 25 years of age.

Examples of current support for priority groups in North Ayrshire

- A **Parental Employment Manager** has been appointed to ensure the greatest possible impact of our work through the **Parental Employability Support Fund** and other initiatives. Our Employability Support Services continues to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.
- We currently fund **We Work for Families** as our specialist employability support for parents who have had referrals exclusively from Health Visitors, and we are extending these referral pathways to support parents accessing 1,140 childcare hours.
- **Family Nurse Partnership (FNP)** is an intensive home-visiting programme for first time young mums and their families. Support is offered from the point of booking into midwifery services and then until the child is 2 years old, where the care of the family will be transferred to the local health visiting team. FNP provides a very client-focused approach to the family and works alongside the mum and baby to support areas like parenting, bonding-attachment, feeding, child development and self-confidence. There are currently 75 active clients with just under 90% of them living in the lowest three SIMD quintile.
- Housing identifies priority families, including a high percentage of lone parent families who are at risk of becoming homeless, are homeless or are in temporary accommodation, to allow consideration of child poverty in its **Housing allocation policy**.
- **Our Family Centred Wellbeing Service** is being scaled up to two further localities through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.
- In our **Intensive and Therapeutic Counselling Support for Care Experienced and Vulnerable Young People**, the criteria have been widened so that any child/young person who requires intensive therapeutic counselling can access this through our partner provider.

- **Support in the Early Years:** Expansion of the service attached to Health Visiting teams, which will support early intervention and prevention work for children under school and work with the whole family where appropriate, is being funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.
- **Early Learning and Childcare Provision:** We offer up to 30 hours free childcare per week to all children aged 3-5 and eligible two-year-olds.
- The **Equal Supported Employment** programme helps people with disabilities or long-term health conditions in North Ayrshire get back into work. The focus on getting people involved in something they enjoy, so they learn other skills like communications skills while having fun. Equal currently has 124 active clients, has helped 26 clients into work so far this year and has referred 70 onto additional services.
- **Strategic Equity Funding** is utilised in North Ayrshire to fund a range of supports including family learning opportunities and targeted nurture to improve pupil readiness to learn in 28 schools. Significant work is underway to embed nurturing principles on a whole school level across all educational establishments.
- **Targeted summer childcare and food programmes** for families includes employability support.
- Connected Communities runs **young mums' groups** to provide support, peer support networks, employability support, benefits maximisation advice and childcare opportunities.
- In 2021-22, North Ayrshire Council, as a corporate parent and a Disability Leader, recruited 24% (compared to the national average of 13.3%) young people with a disability and 6% (compared to the national average of 2%) who were care experienced to their **Modern Apprentice Programme**.
- Arran CVS facilitates the North Ayrshire share of the £15 million **Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund 2022/23** supported by a multi partner steering group. The Fund prioritises a range of 'at risk' groups such as people facing socio-economic disadvantage, black and ethnic minority communities, people with a long-term health condition or disability, older people and LGBTI communities. In its second year, the fund has had a particular focus on responding to the cost-of-living crisis and an increased emphasis on those facing socio-economic disadvantage, with this focus to be continued in year 3.
- A partnership with the **local credit union** provides low-cost loans to higher risk groups.
- We work closely with our Syrian and Ukraine task force, Ayrshire College and community partners to support our **New Scots**. This includes support from Council services, HSCP and capacity building and youth services opportunities.

Examples of planned support for priority groups 2023-24

- **We will continue to capture voices and experience** of children and young people and their families and priority groups who are experiencing poverty and build in learning to policy and policy change.
- We will review, develop, promote and improve North Ayrshire **advice services** to ensure they are person-centred, responsive, and meet the needs of all our residents, particularly the more vulnerable groups.

- We will promote the Financial Inclusion Referral Pathways within NHSAAA where staff refer families to appropriate FIS and incorporate this into routine practice, including role of Better Health Hub in referral to FIS.
- We will further develop **Maternity Services Income Maximisation** joint service.
- We will continue to build upon the provisions put in place through the **Whole Family Wellbeing Fund** to support families to access financial inclusion and benefit maximisation supports.
- We will scale up the **Family Centred Wellbeing Service** through the Whole Family Wellbeing fund.
- We will provide further support to enable families to take up their entitlement to Best Start Grant (BSG) and Best Start Food Scheme.
- We will introduce a **Community Charge Nurse for Care Experienced Young People** based in Throughcare/Aftercare Team (Whole Family Wellbeing Fund).
- We will introduce a **Dads' Support Worker** to develop and deliver specific programmes for dads, including practical parenting workshops; working in partnership with *Dads Rock* and learning from the established programmes and approaches they have developed (Whole Family Wellbeing Fund).
- We will continue to work towards developing sustainable models of **school aged childcare** for North Ayrshire families.
- We will continue to develop our community-based support for **young mums**.
- We will develop our **Neighbourhood Networks** to include a Transition Network and a network for young people to strengthen prevention and early intervention for people with learning disabilities funded by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.
- We will work with Third Sector and community partners to scope our current provision for whole family support and identify where our gaps are, to create a **fund for partner activity**.
- We will review our **housing allocation policy** to continue to ensure child poverty is a key consideration in decision making.
- We will explore, in partnership with the Improvement Service and Glasgow City Council, opportunities to undertake a **data sharing pilot** with Social Security Scotland on use of Scottish Child Payment data to help identify need.
- We will progress a **Pathfinder** project with the Improvement Service to explore ways of obtaining consent to process data for the benefit of our residents, to intervene early to identify unmet need.
- We will work with local partners to identify appropriate **data and health intelligence** to inform monitoring of progress against income-based child poverty targets.

Case Study

Ruth was registered in 2022 with We Work for Families, lives in a low-income household with her partner and their two young children. She had been diagnosed with postnatal depression and had been prescribed medication. After a few weeks of engaging, we discussed options and agreed to be referred to Working for a Healthy Economy for counselling, which she advised has helped her immensely.

Ruth also said that while she loves being a mum that she felt as though she needed to be 'her' too, earning her own money and interacting with adults. We discussed options and she considered her qualifications and experience as a nail technician and that she would love to go back to the beauty industry but felt she was limited in what she could offer and that her skills may be outdated. Due to the nature of the beauty industry, Ruth said she thought she would need to gain more relevant qualifications.

We helped Ruth to source an accredited course in Russian Lashes, which we funded. This course was completed online as she did not feel confident enough to attend a class at the time. WWFF supplied a Chromebook to allow her to access this course online. She was over the moon when she passed and sent photos of the work that she had done to gain the qualification. She identified another course, Laminated Brows, she used her ITA Account to pay the first £200 and WWFF funded the excess. Ruth now felt that with these new qualifications, her experience, and the confidence she had gained in completing the courses that she was ready to start work. She found a salon that she felt comfortable in and committed to being there all day one day a week offering beauty treatments. For her to be able to go to work she needed childcare for her baby, we helped her to find suitable childcare and funded the initial four sessions until she was able to pay for it herself.

Ruth's business has grown significantly, and she has found herself in constant demand, building up a large client base. She decided that with her son now in preschool she can work extra days and have her own premises which is more financially viable as she can come and go as she needs. As she has been working, clients have asked for different treatments, and she wasted no time in gaining the qualifications needed to provide these services. WWFF funded an acrylic nail extension and nail art course. She has recently been nominated for a national beauty award and was absolutely blown away when she won the Bronze Certificate. Ruth has grown so much in confidence since joining the project and continues to do so. More recently WWFF part-funded a new beauty bed as this is a vital piece of equipment but also expensive. She continues to work hard and is expanding her knowledge in the beauty business continually updating her skills and investing in more courses and has shown she is a very dedicated and hard-working individual who has achieved so much, an inspiration - and all this happened following her accessing the targeted childcare offered by North Ayrshire Council in summer 2022.

8. Child Poverty progress report and action plan: Summary of actions and progress: 2022-23 and new actions for 2023-24

Section 1 – Maximising Income from Employment 2022-23: Why is this a priority for North Ayrshire?

LOIP outcomes: Work and World.

- *50.4% of children were in working households in North Ayrshire in October 2022 in comparison with Scottish average of 60.9% (ONS, 2022)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.7% of employees (18+) were earning less than the Living Wage (2021) compared to the Scottish average of 14.4% (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, (www.gov.scot)) • Underemployment (of 16+ population (%)) (2020) showed North Ayrshire levels at 10.7% compared to a Scottish average of 8.1% (Scottish Government) • The Employment Rate (January 2022 to December 2022) showed that North Ayrshire sits at 73.6% against the Scottish average of 74.4% (ONS?) 		
Action: What we committed to doing	Progress: what we've done	Ongoing 2023-24 or complete
Progress the regional Fair Employment workstream action plan	<p>We score fair work first (including living wage) in all relevant contracts.</p> <p>We carry out annual review of living wage status of all applicable contracts and prepare action plan, to encourage suppliers to work towards if required.</p> <p>We refer all suppliers who are not living wage accredited or do not pay living wage to all suitable staff to the Fair Work Ayrshire Team to enable them to encourage payment/accreditation status.</p> <p>We are continuing to encourage Third Sector organisations to pay the Real Living Wage.</p> <p>We have offered Cost of Living payments to staff (90% locally based staff).</p>	Ongoing in 2023-24
Support school leavers and their families to secure positive and sustained destinations, for example through the Youth Guarantee	<p>Working with the Local Employability Partnership, identification and tracking of vulnerable leavers has improved. Schools are increasingly using the school management information system (SEEMIS) 16plus tab which helps to inform Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Data Hub. This data is used by SDS and other partners for early intervention and support in advance of anticipated school leaving date.</p> <p>An Ambition Agreement worker offers individualised support and various pathways for vulnerable leavers and supported by partner agencies. For example, Barnardos are employed for targeted and outreach work with young people, including care experienced, facing significant challenges in accessing a positive destination.</p> <p>As a result of ongoing work, in February 2023 for North Ayrshire nearly 96% of all school leavers achieved an initial positive destination, the highest figure ever recorded for North Ayrshire.</p> <p>In the last academic year, 229 young people were mentored by the MCR programme across six North Ayrshire secondary schools to enable identified pupils to achieve to their full potential and obtain a positive post-school destination.</p>	Ongoing in 2023-24
Support the delivery of the Council's Modern Apprentice Programme, including young people	Over the 3-year period, 151 new MAs were recruited, achieving the target set. The MA programme supports the Council's future workforce planning programme, successfully recruiting local people to gain work experience and a qualification.	Ongoing in 2023-24

with a disability and who are care experienced.	<p>In 2021-22, North Ayrshire Council, as a corporate parent and a Disability Leader, recruited 24% (compared to the national average of 13.3%) young people with a disability and 6% (compared to the national average of 2%) who were care experienced to their MA Programme.</p> <p>Public Health are exploring filling vacancies using the employability advisor's knowledge and resource including recruitment of a modern apprentice.</p>	
Support access to employment in families where disability is a factor	<p>The Equal: Supported Employment programme helps people with disabilities or long-term health conditions in North Ayrshire get back into work. The focus on getting people involved in something they enjoy, so they learn other skills like communications skills while having fun. Equal currently has 124 active clients, has helped 26 clients into work so far this year and has referred 70 onto additional services.</p>	Ongoing in 2023-24
Support parents to progress to or improve employment	<p>A Parental Employment Manager has been appointed to ensure the greatest possible impact of our work through the Parental Employability Support Fund and other initiatives.</p> <p>Our Skills for Life model has been extended to include paid work experience within the Third Sector and has supported over 120 unemployed people to secure employment.</p> <p>The We Work for Families (WWFF) partnership offers person-centred employability support to parents/ carers who are unemployed or on low income and supports individuals to overcome barriers to training, education and employment and works alongside the individual for the duration of their employability journey. Since April 22, 78 parents/ carers have been referred to WWFF. Since 2017, over 800 parents/ carers have been referred for employability support.</p> <p>We currently fund We Work for Families as our specialist employability support for parents who have had referrals exclusively from Health Visitors. We are extending these pathways to support parents accessing 1,140 childcare hours.</p> <p>We are working with Employability and Ayrshire College to offer apprenticeships to existing staff and are currently progressing Hospitality qualification and we have around 12 people interested in this training opportunity.</p> <p>We have a care at home pilot offering more flexible hours of employment.</p> <p>We continue to offer families support for income maximisation and use and awareness of food larders and promoting the use of Third sector supports.</p> <p>We continue to promote Employee Supported Volunteering for all organisations for staff teams to support local groups and charities.</p> <p>We have responsive and flexible childcare solutions for parents engaging in training during the Easter School holidays.</p>	Ongoing in 2023-24

	Public Transport Scheme – 99 parents received a travel pass to access 3 months free public transport which supported enhanced engagement with employability services as well as increased wellbeing and family leisure time.	
Targeted summer childcare and food programmes for families to include employability support	The Information and Culture Service were able to offer childcare support to parents who were undertaking an employability pilot project organised by North Ayrshire Council’s Employability Team, Ayrshire College and We Work For Families. Through this project, parents engaged in training then were interviewed for a 6-month work placement with partner, anchor organisations. All employers involved were aware that a 10am until 2pm work pattern would be favoured to avoid the challenges that childcare can bring. SEE CASE STUDY	Ongoing in 2023-24
Create new Skills for Life work placements	Our Skills for Life model delivered with North Ayrshire Council has been extended this year to include paid work experience within the Third Sector. This has supported over 120 unemployed people in the last year to secure employment. A pilot programme - Step into Business - uses the Skills for Life Model and 11 parents are now in paid work experience within our CPP Partners and anchor organisations - NHS, SFRS, TACT, Ayrshire College and the parents are working towards achieving a SVQ Level II in Business Administration - certifying competence in the workplace. We are keen to extend this to growth sectors such as engineering, which would unlock potential for higher paid employment.	Ongoing in 2023-24
Develop mentoring within the Positive Steps with Partners Project employability project	Employability is working closely with TACT (TSI) to deliver a Positive Pathways programme specifically for parents to access volunteering to develop work experience - using the Steps Programme to build confidence. TACT (one half of the TSI) employ two sessional Project Mentors to work alongside the Positive Steps Team. They have one Project Mentor delivering our Cooking on a Budget Programme, working with 15 individuals. This support comprises of support with budgeting and nutritional advice, as well as teaching basic cooking skills. Positive Steps are keen to continue to develop this role and are looking to implement Mindfulness Sessions in the near future.	Ongoing in 2023-24
We will progress Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs)	In 2022-23, 54 people were progressed into employment utilising an Employer Recruitment Incentive to secure employment.	Ongoing in 2023-24
Establish our Digital Growth Fund for Businesses	53 Businesses were supported through specialist digital consultancy and grant provision. The fund has now been completely delivered and closed off. Those receiving support will continue to be supported by a local adviser to continue their digital plan.	
Complete the roll out of our literacy and employability programmes.	CLD employability programmes now have an established partnership with SDS and have workers for both schools and communities. Programmes in secondaries support the most vulnerable and disengaged young people into a positive destination. Opportunities include an Easter Skills Roadshow, ESOL Employability	Ongoing in 2023-24

	<p>Introductory sessions, 1:1 or group sessions on CV building/job searches/personal statement, online employability, and college application support. The Mobile Youth Centre supported this programme through roadshows in schools and communities, with drop-in sessions and employability awards such as Playback ICE. 1433 adults have engaged in CBAL including social media training, bike maintenance employability, Gaelic for beginners, Community Council training, ESOL buddies and locality CBAL programmes. Funding was allocated via CBAL to 27 projects.</p>	
<p>Develop partner support for care experienced young people</p>	<p>SFRS offer the following supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community garden projects and social events • Halloween, Christmas and Easter events involving games and gifts for young people • Soap making sessions at Ardrossan Fire Station with LUSH. • SFRS mentoring project • Care experienced young people attended YVS at Kilwinning and another care experienced young person has been offered a position within the unit. • Fire Safety Support and Education is being undertaken with various young people within ENSA. <p>Aligned with The Promise, the Police Scotland Community Wellbeing Unit (CWU) in North Ayrshire has been engaging with staff and residents from several children’s residential houses across North Ayrshire. The team has built a good rapport with the young people with several attending at Irvine Police Office where they were cooked an officers’ breakfast. There has been a marked reduction in the number of young people being reported missing and potentially coming to harm since the adoption of the CWU in North Ayrshire in June 2022. Work is ongoing to hold joint events with Connected Communities and KA Leisure aimed at forging positive relationships with young people in the community from all settings including those in care whilst addressing concerns they may have.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>
<p>Develop partner support for people in recovery through mentoring, volunteering and work placements</p>	<p>Mentoring, Volunteering & Work Placements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers and various groups within communities attend the community fire station gardens to carry out work and socialise with others at events such as weekly gardening groups and coffee and chat groups set up for local tenants and residents, some of whom are in recovery or have mental health issues. Two volunteers are due to start with Community Action Team (CAT) in June 2023 from the Positive Steps group within North Ayrshire. The volunteers will assist with CAT duties. • Volunteers from Positive Steps are painting a unit within Kilwinning Fire Station that will be utilised as a Safe Space area for our communities. 	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SFRS Rapid Relief Team – pan Ayrshire - will provide food boxes, sanitary products etc to vulnerable families, supported by volunteers. • Various FireSkills courses are being held within ENSA. • Work is ongoing to establish pathways for police to refer individuals to statutory partners and the third sector. 	
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Maximising Income from Employment: What else are we doing?

- **Procurement (North Ayrshire Council)**
 - Employment community benefit clauses are included in all procurement exercises over £500K. Suppliers are asked to employ local people (employment duration, based on the value of the contract awarded). These jobs are mandatory, and delivery is monitored by our Community Benefits Officer.
 - Payment of the real living wage is encouraged in all procurement exercises. If suppliers do not pay all staff real living wage, we ask what their plans are to work towards it.

Case Study – We Work for Families

Jane, a lone parent, registered with We Work for Families in November 2021, after making a self-referral from one of our outreach days. Jane lives in a SIMD area in a single adult household, has a long-term physical condition, is long-term unemployed, a primary carer of three children in a private let, has children under 18 and is the primary carer of child with a disability.

Since leaving school Jane has only worked for two months in a work placement in 2007. She left to have her eldest son and has been his registered carer since due to his disabilities. She has good communication skills and no problems with her literacy. She had internet and the use of her smart phone but did not have access to a device to complete online training so We Work for Families were able to provide a chrome book through Connecting Scotland.

“Having the chrome book made it easier to complete online training. I was excited that I could do this from my home and didn’t need to go anywhere to do it. I am so pleased that I have some qualifications that can be put on my CV”.

At time of registration Jane was keen to work towards gaining employment after her youngest son went to school (August 2022). We Work for Families has supported her by having calls and keeping in touch through WhatsApp, and this has increased her confidence as she worked through the employability toolkit in preparation for August 2022.

“At first I didn’t really know too much about the programme but when Tracey explained it to me, I thought this is something that could help me”

Jane has since completed numerous on-line modules in Care using her chrome book and has gained accredited qualifications, which have been added to the CV that We Work for Families help to create. We Work for Families discussed with Jane that childcare would be required if she were to gain employment outside of school hours. Jane said she would be happy to look into using a childminder to care for the children but ideally wanted to work during school hours.

Jane was put forward for North Ayrshire Council's pilot scheme with Care at Home. She attended weekly workshops to improve her confidence, employability skills, interview skills and techniques and has gained more qualifications. She secured an interview and has now been offered one of the positions. This will allow Jane to work during school hours therefore she will not require childcare which was one of her initial barriers and has now reached her 6-month milestone and has just been offered a permanent contract with North Ayrshire Council's Care at Home Team.

"I will be able to have some independence back and be better off financially. I will have extra money which will allow me to treat the boys."

We Work for Families have been able to provide money for travel, tickets and lunch via the Easter Funding and Summer funding that we secured, for Jane to take her 3 sons on a day out on 2 separate occasions.

"The weans loved it, they all had fun and loved the fact that they were able to run around and enjoy themselves. On the last day out, my youngest son experienced the cinema for the first time, something that I wouldn't have been able to afford myself."

Maximising Income from Employment: Areas of Focus 2023-24

What progress have we made?

- *% of young adults aged 16-19 participating in education, training or employment has risen from 90.1% (2021) to 90.8% in 2022.*
- *in 2023 nearly 96% of all school leavers achieved an initial positive destination, the highest figure ever recorded for North Ayrshire.*
- *The number of Modern Apprentices recruited by North Ayrshire Council, who are care experienced or disabled has risen from 6 in 2021-22 to 42 in 2022-23.*
- *% of all school leavers achieving one or more awards at SCQF level 5 has dropped from 89.6% in 2021 to 88.6% in 2022*
- *% of care experienced school leavers achieving one or more awards at SCQF level 5 has risen from 62.4% in 2021 to 67.7% in 2022*
- *Number of three-to-five-year-olds registered to access 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare in North Ayrshire has risen from 1893 in 2021 to 1936 in 2022.*
- *% Working age population in work has risen from 71.2% to 73.6% between September 2022 and Dec 2022.*

What will change?	Our actions	How will we know?
North Ayrshire residents will benefit from more jobs and training in the local area.	We will amend the community benefits policy for procured contractors to ensure more local people are trained and employed through Council funded contracts.	There will be an increase in local people trained and employed through contracts awarded by the Council.
North Ayrshire residents will have their incomes increased.	We will continue to encourage payment of real living wage across North Ayrshire Council's partners, including in the Third Sector.	There will be an increase in the number of local people receiving the real living wage.

North Ayrshire parents will have their household incomes maximised through employment opportunities.	We will increase opportunities for parents to secure employment through the Employability Service and identified partners.	There will be an increase in the number of parents engaging with North Ayrshire Council's Employability Service as part of established parenting programmes.
North Ayrshire residents will have increased access to a range of employment opportunities across Local Employability Partnership organisations.	We will continue to work collaboratively as part of the Local Employability Partnership to proactively identified opportunities to reduce barriers to employment across partnership organisations.	There will be an increase in the number of local residents accessing employment opportunities, including Modern Apprenticeships, across Local Employability Partnership organisations.
North Ayrshire residents will have access to a wider range of employment opportunities through Community Planning Partnership organisations.	We will continue to work in partnership with Public Health to explore opportunities to fill vacancies through innovative approaches which utilise employability advisor knowledge and resources.	There will be an increase in the number of local Public Health vacancies that are filled through innovative employability pathways, including the Modern Apprentices.
North Ayrshire residents will know where to access employment support from North Ayrshire Council and partner organisations.	We will explore approaches to raising awareness of local employment support for parents and carers through use of peer navigators and peer to peer influencing.	There will be an increase in the number of parents registering interest in local employability support in North Ayrshire.
North Ayrshire residents participating in employability and skills courses in North Ayrshire will have access to meaningful work placements.	We will continue to create meaningful placements for individuals on employability and skills courses in North Ayrshire.	There will be an increase in the number of employability and skill course participants reporting they were able to access a meaningful placement.
North Ayrshire residents will have access to a wider range of Modern Apprenticeship opportunities.	We will implement changes to our Modern Apprenticeship programme following a review which included an assessment of available budget; new apprenticeship products; workforce development needs; labour market conditions; other employability offers for young people; and feedback from modern apprentices and services.	There will be an expansion to the number of Modern Apprenticeship programmes with a diverse range of apprenticeship opportunities, including graduate and foundation apprenticeships, with ringfenced places for young people with a disability and or care experience, to join the Council's workforce.
North Ayrshire residents will have access to a greater range of opportunities through public sector supplier funded community benefits.	We will work in partnership with NHS Ayrshire and Arran to improve local child-related community benefits that are delivered via the Community Benefits Gateway in partnership with	There will be an increase in the number and uptake of children related community benefits available in North Ayrshire via the NHS Community Benefit Gateway.

	Third Sector organisations, schools and community organisations.	
North Ayrshire residents will have easier access to a greater range of employment opportunities within public sector organisations in North Ayrshire.	We will ensure the Council, CPP and partner websites promote specialist public sector recruitment websites (including MyJobScotland and the NHS Recruitment Portal) and we will ensure role profiles accurately reflect the role and job environment with minimal terminology and appropriate minimum criteria.	There will be an increase in the number of local residents accessing employment opportunities through public sector organisations in North Ayrshire.
North Ayrshire residents will have access to a greater range of employment opportunities in North Ayrshire.	We will develop opportunities for job shadowing, work experience and volunteering and promote these through channels such as job application websites, TSI for parents	There will be an increase in the number of local residents engaging in TSI employment opportunities.
North Ayrshire residents will have access to a greater range of mentoring opportunities.	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will implement a mentoring programme for kinship carers during summer 2023.	There will be an increase in the number of kinship carers being supported by CPP partner organisations.

Section 2 – Maximising Income from Benefits 2022-23 Why is this a priority for North Ayrshire?

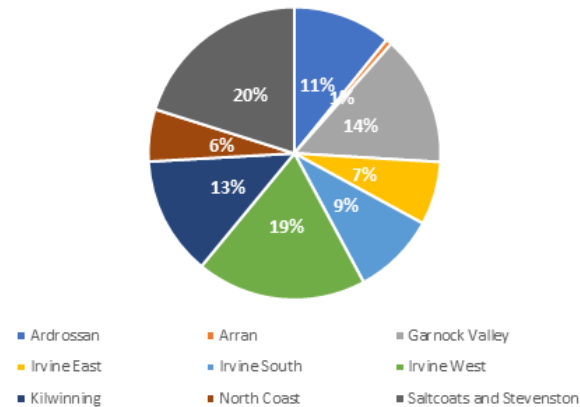
LOIP outcomes: Work and World.

- *28.6% of North Ayrshire children live in relative low-income families (2022) compared to a Scottish average of 20.8% (Local Child Poverty Dashboard (www.gov.scot))*
- *The North Ayrshire rate for claimants as a proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64) is 4.6%. This compares to a Scottish average of 3.3%.*
- *The Unemployment Rate (January 2022 to December 2022) for North Ayrshire was 3.6% against a Scottish average of 3.4% (ONS).*
- *The number of households in rent arrears / council tax debt rose from 5461 (40%) in 2022 to 5793 (43%) in 2023.*

- *Healthy Weight: The 2020/21 percentage of Primary 1 children with a healthy weight in North Ayrshire was 65%, decreasing by 9.9 percentage points from 2019/20. The figure for Scotland was 70%.*

Action: What we committed to doing	Progress	Ongoing 2023-24 or complete
Top up the child bridging payments for 2022 school holidays	The scheduled summer Child Bridging Payment of £130 was increased to £230 (additional £100 payment by North Ayrshire Council) and eligibility for the £100 payment was extended to low-income families of children of pre-school age. Feedback indicates that the timing and value of the payments has made a real difference to families, especially as school holidays and colder weather impact on household bills. The recent increase in the Scottish Child Payment has been implemented and therefore the purpose of the bridging payment has ended.	Ongoing in 2023-24
Improve access to services via “Accessing our Council” and by engaging with our residents	<p>We are investigating opportunities to do a proof of concept using RPA (Robotic Process Automation) with the aim being able to use this technology to automate benefits such as Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants, Education Maintenance Allowance and Community Care Grants to enable these to be processed and administered as quickly as possible.</p> <p>We understand the importance of place-based needs and approaches in relation to joining up our services and those of our partners in local settings, including community hubs, by using local data, for example:</p>	Ongoing in 2023-24

Community Care Grants by Ward



	<p>Our support team is spending an increased amount of time supporting families to make online application for benefits or support. This included ELC placements, access to Best Start grants and following up with issues relating to the Department of Works and Pension or Social Security Scotland.</p> <p>Automation has been achieved for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) which allows information regarding income received from DWP to be automatically input to the Council Tax system and calculate the CTR award.</p> <p>Improvements have been completed to streamline the Council's top 15 online services, improving online customer journeys.</p> <p>The launch of the new customer online account My NAC uses the national My Account to authenticate customers and will offer a simple secure way to access a range of Scottish public services online. The new account will allow customers to see the status and history of all their cases and they will also be able to access their existing Council Tax and Housing Rent Online accounts.</p>	
Review North Ayrshire Council and HSCP financial inclusion services	<p>North Ayrshire Council has agreed a which Financial Inclusion Strategy that reflects the impact of the current economic situation on our services and details our immediate response to meeting the needs of people in our communities during 2023-24. The interim plan for 2023-24 will focus on the main local authority and HSCP-funded welfare rights and debt advice service. Over the next year, a full consultation process will be undertaken with the public and key stakeholders, along with a detailed mapping and analysis of local financial inclusion services provision. Through this process, the strategy will be reviewed and refreshed for 2024-28, and a longer-term, cross-sector delivery plan put in place encompassing wider financial inclusion services.</p> <p>We revised our Financial Inclusion pathway in June 2022 considering the cost-of-living crisis. The revised pathway now considers benefits advice; debt advice; energy advice; and employability. Health Visitors are now asked to consider financial inclusion/ poverty in the same way as Gender Based Violence and take an approach of "routine enquiry" with all families. Many families we are supporting have no experience of navigating the benefits system or in claiming for support. Since April 2022, 160 families have been referred directly for support and a significant more signposted to agencies linked to benefits, debt, and energy bills.</p>	Ongoing in 2023-24
Identify areas of improvement and create an action plan from the Cost of Pregnancy report	NHSAAA have established Cost of Pregnancy implementation group, created an action plan and started work on some actions.	Ongoing in 2023-24
Establish child/ family poverty as a priority area	In June 2022, Universal Early Years Services reviewed and refreshed the Financial Inclusion Pathway which was introduced in 2019. The Pathway has now been extended to include support for debt advice and employability, as well as continuing to provide pathways for benefits and energy advice. The revised Pathway was launched through a	Ongoing in 2023-24

<p>within child health assessments.</p>	<p>Protected Learning Session for all North Ayrshire health visiting and school nursing staff. During 2022/23, 154 referrals were made to a range of services detailed below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="461 301 1861 639"> <thead> <tr> <th>Aspect</th> <th>Service</th> <th>No. of referrals (% of total)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Employability</td> <td>We Work For Families</td> <td>93 (60.4%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>SALUS</td> <td>4 (2.6%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Benefits Advice</td> <td>Money Matters</td> <td>42 (27.2%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Debt Advice</td> <td>CHAP</td> <td>4 (2.6%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Better Off North Ayrshire</td> <td>1 (0.7%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Energy Advice</td> <td>Home Energy Scotland</td> <td>1 (0.7%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>CHA Lemon Aid</td> <td>9 (5.8%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td>154</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Some services also offer direct support to families so a number of families will also have been signposted to services directly.</p>	Aspect	Service	No. of referrals (% of total)	Employability	We Work For Families	93 (60.4%)		SALUS	4 (2.6%)	Benefits Advice	Money Matters	42 (27.2%)	Debt Advice	CHAP	4 (2.6%)		Better Off North Ayrshire	1 (0.7%)	Energy Advice	Home Energy Scotland	1 (0.7%)		CHA Lemon Aid	9 (5.8%)	Total		154	
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<p>Monitor and improve the uptake of the Young Patients Fund</p>	<p>The Young Patients Family Fund (YFFF) is provided by the Scottish Government to support families visiting children up to 18 years old who are receiving inpatient care. With a view to increase uptake a process mapping exercise was undertaken and a range of promotional materials produced. Work will continue to promote and evaluate this fund.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>																											
<p>Prioritise income maximisation and the transfers of claimants from PIP to Scottish Adult Disability Payment and Legacy Benefits onto Universal Credit</p>	<p>The merger of the Money Matters and the Welfare Reform and Advice Team has now begun and options are being explored to develop and improve existing services.</p> <p>In the short term, the priority is to maximise capacity to meet the increasing demand for welfare rights advice services and a number of options are currently being explored, including the development of referral pathways across the sectors to manage demand.</p> <p>The Money Matters Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> generated over £18.4m in financial gains for our residents in receipt of Welfare Benefits. received 5823 enquiries /referrals in 22/23 compared to 4958 in 21/22. delivered Welfare Rights services in seven Secondary schools with one Welfare Rights Officer. The financial gains were £468,550.42. 	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>																											

	<p>Delivering Welfare Rights service in partnership with nine GP Surgeries in North Ayrshire, the first practices went live in June 2022 with two Income Advisers working in the 9 surgeries one day per week. There were 429 referrals from GP staff up to March 2023 resulting in financial gains £945,273.54.</p> <p>We have invested in a Welfare Rights Officer who works with our 9 secondary establishments, providing support to Pastoral teams enhancing their knowledge of welfare rights and takes referrals directly from both education staff and families.</p> <p>The focus and the level of resource allocated to this work is informed by local intelligence such as that shown below:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">School Clothing Grants by Ward</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <caption>School Clothing Grants by Ward Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Ward</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Arran</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Irvine East</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Irvine South</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Irvine West</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kilwinning</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Coast</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saltcoats and Stevenston</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Ward 1</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Ward 2</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ward	Percentage	Arran	1%	Irvine East	9%	Irvine South	10%	Irvine West	17%	Kilwinning	16%	North Coast	6%	Saltcoats and Stevenston	20%	Other Ward 1	9%	Other Ward 2	13%	
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<p>Continue awareness raising sessions and poverty impact assessments training for staff on available supports and updates in relation</p>	<p>Health Inequalities Impact Assessments (HIIA) are a tool to assess the impact on people of applying a proposed, new or revised policy or practice. A HIIA goes beyond the public sector's legal duty of the Equality Act 2010 by assessing also assessing health inequalities, human rights and socioeconomic circumstances.</p> <p>Since 2021 we have worked with Public Health to complete HIAs on a number of plans and policies including North Ayrshire's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, and our Local Police and Fire plans to support our partners to include assessment around potential differential impacts based on income, employment, social and cultural status in their strategic planning.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>																				

to relevant benefits		
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Maximising Income from Benefits: What else are we doing?

- **Income maximisation and improving access to information and advice about benefits**
 - We are holding further sessions with senior managers to encourage poverty impact assessment approaches in our work.
 - We are encouraging use of EDIA which includes questions relating to the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Case Study: Money Matters

Our Welfare Rights Officer assisted a family with three children, two of whom were disabled. They were in receipt of tax credits, income from one parent who worked, carers allowance and Scottish Child Payment. We were able to carry out a benefit check and assisted them with income maximisation as well as a grant for energy debt they had:

- We assisted to make a Universal Credit claim which was awarded at £866.04 per month after earned income deduction (tax credits were only £50 per week)
- An award of Council Tax Reduction for 22/23 £387.31, CTR for this year of £498.16.
- Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for 1 bedroom at £48.58 per month
- A £1700 grant was awarded for energy.

The tenant had also got into rent arrears as her partner was off sick from work for a few months and can't believe the difference it has made to them by getting a benefit check and is surprised she gets all this as her husband was back to work at time of the benefit check.

Overall achievement: Increase of £714.62 per month and one-off amount of £2,585.47 in total

There is also ongoing income maximisation pending for Child Disability Payment for one child and UC work capability assessment with expected award of **£1,205.56 per month bringing total monthly increase to £1,920.18.**

Maximising Income from Benefits: Areas of Focus 2023-24

What progress have we made?

- *Over £18.4m financial gains have been delivered to residents in receipt of Welfare Benefits through the Money Matters team.*
- *The number of enquiries received by Money Matters has increased to 5823 which 17% greater than in 21/22.*
- *Financial gains of £468k have been delivered via Welfare Rights services in seven North Ayrshire Secondary Schools.*
- *Between June 2022 and March 2023, 429 referrals for welfare rights services were made through partnership working in 9 North Ayrshire GP surgeries. This resulted in financial gains of £945k being delivered to North Ayrshire residents.*
- *In 2022, 306 Three Towns residents were referred, or self-referred, to the Better Off pilot advice service. There were a further 67 ‘drop-ins’ who accessed immediate welfare rights help and support. 75% of those referred had a disability or long-term health condition, and 23% were from child poverty priority groups. A total of 449 services were accessed by those referred, including 48 individuals who were referred on for health and wellbeing needs and 15 to employability services.*
- *Dental Caries: The percentage of primary 1 children with no obvious dental caries has steadily increased across North Ayrshire where in 2021/22, 73% of Primary 1 children are free from any obvious dental caries. The figure for Scotland was 75%.*

What will change?	Our actions?	How will we know?
<p>We will reduce levels of child poverty through income maximisation, increasing the number of adults who are managing well financially and increasing the number of adults with savings</p>	<p>We will implement our new Financial Inclusion Strategy and develop a professional, in-house advice service which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission independent debt advice services • Work collaboratively across third and public sector advice agencies • Adopt a ‘named/key worker’ approach across advice agencies • Improve referral pathways to advice services and build on our holistic approach to support for those who need to access multiple services • Develop systems and processes to standardise data recording and reporting and enable services to fully evidence outcomes for clients and achievements of service 	<p>There will be an increase in local access points to advice services in our communities through building on our outreach model.</p> <p>There will be an increase levels of engagement with advice services.</p> <p>There will be a reduction in repeat presentations to advice services.</p> <p>There will be a reduction in levels of poverty, and in particular child poverty, for the most vulnerable people and families in our communities.</p>

North Ayrshire residents will have additional opportunities to engage with financial services to access their full entitlement to financial support.	We will develop, promote and embed a Financial Inclusion Referral Pathways within NHS Ayrshire & Arran to ensure access to appropriate support for staff and patients.	There will be an increase in referral rates to Financial Inclusion Services through direct electronic referral.
North Ayrshire's families will have enhanced support to maximise their income through benefits.	We will continue to build upon the provisions put in place through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to support families to access financial inclusion and benefit maximisation supports.	There will be an increase in the number of families supported through the Family Wellbeing Fund to maximise their income from benefits.
North Ayrshire families will benefit from the best start in life throughout early childhood.	We will continue to support eligible families to take up their entitlement to the Best Start Grant and Best Start Food Scheme.	This will be scoped out further to find suitable alternative measures to uptake data, which is held by Social Security Scotland but not made available locally.

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<p>North Ayrshire residents will have seamless access to Council services to apply for benefits and entitlements.</p>	<p>We will integrate our MyAccount and ContactUs with our CRM to create a “golden record” for our residents.</p> <p>We will continue to implement the “Accessing our Council” transformation programme to improve access to council services, including Customer Services and Financial Inclusion Services.</p> <p>We will set up a proof of concept using Robot Process Automation to automate benefits such as Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants, Education Maintenance Allowance and Community Care Grants to enable these to be processed and administered as quickly as possible.</p> <p>The current NAC website will be rebuilt in consultation with services and customers and will be live by Spring 2024.</p> <p>Opportunities to re-design our current face to face model for accessing Council services will be investigated, incorporating the use of corporate technology to ensure a streamlined customer journey.</p>	<p>There will be an increase in the number of benefit recipients benefiting from automated benefit payments.</p>
<p>North Ayrshire benefit applicants will benefit from a seamless application process that ensures their full benefit entitlement is progressed based on available data.</p>	<p>We will continue to work in partnership with the Improvement Service as part of a pilot project to explore how the Council can use data to maximise customers entitlements, verify eligibility and reduce the unmet need gap through Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data.</p>	<p>This will be scoped out further as this work progresses in partnership with the Improvement Service, DWP and North Ayrshire Council’s Information Governance team.</p>
<p>North Ayrshire tenants, and prospective tenants, will benefit from a housing allocation policy</p>	<p>We will review our housing allocation policy to ensure child poverty is a key consideration in decision making.</p>	<p>This will be scoped out further as part of the policy review to ensure a tangible measure of progress in this area.</p>

which mitigates the potential impact of housing on child poverty.		
North Ayrshire families benefiting from NHS Ayrshire and Arran services will have enhanced access to holistic wellbeing prescriptions.	We will introduce the wellbeing prescription pad to Child Health Weight programme and Better Health Hubs	The usage and number of referrals from the holistic wellbeing prescription pad from families participating in programmes, patients, staff and visitors.
North Ayrshire families will have reduced financial burdens associated with visiting a child receiving inpatient care.	We will ensure effective use of the Young Patient's Family Fund to support families visiting children up to 18 years old who are receiving inpatient care.	There will be strong evidence of impact associated with the spend and use of the Young Patient's Family Fund.
North Ayrshire residents will have access to nutritional benefits which can enable them to lead healthy active lives.	We will roll out the universal Scottish vitamins scheme.	There will be an increase in the distribution of vitamins via pharmacy and care partners.
North Ayrshire residents will have improved oral hygiene and dental health.	We will continue to distribute oral hygiene resources Distribution of oral hygiene resources with access to direct support for dental care costs for those who need it most.	There will be an increase in the number of oral hygiene products delivered to services through increased provision and availability.

Section 3 – Reducing household costs and mitigating the effects of poverty: 2022-23. Why is this a priority for North Ayrshire?

LOIP outcomes: Work and World.

- 49% of North Ayrshire households were managing well financially (2019) before the cost-of-living crisis compared to a Scottish average of 56%
- The number of households in rent arrears / council tax debt in North Ayrshire rose from 5461 (40%) to 5793 (43%) between 2022 and 2023
- Since 2017, the statistics show an increasing number of adults with no savings, against a slight reduction across Scotland
- Since the last quarter of 2012, the Council has referred 1472 people to the food bank.
- In 2022/23, the North Ayrshire Food bank issued 55.21 tons of food to 5558 persons (4144 adults and 1414 children).
- For the period January to March 2023, 6918 North Ayrshire Fairer Food larder appointments were made, with at least 1386 of these directly supporting households with families.
- Age of first-time mothers – 19 and under (% of all first-time mothers) (2016/17-2018/19) (Statistics.gov.uk): North Ayrshire: 12.4%; Scotland 6.65
- In 2017-2019 aggregated calendar years, North Ayrshire had a higher percentage of teenage pregnancies (36%) compared with Scotland (29%).
- Number of children aged between 0-15 on the child protection register: the most recent rate for North Ayrshire was 6.1 per 1,000 population aged 0-15. This is higher than the rate for Scotland, which was 2.9 per 1,000 population aged 0-15.
- Number of looked after children: the most recent rate for North Ayrshire was 22.7 per 1,000 population aged 0-17. This is higher than the rate for Scotland, which was 14.0 per 1,000 population aged 0-17.
- In the latest time period available from 2019/20-2020/21 (3-year aggregate), the percentage of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks in North Ayrshire was 20%. In 2019/20 – 2021/22, North Ayrshire had a lower rate of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks than the rest of Scotland (20 compared to 32 percent).

Action: What we committed to doing	Progress	Ongoing 2023-24 or complete
Deliver additional support to vulnerable families and children impacted by fuel poverty	c. £2.2m has been secured for the Energy Smart Scheme over the past year. The key objective is to support residents of North Ayrshire through the cost-of-living crisis by reducing fuel poverty and increasing affordable warmth, whilst reducing carbon emissions and providing local employment opportunities as part of the programme. There are three elements of the Council’s Energy Smart programme:	Ongoing in 2023-24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of a partnership with the Energy Agency to signpost households to free and impartial advice through the Home Energy Scotland helpline. The partnership was launched on 19 September 2022 and 1,991 North Ayrshire households have received energy advice since that date to help lower their bills. • The creation of a £450,000 fund to offer one-off emergency support payments towards energy bills for low-income families. To date, the Council has supported over 1,300 households facing pressure from rising utility bills through the Emergency Smart Emergency Support scheme. • The creation of a £1.726 million fund to carry out home improvements to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy bills. The initial phase of support launched in January 2023, targeting low-income households who may be eligible for top-up loft insulation. The second phase of support is in the process of being procured and will offer a wider range of energy efficiency measures and is anticipated to launch in June 2023. In addition, we have also provided 900 LED bulbs to the 14 food larders to help reduce energy consumption in homes. • A further £254,000 was allocated by the Council in the budget of March 2023. 	
Complete the roll out of free school meals for Primary 6 and Primary 7	c. £3.9m of Scottish Government funding has been provided to support the continued roll out of Universal Free School Meals (UFSMs). This funding is the revenue funding to cover costs for Primary 4 & Primary 5 children in the financial year 2022/23. Uptake of school meals has increased for primary 4 & primary 5 children following the UFSM provision roll out however, overall uptake for UFSMs is lower than anticipated. This is the general trend across other authorities. The Scottish Government have provided revenue funding of £570,000 in 2023/24 to start the roll out of free school meals to all P6 and P7 pupils whose families are in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment. Using the Council's Cost of the School Day funding, last year we purchased reusable water bottles for every pupil across the school estate this year we introduced the Winter Warmer breakfast from December 2022 until March 2023. This provided a hot and cold breakfast options at every secondary school, free of charge. In total over 66,000 breakfasts were served across all nine secondary schools. In addition, we also offered a free snack item at morning break for those who are unable to attend school for the breakfast for those traveling to school by transport who were unable to access this provision.	Ongoing in 2023-24
Provide holiday meals for families who need it	<p>The Scottish Government also provides funding to enable a continued provision of food-based support during the school holiday periods to those children with an assessed eligibility for free school meals. With support from the Scottish Government, we were able to provide over £700,000 of holiday school meals. In North Ayrshire there are almost 5,000 eligible children entitled to this. Over 20,000 holiday meals were provided during the Summer and Easter holiday period providing a range of activities for families to engage with while accessing a free healthy meal.</p> <p>We have now switched to cash payments during the holiday periods for families entitled to Free School Meals. This has been proposed as a more dignified approach to allow families to use vouchers at shops of their choice.</p>	Ongoing in 2023-24

<p>Introduce new models of provision for free period products across schools and communities.</p>	<p>Educational Facilities Provision North Ayrshire Council is proud to be the first local authority in the UK to launch the free provision of period products in schools. We continue to develop and improve this model based on feedback from both our initial and future consultations with school pupils and education leads. Products are available in both primary and secondary school settings in a convenient, dignified and discreet way. Ongoing support will be made available to all children and young people to ensure they have the knowledge and confidence of their entitlement to access a range of products whenever they need them.</p> <p>Community-based Provision Period products are available free of charge from all Fairer Food Community Larders in North Ayrshire and can be picked up by existing or new members as part of weekly shopping experiences. Our larder sites are strategically placed across our authority and offer dignified access to a range of products. Citizens can also access a range of products from all council buildings including libraries, halls and centres. Additional targeted approaches are also in place providing key staff such as Community Link workers with period products which can be provided to clients as a quick and direct intervention to combat period poverty. A range of platforms have been used to promote our period product provision which includes signage on a range of Council vehicles and an app.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>
<p>Review Out of School Care provision</p>	<p>£100,000 was allocated from Covid Recovery funds to develop OOSC planning and networks. A mini enquiry was held in May 2023 to further inform developments and feedback from this is helping to inform future developments over 2023-24.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>
<p>Focus on vulnerable families who are tenants</p>	<p>We have been working with North Ayrshire tenants to promote maximising income from benefits through our frontline staff. We have been communicating via our social media channels and tenant chat on the range of supports available to reduce household costs.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>
<p>Prioritise the retention of the Education Professional Learning Academy</p>	<p>Review of the Professional Learning Academy has been completed and a revised structure is in the process of being implemented. A new delivery model has been developed which assures the continuation and expansion of the quality work of the PLA into the future. This will continue to have a direct impact on learner outcomes and will support us in our work to reduce the poverty related attainment gap.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>
<p>Review our approach to nurture across our educational establishments</p>	<p>Review of Nurture has been postponed until session 2023-24 because of external factors restricting changes in teacher numbers. Nurture will continue in its current format for session 2023-24, at which time a review will be undertaken to combine and extend the impact of this work across all schools, using a revised delivery model. In parallel, significant work is underway to embed nurturing principles on a whole school level across all educational establishments.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>

<p>Review the relationship between family learning work and other supports for families</p>	<p>The Family Learning Team continues to operate with a blend of targeted and universal supports available for families. Discussions on the future shape of this type of support will commence across services in 2023-24.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>
<p>Prioritise mental health and wellbeing in schools and communities</p>	<p>Within our communities, our MHWB Project Delivery Officers report that the number of children and young people with improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes through involvement with CLD activities is 2086. Key highlights include the development of a 'Your Resilience' programme with Ayrshire College to reach 16–24-year-olds for 60 college students with 37 completing the full course.</p> <p>CLD and the Family Learning Team have developed a programme aimed at primary aged children and their families: "Take Time Families" which has since been rolled out to libraries.</p> <p>A peer mentoring programme (Bee You Ambassadors – 33 members) is ongoing with young people trained in Mental Health First Aid, leading MHWB activities in the community.</p> <p>Engaging with at-risk groups remains a priority and the team have continued to deliver wellbeing sessions and run groups with New Scots, Care Experienced, Young Carers and LGBTQI.</p> <p>Third sector partners Aberlour support children and young people in a range of ways and settings. Aberlour family support has worked with over 100 families in the Kilwinning and Auchendarvie areas providing practical support and support with wellbeing, working alongside families to empower them to lead their own wellbeing, including use of Covid Recovery funding to provide vouchers and childcare for families.</p> <p>Barnardo's support many of our establishments delivering bespoke wellbeing programmes with enhance engagement with education.</p> <p>Children 1st continue to provide whole family support in some areas, with financial advice a core element to their offer.</p> <p>Within our Education Service we have developed a Coping with Anxiety Resource – Be Amasin' (Anxiety Management and Supports in North-Ayrshire), this sits within our one stop shop for community supports, which has had 8244 users. In addition, 93 members of staff have been trained to deliver LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management), an evidence-based programme. Early indications are this has been successful in supporting young people to address the barriers to engaging fully with education.</p> <p>Suicide Prevention staff upskilling sessions provide staff with the confidence to manage situations where suicide risk is a concern. This school session 112 additional staff have attended suicide prevention training.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>

<p>Continue to facilitate the North Ayrshire share of the £15 million Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund 2022/23 supported by a multi partner steering group.</p>	<p>The Fund prioritises a range of ‘at risk’ groups such as people facing socio-economic disadvantage, black and ethnic minority communities, people with a long-term health condition or disability, older people and LGBTI communities. In its second year, the fund has had a particular focus on responding to the cost-of-living crisis and an increased emphasis on those facing socio-economic disadvantage, with this focus to be continued in year 3. As the Year 1 fund was to cover a 12-to-18-month period the first impact report will not be available until September 2023.</p> <p>50% of the projects funded in year 2 were continuations from year 1 and 50% were new projects. In year 2, 8 of the 55 projects funded have a specific focus on financial inclusion, with 5 being new projects and 3 continuations from Year 1. Many of the other projects funded have a more indirect impact on financial inclusion as part of their wider project outcomes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Year 2 - Funded Projects - Localities covered</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Locality</th> <th>Number of Projects</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Garnock Valley</td> <td>15</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cumbrae</td> <td>9</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Three Towns</td> <td>17</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Coast</td> <td>9</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kilwinning</td> <td>16</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Irvine</td> <td>5</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Ayrshire-wide</td> <td>25</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arran</td> <td>9</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Locality	Number of Projects	Percentage	Garnock Valley	15	14%	Cumbrae	9	8%	Three Towns	17	16%	North Coast	9	8%	Kilwinning	16	15%	Irvine	5	4%	North Ayrshire-wide	25	23%	Arran	9	8%	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>
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<p>Mainstream self-sustaining leadership development model in Education</p>	<p>This work is well-underway and has been incorporated into the revised professional learning delivery model in the education service. Improved leadership capacity and greater distributed leadership is intended to positively affect outcomes for learners, including the more effective targeting of work to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>																											
<p>Align schools’ PEF resources to interventions we have shown to be effective</p>	<p>Revised PEF guidance has been produced and circulated across all schools within the service. The template for gathering PEF impact summary reports has been updated and issued to all schools for completion as part of their annual standards and quality reporting requirements.</p> <p>In addition, to help close the Poverty Attainment Gap, we employ 26 Equity and Excellence Leads to support early years children.</p>	<p>Ongoing in 2023-24</p>																											

in reducing the impact of poverty on learning	We work with the Employability Team to support families with childcare over holiday periods, and this has allowed the parents to access work placements. Strategic Equity Funding is utilised in North Ayrshire to fund a range of supports including professional learning for education practitioners; family learning opportunities; targeted nurture to improve pupil readiness to learn in 28 schools, a range of mental health and wellbeing initiatives; and leadership development across establishment leadership teams.	
Reduce the cost of the school day	Over the last two financial years, North Ayrshire Council has committed £1million of COSD funding. This funding has been primarily used to address COSD barriers to learning through provision of food (£150k), IT (£250k) and school clothing and equipment (£100k). This work has been informed by a COSD conference which took place in May 2022 and brought together over 170 young people from across North Ayrshire to consider where this funding should be used to address need. £150,000 was invested this year in provision of a Winter Warmer breakfast across all 9 secondary schools, with over 66,000 free breakfasts being served. Funding has been made available to purchase school uniform, equipment or activities that ensure that all learners are able to fully participate in learning opportunities within their establishments. At the Council budget of 1/3/23, this fund was replaced by the Early Intervention Fund – Child Poverty and Cost of Living – a one off investment over 3 years. The allocation of this fund will take into account existing commitments and will be directed by the Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board).	Ongoing in 2023-24
Complete our Digital Learning review to ensure access to devices	The commitment to provision of 1000 devices (and home connectivity to the internet) per year (to Primary 5 and S2 children) continues. Schools know their pupils well and are confident in targeting additional resource appropriately to families who need this most. In parallel, there is a pilot of “bring your own device” in one campus allowing external devices to connect safely to the school network.	Ongoing in 2023-24
The Eglinton Garden project will extend its approach to include a stronger family focus.	A Positive Steps Project Mentor offers support and advice for participants at Eglinton Community Garden. They have been supporting 16 different individuals with a range of advice and support around planting their own fruit and vegetables at Eglinton Garden and also at home. The Project Mentor has been a great support for all participants, easy to approach and offers a huge amount of support for all people with their own personal issues.	Ongoing in 2023-24

Cost of Living: What else are we doing?

North Ayrshire Food System

- 14 food larders have now been developed in and a peer support network is in place.

North Ayrshire Community Book(s)

- We have introduced an online 'Inform' Booklet which highlights and showcases a range of support for children, families and local people

Scottish Government Islands CoL Emergency fund:

- Support has been provided for schools, energy grants, financial advice and community support.

Case Study – Cost-of-Living Directory

The Community Planning Partnership website has been developed as a useful resource for community members to access key information and resources relating to the work of the Partnership, Locality Planning and community news, which was vital during Covid 19 pandemic. Building on the work developed during this time, including locality specific 'Community Books' that included information and contacts for community members in crisis, a Cost-of-Living section has been added to the CPP website including easy to access information and support. Work is underway to build on this web resource by developing a full, community led North Ayrshire directory. This will use open data through ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) to provide an up-to-date interactive directory of services, groups and contacts that can be updated locally by the community and used by those in crisis or looking for local support. The resource will be hosted on the Community Planning website, as well as being made available through the North Ayrshire Libraries app which will be re-launched as the 'North Ayrshire Communities' app.

CASE STUDY: Transport for Young People Digital Access: Under-22s travel

We have collaborated with Ayrshire College and created a specific application form for those residents in North Ayrshire who attend any Ayrshire College Campus which includes the college verifying details to speed up the process and improve the time taken for the card to be received. This has all proven to be very successful and increased the uptake from 4,051 in May 2022 to 18,887 by the end of March 2023. At the last time of checking, North Ayrshire was sitting at 3rd in Scotland in terms of uptake figures. We made changes to the application for the under 22 free bus travel, creating a simplified digital consent form, allowing applications details to be verified via school records, eliminating the need for supporting evidence. We held regular drop-in sessions across North Ayrshire at various venues including libraries, community centres and local colleges. These proved to be great benefit to the local community with families who were struggling with the online process gaining the support required. We attended Youth Events across North Ayrshire during the summer holidays to encourage uptake. Promotional material was created for advertisement of the free travel as well as easier access to the scheme. These provided a QR code to scan to order a replacement card. There has been an increase in uptake on the cards, up to 18,887 in March 2023 from 4,051 in May 2022.

Case Study: Addressing Barriers to Sports Participation for Children from Refugee Backgrounds

Child poverty is a significant issue in many parts of the world, and children from refugee backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to its effects. These children often face multiple barriers to accessing sports opportunities due to financial constraints and cultural sensitivities, which can have negative impacts on their health and wellbeing. Here we explore how the New Scots team worked with Active Schools coordinators to address these barriers and provide a solution that meets the cultural needs of young people from refugee backgrounds.

Challenge: Young people from refugee backgrounds face numerous barriers to participating in sports due to financial constraints and cultural sensitivities. This is particularly true for young Muslim women who face unique cultural challenges in participating in mainstream sports. Many of these young people are living in households with low income and do not have access to sports opportunities, which can negatively impact their health and wellbeing.

Action: The New Scots team worked closely with Active Schools coordinators to identify young New Scots who would be interested in an overnight residential trip. They then identified the barriers to participation and worked with the young people to remove them, which included cost and cultural sensitivities around mixed sports and sleeping arrangements. The New Scots team fed this information back to Active Schools to ensure that the residential trip would meet the cultural needs of the young people.

Child Poverty Element: The children from refugee backgrounds live in households with low income and often cannot afford sports opportunities. The barriers to sports participation due to financial constraints and cultural sensitivities can exacerbate the negative impacts of poverty on their health and wellbeing.

Results: Approximately 35 young New Scots from refugee backgrounds were able to participate in the residential trip, which they had not had the opportunity to do before. The trip was especially beneficial for young Muslim women, who were able to participate in sports in a culturally sensitive environment. The residential trip also provided an opportunity for socialization, which can be challenging for these young people. This initiative has led to a positive relationship between Active Schools and the young people, with more sports opportunities being offered to them.

Positive Outcome: The collaboration between the New Scots team and Active Schools coordinators has successfully addressed the barriers that prevent children from refugee backgrounds from participating in sports. Through this initiative, approximately 35 young New Scots were able to participate in an overnight residential trip that they had not previously had the opportunity to do. This trip provided a culturally sensitive environment for the young people to participate in sports and socialize with others.

The initiative has also helped Active Schools to offer more sports opportunities for these young people, based on their feedback on which sports they would like to participate in. This collaborative effort has created a positive relationship between Active Schools and the young people, providing them with the chance to improve their health and wellbeing and reach their full potential.

Conclusion: The New Scots team's efforts to engage with young New Scots from refugee backgrounds, identify their needs and barriers, and work with Active Schools to provide a solution that meets their cultural needs are commendable. This initiative has opened new doors of opportunities for young

people, which will have long-lasting positive impacts on their health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life. Addressing barriers to sports participation is an important step towards creating a more inclusive and healthy society, especially for children with refugee experiences.

Case Study

Families in an Irvine neighbourhood who need support when it comes to clothing and food could find what they need at a school Donation Station. This was set up at St John Ogilvie Primary School, in Bourtreehill, when it became clear that parents could benefit from a little additional help.

School Early Years Practitioner Anne started the project, in response to feedback from mums and dads, with just one rail of clothes and now has five rails of clothing as well as food on offer. Anne said: "Starting the Station was in response to finding out that parents have been struggling in recent months due to the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The rising costs of food, clothes and life in general is what sparked the project.

"I thought it would be great idea to start a Donation Station. It started off as one rail and some food, and it very quickly gathered arms and legs. I have parents coming in and using it all the time.

"Through social media, we managed to get some more donations and we set up about four or five rails. We have clothes for children, teenagers and adults as well as shoes, some bags and nappies.

"It's really, really, really worthwhile and it is getting used frequently."

Awareness is currently being raised among North Ayrshire Council staff to ensure that everyone knows about their ongoing responsibility to protect the rights of our children. The Council follows and respects The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to ensure that all children's rights are respected and that they are free to learn, play and develop.

Article 27 states: "Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this."

The Donation Station, which also saves waste going to landfill by recycling, is a great example of this.

Anne added: "The reason we set it up is because of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. People are struggling. When we were talking to parents, they said they were struggling with the costs of winter jackets, the different seasons and how quickly children go through clothes. It's also really good for the environment because we're recycling."

The school is always looking for donations, which will be greatly appreciated, and will take items including children's clothes, adults' clothes, shoes, nappies and food.

Case Study: Cost of Living

Work continues to minimise the cost-of-living crisis' impact on learners across education establishments in North Ayrshire.

Loudoun-Montgomery Primary School in Irvine, which is in one of North Ayrshire's highest areas of deprivation, has taken positive steps to remove financial barriers linked to the school day while maximising learning opportunities. The school has considered several areas where the cost of the school day can be addressed such as healthy eating, uniforms, extra-curricular activities, trips, home learning and event days. Some specific actions include recycling and reusing uniforms; promoting unbranded uniforms; providing family and curriculum cooking experiences; providing a healthy breakfast club and morning snack; enabling family learning experiences at home through providing activities and craft materials; and removing or significantly reducing the cost of school trips and charity event days for all families. Loudoun-Montgomery's Head Teacher Paul Bleakley believes: "our child centred focus on reducing the cost of the school day enhances our ability to broaden our learners' experiences, deliver a wider curriculum and extend learning beyond the school day. Our focus on ensuring that pupils look and feel their best and the provision of a healthy breakfast, snack and lunch all play a significant part in setting up our children to embrace the learning ahead of them each day."

St Winning's Primary School in Kilwinning, where almost half of all pupils are registered for a Footwear and Clothing Grant and 75% of pupils live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) highest deciles 1 & 2, provides another example of positive action taken to reduce the cost of the school day. This includes pupil led championing of the importance of addressing the cost of the school day through attending North Ayrshire's COSD conference and pupil leadership groups. All pupils are members of Pupil Leadership Groups with these groups meeting monthly to discuss ideas and take forward initiatives within the school, including COSD.

Similar to Loudoun-Montgomery, COSD funding has been used to purchase school uniform and provide a new school jumper for every pupil this year. This follows partnership working with the Parent Council to provide greater flexibility within the school's uniform policy to lower costs for families. This work sits alongside an established Uniform Swap Shop that is available all year round for families to access, with provision of winter jackets, hats, and scarves.

A review of school and extra-curricular activities has resulted in the removal of several financial barriers for families. This has included making the Christmas Fayre free to access; heavily subsidising or fully funding school trips for families most in need; and the removal of dress up days as this was shown to have resulted in a decline in pupil attendance that could be attributed to creating an unnecessary financial burden for parents and carers. The school continues to link learning to events such as World Book Day but without costumes.

Case study: New Scots

New Scots, refugees and asylum seekers, often face difficulties accessing financial and employment support services due to language barriers. Phone support services, in particular, pose challenges to those whose first language is not English.

Action:

To address these challenges, the Community Learning and Development (CLD) New Scots team collaborated with two New Scots-led community groups in North Ayrshire: the Spike Wheat Scots and Ukrainian Community. The team engaged with New Scots and service organizations to identify possible solutions for communication and support.

Using an asset-based approach, the CLD team identified members of the community who spoke Arabic. These members worked with the CLD team to support calling through systems and leverage the language skills of people in the community.

Results:

The CLD New Scots team facilitated two weekly drop-in sessions, one for Ukrainian guests from the Cranberry Moss Community Centre and the other for Arabic-speaking resettled families from the Whitehurst Park Community Centre. A rota of groups, services, and organizations attended, including DWP, Social Security Scotland, CHAP, North Ayrshire housing services, and HSCP partners. Bilingual sessional staff and volunteers provided support to families, addressing language and cultural barriers.

Recurring issues faced by New Scots were identified, such as over-reliance on certain support workers despite being in Scotland for over five years. As a result, the CLD team engaged with third-sector organizations to support people in the community, such as CHAP and Social Security Scotland.

Additionally, Lemonaid attended and supported people with energy vouchers, which helped address the cost-of-living crisis.

Members of New Scots (both Syrian and Afghan) regularly attended the sessions at the Spike Wheat Hub to get support from CLD staff working with community bilingual volunteers with a range of support needs, such as contacting the Home Office. Similarly, members from the Ukrainian hub were supported. One Ukrainian woman contacted the team for support with energy debt; they were able to signpost her to the hub on the day that Lemonaid were there, who supported her with vouchers and advocated on her behalf to the energy company.

Positive outcome:

The collaboration between the New Scots team, the New Scots community groups, and relevant partners successfully addressed barriers preventing New Scots from engaging with financial, housing, and health support services/organizations. The drop-ins provided a language and culturally sensitive environment for participants to find the support they need.

Feedback from New Scots:

Overall, this initiative has been a significant success, representing a positive step towards creating a more inclusive society. The New Scots team's efforts in engaging with New Scots, identifying their needs and barriers, and working with relevant partners to provide a solution that meets their cultural and language needs are commendable. One Ukrainian woman said that she has enjoyed the hub because when they ask for help or more information via

CLD staff, those organizations that can support are soon at the hubs to help the community. A Syrian member said that it was good for people to attend the hub because they can benefit from socializing with others, get the support they need, and help with translation.

Case Study: Family Learning

The Education Service's Family Learning Team offer several programmes and initiatives to help address child poverty across North Ayrshire, as well as working in partnership and signposting families to CHAP and Money Matters through financial drops-ins. This ensures families have access to up to date and accurate financial information. So far in the 2022 -23 academic year, 83 families have taken part in our Family Cooking programmes across both primary and secondary schools. All recipes consider the increased cost of food so use a variety of fresh, frozen and tinned ingredients. All the food prepared by families can be taken away and enjoyed. In addition, the team also offers Family Fun Clubs in selected schools, which provide families will lots of activities that don't have a cost attached to them and can be easily replicated at home. This academic year 80 families have taken part in Family Fun Clubs.

The Family Learning Team also works in partnerships with certain schools and community centres to provide families with school uniforms and School Prom outfits with 8 senior phase pupils having taken away their perfect Prom outfit and 20 families accessing the uniform shop for the Three Towns. The Prom initiative will continue to run until Proms take place, as well as Uniform Pop-Ups taking place over the summer holidays to support families to prepare for the following academic year.

"The cooking sessions were good fun. Learned tricks and hacks. All on a budget and with one pan. Brilliant. Felt welcomed and no judgement to any families. Was a great experience." Parent, Greenwood Academy.

Cost of Living: Areas of Focus 2023-24

Progress:

- *% Uptake of Universal FSM has risen from 60.4% in 2021-22 to 78.6% in 2022-23*
- *17% more vulnerable two-year old children have been identified as eligible for early learning and childcare (2022-23) than before Covid (2019-20).*
- *With support from the Scottish Government, we were able to provide over £700,000 of holiday school meals to children with an assessed eligibility for free school meals. In North Ayrshire there are almost 5,000 eligible children entitled to this and over 20,000 holiday meals were provided during the Summer and Easter holiday period alongside a range of activities for families to engage with while accessing a free healthy meal.*

- *Launch of the Council's Energy Smart programme which has support over 1,900 North Ayrshire households through energy advice provided by partnership working with Home Energy Scotland; provision of £450,000 of one-off emergency support payments towards energy bills for low-income families; and creation of a £1.726 million fund to carry out home improvements to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy bills in North Ayrshire households.*

What will change?	Our actions?	How will we know?
North Ayrshire's children and young people will have an amplified voice in informing local services across the local authority.	We will progress with capturing voices and experience of children and young people and their families, with a specific focus on priority groups who are experiencing poverty, to build inform policy change across the Community Planning Partnership.	There will be evidence of effective use of gathered views to inform policy and actions across Community Planning Partnership organisations.
North Ayrshire residents will benefit from local services that recognise and respond appropriately to child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis' impact on our communities.	We will ensure child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis remains an active focus of key governance groups including North Ayrshire Council, NHS Cabinet, the Community Planning Partnership, the Integrated Joint Board and NHS Boards.	A range of Community Planning Partnership organisations will be able to evidence an enhanced focus on child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis through established governance mechanisms.
North Ayrshire residents will benefit from local services that recognise and respond appropriately to child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis' impact on our communities.	<p>We will develop a Cost-of-Living portal on the Council and CPP websites and partners will share information on the support currently available with each other and our communities.</p> <p>We will improve our communication methods, better utilising channels such as those used by schools to reach families and extended families</p>	<p>An increased number of residents will have access to relevant and timely information.</p> <p>A greater degree of targeted support will be evidenced by an increased uptake of benefits.</p>
North Ayrshire residents will benefit from consistent and accessible support	<p>We will provide consistent training for frontline employees and volunteers on advising residents on accessing basic cost of living information.</p> <p>We will coordinate support, so our residents are not overwhelmed. This includes exploring a single point of contact for our most vulnerable</p>	An increased number of residents will have access to relevant and timely support.

	residents, helping them navigate and access support from across providers.	
We will have a better evidence base for our knowledge of relevant services and supports, and of the gaps in provision	<p>We will complete a checklist to support local planning from Population health impacts of the rising cost of living in Scotland - A rapid health impact assessment - Population health impacts of the rising cost of living in Scotland - A rapid health impact assessment - Publications - Public Health Scotland</p> <p>Appendix: Mitigating the impacts of the rising cost of living (publichealthscotland.scot) 06 December 2022 (Latest release)</p> <p>We will work with local partners to identify appropriate data and health intelligence to inform monitoring of progress against income-based child poverty targets.</p>	Resources will be targeted more effectively. A robust, appropriate and meaningful local database will be developed.
Resources to address child poverty will be maximised.	We will identify and map funding streams relevant to child poverty delivery plan and ensure we are accessing all available funds	Additional external funding will be achieved.
Wellbeing will be improved for children and families.	We will establish a North Ayrshire Health and Wellbeing Alliance to deliver the Wellbeing priority of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	<p>Health and wellbeing outcomes will be improved.</p> <p>More people will engage in relevant activities</p> <p>Improved outcomes will be reported.</p>
Asset-based approaches to improving mental health will be encouraged.	Following the announcement of the additional £15 million to support a third year of funding for	More people will report improved mental health.

	<p>the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing projects, the Third Sector Interface North Ayrshire are fully committed to ongoing collaboration with partners and those with lived experience to ensure that funds are disbursed to optimise the best possible outcomes for our communities, effectively targeting the strong links between poor mental health and poverty.</p>	
<p>More of our strategies will encompass awareness of child poverty,</p>	<p>We will further promote the use of HISA</p>	<p>Uptake rates of the on-line HISA tool will increase and strategies will reflect our responsibilities in relation to child poverty.</p>
<p>North Ayrshire residents will have enhanced access to services and groups in their locality.</p>	<p>We will launch a new Communities app and online platform to host North Ayrshire's community book directory.</p> <p>Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will be equipping Community Fire Stations with crisis Boxes, welfare and comfort packs. Island Community Fire Stations will get triple supplies for logistical reasons. The crisis box can feed a family of 4 with basic food and nutrition for a week and provided by firefighters any time of day or night in response to an incident. They will also include period products to support period poverty. They hope to get oral health items such as children's toothbrushes and special toothpaste included in the near future. Home energy advice cards will also be included in the boxes.</p>	<p>There will be an increase in the number of views of North Ayrshire's community book directory.</p>
<p>Island communities will have improved and bespoke services and advice.</p>	<p>We will provide tailored cost-of-living support for our island communities.</p>	<p>Grants and benefits uptake on our islands will improve.</p>

North Ayrshire residents will have improved access to financial support.	We will continue to embed a refreshed financial inclusion pathway to provide a single point of contact and no wrong door approach. We will review, develop, promote and improve North Ayrshire advice services to ensure they are person-centred, responsive, and meet the needs of all our residents, particularly the more vulnerable groups.	There will be an increase in the number of residents provided with support through financial inclusion services
North Ayrshire residents will have more energy efficient homes with household energy costs minimised where possible,	We will continue to install energy efficient measures in people's homes in North Ayrshire.	There will be an increase in the number of energy efficient measures installed by the Council in North Ayrshire homes.
North Ayrshire families will have reduced household costs through the provision of universal free school meals.	We will prepare for the full roll out of universal free school meals from P1 to P7 pupils in 2026 across all primary schools.	There will be an increase in the number of North Ayrshire primary aged pupils accessing free school meals.
North Ayrshire families in receipt of Scottish Childhood Payments will have reduced household costs through provision of free school meals.	We will explore opportunities to fast-track free school meal provision for families in receipt of the Scottish Childhood Payments.	There will be an increase in the number of North Ayrshire primary aged pupils accessing free school meals.
North Ayrshire residents will benefit from a local authority that has fully embedded a community wealth building approach.	We will continue to raise awareness and further embed our community wealth building approach in North Ayrshire.	More local people will be in employment More contracts will be awarded to local companies
North Ayrshire families will face fewer barriers to education because of the cost of the school day.	We will continue to focus on reducing the cost of the school day across our education establishments.	There will be a wide range of effective initiatives put in place across education establishments and NHSAAA to reduce the cost of the school day.
North Ayrshire residents will have greater access to food with dignity opportunities.	We will enhance awareness of opportunities to access food with dignity in North Ayrshire localities.	There will be greater numbers of North Ayrshire residents accessing food with dignity opportunities across North Ayrshire.
North Ayrshire children and young people will have more affordable access to physical activity and sport.	KA Leisure's Inspire membership numbers have reached 334 members. Partners such as Justice Services, Phoenix Futures and the Childhood Obesity and Health Weight Group will refer young people for memberships.	Universal and targeted opportunities will be increased to allow more young people to benefit from the opportunity to take part in physical activity.

	<p>KA Leisure North Ayrshire Community Sport Hub officers are finalising plans for a clothing and equipment recycling programme. It will focus on redistributing throughout North Ayrshire to reduce participation-related obstacles. The programme will be promoted amongst partners and clubs will be encouraged to get their members involved in the scheme. Donors will be able to use bins at KA Leisure venues to drop off their clothing and equipment.</p> <p>KA will hold pop-up shops and drop-in nights across the region in our Community Sport Hubs.</p>	
<p>North Ayrshire residents impacted by poverty will have an enhanced range of opportunities to learn about living healthy lives and reducing energy consumption.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with a range of community planning partnership organisations including NHS Dietetic Health Improvement Team to provide opportunities to upskill community ladders on cooking, food waste, and cooking energy usage.</p>	<p>There will be an increase in the number of community ladders undertaking 'cheap and nutritious' (can) toolkit training.</p>
<p>North Ayrshire residents in receipt Scottish Child Payments will receive an integrated approach to maximised benefit entitlement.</p>	<p>We will explore in partnership with the Improvement Service and Glasgow City Council opportunities to undertake a data sharing pilot with Social Security Scotland on use of Scottish Child Payment data to help identify need.</p>	<p>There will be an increase in the number of North Ayrshire residents in receipt of Scottish Child Payments accessing other benefit entitlements.</p>
<p>North Ayrshire families and learners will have an enhanced range of opportunities to access available benefits, discounts and free entitlements.</p>	<p>We will conduct a range of drop-in sessions across North Ayrshire to promote available benefits, discounts and free entitlements for eligible children and young people.</p>	<p>The number of families registering for free bus travel, Education Maintenance Allowance, Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants and the Scottish Child Payment</p>
<p>North Ayrshire residents will have seamless access to Council services to access benefit entitlements.</p>	<p>We will continue to implement the "Accessing our Council" transformation programme to improve access to council services, including Customer Services and Financial Inclusion Services.</p>	<p>There will be an increase in the number of North Ayrshire residents who report improved access to the Council.</p>

North Ayrshire parents and carers of eligible 2-year-olds will have reduced barriers to accessing childcare.	We will establish a new local performance indicator to capture the number of eligible 2 years olds living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1&2 accessing their full entitlement of 1140 hours of free ELC in North Ayrshire.	This measure will be established.
North Ayrshire parents and carers will have an enhanced range of affordable childcare options for school aged children.	We will continue to work towards developing sustainable models of school aged childcare for North Ayrshire families.	There will be an increase in the number of parents and carers accessing school aged childcare.
Families across North Ayrshire will be supported to experience better outcomes through holistic family support.	We will scale up the Family Centred Wellbeing Service through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.	Additional families in North Ayrshire will be supported to improve outcomes for adults and children.
Families with pre-school age children will receive support to prevent and support issues in relation to parental mental health and domestic abuse.	We will provide support in early years for both early intervention and prevention recognising the increasing level of need in respect of parental mental health and domestic abuse.	There will be an increase in the number of families with pre-school age children who will receive support to prevent and support issues in relation to parental mental health and domestic abuse.
Outcomes for families will improve through more targeted support for dads and male caregivers.	We will engage in a formal partnership and recruitment process to provide practical parenting skills support to dads and other male caregivers.	More dads and male caregivers will benefit from specific programmes for dads, including practical parenting workshops.
Children and families will have more effective access to appropriate digital technology and skills relevant to their learning requirements.	A digital learning strategy for NAC education settings will be launched in session 2023-24	More children and families will have access to learning-related ICT.
We will ensure a range of opportunities are available to our children and families in accessible community settings.	We will continue to deliver a range of free events and activities in the local community through our Connected Communities team and partners.	There will be maximum uptake for local events in libraries and community centres
We will use all the levers possible to advocate for better outcomes for children and families living in poverty.	We will lobby, advocate and seek to influence wider change across all systems, including focus on National Public Health Priority 5 and in line with our Council Plan priorities.	Awareness-raising and engagement in partnership will be improved.

May 2023

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

13 June 2023

Cabinet

Title: Children's Rights Report 2020/23

Purpose: To seek approval for:

a) The North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020/23

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

a) Approves the North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020/23.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Our Council champions the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that all children in North Ayrshire have their rights met, protected and advocated for. We have a duty under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to produce a Children's Rights Report every three years detailing the activities undertaken to secure and promote children's rights in North Ayrshire. Our Children's Rights Report 2020-23 is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Our North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020-23 is part of a suite of three child focussed plans which outline how we are actively supporting the wellbeing and wellness of our children and young people. These include our Children's Services Plan 2023-26 and Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-26, as recognising and advocating for the rights of our children and young people is fundamental to improving both their and their families' lives. As a result, a joined-up approach has been taken to their development and delivery across partners.
- 1.3 Our Children's Services Plan is led by the Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) with representatives from our Community Planning Partners. We have a duty under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to produce a Children's Services Plan every three years to demonstrate how we will improve the lives of our children and young people. Central to this is ensuring their voices are heard and their rights respected.
- 1.4 Our Child Poverty Action Plan is produced by North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran in line with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Most recent data available states 24.7% of children in North Ayrshire are living in poverty after housing costs (as at 2020/21, though this figure is caveated by the Scottish Government due to issues with data collection during the pandemic). Ensuring our children and young people are aware of their rights and have them respected and supported has a direct impact on levels of poverty.

2. Background

2.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a core international human rights instrument which was ratified by the UK Government in 1991.

2.2 The UNCRC sets out a holistic framework for the rights of all children. The different articles are interdependent – civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights all have equal status and are indivisible. Governments are expected to do all they can to implement the UNCRC – to make sure all law, policy and decisions which impact on children from birth to 18 years comply with their human rights.

2.3 The convention consists of 54 articles which are themed into clusters. This helps demonstrate how each and every right is interconnected, with equal importance attached to each. The eight clusters are:

1. General Measures of implementation
2. General Principles of the UNCRC
3. Civil Rights and Freedoms
4. Violence Against Children
5. Family Environment and Alternative Care
6. Basic Health and Welfare
7. Education, Leisure and culture
8. Special Protection Measures

2.4 This report has been structured around each cluster to illustrate what we have achieved during the reporting period.

2.5 Highlights include:

- Almost 90% of Additional Support Needs and young carers have their voice heard, helping to realise Article 12 of the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Our anti-bullying policy entitled “Bullying - It’s Never Acceptable” is now established.
- We have developed a pilot project where tutoring is provided by in school staff for care experienced learners.
- No child or young person will go without a school meal in North Ayrshire.
- Our electronic cashless catering system provides anonymity for those entitled to free school meals.
- We manage the holiday meals programme to ensure every child entitled to a free school meal during term time.
- We have invested in a Welfare Rights Officer who works with our secondary establishments.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) Approves the North Ayrshire Children’s Rights Report 2020/23.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 There are no financial implications for North Ayrshire Council contained within the current report.

Human Resources

4.2 There are no HR implications for North Ayrshire Council contained within the current report.

Legal

4.3 We have a duty under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to produce a Children's Rights Report every three years detailing the activities undertaken to secure and promote children's rights in North Ayrshire.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 Recognising and advocating the rights of our children and young people directly contributes to ensuring equality and equity of opportunity in North Ayrshire.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 There are no Climate Change and Carbon implications.

Key Priorities

4.6 This report directly supports our Council's aim of creating 'a North Ayrshire that is Fair for All' and our mission of 'Working together to improve wellbeing, prosperity and equity in North Ayrshire'. It demonstrates how we are meeting all three of our priorities 'Aspiring Communities', 'Inspiring Place' and 'A Council for the Future' in ensuring children's rights are embedded throughout our services.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 There are no Community Wealth Building implications for North Ayrshire Council contained within the current report.

5. Consultation

5.1 Consultation on children's rights from our Children's Services Report (produced in parallel) was considered during the development of this report, alongside contributions from services across our Council. A Young Person's Edit of the report will take place in August to ensure it is fully accessible for our young people.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director (Communities & Education)

For further information please contact **Dr Audrey Sutton, Executive Director , (Communities & Education)**, on **01294 324415**.

Background Papers

Appendix 1: Draft Children's Rights Report 2020/23

North Ayrshire Council Children's Rights Report



2020-23

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Introduction

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a core international human rights instrument which was ratified by the UK Government in 1991.

The UNCRC sets out a holistic framework for the rights of all children. The different articles are interdependent – civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights all have equal status and are indivisible. Governments are expected to do all they can to implement the UNCRC – to make sure all law, policy and decisions which impact on children from birth to 18 comply with their human rights.

The general measures of the Convention include measures which give legal effect to the UNCRC, as well as 'non-legal measures' – for example, awareness raising, training, budgeting – or other processes that can be used to progress implementation of the Convention.

Every child and young person under the age of 18 has rights, no matter who they are, where they live or what they believe in. Fundamental to those rights is the notion that children are entitled to expect appropriate care, protection and consideration from adults.

The UNCRC is based on four key principles –

- The best interests of the child should be the first consideration for actions that affect him or her.
- All children have the right to life, survival and development.
- All children have the right to participate.
- All rights belong to all children without discrimination or exception.

As a child-centred organisation, the UNCRC provides the Council with a platform to help us determine if we are improving and promoting the wellbeing of children.

The Convention Rights can also compliment the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators, which are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANNARI).

Aspects of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was successfully challenged in the Supreme Court in 2021. The Scottish Government under the new First Minister remains committed to reintroducing the Bill, albeit with certain amendments as a result of the judgement. The fundamental goal of the Bill – to incorporate the UNCRC directly into Scots Law – will be unchanged. As such, whilst the specific timescale is not yet clear, work rightly continues to prepare for incorporation. As a local authority we already owe a range of statutory obligations to children and young people, some of which are substantively similar to the terms of the UNCRC. However, currently, convention rights are not directly enforceable against public bodies in Scotland. We continue to monitor the legal position but as at Spring 2023, a timescale for reintroduction of the Bill has not been confirmed.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has grouped the provisions of the Convention in clusters: "This approach reflects the Convention's holistic perspective of children's rights: that they are indivisible and interrelated, and that equal importance should be attached to each and every right recognized therein". The report has therefore followed this approach by grouping the information into the designated Clusters.

CLUSTER 1 General Measures of implementation - Do we have the structures and resources to implement the UNCRC?

Implementing UNCRC

We have employed a Policy Officer who will drive the implementation of UNCRC throughout North Ayrshire Council.

We have established a young people's UNCRC group, which is led by North Ayrshire's Young People's Champion.

We are working with our learning and development team and the Improvement Service team to identify and implement the best way to develop training materials and guidance on UNCRC. Identifying the target groups and their specific needs will allow us to know the level of training needs required.

An Education Service UNCRC Policy and Operating Procedure was drafted in late 2022 and is in the process of being finalised ahead of sharing with education establishments to support further embedding of children rights within education settings. In addition, a realising children's rights policy insert has been drafted that is being considered as a proposal that will enable alignment between future Education Service policy and UNCRC requirements.

We have developed a communications plan, the remit of which is focussed on raising awareness.

Children's Right Impact Assessment

The Council utilises an integrated impact assessment tool, that includes equality and diversity, the Fairer Scotland Duty and Children's Rights.

The Children's rights element of the assessment is a key tool within the assessment and is used for translating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and specifically Article 3 (giving priority to children's best interests) into practice in a concrete and structured manner. This helps to ensure that all decisions made and affecting children must have the "best interests of the child" as the starting point.

The purpose of carrying out an Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA) is to ensure that when developing policies, planning services, implementing strategies or taking financial decisions we are not adversely affecting or discriminating against different groups within the community. The assessment process is also about ensuring we have taken every opportunity to improve the lives of the people impacted by our services through promoting equality and considering the needs in detail of our younger people. It is a tool to help inform us to make sure our policies, and the way we carry out our functions, do what they are intended to do for everyone. This also ensures that the services provided fulfil the requirements of equalities legislation and the UNCRC.

ECRIA are completed for both budget and non-budget related assessments throughout the year. Work is on-going to continue to ensure all services are aware of their responsibilities to assess activities that impact on people. During the latter part of 2022, a new online Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment training module was developed and promoted to managers, 32 of which have completed this to the end of March 2023.

A review of the Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment process has been initiated. This will cover several aspects of the integrated tool, including the Children's Rights element, which will be expanded and supported by awareness sessions on the UNCRC. These will build upon the information contained in the current ECRIA guidance document.

Complaints

The Child friendly complaints process is currently being reviewed. The purpose of this is to incorporate the rights within the UNCRC into Scottish law by providing a route of legal challenge if someone believes a public body has not met their rights under the UNCRC.

The salient points of the UNCRC as it pertains to the complaints process are being:

1. Applies to a child aged under 18
2. Designed to protect children from discrimination
3. Best of interests of children to be considered when making decisions
4. Children's views to be sought
5. Children, if requested to be given advocacy
6. Where appropriate, have family views sought and given appropriate weight

SPSO will provide guidance which will apply when:

1. Anyone under 18 raises a concern directly (may or may not meet the definition of a complaint)
2. Someone else raises a concern on behalf of under 18s
3. Someone raises a concern that impacts on an under 18

Discussions were being held at a national level to determine whether the pilot is to be confined to a single department, for example within an Education Service within a Local Authority or should be piloted wider to identify the possible impact on other departments such as Customer Services. Further developments are expected to be made in later 2023.

CLUSTER 2. General Principles of the UNCRC - Do we take decisions in the best interests of children in order to maximise their development and enable them to have their say?

Rights Respecting Schools

Almost 90% of Additional Support Needs and young carers have their voice heard, helping to realise Article 12 of the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

All schools promote children's rights. The Rights Respecting Schools programme (RRS) has been promoted and introduced into almost all our schools. The Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. Children's rights underpin the Getting it Right for Every Child approach.

RRS teaches about children's rights, but also models rights and respect in all relationships, whether they are between teachers or other adults and pupils, between adults or between pupils. RRS underpins our Integrated Children's Service Plan, Promoting Positive Relationships and anti-bullying policies. The UNCRC provides a clear link for pupils from rights-respecting schools, to understanding their rights and children's rights being realised everywhere. Children and young people in rights-respecting schools develop a stronger sense of the need to act for global justice. Over 90% of our schools are participating in the RRS status with nineteen schools reaching gold or Ambassador Status and twenty-five schools achieving Silver.

Our anti-bullying policy entitled "Bullying - It's Never Acceptable" is now established. Enhanced and more accurate reporting and recording of prejudiced based bullying has been in place for a year. Our partnership with "Respect Me" Scotland's anti-bullying service for schools continues and this provides a source for professional learning in this area of health and wellbeing.

Recording of bullying incidents has led to improved responses by professionals and better outcomes for our young people due to the support we provide. Requests for assistance indicate that this work requires to continue particularly regarding online bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying work remains a focus for our Child Protection Working party. There are regular updates to training which provides links to online supports for parents, employees and our young people.

Rights Respecting Schools

- **19 Gold award schools** fully Rights Respecting with a Children's Rights ambassador status.
- **25 Silver award schools** who are fully rights aware.
- **13 Bronze award schools** who are Children's Rights committed.

St Matthews Academy

St Matthews Academy is a secondary school built within Saltcoats in 2007 with a pupil roll of 1,225. Of these 20.24% meet a measure of deprivation, whilst 33.3% receive support for additional needs. The school has recently undergone an accreditation visit on how children's rights are embedded within the school. The outcome showed it was clear that children's rights are part of the fabric of the school and underpin every facet of school life and has therefore met the standards for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold.

The strengths of the school are as follows:

- Pupils demonstrate a clear and 'real' knowledge of rights, confident in explaining how these related to their own experiences in school and the wider world.
- A commitment to a child rights-based approach, which is driving policy and practice, alongside the school's values and Catholic ethos.
- Learning and support which is responsive to the needs of the pupils.
- A focus on equality and inclusion which strives to welcome everyone and ensure they have what they need to succeed.
- The engagement of pupils in shaping their school and in acting for a better world.

"This is a process of improvement, it's not an end point. Our school vision is about the whole child, rights help promote that. These things aren't just done to get a tick in a box."

St Matthews Headteacher

"Dignity is at the heart of it. It's what we are about. It's a Catholic school not a school for Catholics.

St Matthews Teacher

UNRC recognises, respects and promotes children's rights. These include rights to be treated fairly, to be heard and to be as healthy as possible. Scottish Government's vision is a Scotland where policy, law- and decision-making take account of children's rights and where all children have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders. This policy plays a critical role in guiding schools and EYC to help children understand and experience their rights.

Education Scotland (ES) published the Children's rights and participation strategy 2020-2022 prioritising children's rights around three key strategic objectives:

- Embedding rights and participation in corporate systems and processes (inward) through professional learning for all staff, referring to UNCRC in PRDs and ensuring that all planning refers to and reflects the UNCRC.
- Mainstreaming rights and participation in education (outward) through professional learning with and for external partners, ensuring all staff working within education or those who work with education promote UNCRC, views of children and young people are gathered to inform policy, services and practice and the use of child's rights and wellbeing impact assessments.
- Securing continuous improvement in implementation of rights-based approaches

HGIOURS highlights that learner participation in self-evaluation and school improvement planning is fundamental to ensuring children's rights within the school context. Article 12 of UNCRC states that children have the right to have their opinions considered when adults are making decisions about things that affect them.

During COVID the Joint Cabinet continued to grow and develop through an online model to ensure that young people's views were taken into account, and this brought young people from across all of our secondary establishments to a space where they can speak truth to power, discuss key issues, ask questions and engage in topics that they want to discuss. These events give young

people the space to give their views but also follow up on key actions through the 'you said, we did' model creating the feedback on how their voice shapes policies, strategies and key changes on things that affect them.

Key topics over the last few years have included:

- Cost of Living
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Education Reform
- Climate Change
- Engagement with key services such as NHS, Police and Fire and Rescue
- Employability
- Issues based (alcohol and drugs education)

As this model evolves it is open to more young people to contribute through online engagement for wider school communities to compliment the live meeting.

Joint Youth Forum

The Joint Youth Forum takes place quarterly and provides the opportunity for all our individual youth voice groups to come together to share good practice, work on North Ayrshire wide projects and gives us the opportunity to facilitate training and share information.

The Year of Young People provided us with the opportunity to look at key themes that young people felt passionate about. These included:

- Young People Voice and Rights
- Poverty and Inequality
- Health and Wellbeing
- And the later addition of Climate Change

The Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan this outlines the key priorities under youth work including:

- Young people's voice and rights
- Climate Change
- Digital Connections
- Attainment and Achievement
- Positive destinations for 16-19 year olds
- Health and Wellbeing
- Poverty and Inequalities

These key priorities shape the work of the Connected Communities team and provide reporting mechanisms for any work that is carried out with young people in both schools and communities.

Youth Participation

Central to the Youth Participation is the work that happens across our localities youth voice structures including six locality-based youth forums. These young people consult and engage with their peers, create events, activities, and opportunities, and create a link between learner and community voice. This is only strengthened through youth voice groups for groups representing some of our protected characteristics including:

- LGBT Provision
- New Scots
- Care Experienced
- Young Carers
- ASN

There has been concentrated work around our peer led model including the creation of community-based groups Climate Change Ambassadors, Mental Health Ambassadors and our Modern Apprenticeship programme.

Scottish Youth Parliament

The Scottish Youth Parliament members continue to be fully supported in being the democratically elected voice of young people in North Ayrshire. Our four young people make up some of the 150 young people that represent the voices of young people within the national organisations. This terms MSYP's have been involved in the national policy of 'A Right to Food' November of this year will see our next set of MSYPs elected in for a 2-year term, with elections taking place across our secondary schools and communities.

The Connected Communities team has established an Equalities Network of young people who identify as LGBTQI+ or allies of those that identify as such.

The programme has also included the completion of the LGBT Youth Scotland Silver Charter Mark that was achieved in March 2023. The Charter has created a minimum standard that we expect to see when working and engaging with our LGBT communities with group work, projects, events, localised support, and opportunities for young people to share their views and affect change.

We are committed to ensuring our young people have the opportunity to device on how local money is spent on projects that benefit them.

The PB process includes young people from the outset, from steering group participation, shortlisting applications and (age 8+) voting on projects they want to see succeed. The locality-based model for young people includes the 4 themes of:

- Poverty and Inequality
- Young Peoples Voice and Rights
- Health and Wellbeing
- Climate Change

The community PB also allows for young people to vote on projects from age 8+. Allowing for young people to participate in these processes creates active citizens that are involved in local decision making and democracy.

CLUSTER 3. Civil Rights and Freedoms - Do we promote the freedom of association and expression, protect privacy, ensure appropriate access to information and protect from inhumane treatment?

Youth Council

As the Youth Council develops and embeds learner participation from primary schools, the Youth Council brings together Primary Seven pupils from across North Ayrshire to participate in interactive activities that complement the Joint Cabinet themes. Using interactive workshops, pupils can contribute to key policies and strategies. Previously, the Youth Council focussed on secondary schools. Now, by opening the participation models to primary sevens they are becoming active members within their communities and create pathways to share their views and opinions in preparation for secondary school.

Data protection

All personal information is held and processed by North Ayrshire Council in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

Under Data Protection legislation, individuals have the right to request access to information about them that the Council holds.

Individuals also have the right to:

- object to processing of personal data that is likely to cause, or is causing, damage or distress.
- prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing.
- object to decisions being taken by automated means.
- in certain circumstances, have inaccurate personal data rectified, blocked, erased or destroyed.
- in certain circumstances, transfer their data to another organisation (data portability)

Our data sharing and handling and privacy statements are published in all school handbooks and on our website.

We publish a range of information, reports and documents in in various formats and produce child friendly versions and summaries where appropriate. Many of our services use social media to actively engage with our children and young people.

CLUSTER 4. Violence Against Children - to what extent do we uphold?

Multi-agency Risk Assessment

Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) commenced in North Ayrshire in August 2022 and are held monthly. During this period, 120 cases have been discussed with approximately 150-170 children part of those case discussions. Children's Services are well represented on the MARAC, ensuring the voice of the child is reflected in the process and in existing safeguarding processes such as Teams Around the Child and Child Protection.

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CLUSTER 5. Family Environment and Alternative Care - to what extent do we support families and maintain the family unit if this is in the child's best interests?

Cost of the School Day

A focus for North Ayrshire Council and the Communities and Education Directorate include is Child Poverty, Cost of Living and Cost of the School Day. The team have created opportunities for young people to share their experiences of Cost of the Schools Day, with an in-person conference with 260 pupils participating in a series of interactive workshops. From events such as these, data is collated and has helped shape the strategic Cost of the School Day Action Plan and activities, events and support around this for the child/ young person and their families.

Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Our fifth priority in our 2022-23 North Ayrshire Council Education Service Improvement Plan, placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education, links to our commitment to promoting learner participation for children and young people across all educational settings. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 strengthens learner participation and children's rights and places duties on local authorities within the framework of children's lives and experiences.

This policy is designed to complement North Ayrshire Council's Youth Participation strategy and Citizenship Strategy 2021-25 [Youth Participation Strategy \(north-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](http://north-ayrshire.gov.uk). The young people contributing to the Youth Participation strategy said "we hope that young people will be included in every discussion and decision-making process on issues that affect us. It is important that we are included, as we will be the ones living with the effects of these decisions." The young people involved in the strategy want to be at the heart of decision making and seeing promises made to them being followed through.

This policy is also designed to complement How good is OUR school. (HGIOURS) The HGIOURS resource supports schools to engage children and young people in self-evaluation and school improvement in ways that enhance learning. This resource provides a guide for staff and partners working with children and young people will support self-evaluation of the establishment's approaches to self-evaluation. It is designed to evaluate what is working well and consider what would support increased learner participation. The HGIOURS resource provides a self-evaluation (SE) framework for use by children and young people. The SE framework within the resource can be used for children and young people to gather their own evidence and contribute to whole school self-evaluation and it is designed to ensure learner participation is far more than pupil councils or committees.

The Promise

The Promise is a large-scale, complex, 10-year change programme with multiple objectives across multiple partners. For North Ayrshire to realise the asks of The Promise, all our partners need to be clear on respective roles and responsibilities as a foundation for future development. Building this foundation alongside our key partners and strengthening the scaffolding around the change programme has been the major focus for North Ayrshire in the last three years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our ability to progress our ambitions as originally planned. There were reduced opportunities to work alongside children and young people. Despite this, we have included them when it was safe to do so, and our partners have remained strongly committed

to progressing The Promise and have sought out creative and innovative ways to overcome some of the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Education has developed an improving outcomes strategy (and action plan) for care experienced learners, with the objective of improving the attendance, engagement and achievement of care experienced learners.

Key Themes for the Promise for Education in North Ayrshire are:

- Building positive relationships and wellbeing through our promoting positive relationships workstream
- Recognising and Realising Children's Rights
- Leadership and Learner Participation
- Parental engagement and involvement & family learning and support.

We have employed an additional home tutor to provide one to one tuition for care experienced children and young people and there is targeted support for young people that are not attending/have poor attendance:

- One to one tuition involving the tutor/teacher giving intensive individual support. It may happen outside of normal lessons as additional teaching, for example, as part of extending school time or as a replacement for other lessons.
- Homework support involving the teacher/tutor supporting tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside of usual lessons and/or 'flipped learning' models, where learners are supported to prepare for classroom discussion and application tasks. This could take place in school outside normal school hours, and/ or in the children's houses.

We have developed a pilot project where tutoring is provided by in school staff for care experienced learners.

We have employed a Quality Improvement Officer to support care experienced children and young people. The role encompasses the following:

- To have lead responsibility for meeting the local authority's statutory duties relating to the education needs, provision and outcomes for care experienced children and young people.
- To review and improve current practice to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people who are care experienced.
- To support schools and partner services to close the poverty related attainment gap and raise the educational attainment and achievement of care experienced children and young people.

Care experienced young people have had a crucial part in interviews for new Health and Social Care staff where that role could potentially impact of the lives of the care experienced community. We have now carried out over 100 awareness raising session that has helped individuals, teams, managers and policy forums to better understand The Promise. We also have a bi-monthly staff newsletter.

We have increased the number of children and young people involved in strategic and operational groups.

Dartington Research was commissioned to speak to practitioners in Health and Social Care and Education regarding our current strengths and next steps in achieving the Promise.

Our 'Family Placement Team' has changed the name of their team to 'Families for Children: North Ayrshire' to reflect the work they do and to change the culture of 'placing' children to be more family focused.

We have asked all teams and departments to appoint a Promise Champion to be the central point of contact for all consultations, views and to disseminate developments to their teams. A 'Promise Champions' SharePoint site has been established and has 25 Champions as members.

Our Champions Board have started to work with developers to create a 'North Ayrshire Care Experienced App', to help inform their community of supports, opportunities and information.

The Promise Conference

On the 4th of November 2022 North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership held a 'Promise' Conference with over 130 delegates from across a range of Community Planning Partners, Government officials, Carers and Care Experienced Young People. Of the 130 delegates 23 were carers or care experienced young people. The conference was facilitated by two care experienced young people who chaired throughout the day.

The format followed a pattern of various speakers followed by table discussions and a panel session. Speakers included the two young hosts, the Minister for Children and Young People, the CEO of the Promise Scotland, CEO of Children 1st, and our Democracy and participation officer.

Care Experienced young people met with North Ayrshires Corporate Parenting Team and were supported in coming up with questions for the panel on the day. There were seventeen questions formulated and five asked on the day.

The panel consisted of the Chief Executive of North Ayrshire Council, the Deputy Leader of North Ayrshire Council, the Chief Social Work Officer, the Executive director of Education and Communities and a Senior Manager from CAMHS.

The target audience for this conference was senior leaders and care experienced young people with the aim of them coming together to discuss selected themes to 1) increase everyone's understanding of each other's roles and experiences, 2) listen and act on the voice of young people, and 3) commit to change.

The themes selected for the conference were 1) Relationships, 2) Voice and the UNCRC, and 3) whole family support. Seven questions were posed to delegates throughout the day as well as a question-and-answer session.

The voices of the Care Experienced community were heard, and a Conference report has been - written with recommendations.

The launch of the Hasta Barista project was launched at the Promise Conference, where guests were able to sample some of the delicious drinks produced by young people involved with the Rosemount Project, Throughcare/Aftercare services, the Programme Approach Team and the Child and Adolescent Specialist Substance Team (CASST).

Hasta Barista is based at Meadowcroft in Irvine and allows young people aged from 14 to 26 to achieve an industry recognised certificate in barista skills that will enable them to seek employment in hospitality settings, or even branch out and set up their own successful businesses in the future.

Universal Early Years

Our integrated Universal Early Years' team ensures families with children under 5 years have access to the right help at the right time and in the right place. The team consisting of health visitors, family nurses, early years social workers, perinatal mental health nurses, support workers and family nurturers, offer early help and support where a family needs this, focusing on the rights of a child to access health and social care services that meets their individual needs.

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CLUSTER 6. Basic Health and Welfare - to what extent do we promote health and welfare and consider the need of children who are disabled?

School Meals

All school meals comply with Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020. This ensures the nutritional requirements for meals is met including limited salt, fat, red meat and sugar, and that the minimum amount of fruit and vegetables is offered to every pupil.

School menus are analysed to ensure all nutritional requirements are balanced over the daily menu.

The service promotes the uptake of school meals across the various groups – Universal Free School Meals (UFSMs), free school meals (FSMs) and those who pay for their meal, to encourage access to nutritious meals.

No child or young person will go without a school meal in North Ayrshire. If a child or young person pays for a meal but has no credit in their account, they will still get access to a meal (2 courses plus a drink).

Discretion is built into any situation regarding no funds for a school meal payment so that no embarrassment is caused and no one else is aware of the funding situation.

Our electronic cashless catering system provides anonymity for those entitled to free school meals therefore providing a dignified food provision regardless of financial status or entitlement. There is no requirement for separate processing or tickets etc.

School meal debt in primary schools is not actively pursued. Children still access a meal, however there is no escalation of debt.

In secondary schools if debt occurs, contact will be made with the family to ensure the correct supports are put in place for the family and the young person will always have access to a meal.

We consult annually with children and young people regarding the menu content and encourage mid-year feedback. We have small group chats and menu sampling across a range of schools to ensure the feedback from the children and young people is incorporated into any new menus, as well as annual pupil wide surveys.

Our Cost of the School Day initiatives recently included a Winter Warmer Breakfast which offered a free hot or cold breakfast across our secondary schools. This also provided free snacks at morning break for those who could not access the free breakfast.

We cater for specific needs of children and young people in our special school, providing food they enjoy, in the texture they would like and even their preferred layout on a plate which will ensure they enjoy their lunch experience.

We cater for circa 360 pupils with special diet requests. We have a referral process to ensure the specific needs of the child are captured and menus are designed to meet their needs and ensure they are still offered healthy, nutritious, and tasty alternatives to the main menu. We also try where

possible to align alternatives to the main menu so that the pupils do not feel they are being treated any differently.

We manage the holiday meals programme to ensure every child entitled to a free school meal during term time, has access to food during the school holidays. This takes the form of a direct cash payment for the equivalent of the cost of a school meal. This allows parents/carers to continue to provide food for the children and young people during this time.

School meals offer value for money. We have not increased the price of a school meal for 4 years and we have one of the lowest charges across the 32 local authorities in Scotland. Our meal deal includes 2 courses plus a drink.

All of our food is freshly prepared every day, we use local suppliers where we can and we support suppliers who follow sustainable farming practices, free range eggs and fish from sustainable sources.

We have a 3 weekly menu cycle for school meals which is full of favourites rated by the pupils with multiple hot meal options as well as soup, fruit, bread, sandwiches, wraps etc. Our menu options are wide ranging and offer a good choice for pupils.

Period Poverty

Through our free period product provision, every pupil who menstruates, will have access to free products in their school. Products are also available in libraries, halls and centres and can be located via a free app – Pick Up My Period.

We regularly provide bulk products to pupils in secondary schools ahead of longer school holiday periods to ensure there is continued access. The products are given to every pupil to ensure no one feels targeted or stigmatised.

Pupils were consulted on the free period products provision in schools as well as community settings to ensure the model met their needs.

School nurses and Health visitors

Together with our partners across Ayrshire, we have been developing improved ways to offer and undertake a health assessment with a school-aged child who has become looked after, either at home or away from home. In North Ayrshire, School Nurses have taken on the responsibility of these assessments and are fully appraised of all children and young people on their caseload who are entitled to an assessment and subsequent reviews. As part of this, we are also reviewing our process for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children and Young People so that any assessment of health accurately reflects and supports the needs of this particularly vulnerable group of children and young people and ensures they have access to health services they require.

All under 5s in North Ayrshire have access to a health visitor or family nurse and we continue to fully implement the Scottish Government's Universal Health Visiting pathway for all families.

Since 2018, we have tripled our School Nurse workforce with nearly all school clusters having access to 2 school nurses. This has allowed us to concentrate on delivery of the refreshed school

nursing pathway, ensuring that children and young people who require support from the school nurse are able to do so in a non-stigmatising, person-centred manner.

School Welfare Officers

We have invested in a Welfare Rights Officer who works with our secondary establishments, providing support to Pastoral teams enhancing their knowledge of welfare rights and takes referrals directly from both education staff and families. delivered Welfare Rights services in seven Secondary schools with one Welfare Rights Officer. The financial gains were c. £467,000.

School Clothing Exchange

Many schools and youth groups in North Ayrshire are making provision for clothing exchanges for young people and families.

For example, the school Donation Station at St John Ogilvie Primary School, in Bourtreehill was set up when it became clear that parents could benefit from a additional help.

A School Early Years Practitioner started the project in response to feedback from parents and carers with just one rail of clothes and now has five rails of clothing as well as food on offer.

Anne said: “Starting the Station was in response to finding out that parents have been struggling in recent months due to the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The rising costs of food, clothes and life in general is what sparked the project.

“I thought it would be great idea to start a Donation Station. It started off as one rail and some food and I have parents coming in and using it all the time now.

“Through social media, we managed to get some more donations and we set up about four or five rails. We have clothes for children, teenagers and adults as well as shoes, some bags and nappies.

“It’s really worthwhile and it is getting used frequently.”

Article 27 states: “Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.”

The Donation Station, which also saves waste gong to landfill by recycling, is a great example of this.

CLUSTER 7. Education, Leisure and culture- To what extent do we provide education services which are non-discriminatory?

The overriding aim is to improve the educational outcomes for all learners, particularly those most disadvantaged learners.

North Ayrshire recognises that Curriculum for Excellence as an inclusive curriculum from 3 to 18 wherever learning is taking place. The education of all our young people takes cognisance of Equalities legislation to ensure there is no barrier to learning for anyone in relation to race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation

The additional support legislation in Scotland promotes inclusion and forms the basis of our approach to meeting needs. We provide additional support for learning when any child or young person experiences a need for support. We follow statutory guidance accompanying the Additional Support for Learning Act realising there is a range of factors that may give rise to a child's additional support needs. These include the learning environment that the child encounters, social and emotional factors, health and disability and the child's family circumstances. We have a wide variety of supports available to help a CYP maximise the benefits of a full education.

We respond to need in such a way that barriers to participation, learning and achievement are removed, inclusion and equality are promoted and a high quality education for all is developed and sustained.

The Education service is part of North Ayrshire Council's Communities and Education Directorate, which works towards developing a society where everyone has the same life chances to grow, prosper and have fulfilling and healthy lives. The education service has a central role in removing barriers and supporting delivery of the priority outcome to ensure North Ayrshire's children and young people have the best start in life.

A key priority of the North Ayrshire Council Plan is ensuring children and young people have the best start in life and that we have active and strong communities. This drives our place-based approach in education and informs how we provide safe, welcoming, nurturing, and inspiring environments. We believe our learning environments promote achievement, wellbeing and enhance life chances for all learners.

We want North Ayrshire's children and young people to understand, feel part of and contribute to their community as this supports them to be the best they can be. We help this to happen through a locality-based approach to service delivery. Our priorities are:

- Priority 1: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Priority 2: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.
- Priority 3: Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.
- Priority 4: Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- Priority 5: Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

All educational establishments have created their own improvement plans, aligned to the broad priorities outlined above, and tailored to the individual contexts and needs of learners in each school community.

St Anthony's Primary School

A successful school garden project in Saltcoats is helping children learn how food gets from the ground to their fork.

Youngsters in all classes at St Anthony's Primary School are involved in growing healthy, nutritious food that is then used by the kitchen team to make meals.

Awareness is being raised among North Ayrshire Council staff that everyone has an ongoing responsibility to protect the rights of our children.

The Council follows and respects The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to ensure that all children's rights are respected and that they are free to learn, play and develop.

Children are learning about these rights in school and Article 24 of the Convention highlights that governments must provide nutritious food, and St Anthony's is embracing the from-garden-to-plate approach to good nutrition.

All pupils are involved in the garden, where they grow vegetables including corn, potatoes and purple carrots. Unfinished water from the dining hall is also recycled and used in the garden, while grass clippings go into the compost.

Some of the potatoes grown are donated to the local food bank, and the carrots and cabbage are used to make coleslaw in the kitchen.

Depute headteacher Michelle Kerr said: "At St Anthony's Primary, children's rights are at the heart of all we do. All staff are our children's duty bearers, and this is definitely a role which our catering staff have embraced. A huge focus for our school is outdoor learning and this has developed into a kitchen garden. Each class has been involved in growing produce, which our award-winning kitchen team have incorporated into their menus."

Junior Rangers

Junior Rangers working in the great outdoors across North Ayrshire are seeing the fruits of their labour improving their lives in many different ways.

Young people, aged up to 18, are thriving thanks to the Scottish Countryside Rangers Association programme, which is delivered by North Ayrshire Council's Countryside Rangers to give the group knowledge about their local natural and cultural heritage, the chance to learn new skills and an opportunity to make friends.

Awareness is currently being raised among North Ayrshire Council staff to ensure that everyone has an ongoing responsibility to protect the rights of our children.

The Council follows and respects The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to ensure that all children's rights are respected and that they are free to learn, play and develop.

Article 31 of the Convention states that each child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

The Junior Rangers initiative is a great example of this and Helen McDowall, from the North Ayrshire Ranger Service, said:

"The young people really just enjoy being outdoors. It is great for general health benefits, their mental health and wellbeing is improved and it keeps them active, which is good for their physical wellbeing. It gets them away from phone and tablet screens and there is a social aspect to it – they have become good friends. They are in a safe space with like-minded people. Some really like doing the practical sessions and others like doing activities like the wildlife surveys. They like it when they can see a result... when they do a job and put something back into the community."

The Hive

The Hive at Ayrshire College provides several pre-curriculum courses for young people aged 15-25 who have barriers to their learning. The 24/7, Pez and Pez plus courses are designed to give students who have social/behavioural issues or who require educational support an opportunity to experience college life in a supportive environment. The focus is on personal development and readiness for next steps. We have had contact with over 60 students in The Hive and have offered employability support in the form of group work, individual meetings, and work experience.

Each Monday and Thursday evening, we run a football group attended by 15-20 girls (Monday) and 10-15 (Thursday) who are from the New Scot community. The attendees attend schools or college across the authority but meet up for activities 2/3 times a week. Most of our participants have faced significant personal challenges after being displaced from their country of origin. They have overcome many barriers in their young lives and continue to show great resilience and determination. The football group has been a brilliant space for the young people to learn about themselves and each other, grow confidence and develop transferable skills that they will be able to apply in further education or employment.

For our 2022 Easter programme our aim was to provide young people with 'hands on' work experiences in a safe, supportive environment. After consultation and planning we presented three programmes which young people could sign up for: which catering, media production and nails & makeup. We planned our delivery to encompass elements of employability such as interview skills and CV building alongside masterclasses from industry professionals. Our for the programme recruitment focused on young people who were "at risk" of not reaching a positive destination post school, or who had additional challenges/barriers to employment. Young people with care experience, who have ASD, suffer from poor mental health, and have English as a second language were all represented on the course. Our aim was to implement the fundamentals of life in the workplace. We placed focus on timekeeping, attendance, participation, and fun.

Learning and Development

Within the West of Scotland Learning and Development forum, an e-module course was developed for all practitioners within Children's Services on Communicating with Children. This e-module supports practitioners in giving children a voice, facilitating conversations with children and young people, and encouraging expression of views and feelings. North Ayrshire CPC are in the process of finalising how this module is shared, monitored, and evaluated. In addition, the Barnardos Hear 4 U Advocacy service continues to operate within North Ayrshire for children and young people subject to Child Protection measures and who are care experienced. This is offering children and young people independent advocacy to ensure their voices are listened to and are taken into account when plans and decisions are being made. In addition, efforts have been made to ensure that children and families have access to increased technology such as tablets and sim cards to support engagement in Child Protection processes.

The CPC Learning and Development Co-ordinator has worked with the Place directorate within North Ayrshire (including workers in transport and waste resources) to ensure that Child Protection e-module training is included within their Professional Development programme. There has also been linkage with KA Leisure to ensure that staff within the organisation have access to Child Protection training. The CPC and ASP Co-ordinators also delivered virtual Protecting People training to NAC contracted taxi drivers and escort staff.

CLUSTER 8. Special Protection Measures- To what extent do we protect those in need of protection?

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee continues to be an active member of North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership and supported the 16 Days of Action campaign by contributing to the development of a public video.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee adheres to National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)* and Protecting Children & Young People: Child Protection Committees and Chief Officer's responsibilities (2019).

By actively involving children and their families in child protection processes, and by practitioners adopting a more child centred approach, we ensure that support is individualised to meet their needs.

We will continue to review and analyse the involvement of children through the Management Information Group, Evaluation and Improvement Group and Public Information and Engagement Group, using this information and feedback to further improve service user involvement and as appropriate, their roles in decision making.

We will continue to develop and deliver practice development child protection sessions to key stakeholder groups in the community. We will pilot and evaluate a Child Protection awareness resource with taxi drivers. We will also identify and target new priority assets within the community to raise child protection awareness, and specifically increase knowledge and understanding of Child Sexual Abuse to support children to talk openly about their experiences.

North Ayrshire will deliver on North Ayrshire's Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2020, co-ordinated initially by a Short Life Implementation Group. This strategy will develop professional practice in relation to Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation, further expand the Stop to Listen initiative from 2017 and have input from young people and survivors of child sexual abuse. The Child Protection Committee will oversee the longer-term implementation of this strategy in terms of Prevention, Protection, Support and Recovery.

Protecting Children

We will continue to analyse the data in relation to the increasing numbers of children who are on the Child Protection Register and also young people subject to vulnerable young person measures. The Management Information sub-group will risk assess and work collectively to devise, recommend and monitor strategies as appropriate, ensuring that vulnerable young people are continuing to be protected from harm.

In respect of protecting children and vulnerable young people, an extra familial dataset was developed for analysis within the CPC Management Information Sub-group. This has meant that there is further analysis and scrutiny of cases where there are concerns in respect of children at risk of significant harm but where the concerns have been considered 'extra familial' – i.e., the children are not considered to be at risk from their primary caregiver.

Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

We launched a localised 3 year Child Sexual Abuse strategy in 2021. The vision is as follows: There is an increased awareness, understanding and acceptability of talking about and facing the reality of child sexual abuse – in our homes, our communities, our workplaces, and our institutions. Children and young people are safe from sexual abuse and sexual harm and well supported if they have previously experienced sexual abuse.

Missing Persons

Multi-agency Localised Missing Person Guidance was developed in collaboration with North Ayrshire Adult Support and Protection Committee. This guidance has been developed into a localised context based on the National Missing Person's Framework, with a specific focused shift on moving away from 'return interviews' which are traditionally largely led by the police to 'return discussions'. This provides children and young people with a choice in who delivers the return discussion and a holistic approach which the aim of supporting children and young people and preventing further missing episodes. The launch of this guidance has been significantly delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic, however the official launch is scheduled to take place in September 2021. In addition, both North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and North Ayrshire Adult Support and Protection Committee have been successful in their application for light touch support from the National organisation 'Missing People'. Support has been provided in terms of the localised guidance and providing access to e-modules on the delivery of return discussions for practitioners in North Ayrshire.

The joint Adult and Child Protection National Missing Person's Group will continue to support the implementation of the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland, co-ordinate learning and development opportunities for multi-agency staff, enabling them to make better use of opportunities to discuss missing episodes with children and young people with the intention of providing necessary supports and reducing the risk of further missing episodes.

Money Matters

The CPC Learning and Development Co-ordinator has been working in collaboration with the Money Matters Team within North Ayrshire. The Money Matters team provides advice to residents within North Ayrshire on welfare rights, assistance, or representation in relation to benefits. A training workshop has been developed specifically for children and families' social workers on this service and how families can be referred.

Money Matters workshops will continue to be facilitated for children and families' social workers and the impact of this will be measured via the CPC business plan.

Suicide Prevention

An annual suicide action plan was developed in 2020 and 2021, actions are continuing to be progressed at the time of writing this report but key pieces of work completed in 2020/2021 include the development of a multi-agency presentation to increase practitioners awareness of the Young People's Suicide Taskforce and its purpose, the review and update of the suicide crisis response place and the development of a new Service Access pathway which means that young people are offered holistic supports when they make suicide attempts.

The Young People's Suicide Taskforce continues to meet on a monthly basis.

A multi-agency VYP group is established to protect and reduce the risk of young people from harming themselves or others and within the community.

Communication

Significant effort has been made to ensure that Child Protection messages are reaching the general public within North Ayrshire. This has included the distribution of leaflets and resources to community pharmacies, sexual health clinics, youth clubs and libraries, covid vaccination centres and via food parcels. An e-module on child protection awareness for members of the public was also developed and promoted via social media channels. A new banner was developed displaying Child Protection contact numbers for display outside all education establishments within North Ayrshire. In addition, the CPC have supported National CPC Scotland campaigns such as the 'For Kids' Sake' initiative via social media platforms. The CPC website has been updated with an acknowledgement that there is an increasing trend in terms of accessing information via social media platforms and a social media protocol has been developed. This protocol acknowledges the current social media channels via Youth Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership and seeks to maximise CP communications with the pre-existing followers that already regularly access these platforms.

Implementation Plan

Everyone in North Ayrshire knows they have a role to play in keeping children and young people safe and understands and is prepared to take appropriate action to support and/or protect a child or young person. A multi-agency implementation plan has been developed on the principals of Prevention, Protection and Support & Recovery and this will be monitored via the Child Protection Committee.