

# NHS Ayrshire & Arran



<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday 4 December 2023</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>East Ayrshire Children's Service's Reports</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Craig McArthur, Director, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Marion MacAulay, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services/Chief Social Work Officer</b>

## 1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Decision

This paper relates to:

- Legal requirement

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Person Centred

## 2. Report summary

### 2.1 Situation

The report compiles reporting and strategy development recently undertaken by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP). The report provides a brief summary of:

- The Children Services Plan 2020-2023 Annual Report;
- The Children Services Plan 2023-2026;
- The Children's Rights Reports 2017-2020 and 2020-2023; and
- The Cherishing Our Families Strategy 2023-2026

The reports noted above were presented and were approved at Community Planning Partnership Board on 21 September and the Integration Joint Board on 11 October 2023.

### 2.2 Background

In East Ayrshire, oversight of Children's Services Plans rests with the Community Planning Partnership Board, with responsibility for strategic planning and continuous improvement activity delegated to the Children and Young People's Strategic

Partnership (CYPSP) and managed on a shared basis with the Child Protection Committee (CPC).

## **2.3 Assessment**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN 2023-2026**

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 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.

The Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026 sets the local long term strategic intent for improvement in outcomes for all our children and young people and provides details on the key activities which will be undertaken by all partners over the next three year period to deliver progress in the key priority areas that we have collectively identified.

Development of the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026 has been supported through extensive engagement and collaboration with children, young people and families to understand the experience of their lives and the things that matter most to them.

Drawing from the engagement feedback and evidence gathered, the Plan has focussed on five strategic priority areas that, through concerted focus by partners, will achieve high impact changes for children, young people and families. The following priorities have been identified as key areas of work for the partnership in 2023-2026.

- Our children and young people feel respected, listened to and influence change
- Working collaboratively we will reduce the impact of social and economic poverty on our children and young people
- Our children and young people feel safe
- Our children and young people have the best start in life and achieve their full potential
- Our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is improving

The East Ayrshire Children and Young People Service Plan 2023-2026 is underpinned by a detailed Action Plan for the three year period. The content of this Action Plan aligns directly with the areas of priority identified and outlines the actions and activities to be undertaken by partners to ensure we are achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people across East Ayrshire. The Plan also includes an overview of the measures we will use to assess our progress in achieving our stated outcomes for each of the priority themes.

### **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS REPORTS 2017-2020 AND 2020-2023**

The two reports presented cover the periods 2017-2020 and 2020-2023, recognising the delay in reporting due to pressures associated with the pandemic. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a core international human rights statement and articulates fundamental rights with the framework of children's lives and experiences.

For the purpose of these reports, a number of Children's Rights, relating to similar themes, have been grouped together into clusters (1 - 8) to provide an in-depth overview of progression. The themes are:

- Cluster 1 - General measures of implementation;
- Cluster 2 - General principles of the UNCRC;
- Cluster 3 - Civil rights and freedoms;
- Cluster 4 - Violence against Children;
- Cluster 5 - Family environment and alternative care;
- Cluster 6 - Basic health and welfare;
- Cluster 7 - Education, Leisure and Culture; and
- Cluster 8 - Special protection measures.

## **CHERISHING OUR FAMILIES STRATEGY 2023-2026**

The aim of this strategy is to set out the strategic aims and objectives of East Ayrshire's approach to preventing and reducing neglect across the community. This includes working within the approach of the HEART model to ensure that issues are addressed holistically and in a family context, and to also pull together all the work happening across the CYPSP to reflect consistent ways of working to tackle the issue of neglect. This will help us to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in East Ayrshire.

This strategy has been developed in conjunction with multi-agency partners working across the CYPSP and should be considered alongside other key strategies and plans.

Feedback from the engagement highlighted four key priorities for the strategy to address, namely:

- Children's voices are heard
- Right support at the right time
- Improved understanding and collaboration
- Addressing poverty

An action plan has been developed and is included in the strategy document. This will enable the CYPSP to ensure progress is being made and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

### **2.3.1 Quality/patient care**

There will be positive impacts into for children, young people and families who are at the centre of all of these documents and have gave feedback which has been reflected.

### **2.3.2 Workforce**

There are no workforce implications to noting the reports.

### **2.3.3 Financial**

There are no financial implications to noting the reports. There may be financial implications through the implementation of the new Children's Service's Plan and Cherishing our Families Strategy 2023-2026 which will be reported to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

#### **2.3.4 Risk assessment/management**

There are no risk implications to noting the reports.

#### **2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities**

The Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2020-2023, the Children's Services Plan and the Children's Rights Reports are reporting on performance so a full equality impact assessment is not required. The Cherishing Our families Strategy has been fully equality impact assessed.

#### **2.3.6 Other impacts**

- Best value
  - Governance and accountability
  - Use of resources
  - Performance management
  
- Local outcomes improvement plans, community planning etc.

#### **2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation**

The Board has carried out its duties to involve and engage external stakeholders where appropriate:

This was carried out by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

#### **2.3.8 Route to the meeting**

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

- Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, 20 September 2023
- Community Planning Partnership Board, 21 September 2023
- Integration Joint Board, 11 October 2023

### **2.4 Recommendation**

Members are asked to agree the reports.

- **Decision** – Reaching a conclusion after the consideration of options.

## **3. List of appendices**

The following appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix No 1, Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 Annual Report
- Appendix No 2, Children's Services Plan 2023-2026
- Appendix No 3, Children's Rights Report 2017-2020
- Appendix No 4, Children's Rights Report 2020-2023
- Appendix No 5, Cherishing our Families Strategy 2023-2026



# **EAST AYRSHIRE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PLAN**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

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## FOREWORD

Welcome to our third Children & Young People’s Annual Report, which reflects another year filled with challenges for our communities and workforce, but also a year filled with successes that highlight the amazing work our teams and partners carry out every day. I give my thanks to all who have played their part in supporting our communities over the past year, with recognition to those who continue to go above and beyond to ensure that our children and families have the help and support they need.

The [East Ayrshire Children and Young People’s Services Plan 2020-2023](#) sets out our long-term aspirations and our vision that *“In East Ayrshire, our children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential”*. It details our service plans for children and young people in East Ayrshire and celebrates our young people’s achievements, talents, perspectives and contributions, alongside examples of our partnership working successes and positive outcomes achieved for people.



The plan sets out six important areas for 2020-23:



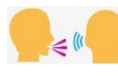
Recovery and renewal from the impact of Covid-19



Tackling poverty



Improving wellbeing



Respecting and promoting children and young people’s rights



Achieving!



Keeping safe

As we are now at the end of this current plan, work is underway to develop a new three year plan, although it is anticipated that some of the key themes will continue to feature, such as child poverty, children’s rights and voice, and emotional and mental health will remain relevant and important to our children and young people.

I would like to thank all of our children and young people for their strength, resilience and optimism over the past year. We will continue to support, listen and learn from you as we work towards a bright future for all.

Marion MacAulay  
Chair, East Ayrshire Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership

## HEART

Within East Ayrshire, we have developed a family support model accessed and provided by a range of partners. This operates from early intervention and prevention to intensive family support. To better understand and consider how we adapt this we have completed a mapping exercise to look at what we have and how it best meets the needs of our communities. This has also allowed us to consider workforce planning.

Our children's services model, HEART (Help for Everyone At the Right Time), has been developed around our secondary school education groups to promote community assets and support stronger community connections. This will ensure families get help when they need it locally.



The development of HEART has involved the voices and collaboration of young people from the outset. In the early stages young people in their hundreds took part in a Smart Survey to tell us what mattered to them. Later some participated in detailed interviews, sharing their stories of accessing children's services, what worked well and what needs to change. Some young people have also joined our Critical Friends group which has had oversight of the plan as it has developed and one young person has participated in a video we are making to explain what HEART is all about.

Young people have told us that all too often, help for their families has been hard to access and that people have not listened when they have reached out for support. They have told us what it feels like to be truly heard and that services have to do more to ensure that they link in together as part of a coherent system so that there is "no wrong door". We look forward to continue working in partnership with young people as we move forward with HEART.

### Keep the Promise

In East Ayrshire we have created a Promise Participation Team. This is led by our Service Manager (Promise Implementation Lead), whose remit is to support the workforce and communities of East Ayrshire to fully understand and embed The Promise. Our children's independent reviewing officers also sit within this team, to ensure participation in meetings is strong. We have three participation leaders within this team whose role is to promote and support true participation of children and young people to ensure their voice is loud, is heard and is acted upon.



the promise  
scotland

More broadly, we have established a Promise Oversight Group made up of members of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Together, members have been working to undertake a self-evaluation of our progress in delivering the 25 outcomes areas outlined in the Promise [Change Programme One](#) for 2021-24. The aim is to establish an evidence-informed baseline to support our development a local Promise Delivery Programme. Analysis of the self-evaluation has been completed and partners are working to develop the next steps in the planning and delivery process.



## How did we measure up?

Last year, we identified a number of additional indicators to enable us to identify areas of improvement in our priority areas and make comparisons on a national level.

For more information on the additional indicators, please see [Appendix 1](#).



The % of children living in poverty relative low income families rose by 5.6% from 19.9% (2020/21) to 25.5% (2021/22).

Source: *DWP StatXplore*



We have maintained the % of babies born at a healthy weight (84%)

Source: *ScotPHO*



The % of children with no concerns across all domains at 4-5 years has increased from 74.2% (2020/21) to 75.1% (2021/22).

Source: *PHS Scotland*



The % of children with no obvious tooth decay in P1 decreased from 68.9% (2019/20) to 66.5% (2021/22). Figures were not updated in 2020/21 due to COVID-19.

Source: *ScotPHO*



The % of children with no obvious tooth decay in P7 increased to 62.2% (2019/20) from 54.1% (2018/19). **Figures have not been updated since 2019/20.**

Source: *ScotPHO*



The % of young people leaving school who progress into employment, training and education has increased to 96.9% (2021/22) from 95.7% (2020/21)

Source: *Scottish Government Statistics for Initial Leaver Destinations*



The % of child protection re-registrations within 18 months has increased from 10.7% (2021/22) to 14.9% (2022/23). **TARGET is under 3%\***

Source: *Local Government Benchmarking Framework*

## Priority 1 - Recovery and renewal from the impact of COVID-19

### We said we would:

- reduce the impact on children and young people's emotional and mental health;
- minimise the impact on children and young people's education;
- focus on vulnerable and care experienced children and early years; and
- ensure connections and relationships are maintained.

**We did – key delivery examples:** Children's Practitioners across East Ayrshire have continued to show their dedication and commitment to supporting children and their families in challenging social and economic circumstances over the past 12 months, and practitioners have continued to go above and beyond in the support they have provided during this period whilst experiencing ongoing workforce capacity and recruitment pressures.

Our children's houses meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable children and young people. As they have recovered from the disruptions of the last few years, much of the work has focused on supporting children and young people to find normality again through school attendance and offering opportunities to achieve all that they can. Many young people from our houses have also gained apprenticeships with East Ayrshire Council or found further education courses suited to their skills and abilities. We are really proud of their progress. We were especially pleased to see one of our young people head off to St Andrew's University in September 2022. Our residential colleagues were able to help him set-up his accommodation and have been heartened to hear about how he has been getting on when he has come back to visit. We continue to offer outreach support to all our young people who move on.

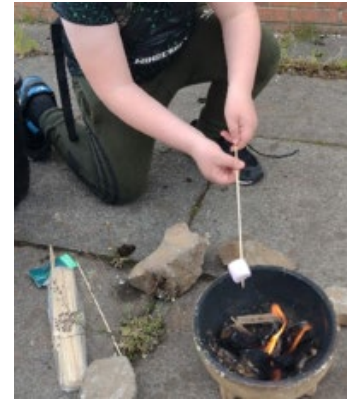
'The Promise' puts an emphasis on how we look after and support the people who directly care for our children. All children's carers attended six day Social Pedagogy training in 2022-23 to support them with the skills and resilience to meet the needs of our young people.

As most services have returned to pre-pandemic delivery, there has been a focus on rebuilding face-to-face and group activities to support children and their families. The Family Support Team held activities throughout the Easter, summer, October and winter holidays, enabling families to take part in a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, messy play, physical play and song/story time, and make those all-important memories together.



Families were supported to attend by the team and the activities also served as an opportunity for signposting to additional supports, such as financial inclusion, food larders or other community events.

Weekend activities have also taken place throughout the year offering families positive, low cost, easily accessible community activities that focus on health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation and fostering positive attachments. The weekend activities build on the work and relationships nurtured with families who work alongside the team through group work activity, focussed work and family time.



Group work activity within the Family Support service expanded over the last 12 months, with a variety of groups being held across the authority that focus on bringing people together with shared aims; promoting positive social interactions; decreasing social isolation; upskilling parents, carers and young people; and, linking people to their local community.

**We have continued to also develop and improve the range of partnerships with the local community through Care Leavers Week. This year we were able to work in partnership with Kilmarnock Football Club where the club were able to dedicate a match during Care Leavers week. This enabled hundreds of care experienced children and young people a chance to attend a football match with a special mention for care experienced children and young people. Many children and young people were able to attend with their foster carers, children's house carers, and some care experienced young people who are parents attended with their own children.**

The mental health of children, young people and their families across East Ayrshire remains a priority in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In developing our mental health response, the voices and experiences of our families remain central in how we support good mental wellbeing and how we provide the right help and support. Over the past year a number of services have worked to address mental health needs and plans are underway for the introduction of new models, including online support through [Kooth](#) for young people aged 11-25; the development of a sensory room through Ayrshire Am-ASN Warriors; and the introduction of a Health Care Support Worker to support transition to Primary 1.

The East Ayrshire Counselling in Schools service has provided counselling and wellbeing support since January 2021. Working alongside the Exchange Counselling service, they have supported hundreds of children and young people over the age of 10 years to talk about the issues that trouble them in a private and safe space, including issues such as: bereavement, transitions and change, stress management, self-image, relationships, and understanding their feelings and behaviours. The service expanded in April 2022 to include support for children aged five to ten years, and focuses on helping them develop resources they need to cope more effectively

with adverse circumstances and life events. Support is also offered to parents and carers to develop skills as a family to support one another.

Over the past year there has been a real focus in the School Nursing service on listening to the voice of children and young people and adapting how engagement is carried out. The complexity of children and young people presenting with emotional

concerns over the past two years has challenged the service to be more creative, recognising that all children are unique in how they prefer to engage with professionals. Sessions have become more interactive and enjoyable, with practitioners finding success in using new approaches, such as using play to allow children and young people to share their worries. Other resources have included sand trays and iPads that allow children to relax and share their story in a more natural way, and can be utilised both at home and at school. Additional fidget cubes and stress balls have also supported young people in remembering coping strategies in times of worry. wellbeing

Following the pandemic, revised Pan-Ayrshire guidance was produced for Supporting Children and Young People with Healthcare Needs in Education. The guidance has been adapted from the Scottish Government's [2017 guidance](#), and sets out how schools or centres (including early childhood centres) can support children and young people with their health and wellbeing needs. The guidance supports education and health practitioners to work collaboratively with parents and other professionals who may be involved in the child's care to support and review their needs in order to make the most of their learning.

**Young person:**

*"I feel like my brain is a racing train and all my thoughts are like loads of passengers trying to jump aboard all at once. These sessions make me feel really calm and my brain gets to be an empty train"*

## Priority 2 - Tackling poverty

We said we would focus on:

- **Transport:** in partnership, we will break down the barriers to affordable transport to enable financially challenged parents, carers and young people to access employment, benefits, support services and other amenities. We will lobby for change and we will explore options for developing a municipal bus service.
- **Employment:** we will ensure economic benefits for major developments are distributed fairly across our communities, we will continue to have fair working practices and employ, commission and procure in line with, for example, Scottish Living Wage commitments.
- **Financial Inclusion:** we will ensure financial inclusion services have maximum reach, work together with Social Security Scotland to tackle child poverty and provide up-stream, early advice and support through children's health services.
- **Every Day Living Costs:** we will continue to; roll out free P1- P3 meals and early years expansion; deliver good quality affordable housing for families; rapidly rehouse people and families who are at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness.
- **Communication:** we will improve information sharing and promote a consistent anti-poverty message across East Ayrshire.

**We did – key delivery examples:** Building on the success of the Loudoun Education Project launched in 2021, the Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) has grown the school-based pathfinder project, expanding to all secondary schools in East Ayrshire for one year, serving the local primary school and early year centre communities as well. The project rolled out to Grange Academy in December 2022, with the remaining secondary schools launching in May 2023. In this academic year, the project has generated £121,011.77 for families with children. Additionally, FIT staff launched a new Early Years project, working alongside Health Visitors to support families with children from pre-birth to pre-school by ensuring all their income is fully maximised. In total 260 families have been supported to date, achieving £479,113.19 of additional income.

**The level of relative child poverty increased in 2021/22 from 19.1% in the previous year to 24.4% and nationally child poverty levels are projected to continue to rise over the coming years. Research commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2018 suggests that relative child poverty (after housing costs), will increase to between 35-38 per cent by 2030. This would suggest that nearly 9,000 children and young people in East Ayrshire could be living in relative poverty by 2030 unless action is taken.**

Mentoring Development Officers work hard to support young people in East Ayrshire, providing one-to-one support, group sessions and facilitating attendance at holiday programmes. Young people told us that as a result of the work of the officers they felt more confident after attending sessions, more involved in their community and more responsible. They also felt that overall their teamwork, communication skills had improved as a result of the support received.

Throughout the school holidays, the Active Schools and Home Link teams provided free meals in a bid to tackle holiday hunger and help families with the cost of living crisis. During the summer holidays the Home Link Team delivered 45 iLunch sessions across 26 primary schools in East Ayrshire. The sessions focused on family learning and included trips to Dumfries House, Dean Castle Country Park, Newmilns Ski Slope and Ten Pin Bowling. The trips were supported by the “Get into Summer” funding and through this the team were able to provide breakfast and lunch packs to the families attending. The team also focused on food poverty this summer, delivering family cooking sessions as part of the iLunch programme and providing 226 cooking packs to families who took part.

Child feedback:  
*“iLunch is so much fun!”*

Parent/Carer feedback:  
*“iLunch has been a wonderful opportunity to create happy family time and memories. Gives you a chance to see places you normally wouldn’t get to.  
Thank you”*

The Play and Early Intervention team held five Summer of Play events across East Ayrshire in partnership with teams across Vibrant Communities offering a range of activities from mud slides to sensory play for children and young people and their families/carers, including a BBQ lunch provided by the East Ayrshire catering department.

As of February 2022, 6,989 primary pupils in East Ayrshire were registered for free school meals and in secondary schools there were 1,317 pupils registered. The number of East Ayrshire pupils registered for free school meals has risen steadily since 2016 in line with the national trend. The overall percentage of pupils registered for free school meals in East Ayrshire remains slightly higher than the national figure for both primary pupils and secondary pupils.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran also launched a new Child Poverty Action Plan for 2022/23 detailing areas of focus for the year, such as supporting uptake of free bus travel and further developing financial inclusion pathways and areas where income can be maximised. This plan is supported by a new team established within Public Health who are focused on Child Poverty.

## Priority 3 - Respecting and promoting children and young people's rights

### We said we would:

- uphold, champion and defend the rights of children and young people in all we do and further embed the UNCRC, ready for this becoming law;
- truly deliver GIRFEC with children and young people at the heart of their plans, decisions and services;
- develop and implement innovative ways of ensuring children and young people's voices are heard in discussions and decisions that affect them, including collaborative service redesign and the future of our towns and communities;
- listen to and include all children and young people and to find creative ways for them to keep in touch with the people involved in their lives;
- empower children and young people to take control of actions and activities in any of their plans; and
- strategically embed the rights of young carers, through implementation of young carers statements.

**We did – key delivery examples:** Across East Ayrshire we have continued to work hard to ensure that we deliver on our commitment to #KeepThePromise. We have prioritised listening to our children and young people and have created opportunities for them to talk about the issues that are important to them.

### ArtClub? Member:

*"Sometimes I find it rather difficult to express myself through words, about how I feel in the real world. One way I get around this is by using a wide range of techniques in art to help express myself, mostly experimentally and random but unique to myself as they show who I am as an individual."*



The Promise Participation team established 'ArtClub?' a co-curated group led by care-experienced young people with an interest in contemporary visual art and activism. The group enables young people from a range of care backgrounds to creatively engage with the issues and interests that affect them. At a recent board meeting, a presentation from members of 'ArtClub?' resulted in an increased offer of financial support to assist care leavers on low incomes through the cost of living crisis. We are working with our care experienced young people to refresh 'Pizza and Coke', our Corporate Parenting Board, to ensure that young people can drive positive change by raising their questions directly with leaders and elected members.

Young People's Mentors (YPM's) provide support to care experienced young people across our Grange, Kilmarnock, Robert Burns, Loudoun and Stewarton Academies. Working in partnership with each school, mentors provide support on a needs basis for each young person. Since April 2022, 149 care experienced young people were supported through the mentoring programme, with 2,179 tailored support sessions delivered to 43 groups. High levels of engagement have seen positive attendances at sessions and mentors have also facilitated staff meetings with disengaged young people to build positive relationships with them. These supports led to 53 Dynamic Youth Awards and two Bronze Youth Achievement awards being completed in recognition of the young people's achievements throughout the year.

*"I like the opportunities I am given with this service as they are always fun and exciting. I love that everyone is treated equally and no one gets left out"*

Our care-experienced community also had an opportunity to share their views through the Brightspots survey which we ran last year. Their feedback, combined with the findings of a detailed self-evaluation has enabled members of the Promise Oversight group to determine a number of key priorities within our Promise Implementation Plan. These include:

- Helping children in our care to build and maintain relationships with the people who matter to them;
- Ensuring care experienced children and young people receive all they need to thrive at school and achieve their full potential;
- Ensuring that children moving on from care receive the love and support they need to live independently;
- Equipping the workforce to effectively identify and support people who experience trauma; and,
- Providing early and intensive help and support to families who need it.

Social work and social care teams have been taking time to consider what The Promise means for their particular areas of practice. Towards the end of 2022 practitioners from our children's houses and the Fostering, Adoption, Kinship Care and Supported Care services set aside two days to consider how they can better embed The Promise in their work. Many ideas were generated, but two key projects emerged. The first will look at how we can better hear from our children about their experiences of care using more varied and accessible methods to gather their views. The second will look at how we can move away from factual case recording towards keeping records that will help young people understand their whole life experience, both now and in the future.

The UK National Government mandated Scotland to participate in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). East Ayrshire has a maximum allocation of 23 children aged under 18 years. Due to the change in UK government approach, we were required to quickly develop our approach to supporting children. We currently support nine UASC (under 18) and provide aftercare support to eleven young people over the age of 18. The young



people that we support have come to East Ayrshire from a variety of countries including, Vietnam, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Egypt and Iran. Our UASC team have provided and coordinated support and services to young people, linking them in with ESOL language classes, education, sports groups, health and care, cultural and religious connections, and community activities. The team also support young people to manage their tenancies, daily living tasks and to access leisure activities in their local area.



Children and young people gathered at East Ayrshire Council Chambers to celebrate the first Clean, Green Education Awards in June 2022. Following the virtual Children and Young People's Climate Conference in 2021, twenty-one schools developed their own Climate Change Action Plans which included 217 individual actions that have been implemented by children and young people over the past year. Eighteen establishments submitted evidence for the 2022 Clean Green Education Awards and all received a Bronze accreditation, with special recognition being given to:

- New Cumnock Primary – for a range of initiatives encouraging energy saving within their establishment
- Lochnorris Primary – for reducing transport emissions by encouraging active travel through walking, cycling and scooting to school
- Lochnorris Supported Learning Centre – for reducing and recycling food waste and composting
- Netherthird Primary School – for their commitment to the natural environment and work in supporting the local community garden

- Kilmarnock Academy – for creative thinking and awareness raising of the carbon impact of our digital footprint
- Stewarton Academy – for outstanding Pupil Leadership and leading learning around the implications of climate change and actions that need to be taken.
- Onthank Primary – a Silver accreditation and the Chair’s Award for Outstanding Achievement, which recognised their outstanding early and wide engagement in the local community to reduce emissions.

Grange Academy pupils also celebrated success for their environmental work in the community, with 90 young people from S2 receiving a John Muir Award. The young people took part in litter picking sessions around the school, planted seeds and plants to improve their school environment and supported the local community in Knockentiber towards their aim of having a litter free village.



East Ayrshire Carers Centre provided a wide range of support to young carers in 2022/23, with weekly age-specific groups making a full and welcome return following restrictions from the pandemic easing. The Centre supported young carers to access respite breaks as well as employability and skills training, days out and social activities during holiday periods, with the Young Carers Christmas Party returning for the first time since 2019.

**Parent of young carer:**

*“Is that the same child you have given me back? She is so happy and seems to have gained so much confidence”*



In October 2022 a project to support unpaid carers during hospital discharge was restarted and two new Hospital Discharge Carer Link Workers were recruited to support the discharge process and identify unpaid carers. This has helped to ensure that all carers, including young carers, are involved in the planned discharge of their loved ones, as well as identify what support they may require from statutory and voluntary services to ensure they are fully supported in their caring role.

## Priority 4 - Improving wellbeing

### We said we would:

- continue to embed Getting It Right For Every Child through improved partnership working with children and young people at the centre;
- support families to remain together and where this is not possible, increase our effectiveness in keeping brothers and sisters together, or connected with each other, when they are looked after away from home;
- scale up prevention, early intervention and wellbeing-focussed models of service delivery for all children, young people and families that promote resilience and better emotional, mental and physical health, ensuring timely access to appropriate, locality focussed services;
- ensure children and young people's development and physical health, regardless of ability, is supported by play, time outdoors and physical activity, including with their family; and
- raise community awareness and ownership of neglect and embed systematic approaches to early and effective identification, reporting and intervention.

**We did – key delivery examples:** Over the past 12 months the Fostering, Adoption and Kinship teams have worked closely with the Promise Implementation Lead to embed 'The Promise' across the workforce. Our committed and passionate Foster Carers have supported the service to deliver key foundations of 'The Promise', which has resulted in a number of brother and sisters being able to stay together.

Recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a key priority locally and nationally, and whilst 2022 saw limited growth in recruitment, there have been promising developments in early 2023 with several households completing the 'Skills to Foster' training and progressing to assessment to become foster carers. Nationally, the number of potential adopters continues to outweigh the number of children who have potential to be placed for adoption which is reflected in the low number of children adopted in East Ayrshire over the past year.

The service has continued to take a holistic approach to supporting anyone who has been impacted by adoption, this ranges from the assessment of prospective adopters, to supporting birth mothers affected by adoption and helping adoptees with origins enquiries. These pieces of work are often emotive, but also hugely rewarding and we have recently been recognised for the innovative and compassionate practice that underpinned children being placed for adoption with carers in East Ayrshire.

Through facilitation of a meeting between our adopters and a birth mother, our adopters were able to demonstrate their commitment to raising the children to know their life story, to have a knowledge of their birth mother and their birth family, and to ensure that she had all the reassurance that any mother would want of how her children were. Facilitation of this meeting was recognised by partner agencies and led to the children's birth mother attending the adoption hearing to express that she felt that the adoption order was in her children's best interests and express her own confidence in the adopters to meet her children's needs.

Commissioned services are currently undergoing a full review to ensure they align with the changing needs of our communities, as well as the ambitions of The Promise, The Feeley Report, and EAHSCP Strategic Plan. Significant engagement and consultation has taken place with people who use our services, and they have been clear that they want accessible provisions at the right time and place.

There have been a number of developments emerging from engagement on commissioned services, in particular, our parents and carers of children with disabilities and Additional Support Needs (ASN) have been fully involved in co-producing facilities which will benefit a significant number of families.

Parents told us that the traditional short breaks model did not necessarily work for their families, and that they wanted an opportunity to enjoy a whole-family break together.

This has resulted in a test of change of whole-family provision at the Tree Tops facility in the Dean Park. This will allow a number of families to enjoy a residential break together, fully supported by park rangers who will provide activities. The facilities on-site are fully compatible for children with disabilities, and includes a cinema for film nights.

Considerable work has been undertaken to continue the development of HEART. A range of local services (including: Education, Early Years, School Nursing, Health Visiting, CAMHS, Vibrant Communities, Social Work, Housing and Allied Health Professionals), have developed six Community Teams, which formally started to come together on 4 April 2022. As HEART implementation progresses, it is anticipated that families and communities will experience the benefits in terms of early help and support.



In March 2023 HEART was a Bronze Award Winner of the iESE Customer Focus Award. This award recognises the organisation has delivered outstanding service to the people who use our services in our transformational approach to improve how children and families are supported in East Ayrshire. We have also demonstrated the link between excellent customer service and performance through working on a smaller scale, to root more services in the communities they serve and be more connected to partners in other services.



Self-Directed Supports in Children and Family Services continues to be developed. Currently, it is well embedded with the Children with Disabilities Service, and the last

year has seen personal budgets allocated across Children and Family Localities to great effect, giving children and young people choice and control over how they are supported.

### **Self-Directed Support Case Study**

Ellie is studious, and has worked very hard at school, she loves the sciences and is a straight 'A' student. Ellie would like her career to be in the field of molecular biology and has recently commenced studying for a degree at a university some distance away from her home. Ellie has Cerebral Palsy, which impacts her physical mobility and she uses crutches to get about. This limits what she is able to do as her hands are not free, making carrying anything such as a bag, opening doors, or preparing a meal very difficult. Ellie requires ongoing support to complete everyday tasks and to be able to access all the exciting life and career opportunities that she has open to her in the future.

The Children & Disabilities' team together with Adult Services worked together with Ellie and her family to create her support plan through Self-Directed Support. Ellie has been able to use her Self-Directed Support budget to commission a vital support service, ensuring that she is able to reside in her own accommodation while she attends university by supporting her with independent living tasks and allowing her to link into social activities. As a result, Ellie has been able to take up this opportunity that she has worked very hard for, and progress in her journey towards her career goal. Without the support plan, Ellie would not have been able to commence higher education or live independently.

Throughout the holiday period, Vibrant Communities delivered a range of free and accessible indoor and outdoor events through the Play and Early Intervention team, ensuring that children had the opportunity to access play. Partners across East Ayrshire joined the team in celebrating the most popular play event of the year, with Play Day returning on Wednesday 3 August 2022, offering six unique zones for children to celebrate their right to play.



Play Day promotes and encourage children and their families to come together and celebrate play through a range of outdoor activities, and also offers families access to a variety of groups and organisations who can provide further recreational opportunities or family support. Play Day attracts between 5,000-8,000 attendees each year. Partners at this year's event included Police Scotland, Active Travel Hub, Scottish Fire and Rescue, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, and local sports and community groups.

The Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy service completed training for staff groups focusing on sensory processing, emotional regulation and the

environment and delivered universal class discussion to primary 4 and 5 groups. This work focused on what mental health and wellbeing means to the young people and included activities to promote good mental health and wellbeing and everyday strategies to incorporate in daily routine to develop coping strategies as well as promote better mental health.

Multi-agency parental drop in sessions (including Speech and Language Therapy and Educational Psychology) took place in some early childhood centres, giving parents and carers the opportunity to speak with team members without the need for a request for assistance. The focus of these sessions has been around early intervention and supporting families at the time of need. Practitioners provided advice and signposting as part of this and feedback on these sessions has been positive from parents and carers in relation to some of this early support.

The Breastfeeding peer support service has continued to evolve, and in the last year has been able to offer peer support to all first time mothers in East Ayrshire. Evidence has shown that breastfeeding benefits both the short and long-term health of mothers and their babies, with breastfed babies at less risk of diabetes and obesity in later childhood. Since expanding to all first time mothers, over 80% of those offered peer support accepted the offer, with mothers from the most deprived areas showing the highest level of uptake. Whilst rates of mothers exclusively breastfeeding in these most deprived areas remain low in comparison to least deprived areas, a number of those who accepted peer support were continuing to exclusively breastfeed at 6-8 weeks (34% in SIMD quintile 1 and 45% in quintile 2), which highlights the value of the support offered by the peer workers.



Vibrant Communities worked in partnership with Columba 1400 to co-produce a bespoke East Ayrshire values based programme to ensure that the Parental Empowerment provision is sustainable. The programmes are underway in Littlemill and New Cumnock Primary schools and Robert Burns Academy and parents can access information and support through the [EAC Parental Empowerment Programme blog](#).

Over the past 12 months, the Littlemill group has flourished. Parents have held self-led walks and talks, engaging with SL33 in relation to parental employability which has resulted in one parent undertaking midwifery training and another receiving funding to restart their own beauty business. In June 2022, the group all undertook Mental Health First Aid training and participated in the Lost Words campaign in July.

The New Cumnock group have completed health and wellbeing and coaching themes from the programme blog, covering [Change and Loss](#) and [Connecting with Nature](#). One parent from the group completed the John Muir Award training alongside Vibrant Communities and school staff. Moving forward, the parents are looking to complete a

range of courses including food hygiene, first aid and CPR training as well as cooking demonstrations from the catering team.

**Parent:**

*“For me, parental empowerment means feeling that you are on the right path and achieving your goals as a parent! Achieving these goals with the help from others plays a vital part in feeling empowered. And helping others with theirs is equally as important, as this allows us to learn from each other. Sometimes we go up the wrong path and learn from that! I think parental empowerment is a feeling and is different for all of us! Allowing parents to acknowledge this is empowerment in itself!”*

Play Therapy is offered through the Lifestyle Development & Community Wellbeing co-ordinator and can be used with children who have experienced abuse, neglect or trauma; loss; fostering or adoption; illness or disability; emotional or behavioural difficulties; and, children who have witnessed violence or substance misuse. The therapy sessions help children explore their feelings and recover from their experiences, which in turn can help them achieve a more positive view of themselves, develop emotionally and socially and improve their relationships, behaviour and communication. The Play Therapist offers a safe environment for children to express themselves through a range of play options over the course of 12 sessions (minimum) and in 2022/23 120 sessions were delivered to children in East Ayrshire. For all children who have completed sessions they have shown improvements in their relationships, behaviour, emotional issues and with hyperactivity/inattention problems, with primary children preparing for secondary school reporting that they feel more prepared for the transition.

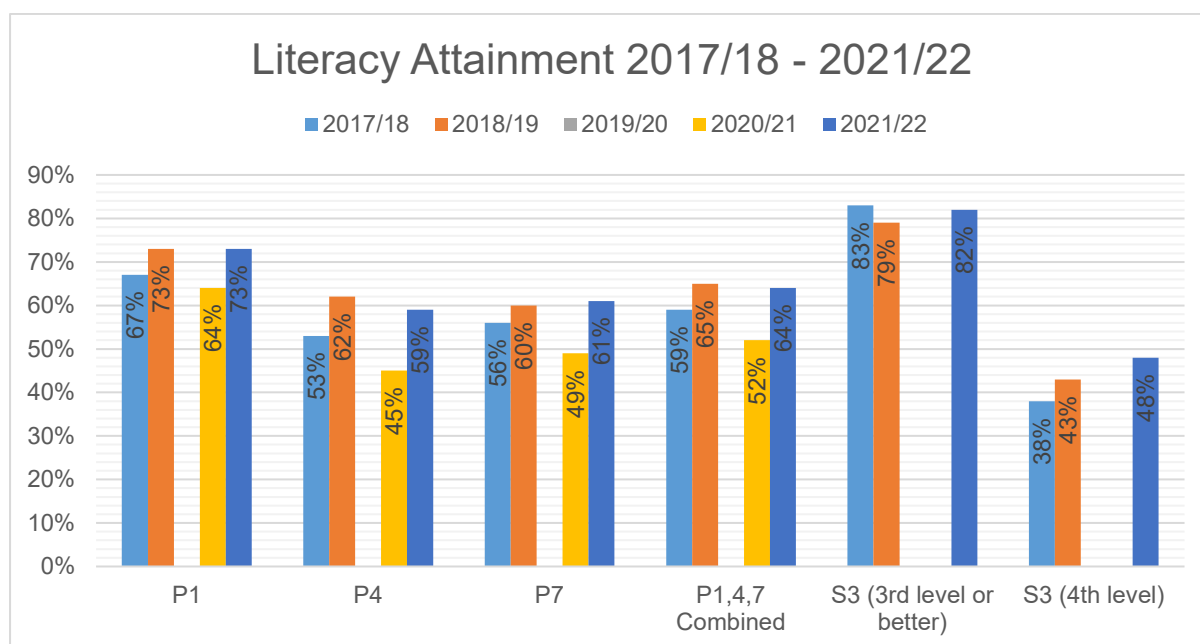


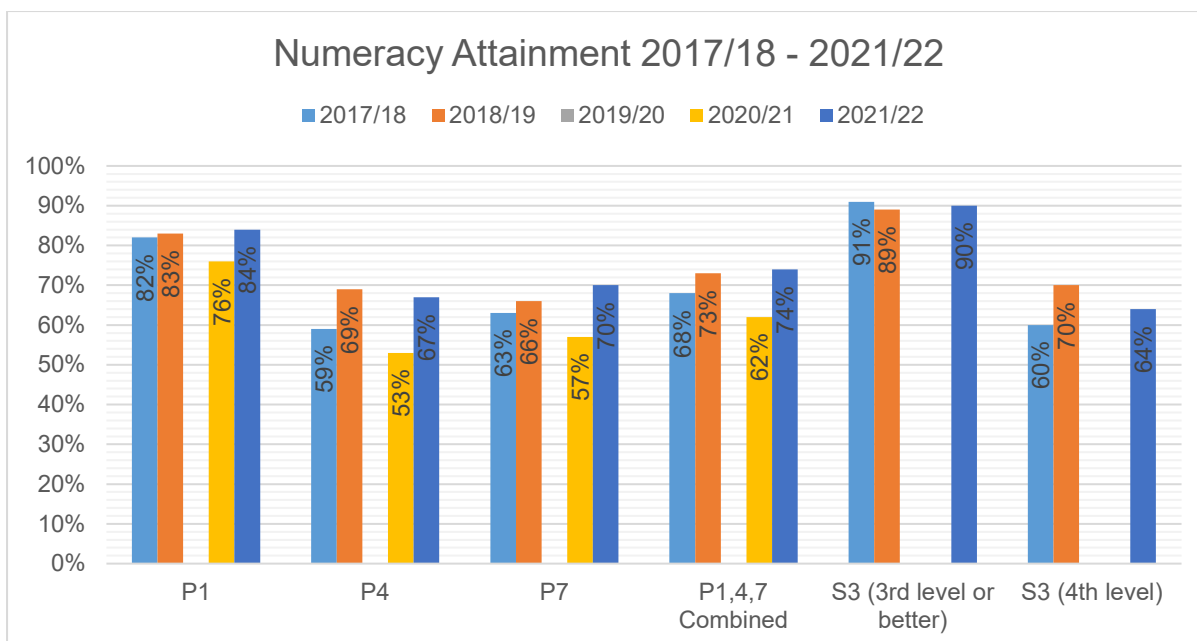
## Priority 5 - Achieving

### We said we would:

- maintain our emphasis on improving the attainment gap and achievement outcomes for children and young people, in particular, care experienced children and young people and those who are looked after at home;
- through investment in early years, we will create better life chances for our children, particularly those in our most deprived communities; and
- empower, engage and inform parents and carers in children and young people's learning across East Ayrshire

**We did – key delivery examples:** Curriculum for Excellence levels of achievement resumed recording in 2020/21 based on teachers assessments of progress children have made. This follows a gap in reporting for 2019/20 where levels could not be assessed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across East Ayrshire there have been increases in attainment across all areas of literacy and numeracy from the previous year, with most returning close to, or exceeding, pre-pandemic levels:





Source: Scottish Government – December 2022

\*Due to continued focus in secondary schools on the Senior Phase Alternative Certification Model (ACM) no attainment levels were collected nationally for S3 in 2020/21.

As a result of these improvements from 2020/21 across P1, P4 and P7 levels we have succeeded in closing the poverty related attainment by 10% in literacy and 12% in numeracy.



**We saw 96.9% of our school leavers from 2021-22 progressed on to positive destinations, which is the highest figure ever achieved in East Ayrshire since tracking destinations began.**

The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) was established to support young people aged 16-24 into further learning, training or employment, prioritising young people at greatest need. Grant funding for the Young Person's Guarantee ended in March 2023 and the programme has now been mainstreamed as part of the No-One Left Behind All-Age Employability approach delivered through the East Ayrshire Local Employability Partnership (EALEP).

In 2022-23, the YPG funded training programme saw young people undertake a rail sector skills programme where they were able to achieve nine industry recognised qualifications. The young people undertook four weeks of work experience across Scotland, receiving a weekly training allowance and support from YPG work coaches. The programme achieved 100% positive destinations from its first two cohorts with twenty young people moving into employment and one young person choosing to continue studying at college.

By March 2023, the YPG programme had supported 231 young people into employment, with 165 achieving full-time work; and 66 young people achieving Modern Apprenticeships within East Ayrshire Council; and with private and third sector employers.

The Vibrant Communities Home Link team continued to offer bespoke support to care experienced children and young people and their families throughout 2022/23, delivering group sessions and home visits to boost readiness to learn and supporting parents and carers to be part of their child's learning journey. The Home Link team also supported children to attend school and made onward referrals to other agencies that were able to provide young people with more tailored support.

Care Experience Work Coaches based in SL33 supported young people with social and practical skills and provided opportunities to achieve vocational qualifications. Half of the young people supported in 2022/23 progressed into further learning, training or employment and the remaining cohort continue to receive support from the team. Moving into 2023/24, the team have taken a targeted approach to supporting children in primary schools with high numbers of care experienced children delivering bespoke sessions to address barriers to learning, establishing parent groups and supporting transition from Primary 7 to S1.

#### **East Ayrshire Leadership Academy Case Study**

*"Being involved in Netball Scotland's Ambassador programme has given me many opportunities to develop and understand the many aspects of the game, but more so has developed my personal confidence, self-esteem and motivation for life. I would really like to make a positive contribution to Netball and would love to play for Scotland one day, in doing so encourage and help other young people to get involved in Netball and help them enjoy the sport like I do, and to show them how positive Netball – and sport in general – can be for your life."*

**- Sophie Simpson, Netball Ambassador, Stewarton Academy**

*"Sophie is an inspiration to the many young females who are participating in netball and other sports in the Stewarton community. She is a positive role model to all and has a great playing and coaching career ahead of her."*

**- Gordon Allan, Active Schools**

The Active School team delivered a leadership programme to all P6 pupils in the Auchinleck school cluster over a period of four weeks. The aim of the programme was to provide young people with the confidence, skills and knowledge to put their leadership learning into practice through transition events for children in the Early Childhood Centres, playground games with peers and through input during Health Week. A total of 145 pupils completed the course and will continue to put their skills to

use in the following school year through leading more activities for school health events.

**P6 Pupil:**

*"This taught me a lot and I want to do more as I like it!"*

**Teacher:**

*"Great thing for kids to do as it builds their confidence"*

**Active Schools:**

*"Fantastic group of kids to work with throughout the whole cluster and great to see them putting what they have learned into practice with the health events and other school events on top of what they carried out with the transition events. Well done to all!"*

The Essential Skills service works in partnership with East Ayrshire schools to provide an alternative approach to literacy and numeracy learning. Youth literacies uses an early intervention approach through fun and learner-centred activities to sustain engagement and support pupils to achieve their goals. Family literacy programmes support parents and carers to learn together with their child through fun and creative approaches, encouraging engagement with learning and understanding of teaching approaches used in schools. From launching in 2017 to August 2022, 895 families have been engaged with the Family Literacy Learning programmes, with 1,015 pupils engaging with face to face programmes.

**Pupil:**

*"It was great creating stories, me and my teammates made a great team, I thought I could not do it but I just had to have confidence in myself, it was really great I learned a lot from it" - P7 Transition Stop Motion animation programme*

**Pupil:**

*"I liked the escape rooms, we had to use our heads to solve the problems and work together to find more clues. They were hard but I was good at finding clues others couldn't" – Numeracy through Escape rooms programme*

## Priority 6 - Keeping safe

### We said we would:

- work together to improve the safety of all children and young people, through a co-ordinated approach;
- support children and young people to build respectful relationships with each other and tackle bullying wherever it takes place;
- promote safe and responsible online behaviour and provide children, young people, families and the workforce with the confidence, skills and tools to be digitally safe;
- promote and implement an early intervention, prevention and protection approach across all safeguarding themes; and
- continue the Whole Systems Approach and through early intervention and prevention, support children and young people to stay on a positive path as responsible citizens.

**We did – key delivery examples:** The Child Protection Committee identified four priority areas for 2022-23:

- Continued implementation of Safe and Together
- Child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation and trafficking
- Robust self-evaluation and quality assurance, and
- Learning reviews

Over the past year, the Committee delivered Child Exploitation workshops and supported Child Protection Training as well as the Newly Qualified Social Workers Forum. The Committee has also supported the development of Whole Family Approach guidance and a refresh of practitioner's guidance to parents with problematic drug and alcohol use.

Joint work of the East, North and South Adult Protection Committees has progressed in developing a Pan-Ayrshire approach to implementing the revised [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#), as well as a Pan-Ayrshire set of Child Protection Procedures. As part of the process, the East Ayrshire Multi-Agency Implementation Group has carried out a range of self-evaluation activity to establish readiness and inform areas of work to be progressed. The three Ayrshire Child Protection Committees have also developed Pan-Ayrshire Learning Review Guidance, adapted from the national guidance, and work has now concluded to align the guidance to our Adult Protection Committees, leading to a single Pan-Ayrshire Guidance for Learning Reviews for all committees.



The Intensive Support Team supported a number of children and young people to remain in their communities, by offering a mix of tailored individual support, with group and activity opportunities for development and fun. The team delivered a summer programme including gorge walking, cinema trips and gym passes for care experienced young people and young people. By offering these activities, a number of children and young people were diverted from being involved in negative behaviours and conflict with the law in their communities.

Two Social Workers became trained in Therapeutic Life Story Work (TLSW). This approach aims to not only help the young person understand their story, but also make sense and create meaning from their trauma, loss and experiences, as well as building resilience. TLSW provides increased opportunities for children and young people, and going forward the aim is for all practitioners to be trained in trauma informed approaches as well as working with play.

**TLSW Participant:**

*“What I like about it was that I know how to handle my feelings with breathing then letting it out”*

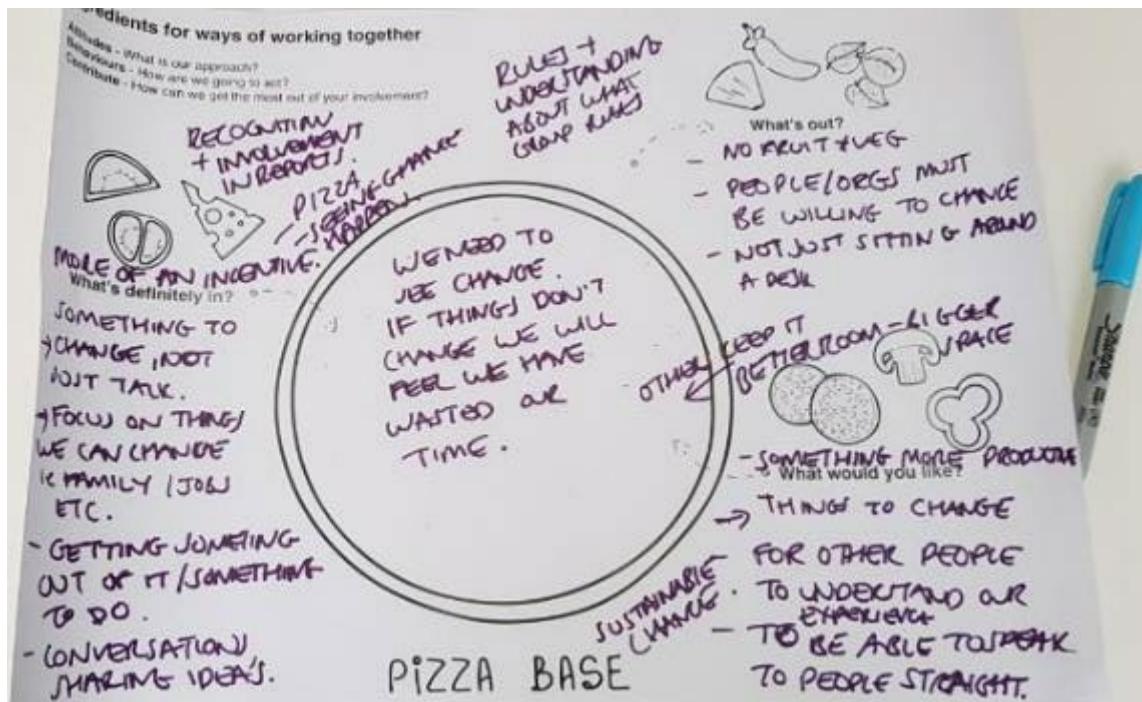
The Intensive Support Team partnered with Scottish Fire and Rescue to offer young people the opportunity to earn qualifications whilst becoming more informed about the fire service and participating in drills. This provides a range of learning, skills building and the opportunity to earn SQA, Saltire and John Muir Awards.

The Whole System Approach aims to divert children and young people away from formal Court processes and adult justice systems; recognising that these systems do not meet the needs of our children and young people. The Whole System Multi-Agency team work in partnership with the Police, Procurator Fiscal and local solicitors to provide additional information about children and young people to help with decision-making and consideration of alternatives to prosecution. In East Ayrshire, we have worked to replicate the national agenda of promoting Children’s Rights and ensure that children who are in conflict with the law are still treated as children.

Whole System Coordinators have worked to ensure that every child and young person under the age of 21 is offered support through Court. The service supported 67 children and young people following their appearance at Court and provided post-Court support. Some of these children and young people have been successfully diverted through remittal to the children’s hearing system.

The voice of children and young people has also been a key area of focus for the Whole System Approach. Since June 2022, 6 young adults aged 18-25 have been supported to participate in a national study through the Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII), exploring young adults’ experiences of the Justice system and co-designing more positive services in the local area. The group identified issues and stigmatisation in employment, making it difficult for them to gain experience and career

opportunities. As a result, we have invited our partners within local community employment services to listen to the feedback and help create solutions to the issues raised. This group continues to meet facilitated by Whole System Coordinators.



The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) and Adult and Child Protection teams received funding from the CORRA Foundation to create a new support service for families affected by alcohol and drug use. The funding (£500,000) will be delivered over the next five years to help establish a new Family Support Service which will provide support to vulnerable families who have been affected by parental substance abuse. The model will be based around kind and compassionate care, providing opportunities for individuals and families to realise their potential and for parents to be the best they can be. The new service aims to build family relationships and empower individuals to be active in their own families and communities.

The Trauma Informed Contact and Care (TICC) initiative is a unique Police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership which ensures that a child's school is notified prior to the start of the school day that there has been an incident of domestic abuse to which the child or young person has been exposed. A test of change began in September 2021 to roll out the TICC initiative, with all schools involved by April 2022. By June 2022, schools had received 45 TICC forms from the Police Hub which allowed them to provide support to the identified children, ensuring their safeguarding and wellbeing is supported. Education and Police colleagues have welcomed this initiative and found the process to be beneficial.

## THE LAST WORD

Marion?



## Appendix 1 – Improving Local Outcomes

Measures of Success	Current East Ayrshire	Current National Average	Baseline	Outcomes
<b>The % of children living in relative poverty (after housing costs).</b> (Source: DWP Stat xplora)	<b>Children 0-15</b> <b>23%</b> (2019/20)  <b>20%</b> (2020/21)  <b>26%</b> (2021/22)	<b>Children 0-15</b> <b>19%</b> (2019/20)  <b>16%</b> (2020/21)  <b>21%</b> (2021/22)	<b>Children 0-15</b> <b>22%</b> (2018/19)	Reduced by 2024 and reduce the gap with Scotland
<b>The % of children/young people who feel consulted about decisions and services affecting them.</b> (Source: East Ayrshire 5000 voices survey)	<b>43%</b> (2020/21)  <b>No update since 2020/21</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>43%</b> (2020/21)	Increased to 75% by 2024
<b>% babies born a healthy weight</b> (Source: ScotPHO)	<b>84.42%</b> (2017/18-19/20)  <b>84.0%</b> (2018/19 – 20/21)  <b>83.8%</b> (2019/20-21/22)	<b>84.07%</b> (2017/18-19/20)  <b>84.2%</b> (2018/19 – 20/21)  <b>84.1%</b> (2019/20-21/22)	<b>83.81%</b> (2016/17-18/19)	Maintained above 84% until 2024
<b>The % of children with no concerns at 4-5 years</b> (Source: PHS) <i>*Figures for 2019/20 and 2020/21 may differ from previous years as PHS updates final figures retrospectively.</i>	<b>71.5%</b> (2019/20)  <b>74.3%</b> (2020/21)  <b>75.1%</b> (2021/22)	<b>70.8%</b> (2019/20)  <b>72.5%</b> (2020/21)  <b>73.1%</b> (2021/22)	<b>62.2%</b> (2018/19)	Maintained above 72% until 2024

<b>P1 healthy weight</b> (Source: ScotPHO)	<b>72.70%</b> (2019/20)  63.88% <b>(2020/21)</b>	<b>76.25%</b> (2019/20)  69.76% (2020/21)	<b>75.81%</b> (2018/19)	Increased to above 75% by 2024
<b>The % of Primary 1 with no obvious dental decay experience</b> (Source: ScotPHO)	<b>60.1%</b> (2018/19)  68.9% (2019/20)  66.51% (2020/21)	<b>71.6%</b> (2018/19)  72.4% (2019/20)  73.11% (2020/21)	<b>63.5%</b> (2017/18)	Increased to above 62% by 2024
<b>The % of Primary 7 with no obvious dental decay experience</b> (Source: ScotPHO)	<b>54.1%</b> (2018/19)  62.2% (2019/20)  No updates since 2019/20	<b>72.9%</b> (2018/19)  75.0% (2019/20)	<b>62.97%</b> (2017/18)	Increased to above 62% by 2024
<b>The % of school leavers progressing into positive and sustained destinations (employment, training or education)</b> (Source: Annual, Scottish Government)	<b>91.5%</b> (2018/19)  94.8% (2019/20) 95.7% (2020/21) 96.9% (2021/22)	<b>92.9%</b> (2018/19)  93.3% (2019/20) 95.5% (2020/21) 95.7% (2021/22)	<b>93.6%</b> (2017/18)	Increased to above 92% and the gap between SIMD 1 and SIMD 5 is narrowed
<b>Unemployment rate for young people aged 16- 24</b> (Source: Annual/Nomis)	<b>15.5%</b> (Year to Sept 20)  Not available	<b>9.1%</b> (Year to Sept 20)	<b>8.8%</b> (Year to Sept 19)	Reduced to below 10% by 2024
<b>The percentage of requests for CAMHS assistance that are appropriate</b> (Source: CAMHS service, annual)	<b>70.4%</b> (March 2021)  88.9% (2021/22)	<b>76.5%</b> (March 2021)  76.5% (2021/22)	<b>60.1%</b> (March 2020)	Increased to above 75% by 2024

<b>Child Protection registrations:</b> proportion of children protection re-registrations within 18 months (Source: Local Government Benchmarking Framework)	<b>5.3%</b> (2019/20)	<b>6.9%</b> (2019/20)	<b>5.3%</b> (2019/20)	Reduced to below 3% by 2024
	<b>10.7%</b> (2020/21)	<b>6.9%</b> (2020/21)		
	<b>14.9%</b> (2021/22)	<b>8%</b> (2021/22)		



# East Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-2026



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## FOREWORD

Welcome to the East Ayrshire Children and Young People Services Plan for 2023 – 2026, which articulates the outcomes our Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership hope to realise for children, young people and families. The stated vision of our Plan is to make East Ayrshire a place where all children and young people can grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential.

In developing this Plan we have fully recognised that the past few years have been some of the most challenging experienced by families in a generation. The economic outlook remains uncertain, while cost of living increases are placing families and services under unprecedented pressure. With so much uncertainty about the future, this Plan is designed to remain dynamic and adaptable to address the challenges which our communities and our services face.

The Plan provides a framework for professionals, parents, carers and volunteers working with our children and young people, to shape and improve the services we offer. The plan is underpinned by an action plan which reflects the priorities we have agreed and outlines the activities we will undertake to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in East Ayrshire. Over the lifetime of this plan, our focus will be on:

- Respecting and Promoting Children and Young People’s Rights
- Achieving
- Improving Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Tackling Child Poverty
- Keeping our Children Safe and Addressing Neglect

Our aspirations continue to be to promote equality of opportunity and to ensure that every child is assisted and encouraged to reach their full potential and we will continue to collectively strive for better outcomes for every child in East Ayrshire.

We recognise that investment in our children and young people is one of the most valuable long-term investments that we can make. By investing our shared resources in the delivery and development of services that focus on addressing our key priorities, we can ensure that children and young people’s needs are met at the earliest opportunity and that they are effectively supported to achieve their full potential.

The partnership is fully committed to delivering the Children and Young People’s Services Plan and we look forward to continuing our collective efforts to improve the support we provide to children, young people and families and to flexibly respond to the needs and pressures for families over the next few years.

**Marion MacAulay (Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services/Chief Social Work Officer)**



## 1. Our Vision

The East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026 ('the Plan') sets the local long term strategic intent for improvement in outcomes for all our children and young people and provides details on the key activities which will be undertaken by all partners over the next three year period to deliver progress in the key priority areas that we have collectively identified.

The core motivation that has driven the development of this Plan has been to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible services for our children, young people and their families in order that they are able to flourish and experience the best possible outcomes.

The Plan aligns directly with the East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-30 and our long term aspirations for children, young people and families are designed to achieve our vision which is:

***"In East Ayrshire, our children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential."***

This vision and the outcomes we seek for our children and young people are rooted in the national GIRFEC wellbeing framework. This framework underpins all that we do in East Ayrshire to ensure our children and young people become confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens through being safe, nurtured, healthy, active, included, achieving, respected and responsible.

The outcomes relating to children and young people in the National Performance Framework are directly aligned with the priorities and outcomes shared by local partners in East Ayrshire to ensure our children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.



## 2. Our Commitments and Principles

We are committed to providing services that are holistic and developed with families and our partner agencies that tackle inequalities and focus on improved outcomes for our children. The East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026 highlights the commitment of partners to deliver outcomes for children and young people in East Ayrshire through active participation in joint planning and delivery structures. This work will be underpinned by the following principles:

### **Working in Partnership**

Partnership working is at the heart of everything we do and plays a vital role in ensuring that all of East Ayrshire's children and young people are safe, respected and are able to realise their full potential.

As part of our Community Planning arrangements, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership ('CYPSP') and Child Protection Committee ('CPC') have collective responsibility for strategic planning and improvement of services for children and young people.

All partners in the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership are committed to actively participating in well-established joint service planning and we have built on our previous successes and further demonstrated the added value from cooperative approaches to planning and delivering services and activity.

We are clear that robust partnership working is essential in order to deliver positive outcomes for our children and young people and their families. As we move forward we are working together to consider how best to use our collective resources to do this.

### **Participation and Engagement of Children, Young People and Families**

The collective goal of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is to continue to improve our approach to engaging with children and young people in the development of services and to increase children and young people's direct participation in decision-making which directly affects them, their families, and their future.

The findings from our programme of engagement with children and young people has allowed us to incorporate key learning points into strategic plans and development programmes. The findings have also provided us with a greater awareness of the issues children face and has influenced what we prioritise in practice and has allowed us to improve processes and systems where appropriate.





## Keeping the Promise

The Promise called for the redesign of our system of care and fundamental changes in how decisions are made and money is spent to ensure that our youngest citizens experience the childhood they deserve and that our children and young people grow up safe, loved and respected. At its core it focuses on relationships, rights and participation and East Ayrshire's CYPSP have been working hard to ensure we deliver on the commitment to #KeepThePromise.

The foundations of The Promise are woven into our Children's Services Plan 2023-2026 and locally, we have recruited a Promise Implementation Lead to support this work. We have also established the Promise Oversight Group to ensure that our strategic plans include actions to enable us to deliver our commitment to keep The Promise. In doing so, our Promise Participation Team has established 'ArtClub?' a curated group led by care-experienced young people with an interest in contemporary visual art and activism. The group enables young people from a range of care backgrounds to creatively engage with the issues and interests that affect them.

The findings of our recent self-evaluation of our progress in delivering the Promise Plan 21-24 outcomes has enabled the Promise Oversight Group to establish additional key priorities within our Promise Implementation Plan. These include;

- Helping children in our care to build and maintain relationships with the people who matter to them
- Ensuring care experienced children and young people receive all they need to thrive at school and achieve their full potential
- Ensuring that children moving on from care receive the love and support they need to live independently
- Equipping the workforce to effectively identify and support people who experience trauma, and
- Providing early and intensive help and support to families who need it



### 3. Children's Services Plan 2020-2023: Celebrating our Successes!

Over the course of our previous Children's Services Plan (2020-2023) we have been able to show significant improvements across a range of key measures associated with the health, wellbeing and educational outcomes of our children and young people.

These improvements are an indication of the effective collaboration of all partners in East Ayrshire who work with our children, young people and families.

- 19.1% of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks (2019/20 – 2021/22), up from 18.1% previously (2017/18 to 2019/20)
- The employment rate for young people aged 16-24 years was 53.7% during Apr 2022- Mar 2023, up from 51.7% during Apr 2020 – Mar 2021
- The % of children with no concerns across all domains of development at 4-5 years has increased from 71.5% (2019/20) to 75.1% (2021/22)
- In 2022-23 129 families with children under 5 accessed support from a Community Practitioner with 115 families supported to access community food larders and food banks, 91 families supported to access financial services such as EA Money, Financial Inclusion Team as well as Energy Support and 281 families were supported to access the Christmas Charity Fund. Throughout the year, 223 families were supported to access clothing and equipment from Hillhouse Care.
- In 2022-23 755 families with children under 5 attended one or more play and learning opportunities such as play at home, book bug and peep family engagement sessions,
- 248 children, young people and their families were supported by the Home Link Team, whom provided 4,998 coaching conversations and 1,620 home visits, garden visits and walk and talks in 2022/23.
- The % of Looked After and Accommodated Children with 3 or more moves reduced from 32.7% during 2021/22 to 28.8% during 2022/23
- The % of young people leaving school who progress into employment, training or education has increased to 96.9% (2021/22) from 95.7% (2020/21)
- 86.4% of looked after school leavers were in positive initial destinations during 2021/22, up from 83% during 2019/20.
- The % of P1 children with a healthy weight has increased from 63.9% in 2020/21 to 69.9% in 2021/22.
- The rate of teenage pregnancy fell to 24.5 in 2021, from 29.1 during 2019 per 1,000 population.
- The Early Years Health team continued to maintain the uptake of pre-5 childhood routine immunisations at 98% in 2022/23.



## Key Achievements in 2020-2023

### Implementation of the HEART Wellbeing Model

In 2022 East Ayrshire implemented a new wellbeing model for families, making help available whenever and wherever it's needed. This new children's services model, HEART (Help for Everyone At the Right Time), has been developed around our secondary school education groups to promote community assets and support stronger community connections. Through HEART, we will work with children, young people, families and communities across East Ayrshire to enable them to thrive. By working together, we will transform the way we work to improve early help and support, building upon the strengths and resilience of our families and communities. This will ensure families get help when they need it locally.

The development of HEART has involved the voices and collaboration of young people from the outset. Our young people told us what it feels like to be truly heard and that services had to do more to ensure that they linked in together as part of a coherent system so that there was "no wrong door."

In March 2023, the HEART model won the Bronze iESE Customer Focus Award, recognising the delivery of an outstanding service to the people who use the services and the transformational approach to improving how children and families are supported in East Ayrshire. The HEART model has also demonstrated the link between excellent customer service and performance through working on a smaller scale, to root more services in the communities they serve and be more connected to partners in other services.

### Programme of Best Value Service Reviews 2020-23

The impact of current challenges is predicted to bring an increase in demand for services for children and young people, which in turn is likely to exceed available resources if services are not fundamentally redesigned. In order to plan for the new anticipated demand pressures on services, the Health and Social Care Partnership approved a three year programme of Best Value Service Reviews across children and young people's services to facilitate ongoing continuous improvement in the delivery of these services and to identify more efficient and effective ways of delivering our services.

This Programme of reviews will result in the adoption of new service models for a range of children and family services including the Fostering and Adoption Service, Children's Houses, Kinship Services, Initial Response Team and the Family Support and Young People Service.



## **East Ayrshire Children and Young People’s Cabinet**

The East Ayrshire Children and Young People’s Cabinet has continued to campaign on issues of importance for children and young people in East Ayrshire and have been successful in ensuring young people’s voices are being heard. A key aim of the Cabinet has been to represent seldom heard young people, such as those with a neuro-divergent condition, those with additional support needs, those who identify as LGBT+, members of the BAME community and also young carers and they have supported all of these agendas over the last three years.

The Cabinet has also made effective and meaningful contributions across the range of community priority areas and have proactively engaged with a wide range of decision-makers and agencies such as the Council, NHS, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and other key youth work partners.

### **Respecting and promoting the rights of children and young people**

A collective goal of the CYPSP, the CPC and our partners over the 2020-23 period has been to improve children and young people’s participation in decision-making which directly affects them, their families, and their future. In doing so we have recognised our children and young people as experts and amongst our strongest assets and we have placed an emphasis on listening to them to ensure they experience better outcomes.

All our schools and some of our Early Childhood Centres (ECC) are now registered for the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA), which ensures they are adhering to UNCRC and promoting children’s rights. Each school and ECC has a dedicated RRSA lead and we currently have 26 schools achieving Bronze, 13 achieving Silver and 6 achieving Gold. Our plan is for all schools to achieve and maintain Gold over the next 3 years.

The East Ayrshire Young Peoples Equalities Forum has allowed our young people with a specific interest in the equalities agenda to come together to learn from each other and to discuss and increase their knowledge around equalities, diversity and equity. This forum has proved to be a positive platform for young people to consult with others and to facilitate community engagement and cohesion to raise awareness of what constitutes fairness and to encourage young people to be more aware of issues such as poverty

### **Capturing the voice of our children and young people**

As part of our commitment to embedding the voice of children in local decision making processes East Ayrshire H&SCP has introduced a number of new approaches to help capture the voice of children and young people over the last number of years.



In 2021, we recruited three Promise Participation Leaders to ensure that the voices of young people from our care experienced community were being heard and that they were being provided with opportunities to influence how services were designed and delivered.

In 2022, the CELCIS Bright Spots survey programme was launched in Scotland to identify what was important to care experienced children and young people in Scotland. East Ayrshire was one of three pilot areas who took part in the programme with the aim of better understanding how our young people felt about their lives and for Local Authorities to action on what young people were feeding back. The East Ayrshire survey was co-developed with care experienced young people and the Bright Spots programme further enabled us to put children and young people's voices at the heart of everything we do

In 2023 we hosted the "Hope-Hack" (Hackathon), a full-day, large-scale event for young people held at Ayrshire College in Kilmarnock. Designed by the Hope Collective with the support of East Ayrshire Council and What Matters to You, this was part of a UK-wide series of events to bring together young people from the most vulnerable communities with cross-sector leaders and decision-makers to explore and develop solutions to current challenges faced by young people in areas including education, employability & skills, community safety and mental wellness. The event was attended by over 100 young people aged 14-24 from across East Ayrshire, recruited through social media and other channels and resulted in a diverse range of young people attending. The feedback from this event is being used to develop next steps, with young people themselves deciding priorities and how they wish to share their insights and ideas.

We have also introduced the Mind of My Own app within Children's Services to gather the views of children and young people and to allow them to share and express feelings about their wellbeing and on a wide range of issues that are important to them. Mind of My Own supports our HEART model and empowers young people to have a voice, whilst providing an attractive way for children and young people to start the conversation. It also helps workers capture and evidence their views, ensuring their voices are at the centre of assessment, meeting quality standards regarding the voice of the child.

In addition, the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Cabinet and our Care Experienced Cabinet have continued to campaign on issues of importance for children and young people in East Ayrshire and have been successful in ensuring young people's voices are being heard and listened to.

In our efforts to support all children and young people to access mental health and wellbeing support, regardless of their communication level and need, a wide range of multi-agency practitioners are currently being trained to deliver Talking Mats programmes to our children and young people with additional support needs. This will support practitioners to undertake conversations with our children with social and



emotional barriers and increase their capacity of to express their thoughts and feelings and enable them to think about and communicate effectively regarding the things that matter to them.

### **Tackling poverty**

Tackling poverty and inequality is one of the six priorities identified in the [East Ayrshire Council Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#). The Plan outlines the commitment to work with communities and partners over this five year period to tackle the causes and effects of poverty and inequality, as well as to understand the impact that recent years have had on communities and services.

Within East Ayrshire we have continued to have meaningful engagement with children and young people through our schools, services and networks, and particularly through the Children and Young People’s Cabinet. This dialogue with our children and young people is of paramount importance in helping to better understand and develop approaches to tackling child poverty. As we have moved forward together it has been very important that all the agencies, services and groups involved in tackling child poverty sustained and further developed these relationships to allow us all to be more effective in addressing child poverty and inequality.

The school-based pathfinder project was introduced to all secondary schools in East Ayrshire in 2022-23 for one year, serving the local primary school and early year centre communities as well. In this academic year the project generated £121,011.77 for families with children. Additionally, the Early Years Financial Inclusion (FIT) Team project supported families with children from pre-birth to pre-school by ensuring their income was fully maximised and this has supported 260 families to date, achieving £479,113.19 of additional income.

### **Achieving**

Over the three year period 2020-2023, there has been an ongoing commitment to create communication friendly environments across Early Childhood Centres (ECCs) and Primary School’s to support children’s language and communication skills. In this period all ECCs in East Ayrshire established a dedicated Communication Champion whose role is to ensure that those children who require additional support are identified and can access help at the earliest opportunity and in the least intrusive way possible. The Communication Champions work in partnership with speech and language therapists to create the conditions for children and young people’s language and communications skills to flourish.

We have also established an East Ayrshire Communication Friendly Environments Accreditation framework and to date 5 of our ECCs have successfully achieved accreditation and a further 10 are working towards accreditation with 6 Primary schools also receiving accreditation and a further 20 schools are currently on their journey towards accreditation.



The Buddy Language & Communication Programme has become hugely successful in East Ayrshire and aims to support the transition process between early learning establishments and primary school for children and we now have 23 education practitioners from across East Ayrshire who can deliver this programme in their establishments.

Education has a significant role in preparing children and young people to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors throughout their school years and beyond. Over the last 3 years, attainment in literacy and numeracy of school leavers at each SCQF level in East Ayrshire has across most measures, been better than our Virtual Comparator's performance. It is also encouraging to note that East Ayrshire's performance against the national figures is also positive in each SCQF level measure. The importance of these core skills is consistently emphasised by employers across all sectors and remains a key differentiator for employee recruitment. Attaining in line with national performance supports East Ayrshire school leavers in maximising opportunities for post-school progression and recent data highlighted an initial positive destination figure of 96.85% which is the highest initial destinations figure achieved in East Ayrshire.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge funded Speech and Language Therapists (SAC SLTs) have developed a suite of training packages for school staff. This suite of training continues to be adapted and updated following learning from Improvement Science data. The impact of this training has been reported as positive, with practitioners reporting that they feel more confident and more able when supporting children with Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) needs and developing SLC skills in all children. The link between language skills and literacy is recognised. Effective listening and talking skills are essential in enabling children to learn and access the curriculum.

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

Commencing in June 2021 an innovative approach was taken to help support the mental health and wellbeing of East Ayrshire's children and young people through creation of an Occupational Therapy post focused on early intervention, support and advice. This service was developed in collaboration with partners across; health, social care, education, third sector and parent groups. Supports have focused on a number of areas including; sensory processing differences, mood management, anxiety management, independence skills, activities of daily living, play and self-regulation.

Initial successes of this new service include; development of an Occupational Therapy weekly 'Advice line', universal whole class sessions across 8 primary schools, multiagency parental drops within ECCs, P7 transition work, support within 3 the children's houses and completion of environmental assessments across ECCs, primary schools and academies, looking at the environmental impact upon children



and young people's functional skills, mental health and wellbeing. Training has also been provided for staff on sensory processing and regulation across all special schools, foster carer groups and several primary schools.

### **Whole Family Wellbeing Fund**

The Scottish Government provided funding to Children's Services Planning Partnerships to build local capacity for transformational whole system change and to enable them to scale up and drive the delivery of holistic whole family support services. We have used our allocation from the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to support the system changes we designed i.e. HEART family support approach, to provide our children, young people and families with access to the support they need, where and when they need it before they reach crisis point.

East Ayrshire Children's Services were also selected to be one of three test sites for Element 2 of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund and we have been working alongside Scottish Government colleagues to agree key principles of our vision for whole family support across East Ayrshire and to design and test new family support models that will deliver improved outcomes for our families. This funding has allowed our teams to engage with families in a completely different way with a focus on self-directed support and by addressing the need and priorities that families feel matter most to them at that time and which will make the biggest difference to improving outcomes for the family as a whole.





## 4. Understanding Our Challenges: The Context for Our Children's Services Plan 2023-2026

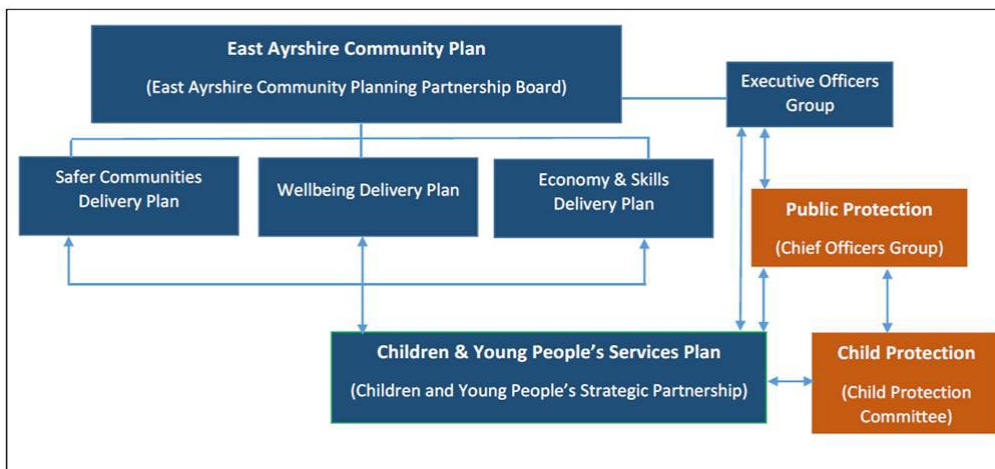
A wide range of discussions and activities were completed by partners to inform the development of this Service Plan 2023-2026 and to decide our priorities and the focus of our suite of high level actions. These discussions and activities have shaped our thinking about how we can best redesign and deliver services and supports for children, young people and families in East Ayrshire and helped us to identify the key areas we as partners need to prioritise in order to achieve our intended outcomes.

These activities are highlighted in the following sections and included an analysis of needs, a review of existing strategic priorities, a review of national and local policy/guidance, robust stakeholder consultation and engagement and a series of workshops at key points in the development of the plan.

### GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Services for children are provided through a range of organisations across East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and the private and Third sectors. In accordance with Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), the Ayrshire Child's Pathway puts the child and family at the heart of service provision, accessing universal, additional and enhanced levels of support for each individual child according to their level of need.

An integrated approach to service planning by partners is a requirement under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and in East Ayrshire this is the responsibility of the Community Planning Partnership, with responsibility for strategic planning and continuous improvement activity delegated to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership ('CYPSP) and managed on a shared basis with the Child Protection Committee ('CPC'). The Governance of the CYPSP and the relationship it has with other relevant groups is shown in the graphic below:



## STATISTICAL PROFILE OF EAST AYRSHIRE'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In planning for the development and delivery of services for children, young people and their families, the demographic profile of East Ayrshire's children and families has been an important consideration.

According to the latest figures available based on 2022 mid-year population estimates the actual number of children and young people in East Ayrshire aged 0-15 years was 20,792, which translated to 17% of the East Ayrshire population. However, based on current demographic trends this is predicted to fall by 5.6% to 11.4% of the total population by 2028.

The influence of poverty on children's health and wellbeing in East Ayrshire is very clear and we know that children living in poverty are more likely to have poorer health outcomes including low birth weight, poor physical health and mental health problems. The health impacts of growing up in poverty are significant and follow children across their life and this is why we believe it is essential that health inequalities are addressed to improve child health outcomes and allow them to experience improved life chances and better outcomes.

- 19.9% of children aged 0-15yrs living in relative poverty
- 25.5% of children live in low-income families
- 19.5% of children are registered for free school meals
- 84% of children had a healthy weight at birth
- 19% of babies exclusively breast fed at 6-8 weeks
- 25% of children had one or more developmental concerns at 27-30 month review
- 54% of P7 children had no obvious dental decay
- 31.7% of children aged 0-15yrs are predicted to have a speech, language and communication need (6,591 children and young people)

This demographic profile of East Ayrshire, allied with the many life-stage challenges faced by children and young people and the impact to health and wellbeing brought about as a result of the COVID pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, indicates that there will be a continuing need and a likely increase in the demand for services for children and families with additional needs. In preparation we are focussed on ensuring that our services are appropriately targeted, delivered and planned in partnership and that they deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.



## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The [East Ayrshire Community Plan \(2015-2030\)](#) is the sovereign planning document for the East Ayrshire area, providing the overarching strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by all partners. The Community Plan sets out how outcomes for people and service delivery in East Ayrshire will be improved in working towards achieving the following vision:

*“East Ayrshire is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.”*

The Community Plan is underpinned by three thematic Delivery Plans which set out the actions that will be taken forward by partners. These Delivery Plans are for: [Economy and Skills](#), [Safer Communities](#) and [Wellbeing](#) and a number of the actions incorporated within these Delivery Plans positively impact on children and young people and their rights, with a pertinent strategic priority within the Wellbeing Delivery Plan being: **Children and young people, including those in early years and their carers, are supported to be active, healthy and to reach their potential at all life stages.**

The East Ayrshire Children’s Services Plan 2023-2026 seeks to deliver the ambitions outlined in a complex framework of Primary and Secondary legislation and statutory guidance. The key elements of this framework include;

- the [Getting It Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) approach. This is the primary policy framework for children’s services in Scotland since its inception in 2006 and introduced important elements of the current system such as the named person, the Team with the Family and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.
- [The Promise](#) was made following the Independent Care Review which made clear the current “care system” was not working. The aim of the promise is that every young person will grow up loved, safe and respected.
- The [National Guidance for Child Protection](#) published in 2021 describes the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children and will support the care and protection of children.
- The national [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2026](#) outlines the Scottish Government’s long-term vision and approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of everyone in Scotland.
- the national [Best Start, Bright futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026](#) which sets out sets out how we will work together to deliver on Scotland’s national mission to tackle child poverty.



- The incorporation of the key concepts of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)
- The [Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2021-2030](#) which is working towards ambitious long term outcomes for families, as part of the broader wellbeing agenda and
- East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership 'Whole Family Approach To Getting Our Priorities Right Practitioner Guidance' 2023. The guidance is for all practitioners working with children, young people and families affected by problematic alcohol and/or drug use.
- The [Scottish Attainment Challenge: framework for recovery and accelerating progress](#) and [Strategic Equity Fund National Operational Guidance 2023](#) to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

This Plan is part of a wider strategic planning framework that is focussed on achieving the partnership's vision for children and young people and their families in East Ayrshire. We believe that it is crucial that a whole system approach is taken in the planning and development of our services and this is the reason why this Plan aligns with existing plans and strategies across East Ayrshire. The existing strategies and plans include;

- East Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2021-24
- East Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan
- East Ayrshire Community Learning & Development Framework 2021-24
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran Child Poverty Action Plan.2022-23
- Cost of Living Response
- Education Service Improvement Plan
- Child Protection Improvement Plan
- Early Learning and Childcare Plan 2022-24
- Out of school Additional Support Needs (ASN) services in East Ayrshire

## THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE (SAC)

Each local authority receives additional funding to address the poverty related attainment gap. This model undertook significant change at the start of financial year 2022/3. Designated SAC authorities (which EAC was formerly) were ceased across Scotland and all thirty two local authorities were apportioned Strategic Equity Funding (SEF). The Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF; overarching SAC initiative) global sum remained static. The proportion of funding for each LA was calculated by using 'Children in Low Income Families' (CILIF) data. The resulting levels of funding mean EAC entered a period of tapered reduction in funding across period 2022-2026. Each



financial year sees a reduction for EAC of circa £635,000 as we move from £3.762m in 2021/22 to £1.21m in 2025/6.

We continue to work with establishments and communities to improve attainment and outcomes for our most deprived learners and to close the poverty related attainment gap. The authority SEF plan was developed to mitigate against barriers to learning caused by poverty and throughout 2022/3 we reviewed progress through a range of quality assurance measures including school review, attainment data analysis and our Children and Young People's Impact Forum governance board, which includes members of a range of EAC services including VC.

In 2022/23, a wide variety of interventions were in the SEF plan across our three levers for change of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (planning for effective learning, teaching and assessment), Working together with Families and Communities and Leadership for all.

Key measures of attainment at P1, P4 and P7 continue to be used to quantify closing of the attainment gap as set out within the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Recovery and Accelerating Progress paper (May 2022). EAC subsequently set an ambitious set of stretch aims within each of these areas.

## **Excellence in Learning and Teaching**

**Literacy:** The SAC literacy team has provided professional learning and support for staff in all East Ayrshire schools to engage with and embed the EA Literacy Programme which contains a structured progression across all stages. The focus is on consistency in high-quality planning, learning, teaching and assessment to raise attainment and close the attainment gap in all aspects of literacy. This session, bespoke professional learning has been delivered to schools where required or requested. A focus on assessing pupil progress towards national expectations has raised teacher confidence in assigning achievement levels. Our SEF Speech and Language team is supporting twenty two schools on the journey towards Communication Friendly Environment accreditation. Six schools have already achieved full accreditation.

**Numeracy:** The aims and desired outcomes within the East Ayrshire numeracy strategy have remained unchanged this session with a focus on developing the numeracy skills of all learners for life, learning and work and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Our qualitative and quantitative data highlights that we are making significant progress against the desired outcomes. This evidence is coming through strongly from training evaluations, feedback from teaching blocks and feedback from Headteachers and senior managers. Our combination of high quality CLPL and follow up support



provided by the expertise and skill of the SAC Numeracy Team, Aims and ELCCPs within individual schools has helped to accelerate progress towards these desired outcomes.

Bespoke professional learning inputs have been provided for establishments, in relation to establishment improvement priorities, focussing on a range of themes including embedding assessment, developing a problem solving classroom, teaching fractions and planning for progression in key concepts.

### **Working together with Families and Communities**

The SEF Home Link Team provided tailored early intervention support where it was needed most to around 250 Children, young people and their families on a weekly basis with over 100 children and young people achieving positive outcomes. The team worked collaboratively across education and community groups to run several innovative, impactful and sustainable programmes to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

Specifically designed for our children and young people we provided Enhanced Transition programmes, Outdoor Learning opportunities, Health and Wellbeing workshops and Seasons for Growth sessions.

Working alongside parents and carers we successfully ran Parental Empowerment programmes, Parents in Partnership sessions, iLunch sessions during school holidays, with our Family Involvement Programme and 'Beawesome' Cooking workshops.

These programmes promote high aspirations and have a sustained emphasis on children and young people's readiness to learn through focusing on engagement, confidence and wellbeing; whilst recognising broader achievement for all our children, young people and their families.

### **Leadership for all**

Opportunities for collaborative working have continued to be arranged through the leadership Workstream, across all levels of education. The focus of all events was around Quality Indicator 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment (HGIOS 4). These engagements have developed leadership capacity and staff confidence to support the delivery of high quality learning and teaching experiences for children and young people.

Across all sectors, advice, support and constructive challenge has also been provided on a wide range of education matters. This has supported ongoing school improvement and the development of collaborative leadership models in schools to



improve outcomes for children and young people by raising attainment and achievement (QI 3.2 HGIOS 4) and closing the poverty related attainment gap, a key priority of the National Improvement Framework.

## WHAT OUR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES TOLD US

In the development of this Plan we undertook a wide range of engagement with children, young people, parents and carers. Children and young people's responses made clear that they valued family above all else in their lives, with friends, school and activities following in that order.

Parents and carers similarly spoke above all about the importance of family. Their responses particularly highlighted the need for social bonds and community, and those who had used additional services spoke of the need for services to work well together and for help to be available early rather than at crisis point.

Our commissioned services are currently undergoing a full review to ensure they align with the changing needs of our communities, as well as the findings of The Promise, The Feeley Report and EAHSCP Strategic Plan. Significant consultation has taken place with people who use our services, and they have been clear that they want accessible provisions at a time and place they are needed.

There have been a number of developments emerging from this engagement to date, in particular, our parents and carers of children with disabilities and Additional Support Needs (ASN) have been fully involved in co-producing facilities which will benefit a significant number of families. This has resulted in securing funding to develop a sensory play room in Kilmarnock, with the design of the room being completed by the families.

The East Ayrshire Bright Spots survey was co-developed with care experienced young people and the Bright Spots programme provided many positive results but those that were less positive provided us with greater insight and detail into aspects of our children and young people's care that were not as encouraging and which required further focus. These included;

- 25% of young people felt stigmatised about being in care
- 38% of 8-11 year olds and 21% of 11-18 year olds were afraid to go to school because of bullying
- 45% of children and young people did not talk regularly with the adults they lived with about things that mattered to them.
- 16% of all children and young people felt they were '*hardly ever*' or '*never*' given the opportunity to be trusted to help out



We also undertook a series of engagement sessions with staff who work across the different services provided for children and families in East Ayrshire in what we called our 'Spotlight Sessions'. The aim of these sessions was to capture the views and observations of front line staff in respect of what they considered the key areas that required additional focus over the period covered by this Service Plan. A total of three Spotlight Sessions were held and the key findings from these sessions have influenced the development of the Service Plan 2023-2026. These findings included:

- Enhance resilience and tackle low confidence of children and young adults.
- Sustainable mental health support for children and young people.
- Focus on early help and intervention to improve outcomes for children to prevent escalating need
- Promote and embed HEART
- Support for families impacted by cost of living crisis
- Support to reduce health inequalities

## **COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

The cost of living has risen sharply since 2022 with the combined effect of rising inflation, food costs, interest rates and fuel prices. The impact of the pandemic and economic uncertainty, together with the increasing cost of goods and services has placed more of our residents in financial hardship and it is evident from increasing benefit claims, significant increases in community larder usage and the increase in the number of families seeking debt advice and assistance that the situation has reached crisis point for many,

We are also acutely aware these impacts are not being experienced evenly, with our most vulnerable residents and low-income households being hit hardest. We recognise that support is required in the short-term to meet financial demands of the crisis and partner organisations have developed and introduced a range of supports to assist families in financial hardship. Since 2022 the Council has approved additional funding as part of the budget process for financial inclusion, income maximisation and energy and debt advice, and has worked closely with third-sector delivery partners to support people in financial hardship

However, it is also clear to partners that longer-term changes are necessary to ensure families do not continue to fall into, or deeper into, poverty and over the three-year span of this Plan partners will support this aim by supporting the following outcomes:

- Flexible early learning and childcare and school age childcare
- Young people progress into positive destinations.
- Appropriate mental health supports for adults and children.
- Joined-up and person-centred services.





## WHAT WE SPEND ON SERVICES FOR OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In 2022/2023 the total spend for Children's Services in East Ayrshire across Education, Social Work, NHS and our commissioned services with the third and independent sector amounted to in excess of £224 million.

<b>East Ayrshire Council</b>	<b>£m</b>
Education Services	165,242,000
Skills Development & Employability Service	867,000
Vibrant Communities	1,706,600
<b>East Ayrshire H&amp;SCP</b>	
Children and Families Services	19,156,000
Specialist Children's Services	6,469,000
<b>Ayrshire and Arran NHS</b>	
Children Health Visiting	3,938,000
Children's and Young People's AHP Services	806,531
<b>Community Planning Partners and Partner Agencies</b>	
Ayrshire College	20,700,000
East Ayrshire Leisure Trust	5,128,100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£224,013,231</b>



## 5. Priorities for 2023-2026

This Plan focusses our work around the children, young people and families that face difficult life challenges and a host of different barriers to reaching their full potential.

In order to ensure that the work we undertake and the supports we provide help every child to experience the best start in life and build the foundation for living well in the future, the following priorities have been identified as key areas of work for the partnership in 2023-2026:

- 1. Our children and young people feel respected, listened to and influence change**
- 2. We are working collaboratively, reducing the impact of social and economic poverty on our children and young people.**
- 3. Our children and young people feel safe**
- 4. Our children and young people have the best start in life and achieve their potential**
- 5. Our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is improving**

Our priorities align with the National Performance Framework and contribute directly to the Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI) and correlate with the UNCRC priorities of safeguarding children and young people.

The East Ayrshire Children and Young People Service Plan 2023-2026 is underpinned by an Action Plan for the three year period. The Action Plan, shown below, reflects the priorities we have identified and outlines the high level actions we will undertake to ensure we achieve the best outcomes for children and young people across East Ayrshire. The Plan also includes an overview of the measures we will use to assess our progress in achieving our stated outcomes for each of the priority themes.

A more detailed plan, outlining all of the cross-sectoral operational actions and activities that partners will undertake over the life of the Plan sits underneath the priorities and will be used to ensure that all associated activity undertaken by partners is continually monitored as part of the requirement to review, assess and adapt our approach.



## Monitoring and Reporting Progress of the Plan 2023-2026

A robust suite of indicators using the SMART framework, aligned to the actions agreed in our action plan, have been established to ensure we can effectively track the progress of our intended priorities and outcomes.

To ensure that we are making a positive difference in the lives of children and young people in East Ayrshire these indicators will be tracked via our performance information system and Performance Reports on the progress of our key strategic actions and indicators. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and Child Protection Committee will oversee delivery, via quarterly consideration, of progress against these key actions and indicators and annual reporting to the Community Planning Partnership Board.



## 6. The Last Word

Statement from Young Person



## Appendix 1 - Action Plan 2023-2026

1. Our children and young people feel respected, listened to and influence change	
Key actions and areas of focus	Measures we will use to evidence our progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a broad range of programmes and structures that will encourage participation and co-production by our children and young people in our work</li> <li>• Develop a strategic framework to involve our children and young people across our partnership in line with the ambitions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</li> <li>• Develop a training programme to support our workforce in enhancing and developing their ability and skills to involve and empower our children and young people.</li> <li>• Put in place a clear system to ensure feedback on our approaches to involvement is heard, considered and acted upon.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ % of schools participating in Participatory Budgeting Programmes.</li> <li>▪ % of pupils reporting that they feel included in the decision making of their school.</li> <li>▪ % of pupils reporting that they feel included in the curricular design of the learning &amp; teaching approaches is imbedded in their schools.</li> <li>▪ % of young people who feel adults take their views into account in decisions that affect them.</li> <li>▪ % of staff who have completed UNCRC training.</li> <li>▪ % of interviews conducted which involved children and young people in the recruitment process.</li> <li>▪ No. of youth led change projects in schools and communities</li> <li>▪ % of staff reporting increased confidence in the use of engagement techniques with children and young people.</li> </ul>
The outcomes we aspire to achieve	
<p>Children and young people’s voice is strategically placed at the heart of everything we do.</p> <p>Our children and young people are able to access to independent advocacy when they want it.</p> <p>Our children and young people feel respected, valued and listened to and influence change as partners within our work.</p>	



Our staff are confident and supported to listen and involve our children and young people in the development and production of services.

## 2. We are working collaboratively, reducing the impact of social and economic poverty

Key actions and areas of focus	Measures we will use to evidence our progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively to support our children and young people and families maximise their income and mitigate against the cost of living crisis.</li> <li>• Develop and implement new and innovative work based learning programmes that improve employability prospects for our young people.</li> <li>• Ensure that collaborative, creative and innovative programmes are developed that encourages equitable access to participation in play, sport and active recreation opportunities.</li> <li>• Ensure all children, no matter what their financial challenges have access to opportunities to thrive, develop and gain life experiences in their communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The No. of schools with active Cost of the School Day / Poverty Proofing action plans</li> <li>▪ % reduction in the authorities poverty related attainment gap.</li> <li>▪ % of children in combined material deprivation and low income after housing costs.</li> <li>▪ % of school age children registered for free school meals.</li> <li>▪ % families receiving school clothing and footwear grants</li> <li>▪ % households with children living in fuel poverty</li> <li>▪ Level of income generated as a result of Financial Inclusion Team support within schools and pre-5 services.</li> <li>▪ % of children under 16 living in households where all individuals 16+ are in employment</li> </ul>

### The outcomes we aspire to achieve

Working collaboratively we are reducing the impact of social and economic poverty on our Children and Young People.

Our children, young people and families have access to good affordable nutritional food

Our children and young people have access to affordable transport to enable access to supports and services.

Our children and young people have strong employability prospects.



### 3. Our children and young people feel safe

Key actions and areas of focus	Measures we will use to evidence our progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with our families to improve children’s safety at home, school and community.</li> <li>• Provide our workforce with the tools and training to identify, support and challenge neglect and harm against children and young people.</li> <li>• Develop innovative support models which will strengthen the safety of children, young people and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No. of referrals to the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration on ‘Lack of parental care’ ground.</li> <li>▪ % of children re-registered on child protection register within 12 months</li> <li>▪ No. of children appropriately placed on Child Protection register where ‘Domestic Abuse’ is noted as an area of concern.</li> <li>▪ No. of Trauma Informed Contact and Care concerns received from the Police.</li> <li>▪ % of children reporting increased safety awareness through our annual Danger Detectives Partnership Program.</li> <li>▪ % of staff who undertake child exploitation and trauma informed training</li> </ul>

#### The outcomes we aspire to achieve

Our children and young people experience effective support from services that reduces the impact of neglect.

Our children and young people tell us that they feel safer in their community.

Our planning for children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse has significantly improved.

Our staff and partners are confident in practicing to the standards of the national Child Protection Guidance.

Services are more alert and reactive to the complex needs of children and young people who experience exploitation

Our children and young people are less likely to come into contact with the justice system as a result of being suspected or accused of committing an offence.



## 4. Our children and young people have the best start in life and achieve their potential

Key actions and areas of focus	Measures we will use to evidence our progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build upon our community assets and the skills and talents of our children, young people and families to provide the best start in life</li> <li>• Implement a series of innovative programmes which will support our children and young people to develop and achieve their potential.</li> <li>• We will support all of our children and young people, particularly those most at risk to make best use of our support pathways for learning, work and wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ % of babies born a healthy weight</li> <li>▪ % of children aged 27-30 months who are above a healthy weight</li> <li>▪ % of P1, P4 and P7 children achieving expected CfE levels in numeracy and literacy</li> <li>▪ % of School Leavers Attaining 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 4 on leaving school</li> <li>▪ % of School Leavers Attaining 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5 on leaving school.</li> <li>▪ % of School Leavers Attaining 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 on leaving school</li> <li>▪ % of annual participation (in education, training or employment) – 16-19 years</li> <li>▪ % of school leavers in positive destinations</li> <li>▪ % of Looked After Children in Positive Destinations</li> <li>▪ % of children and young people residing within our Children’s Houses who have participated in community activities supported by Vibrant Communities</li> </ul>

### The outcomes we aspire to achieve

Our children and young people achieve their potential, thrive and reach sustainable positive destinations.

Our children and young people’s communication skills are developed and supported through a whole systems approach.

Our children and young people are motivated and empowered to become involved in their communities as active citizens.





## 5. Our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is improving

Key actions and areas of focus	Measures we will use to evidence our progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people of all abilities across East Ayrshire using engaging and creative approaches.</li> <li>• Ensure all staff working with children and families are provided with access to appropriate training opportunities in mental health interventions.</li> <li>• Support children, young people and their families to develop essential skills, habits and attitudes for building resilience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ % of pupils achieving the age and stage appropriate CfE HWB level</li> <li>▪ % of pupils undertaking biannual Wellbeing profiles.</li> <li>▪ % of CAMHS referrals that are appropriate</li> <li>▪ No. of children and young people accessing mental health and wellbeing supports through schools and school counselling</li> <li>▪ % of S2-S6 children and young people with slightly raised, high or very high 'Strength and Difficulties' score</li> <li>▪ % of young people actively using Kooth online mental health supports.</li> <li>▪ % of staff trained in mental health interventions</li> <li>▪ % of staff trained in trauma informed practice</li> </ul>

### The outcomes we aspire to achieve

Our children and young people feel supported in terms of their Mental Health.

Our children and young people are more confident in accessing support to improve their Mental Health.

Parents feel more confident in supporting their child's mental health.

Our staff and partners are skilled and confident in supporting children and young people to access Mental Health supports appropriate to their needs.



## Appendix 2 - Our Strategic Landscape for Children's Services

National Performance Framework	Children and young people	Communities	Culture	Economy	Education	Environment	Fair Work and Business	Health	Human Rights	International	Poverty
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Community Planning Priorities	Economy and Skills			Safer Communities			Wellbeing			
	Including cross-cutting themes of: tackling inequality; early intervention and prevention; lifelong learning, and ensuring that the strengths and opportunities within communities are maximised									

Children & Young Persons Services Plan	Our Children and Young People feel respected, listened to and influence change	We are working collaboratively, reducing the impact of social and economic poverty on our Children and Young People	Our Children and Young People feel safe	Our Children and young people have the best start in life and achieve their potential	Our Children and Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing is improving
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Other Children's Services' Plans	East Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2021-24	East Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan	East Ayrshire CLD Framework 2021-24	NHS Ayrshire & Arran Child Poverty Action Plan.2022-23	Cost of Living Response	Education Service Improvement Plan
	GIRFEC ACTION PLAN	HEALTHY WEIGHT STRATEGY (EAST AYRSHIRE)	PROMISE OVERSIGHT GROUP ACTION PLAN	Child Protection Improvement Plan	Early Learning and Childcare Plan 2022-24	Out of school Additional Support Needs (ASN) services in East Ayrshire



## Appendix 3 - Key Strategic Actions and Activities 2023-2026

Priority 1: Our Children and Young People feel respected, listened to and influence change			
No.	Action Title	Action Owner	Timeframe
CYP 1-01	Develop and introduce an HR model to encourage the participation of young people in the recruitment of staff for roles that involve working with children and young people.	People and Culture Manager /Strategic Lead: Communities	2024
CYP 1-02	Co-produce a Children and Young Person’s Consultation and Engagement Strategy in partnership with our children and young people.	Strategic Lead: Communities	2024
CYP 1-03	Deliver leadership training for children and young people and signpost them to opportunities within the service to get involved in leading change.	Team Leader: YPSD, Vibrant Communities / Education Manager: Children’s Services	2023/2024
CYP 1-04	Provide funding for youth led change projects and initiatives within schools and communities linked to leadership academies for young people.	Education Manager: Children’s Services	2024/2025
CYP 1-05	Develop and deliver a wide range of participation forums to provide opportunities for young people to use their voice to drive change.	Team Leader: YPSD, Vibrant Communities	2023/2024
CYP 1-06	Develop a practitioners network of Participation Officers to enable those working with young people to share experiences and knowledge and maximize partnership working.	Team Leader: YPSD, Vibrant Communities	2023/2024



CYP 1-07	Support staff to access to CPD opportunities that will equip them in facilitating feedback, involvement and engagement of children and young people in decision-making.	Team Leader: YPSD, Vibrant Communities	2023/2024
CYP 1-08	Integrate Children’s Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA) within the existing EQIA process.	Corporate Officer Equality and Diversity: Corporate Support	2024
CYP 1-09	We will ensure that schools meaningfully engage with children and young people in decision making in relation to school expenditure (e.g. PEF Participatory Budgeting) and priority setting (e.g. SiP consultation)	Deputy Head of Education	2026
CYP 1-10	We will ensure that children and young people will have their say on the curricular design and learning and teaching approaches embedded in their school	Deputy Head of Education	2026

**Priority 2: We are working collaboratively, reducing the impact of social and economic poverty on our children and young people**

No.	Action Title	Action Owner	Timeframe
CYP 2-01	Reduce the impact of poverty by supporting families to access community based supports.	Service Manager: Vibrant Communities	2023 - 2026
CYP 2-02	Implement the East Ayrshire’s Child Poverty Action Plan.	Financial Inclusion Manager	2024
CYP 2-03	Embed the Financial Inclusion Team within Early Years children’s health teams.	Financial Inclusion Manager	2023 - 2025



CYP 2-04	Replicate the SL33 model to provide equity of provision across East Ayrshire.	Deputy Head of Education	2023 - 2025
CYP 2-05	Schools will support children from low income families to overcome the barriers they face in terms of the costs associated with their participation and engagement at school.	Education Manager: Children's Services	2023 - 2026
CYP 2-06	Ensure young people are supported appropriately to access a national entitlement card and access to free bus transport.	16+ Transitions Officer	2023 - 2024
CYP 2-07	Increase access to information and supports to ensure families can make nutritious, affordable, healthy choices.	Speech & Language Manager	2023 - 2024
CYP 2-08	Increase participation in training opportunities that meet the needs of young people and employers.	Deputy Head of Education / 16+ Transitions Officer	2024-2026
CYP 2-09	Develop sector skills based activity that provide progression pathways into employment	Deputy Head of Education / 16+ Transitions Officer	2024-2026
CYP 2-10	Increase the range and number of targeted pre-apprenticeship programs.	Deputy Head of Education / People & Culture Manager: Workforce	2024 – 2026
CYP 2-11	We will support and challenge schools to embed a range of Cost of the School Day / Poverty Proofing approaches to support equity and reduce poverty related barriers to learning	Deputy Head of Education	2026



CYP 2-12	We will ensure that schools utilize their PEF funding to tackle poverty and reduce their poverty related attainment gap	Deputy Head of Education	2026
<b>Priority 3: Our Children and Young People feel safe</b>			
No.	Action Title	Action Owner	Timeframe
CYP 3-01	Implement the East Ayrshire's Cherishing Our Families Strategy to eradicate and reduce the impact of neglect.	Senior Manager, Localities, C&F	2026
CYP 3-02	Support children and young people to build respectful relationships with each other and tackle bullying wherever it takes place.	Child Protection Lead Officer	2023 - 2024
CYP 3-03	Promote safe and responsible online behaviour and provide children, young people, families and the workforce with the confidence, skills and tools to be digitally safe.	Child Protection Lead Officer	2023 - 2024
CYP 3-04	Support the implementation of Safe & Together model of practice with Children & Families, Early Years Health, Education and ensure that more families are safe and together with the non-offending partner.	Senior Manager, Localities, C&F	2023 - 2024
CYP 3-05	Work with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to improve holistic family support for children affected by drugs and alcohol.	ADP Lead Officer	2023 – 2026
CYP 3-06	Implement the Health Visiting Pathway to identify need at an early stage with identified models of early help and support.	Senior Manager Children's Health	2023 - 2024
CYP 3-07	Enhance and develop practitioner's confidence and knowledge of child exploitation.	Senior Manager, Localities, C&F	2023 - 2024



CYP 3-08	Improve our Whole System's approach to those children and young people who are in conflict with the law.	Senior Manager, Authority Wide Services, C&F	2023 – 2025
CYP 3-09	Update our child protection learning and development supports to practitioners to services who support children and their families.	Child Protection Lead Officer	2023 – 2024
CYP 3-10	Implementation and development of relational practice across schools and early childhood centers	Principal Educational Psychologist	2025
<b>Priority 4: Our Children and young people have the best start in life and achieve their potential</b>			
No.	Action Title	Action Owner	Timeframe
CYP 4-01	Implement the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Early Learning Scheme in Early Years' Centres.	Senior Education Manager: Early Education & Childcare	2024-2025
CYP 4-02	Implement the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Primary School scheme and the Local Authority scheme.	Senior Nurse Manager	2023 - 2024
CYP 4-03	Provide every child with the opportunity to have support from a Dental Health Support Worker to access dental care and receive oral health education/support.	Senior Nurse Manager Health	2023 - 2025
CYP 4-04	Ensure our early year's workforce are appropriately trained to provide positive and effective speech, language and communication interventions.	Senior Nurse Manager Health	2023 - 2024
CYP 4-05	We will anticipate the changing needs of children and young people to facilitate positive transitions	Speech & Language Manager	2023 - 2025



CYP 4-06	Early Years universal supports will develop and introduce innovative supports for children 0-5yrs with ASN (Additional Support Needs).	Senior Education Manager: Early Education & Childcare	2023 - 2025
CYP 4-07	Ensure coherent progression pathways for every school leaver, particularly those at risk of not achieving a positive destination.	Education Manager: Children's Services	2023 - 2026
CYP 4-08	Ensure school learners are developing skills to enable them to take up opportunities within areas of sectoral expansion or as a result of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.	Education Manager: Children's Services	2023 - 2025
CYP 4-09	Implement a program to provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their communities and democracy at the local level.	Team Leader, YPSD, Vibrant Communities	2024
CYP 4-10	Increase participation levels by children and young people in a range of community representation groups	Team Leader, YPSD, Vibrant Communities	2024
CYP 4-11	Support improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap through strategic equity fund plans that include stretch aims and contributing to the overall Scottish Attainment Challenge.	Deputy Head of Education	2026
<b>Priority 5: Our Children and Young People's Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing is improving</b>			
<b>ID</b>	<b>Action Title</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
CYP 5-01	Support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people of all abilities across East Ayrshire using engaging and creative approaches.	Service Manager Children's Health	2023 - 2026





CYP 5-02	Ensure the new public health resource 'A Guide for Children – a Creative Guide to Staying Healthy and Happy' is promoted and utilised by Children and Families Services.	Service Manager Children's Health	2023 - 2024
CYP 5-03	Provide access to 'Mental Health Improvement Approach' training to our young people and those who work with them.	NHS Colleagues	2023 - 2025
CYP 5-04	Support children and young people to access neurodiversity supports.	Service Manager Children's Health	2023 - 2024
CYP 5-05	Provide access to training in mental health interventions for all staff working with children and families.	Education Manager: People and Culture Manager: OD	2023 - 2024
CYP 5-06	Implement a toolbox of mental health resources that have been developed in partnership with children and young people.	Service Manager Children's Health	2023 - 2025
CYP 5-07	Support the development and implementation of the East Ayrshire Children and Young People Suicide Prevention Strategy.	Service Manager Children's Health	2023 - 2024
CYP 5-08	Deliver a series of Talking Mats programmes to practitioners to support engagement with our children and young people with additional support needs,	Service Manager, Speech and Language Therapy	2026
CYP 5-09	Provide HWB progression framework and training to support a sustained focus on physical and mental health & wellbeing.	Deputy Head of Education	2026
CYP 5-10	Challenge and support schools to undertake biannual wellbeing profiles and provision of appropriate supports.	Deputy Head of Education	2026



CYP 5-11	Continue to provide a Schools Counselling Service with identified improvement priorities to meet specific needs of CYP across East Ayrshire	Principal Educational Psychologist	2026
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# East Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2017 – 2020



***Committed to supporting, protecting and nourishing  
children & young people throughout East Ayrshire***

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## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to allow the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to update on our progress against statutory duties in accordance with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, covering the 2017-2020 period. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a core international human rights statement and articulates fundamental rights with the framework of children's lives and experiences. Due to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, it is not feasible to capture all activities across East Ayrshire contributing towards the Rights of Children, however the report highlights a range of good practice delivery examples and provides a general update under the circumstances.

In September 2015, the Community Planning Partnership Board (CPP Board) endorsed proposals for the establishment of a new Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, accountable to the CPP Board. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership have collective responsibility for strategic planning and managing the improvement of services for children and young people.

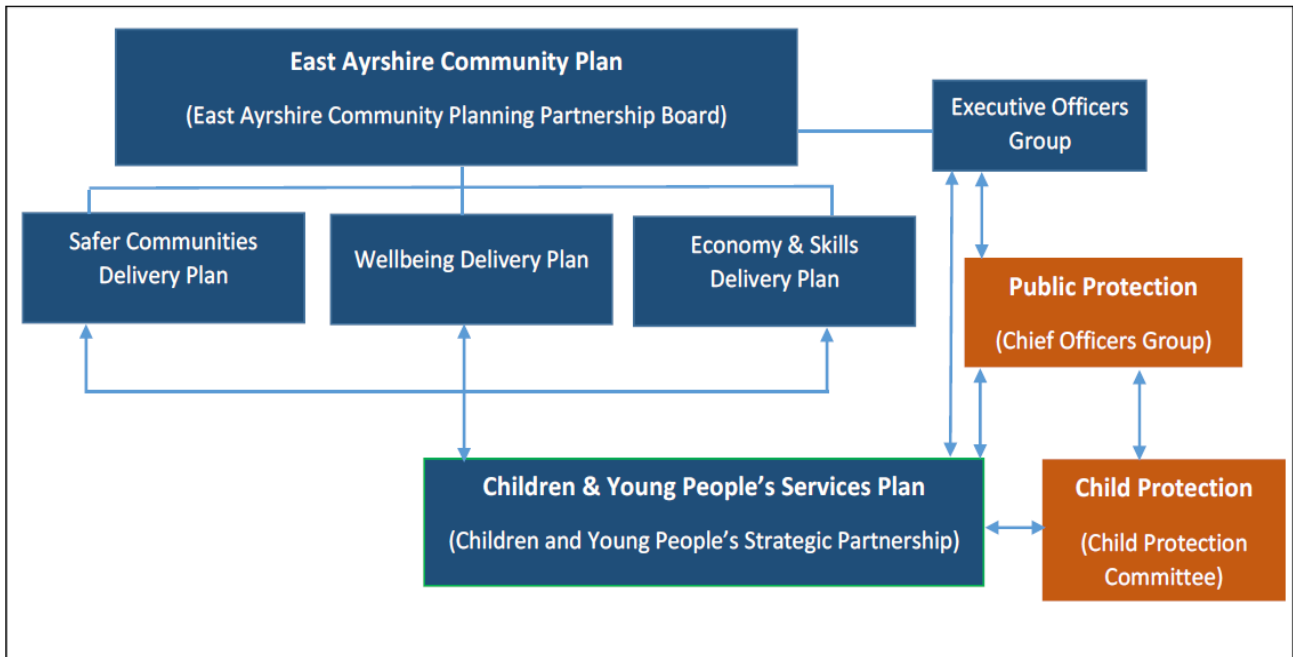
The CYPSP developed the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Service Plan 2015-2018, taking account of the requirements of the Act. It also embarked on a robust self-evaluation process to maximise joint learning and further inform our approach. This Plan compliments the East Ayrshire Child Protection Plan 2015-2018, however work is underway to progress a joint planning approach. This will form part of our review and revision activity. This Plan also compliments the East Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership's Plan 2015-2018 and the East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The CYPSP will work in partnership across services, with local communities and partners, supported by a strategic programme of work. In East Ayrshire, we focus on making decisions with young people and not for them. Children's Rights apply to every child and young person under the age of 18 and to adults who are still eligible to receive a "children's service". This includes all care leavers aged 18 to 26.

The [East Ayrshire Community Plan \(2015-2030\)](#) is the sovereign planning document for the East Ayrshire area, providing the overarching strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by all partners. The Community Plan, underpinned by East Ayrshire's Single Outcome Agreement, sets out the Community Planning Partnership's ambition for East Ayrshire for delivering and achieving improved outcomes for children, families and communities. The Community Plan is implemented through three thematic Delivery Plans, namely Economy and Skills, Safer Communities, and Wellbeing.

Locality planning is founded on aggregated multi-member wards with service delivery based on multi-disciplinary working, developed around people in communities. Delivering services for children and young people in East Ayrshire's localities have been established: Kilmarnock; Northern (Annick & Irvine Valley) and Southern (Ballochmyle, Cumnock & Doon Valley). These localities are aligned to education area boundaries and the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership arrangements. Responsibility for children and young people's strategic planning lies with the East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board. The Board has delegated the responsibility for overseeing children and young people's strategic planning to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.





The East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership [Strategic Plan 2018-21](#) sets out ambitions and shared priorities for local health and social care provision in delivering the vision of:

***“Working together with all of our communities to improve and sustain wellbeing, care and promote equity”.***

The Partnership’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021 focuses on four priority areas: Early Intervention and Prevention; New Models of Care; Building Capacity in Primary and Community Care; and Transformation and Sustainability, in addition to working towards the ‘triple aim’ of better care, better health and better value. The Partnership’s delivery activities are centred on these core aims and through each Directorate’s Service Improvement Plan, will improve outcomes for people in our local communities. A new Strategic Plan covering 2021-30, will be developed over the coming year together with partners in all sectors and we will collaboratively review our priorities and long term strategic intent within this process.

East Ayrshire Council, the Health and Social Care Partnership, and Partners mobilised to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, with a focus on delivering crucial and safe services for vulnerable people in our communities. The nature of the pandemic required a swift and proactive response, comprising a number of workstreams to ensure that both our residents and workforce were kept safe and well. It should be noted that unprecedented circumstances associated with the Covid-19 pandemic at the time of reporting have impacted on the capacity of colleagues to provide delivery examples for inclusion in this report, therefore it has not been possible to include the level of detail that would be expected under ‘normal’ circumstances.



## Background

### [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) is

an international human rights treaty that grants all children and

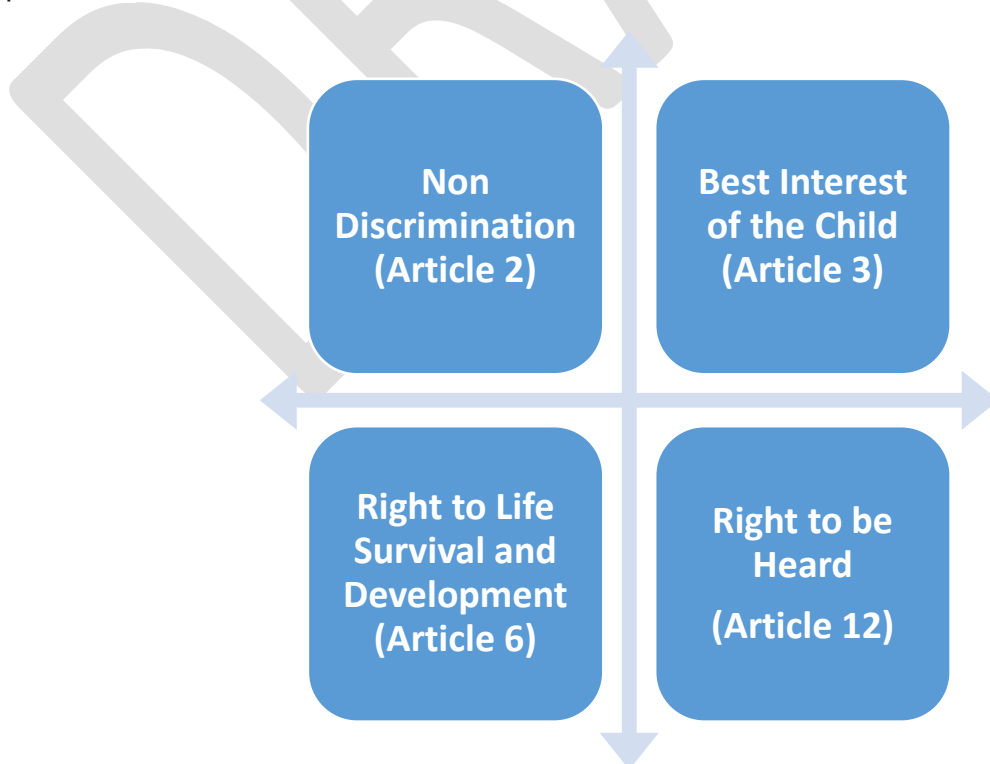
young people (under the age of 18) a comprehensive set of rights. The UNCRC is the most widely supported human rights agreement in the world and it sets out a holistic framework for the rights of all children. Governments are expected to implement the UNCRC to make sure all law, policy and decisions which impact on children from birth to 18 comply with their human rights. There are 54 comprehensive articles covering a range of topics setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. A summary of these 54 articles is available in Appendix 1.



### UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK

The intent behind the UNCRC Bill is to deliver a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. The Bill would apply to all public functions within legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament. Specific measures aim to remove barriers that children and young people may face in exercising their rights under the legislation and in accessing justice. These provisions include giving the Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland and the Scottish Human Rights Commission the power to raise claims in the public interest.

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 UNCRC is underpinned by four guiding principles that help to interpret all the other articles and play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all children. These 'General Principles' are:



## Reporting Duties

Public bodies are duty bound to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken to further Children and Young People's Rights as set out by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014

The Scottish Government's vision is a Scotland where children's human rights are embedded in all aspects of society. Section 2 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to report every 3 years in relation to the actions taken to secure better or further effect of the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Scottish Government are taking measures to ensure that children enjoy their rights, as set out in the UNCRC. These include:

- Implementing the UNCRC and incorporating it into Scots law;
- An action plan to help children and young people experience their rights;
- Using the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) to ensure that their policies and legislation protect and promote the rights and wellbeing of children and young people; and
- Reporting on their progress to Parliament.

## Getting It Right for Every Child

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is the national approach in Scotland to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the support they require. A key theme of the approach is ensuring that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is central to the duties of all practitioners who work with children and young people. It is also incorporated in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The GIRFEC wellbeing indicators complement the UNCRC Bill which include: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANNARI).

## The Promise

The [Independent Care Review](#) published seven reports on 5th February 2020 which are:

- The Promise and Pinky Promise for younger readers;
- The Plan;
- The Money and Follow the Money;
- The Rules; and
- Thank You.

The reports help identify and make recommendations for achieving lasting change in Scotland's care system in relation to transforming the care and wellbeing of infants, children and young people. [The Promise](#) report outlines what Scotland must do to ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe, respected and supported to realise their full potential. Children's rights is a consistent theme throughout The Promise, which states that *Scotland must respect, uphold, champion and defend the rights of children*, recognising that their rights are predominantly realised through relationships with loving and attentive caregivers. The Promise also explicitly states that *Scotland must fully incorporate and uphold the UNCRC*.



In East Ayrshire, children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential



## Clusters

For the purpose of this report, a number of Children's Rights, relating to similar themes, have been grouped together into clusters (1-8) to provide an in-depth overview of progression. These clusters also evidence our vision in East Ayrshire of working in partnership to ensure our children and young people have the best start in life and are at the heart of everything we do.

### Cluster 1. General Measures of implementation - Do we have the structures and resources to implement the UNCRC? (Articles 4, 41, 42 & 44(6))

Through our Children and Young People's Services Plan 2015 – 2018 we are committed to ensuring children and young people have a voice in East Ayrshire. Our vision is to continue to support, protect and nourish children and young people throughout local East Ayrshire communities. We will continue to incorporate Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), through partnership working with our child centred focus.

#### What are Human Rights and Children's Rights?

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. Children and young people have the same human rights as adults. They also have specific children's rights under the UNCRC that recognise their special needs so that they can develop to reach their full potential.

#### Children's Rights and Wellbeing

In East Ayrshire we utilise legislation underpinned by UNCRC to support decisions for children such as the Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Act 2019 and Children (Scotland) Act 2014. This allows us to support children effectively in relation to family life with brothers and sisters, protection from assault and domestic abuse. We will continue to review the move to full incorporation of the UNCRC within Scottish legislation.

All children from birth to age 5 have a full GIRFEC assessment carried out by the named person (Health Visitor) using the SHANARRI and My Wider World assessment and national risk frameworks such as resilience matrix to support analysis of risk. Physical health, psychological health and wellbeing, financial risk is also considered. In East Ayrshire our Health Visitors have access to financial inclusion officers who help support and generate unclaimed income for families with children aged 5 and under.

#### East Ayrshire Advocacy Services (EAAS)

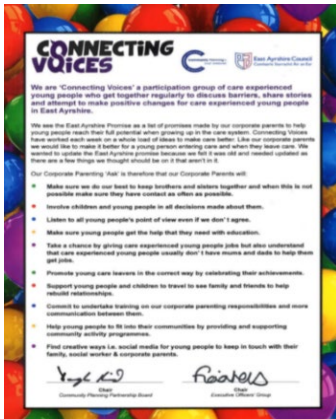
East Ayrshire Advocacy Services continues to provide bespoke independent advocacy to support vulnerable people in our communities access appropriate services and to be involved in decisions affecting their lives by making their views known and reflected. In 2019/20, additional funding was provided by the Scottish Government to extend advocacy services for children and young people in the Children's Hearing system.

**EA Advocacy service user:** "Through support from advocacy, I finally got discharged to my own home with a care package in place"

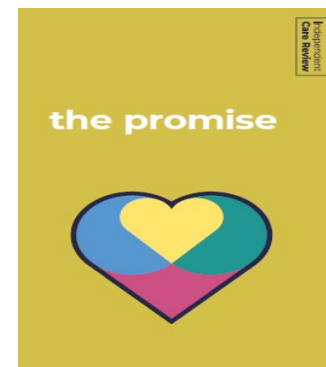


## Connecting Voices

In February 2020, the [Independent Care Review](#) published its conclusions. In 'The Promise', the Care Review identified five foundations for change, outlining over 80 actions to transform how we ensure that all children grow up loved, safe and respected in Scotland. We are fully committed to listening to the voices of our children and young people who are care experienced, a practice which has been long established prior to the publication of the Independent Care Review. We have worked with our young people through 'Connecting Voices' to develop 'their ask' and 'our promise' to them, helping us understand what was most important to them.



The East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership agreed and signed our updated 'Promise' in 2019. This Promise now sits at the heart of our new Corporate Parenting Action Plan for 2020-23 and firmly influences our priorities.



We have renewed our corporate parenting structure to ensure strong governance, clearer reporting approaches and an enhanced approach to collaboration. These changes have enabled us to take account of the key messages from the Independent Care Review.

## Children's Houses

Our Children's Houses have been heavily involved in aspects of the transformation agenda in terms of service delivery and embedding the aspirations and values of 'The Promise' within their practice. We have worked to ensure that the care and support we provide to each young person is person-centred, personalised, coordinated, engaging and empowering, with children's rights being central to every aspect of our practice and future developments.

Resource has been committed to increase digitalisation within our three Children's Houses. Each child has been given access to a laptop, which has improved access to advocacy through the introduction of Mind of My Own, facilitated educational activities and provided children with an equal lived experience as their peers. Every child has been given access to a Looked After and Accommodated Children Nurse for advice, guidance and support and staff can access a HICE Practitioner to ensure children's health and development needs are fully met. This resource has been particularly useful in preparing for the Covid-19 pandemic from the early part of 2020. The Children's Houses also participated in Wellbeing workshops throughout 2019/20, with a focus on wellness, mindfulness and personal resilience. This has allowed our teams to create bespoke resilience plans for dealing with stress.



In East Ayrshire, children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential

## Vibrant Communities

East Ayrshire Vibrant Communities service was established in April 2013 as a catalyst for change across services and partnerships. Vibrant Communities work with all sectors of the community, including children and young people, adults and older people, to develop sustainable communities and to reduce inequalities through a wide range of innovative prevention and early intervention services and programmes. By focusing on asset-based approaches, individuals, families and communities are at the very heart of the planning and decision-making process and integral to delivering the overall vision of strong, safe and vibrant communities.

This service has continuously attracted considerable national interest from other local authorities, community planning partnerships and major funders who are particularly interested in the way in which both employees and communities have been empowered to make change. Central to community empowerment and community engagement has been the development of 18 community-led action plans, which are community owned and developed. The involvement of children and young people as stakeholders in every plan has been facilitated by the Vibrant Communities' early intervention and prevention service. Key outcomes already delivered by community led action plans include:

- Increased membership of existing groups;
- More people involved in shaping the future of their community;
- The creation of new community organisations;
- Increased local capacity to develop and manage projects;
- Communities shifting from being reactive to proactive;
- Communities becoming partners in their own development;
- Communities partnering with public agencies to deliver services;
- Move towards investment culture with business and key funders; and
- Increase in community events and celebrations.

Vibrant Communities' community investment team has increased co-production work with communities by supporting the process that transfers assets to the community, with 44 applications approved, empowering local groups and communities to run facilities and deliver local services. Vibrant Communities has also been proactive in helping a range of community groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and charities with funding options and new routes to community investment. In 2016/17 Vibrant Communities successfully piloted the Participatory Budgeting approach, which empowers local people to decide how and where public money is spent in their communities. This successful initiative has resulted in 19 participatory budgeting events taking place across communities, with 250 projects receiving a share of £220,000 of public funding.



### Rights Respecting Early Childhood Centres

Hillbank Early Childhood Centre was the first standalone early learning and childcare establishment in Scotland to achieve a gold award in 2019. Staff have worked hard to sustain this and now contribute to national projects to support the development of approaches to embed the principles of the UNCRC in practice. This work is led by a Senior Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner.



### Pizza and Coke

Pizza and Coke was established in 2015 evolving from the Corporate Parenting Group which was made up of Elected Members, care experienced young people, service managers and Third Sector representatives. Pizza and Coke was formed to give children and young people a platform to voice their opinions and concerns to leaders on what is important to them on topics such as corporate parenting developments/initiatives, sibling contact, education, employment etc. This committee is currently being refreshed due to the declining numbers of young people in attendance impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. By working in partnership with children and young people the committee will have less public officers at the meeting and continue to further develop more ways for young people to have their say.

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## 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? (Articles 2, 3, 6 & 12)

### Thinking Differently

The Thinking Differently Team have also progressed the implementation of Mind of My Own, which is a suite of apps that children and young people can use independently or be supported to use by practitioners to express their views on their wellbeing and on a wide range of issues and topics that are important to them. Mind of My Own will empower young people to have a voice and to ensure their views and feelings are heard in a way that is important to them, whilst providing an attractive way for children and young people to start the conversation.



During the reporting period, a technology enabled care project was implemented in East Ayrshire to support children and young people in situations where out with authority care, education and / or secure care was being considered. TEC was offered alongside Self Directed Support (SDS) to 'think differently' in providing person-centred support for children and young people during periods of delicate transition. This has included using Option 1 to purchase technology from mainstream providers, which in some cases avoided the need for further social care supports.

**App user:**  
*"I really like it. It gives me the chance to think about what I am feeling"*

This approach empowered young people to become more independent whilst keeping safe, in addition to achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes through utilising mainstream technological solutions such as fitness activity trackers, mobile phone subscriptions, mental health apps and smart watches with a location function for emergencies.

### National Care Experience Week



National Care Experience week in October 2019 saw us celebrate the achievements of care experienced people in our communities. A number of activities took place including supporting young people to attend the Lifetime of Love Rally hosted by Who Cares Scotland, our annual Corporate Parent

Football tournament, a Care Experience celebration gathering with several key speakers and a Care Experience event facilitated in partnership with Ayrshire College, attended by over 120 young people, corporate parents and partners such as Police Scotland, Housing services and the Scottish Fire and Rescue service.



### **East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Cabinet**

East Ayrshire's Children and Young Peoples Cabinet provides a platform for young people to highlight issues affecting their peers whilst also contributing to local priorities and partners. Cabinet Members help to raise the profile of young people by joint working with Council Cabinet Officers and the Executive Officers of the Community Planning Partnership Team for East Ayrshire. This provides young people an excellent opportunity and platform to have their say through consultation and young people's interests are considered.



### **Members of Scottish Youth Parliament**

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people, with elections being held every two years. All young people living within East Ayrshire aged between 14 and 25 years at the time of the election will be eligible to stand as MSYP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (1 seat) and Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley Area (2 seats). SYP's mission is to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign for changes to the nation that they live in and our MSYP's are supported throughout their term in Office by their dedicated Council Support Worker.



## 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? (Articles 7,8,13,14,15,16 & 17)

The Intensive Support Team continues to provide high quality and bespoke support to our children, young people and families. The team enables children and young people to remain in their communities by offering tailored individual support, in addition to group and social activity opportunities for development and fun. Throughout 2019/20, the Intensive Support Team continued to meet with up to 80 vulnerable young people who were in need of a high level of support and often isolated on a weekly basis.

Throughout East Ayrshire pupils are encouraged to express their views and opinions and can do this on a one to one basis or through various groups and forums. Every child and young person has a named person in school to support them and ensure their rights are upheld. They are aware of their right to privacy and through 'getting it right for every child' we have information sharing guidance which is followed by practitioners.

### Education

Early learning and childcare staff continue to assist and encourage children to make choices and establish routines which support their care, development and learning. Community Practitioners also engage with younger children and their families who are in need of additional support. Many children in primary schools are involved in a variety of groups promoting responsibility, including Rights Respecting Schools, health and wellbeing groups and citizenship groups. Some children within schools also take on mentoring roles to support each other and younger children. Young people involved with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) groups are also responsible for making positive changes within schools, for example, introducing gender neutral toilets and delivering workshops at the 2016 East Ayrshire LGBTI conference.

### Violence Against Woman Partnership

East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (EAVAWP) was formed in 2010 to bring together individuals and organisations who can provide a comprehensive partnership response to violence against women. The EAVAWP is a large multiagency partnership which has a wide range of public and independent organisations working together to prevent violence against women and children.



## Cluster 4. Violence Against Children - to what extent do we uphold (Article 37(a))

Staff across all services respond to any concern or safety issues in relation to children and young people recognising it is everyone's responsibility to protect children at home, in school or within the community. All East Ayrshire staff follow procedures outlined in national guidance Child Protection in Scotland (2014) and The Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act (2015).

Vibrant Communities recognise the importance of Child Protection in its widest sense and to ensure that our local community organisations are equipped and safeguarded, training and support is available and provided to all appropriate organisations. For example, Active Schools Coordinators will only work with local sports clubs/organisations who have a live Child Protection Police and Child Protection/Welfare Officer in place. This ensures that the appropriate governance is in line with national guidance. Where these pre-requisites do not exist, staff will provide the appropriate level of support to implement.

We have also promoted the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act with multi-agency practitioners and within community settings. Our Whole System working group have been promoting and following procedures for The Rights Respecting Approach to Justice for Children and Young People.

### Child Protection

The Child Protection Committee is a partnership between East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Police Scotland, Scottish Children's Reports Administration (SCRA), Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, East Ayrshire Children's Panel and the Third Sector. East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is committed to raising awareness and understanding of child protection and promoting child safety, wellbeing and health.



The child protection committee has a robust approach to quality assurance and performance measurement. In East Ayrshire we monitor and ask searching questions about the reasons for any trends. For example, there was an upward trend in child concerns being reported by police to social work services from 664 in 2011/12 to 1,467 in 2015/16, East Ayrshire Council and partners believe this is a result of increased identification of concerns within the community.





## Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right place. We want to ensure that every child in East Ayrshire have the best start in life and committed to provide children, young people and their families with the best support.

The key eight indicators are collectively known as SHANARRI displayed in the pie chart. Each indicator is individually defined however can overlap and connect with other indicators which provide a holistic overview of each child and adults supporting them to consider strengths as well as growth. A named person service has been implemented within the universal services of health and education to allow wellbeing needs to be passed from other agencies to the child's named person.



The Ayrshire GIRFEC Child's Pathway and Practitioner Guide has been implemented across all agencies and services in East Ayrshire. The Team Around the Child (TAC) is the operational embodiment of the Single Planning Process supporting the Child's Plan in East Ayrshire for children from birth until 18 years of age. TAC is a key delivery mechanism for GIRFEC in East Ayrshire.

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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? (Articles 5,10,11,18,19,20,21,25,27 & 39)

We continue to operate a Whole Systems approach across services. Streamlined and consistent planning, assessment and decision making processes have been in place for young people who are involved with offending behaviours, ensuring that they are given appropriate support and guidance at the right time. Our Whole System Strategic Group consists of multi-agency partners including: Education, Housing, Fire Service, Police, Child Protection Leads, Vibrant Communities, Community Justice and the third sector.

In 2019, East Ayrshire extended justice support for young people up to the age of 21. A number of young people were supported through their experience in custody from remand/sentencing to liberation in conjunction with HMYOI Polmont and Action for Children's Moving On project. Welcome home packs were also distributed to support young people who were being liberated from Prison with their transition.

In August 2019, East Ayrshire Social Work services, Action for Children and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service worked in partnership to support young people and to improve awareness of fire raising. This programme also focused on developing core skills of young people, such as building self-confidence, team work, communication and problem solving and to promote a positive image of young people in the community.



### Positive Play in Prison

The Positive Play in Prison initiative helps children and families to establish and maintain a paternal bond and meaningful contact with fathers who are incarcerated in HMP Kilmarnock by providing positive play experiences. Programmes include 1-2-1 bonding visits, family book share (where fathers create a story CD to send home to their children) sports days and summer family days which have demonstrated improved outcomes for both parent and child including lessening the impact of the sentence on their children and strengthening family bonds and parenting skills.

Positive Play in Prison was recognised for its innovation and success and won the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) Chair's Award in 2016. In April 2017, the Positive Play in Prison team won two silver awards at the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) Awards.



## Programmes for Children and Young People

A number of diversionary activities are delivered throughout East Ayrshire with the aim of addressing anti-social behaviour issues and incidents which were reported by Police Scotland. Local programmes delivered included: Premier Night Leagues (football scheme ran on Friday evenings), Streetsport Cages (activities in multi-use gaming areas) and the provision of sporting equipment and outreach work at weekends through the Young Action Team. The total number of attendances for diversionary activities throughout 2019/20 (prior to ceasing due to Covid-19) was 8,611. Throughout 2019/20, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service delivered a 'Fire Reach' project to a number of secondary school pupils across East Ayrshire. Fire Reach was a five day course delivered at Kilmarnock Community Fire Station, which gave pupils an opportunity to participate in fire service drills, scenarios and basic life support training. The project taught about respect, teamwork, leadership, discipline and transferable skills.

## Corporate Parenting

Whenever a child or young person can no longer remain in the care of their parents, our starting point is that we seek to work with the family to look after the child. Kinship care has been developed significantly in recent years and we continue to seek ongoing improvement. A best value review of Kinship care commenced in 2019/20 to identify more effective and efficient ways of delivering the service, reflecting key areas such as supporting kinship carers and children and developing the guidance available to social work practitioners. Listening to the experiences of kinship carers, the children who live with them and those who support them, has been integral to informing this review.

The fostering service continues to place a high emphasis on hearing the voice of each child who lives with a foster carer. In East Ayrshire we are working towards the fostering service being a service that can play a role in keeping families together and ensuring their right to family life. This is evolving in a number of ways through the offer of support from experienced foster carers to birth families, to more substantive support such as regular short breaks.

Our adoption service continues to balance the outcome of seeking to ensure that every child coming into contact with the service achieves the right to be part of a stable family unit. This requires sensitivity in looking to the future and finding the best possible family for that child, through methodical linking and matching processes, and also looking to the past to recognise the rights of the child to know about their family of birth and indeed support birth parents to work through what is the most traumatic experience a parent can have. Ensuring that information relating to the child, their birth family and the prospective family, is known thoroughly and shared appropriately is key to upholding the rights of each child who has been affected by adoption. A commitment to child appreciation days and robust post-adoption support plans ensures that a child's journey, both past and future, is captured and planned for.

The kinship support service work with kinship carers who are experiencing the most significant challenges, providing a range of interventions including emotional, practical and training support to kinship carers ensuring that they are equipped as much as they can be to provide the best possible family environment for the child that they care for. In East Ayrshire, more young people are remaining in foster placements and children's houses beyond their eighteenth birthday highlighting the strong bonds and between matched families, practitioners and young people. The number of care leavers staying in touch with services continues to rise, we have a higher proportion than average of care leavers in employment, education or training and homelessness among young people eligible for aftercare services remains low.



In East Ayrshire, children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential

## Family Support Team

Our Family Support Team continue to assist families by providing numerous interventions. Seasonal activities take place throughout Easter, summer, October and winter holidays, allowing families to participate in various activities such as arts and crafts, messy play, physical play and song/story time, and make those all-important memories together. Families are supported to attend by the team and the activities also serve as an opportunity for signposting to additional supports, such as food larders or other community events. It should be noted that these activities are currently impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The team are currently working with over 20 families per week to support outside play.

## Therapeutic Play

During the reporting period, a Therapeutic Play training programme was rolled out across the multi-agency Children's Services workforce. This proved to be a high demand area of training, with a total of 68 staff from different agencies attending these sessions. The programme allowed participants to enhance their understanding of trauma informed practice in relation to children and young people. Learnings from the programme have positively impacted on the lives of children and young people in East Ayrshire through practitioners' use of resources such as 'Button Mice', 'Cuddle Blankets' and the 'Sand Tray'. These have been used successfully in 8 schools across East Ayrshire and within family support sessions. A number of practitioners have also used these resources effectively in 1:1 support sessions with children and young people who have communication concerns.



## Education

While the wellbeing of more vulnerable children and young people demonstrate some important and improving trends, we recognise the need for focused action to improve the educational attainment and personal outcomes for looked after children, in particular, those looked after at home and in kinship care. There are improving trends in the percentage of looked after school leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 5 and 6, above the national performance figure in 2016. Closing the poverty related attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people remains a partnership priority.

## Young Carers

East Ayrshire recognises the substantial impact caring for someone who may be: in ill-health; frail; disabled or with substance misuse issues, may have on a young person. The East Ayrshire Carer's Centre provides a dedicated service to those Young Carers who may need some support. In April 2017, East Ayrshire Carer's Centre had 1558 registered Young Carers (aged up to 25 years), an increase of 258 (20%) on those registered in 2014.



## Cluster 6. Basic Health and Welfare - to what extent do we promote health and welfare and consider the need of children who are disabled? (Articles 6,18,23,24,26 & 27)

Vibrant Communities has an Active Schools Coordinator whose role is to specifically coordinate a wide range of opportunities for children and young people to participate in sport, play, recreation and sensory activities, which are designed to improve the health & wellbeing of participants in the community and school establishment. This Active Schools Coordinator works closely with the Council's 3 ASN schools and additional communication centres.

### Financial Inclusion

Our communities have been increasingly affected by financial hardship, with around one in five children living in poverty in East Ayrshire. This is likely to be compounded by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Poverty Action Group includes all our key partners, who are integral to our EA Money service, which is a web based and telephone service to which individuals and agencies can make referrals on behalf of people, whom are then directed to the most appropriate partner organisation.

The [2018/19 East Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Report](#) was approved by the Community Planning Partnership Board on 26 September 2019. The report highlights key activities undertaken locally to reduce child poverty in East Ayrshire, in addition to outlining further activity planned for the future to meet the challenging child poverty reduction targets.

The Financial Inclusion Team, together with its partners, has continued to support East Ayrshire residents with money advice and to achieve financial gains over the last year. During 2019/20, the EA Money Team assisted with 2,458 referrals, an increase of 174 from the previous year, achieving additional benefit income totalling £3,819,743 on behalf of service users in East Ayrshire. Over this period, the In Court Advice project also supported 405 tenants with rent arrears totalling £297,582.38 and the Macmillan project generated financial gains of £466,433 for people living with cancer in East Ayrshire. The total financial gains made on behalf of service users dating from November 2013 now stands at £28,092.299.



**£4.6 million financial gains in 2019/20**

**£28.1 million since November 2013**

There has been a continued increase in people accessing the local foodbank for crisis food provision. Throughout 2019/20, 86,517 meals (1,664 per week) were provided by the East Ayrshire Foodbank. This situation has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, with 65,583 meals (3,436 per week) distributed between the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2020.

### Children with Disabilities

Young people with additional support needs in East Ayrshire benefit from imaginative use of activities through self-directed support to promote independence and increase responsibility. Most young people receiving aftercare are currently supported to develop independent living skills and also supported to adhere to boundaries that help maintain a safe home environment.



The Partnership is committed to enabling people to live as independently as possible, drawing on natural supports to help people achieve their outcomes. For people with complex needs, more formal supports through commissioned or statutory services are often required. Since March 2018, Social Workers and Care Managers have been working alongside supported people, their families, care providers and the Overnight Care Project Co-ordinators to redesign the way overnight care is delivered to those with complex needs in East Ayrshire. The project identified opportunities for shared supports and technology-enabled models of care, where overnight care outcomes could be met as equally well for service users. Through working with individuals, person-centred planning and the creation of new technology-enabled responder services, a number of individuals have been supported to live more independently at home.

Throughout 2019/20, the review process was completed in several areas and three new overnight care responder services were commissioned in Hurlford, Altonhill and Longpark. The redesign work in these areas has allowed for the provision of overnight care to be delivered in a different way for sixteen individuals, whom no longer rely on traditional overnight care services and are instead supported by innovative technology and shared supports.

**Parent of service user:**

*"I never imagined my son would cope without his sleepover, but he's doing brilliantly and has proved what he's capable of"*

### **Befriending Project**

Social isolation and loneliness is experienced across the age spectrum for different reasons and this issue has been identified to have a significant impact on wellbeing in East Ayrshire. In 2019/20, the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) Befriending Project supported a number of young people with a connection to some form of substance dependency who were feeling isolated and/or lonely. The case study below provides an example of the positive impact achieved by the project:

**ADP Befriending Project case study:** K, 15, had not been attending school due to anxiety, she was refusing to eat, had no friends or interests, was in an unhealthy relationship and initially refused to speak and interact with the project worker. The project worker spent some time in the home at the initial visit and noticed K had a strong bond with her dog. Taking this on board, it was anticipated that this interest could be used as a focus to build a more positive relationship with K. The project worker met with K weekly, where they took K's dog a walk and slowly but surely K started to chat and share some information about herself. K successfully applied for college and although she didn't manage to enroll in her desired course, K was offered a place in an alternative study.



## Cluster 7. Education, Leisure and culture - To what extent do we provide education services which are non-discriminatory? (Articles 28, 29 & 31)

### Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative

In 2016, the Early Years Collaborative and Raising Attainment for All combined to form the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) with the aim of delivering quality improvement throughout a child's journey. This aligns closely with the Maternity and Children Quality Improvement Collaborative, which focuses on maternity, neonatal and paediatric healthcare settings. The East Ayrshire CYPIC identified key priorities for collaborative work across the community planning partnership which are: Language, Communication, and Literacy.

This was informed by the partnership's data compendium and local data from the 27-30 month child health assessment broken down by deprivation quintiles. This data highlighted that in some areas of East Ayrshire, up to 40% of children were not meeting their developmental outcomes around speech, language and communication (compared to 13.3% at a national level in 2014/15). This data also highlighted that only 7-10% of children will have long lasting speech, language and communication needs requiring the support of the speech and language therapy team.

### Vibrant Communities

The Vibrant Communities service play a pivotal role in the delivery and coordination of extracurricular and community based opportunities throughout East Ayrshire. Children, young people and their families have equitable access to a wide range of opportunities to participate in structured and/or informal sport, play and recreation activities, where fun and learning are at the heart of the programme.

Vibrant Communities programmes are coordinated and delivered to targeted communities and individuals, ensuring that those from the most deprived areas have access to participate in learning opportunities, enabling them to develop individually, within the family home and education establishment.

### Home Link Team

The Home Link Team provide a range of support for children and families in East Ayrshire. Throughout 2019/20, significant progress was made across all 8 Education Groups within the Home Link Team, supporting a total of 656 children, young people and their families, with 438 of those families now no longer requiring Home Link support. Currently, a team of 10 Home Link Workers are supporting 195 children, young people and their families on a weekly basis. Two new Home Link Workers were also recruited to work across East Ayrshire, with a particular focus on supporting looked after children and young people.

**Parent:** *"I have a totally different girl now! She was terrified going to school before and every morning was a nightmare. She now loves going to school and gets upset if she has to take time off. Her confidence has grown and I no longer worry about her all day"*



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### SL33

The development of SL33 was approved by Cabinet in March 2020. As a skills and learning hub, it provides an infrastructure that supports our schools to raise attainment, close the poverty related attainment gap, and provides access to projects designed to broaden the horizons of young people as part of their entitlement to a rich educational experience across the senior phase both in school and in post school.

SL33 plays a pivotal role in supporting young people to acquire the skills and knowledge required by employers across the region, with particular and direct alignment to future areas of sectoral expansion delivered through the Ayrshire Growth Deal. Care has also been taken to ensure that SL33 does not duplicate the work of the Council's existing employability services, or training provision delivered through third sector partners for young unemployed people.

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## Cluster 8. Special Protection Measures- To what extent do we protect those in need of protection? (Articles 22,30,32,33,24,25,36,37(a-d),38,39 & 40)

In East Ayrshire, we have a strong focus on keeping children safe in schools and the community helping children to feel safe. A wide range of preventative and diversionary activities including workshops, road shows, theatre and street-dance programmes increase children and young people's knowledge and awareness about keeping themselves safe. Some of the programmes delivered children learn how to use the internet safely as well as about the dangers of knives. Many children and young people in schools benefit from Protecting People work, which provides multi-agency, co-ordinated public protection awareness on issues relating to alcohol and drugs, domestic abuse, personal safety and risk. Senior pupils have helped raise awareness of low-level violence and domestic abuse to other children within their school through the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme. Campus police officers and the Ayrshire College campus liaison officer provide safety advice, support to young people and collaborate with school staff on risk assessment and planning to keep children safe. Children within our Educational Establishments are confident they knew who they could speak to if they have a problem or concern and feel teaching staff listen to their concerns.

Collaborative working between Children and Families, Justice Service and Learning and Development colleagues led to the development of the 'Safe and Together' model of practice within East Ayrshire. The model focuses on creating a domestic violence informed child welfare system, with the principals and components of the Safe and Together model building competency in knowledge and skills related to domestic violence informed practice and specific techniques related to perpetrator, survivors and children.

### Training

Child protection training and child protection supervision supports staff to identify children and young people in need of protection and to follow correct process to support and protect. Families are supported within East Ayrshire by our resettlement team where families have sought refuge from war torn countries. Support is given to access health care with ongoing holistic assessment of need undertaken by Health Visitors and School Nurses.

A series of one-day overview sessions based on the 'Safe and Together' domestic abuse programme were delivered in 2019/20, within which participants engaged in action planning to translate their learning into step by step changes in their day to day practice.

### Protection and Learning Team

Following a review of public protection and social work governance arrangements in 2019, a new Protection and Learning Team was established in October 2019 under the leadership of the Chief Social Work Officer. The team comprises a service wide governance and support function and incorporates Learning and Development (including social work and social care services) and Multi-Agency Public Protection (including: Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Violence Against Women, MAPPA and the Mental Health Officer service). The creation of the team has aligned a number of key social work functions, supports the leadership and governance for our public protection functions and the multiple committees aligned to this work, and provides direct assurance to the Chief Officer Group and the Integration Joint Board.



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Planned development activities going forward include a review of the Learning and Development service and a multi-agency Public Protection Communication Strategy. A multi-agency inspection of Adult Support and Protection in East Ayrshire commenced in February 2020 and was being led by the team, however this has been temporarily suspended by the Care Inspectorate due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The team has led on a range of work to date, including: developing an operational oversight process to support multi-agency public protection and mitigate risks, coordinating activities to improve interventions, implementing new mental health support pathways, delivering the Distress Brief Intervention service, providing access to temporary accommodation and support packs for early release from custody delivering public protection training and distributing over 700 children's activity packs.



A 5-day pan-Ayrshire Child Protection Learning Programme for qualified Social Workers was developed in 2019/20, which seeks to improve knowledge and understanding of child protection processes, procedures and practice in enabling Social Workers to feel more prepared in their role as lead professionals in child protection work. Workforce development in relation to protection is an essential part of Social Workers' Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) requirements in supporting them to meet the registration requirements of the governing body, Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC).

This programme is delivered in partnership across Ayrshire and Arran, connecting Senior, Service and Team Managers as well as practitioners, providing richer discussions and learning opportunities. In addition to improving relationships across the three Ayrshire Partnerships, this commitment to joint working allows us to meet continued service demands by ensuring we have the right staff trained at the right time, as training can be delivered more frequently while ensuring the course is fit for purpose regardless of which Partnership hosts the event.

### East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership



The East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (EA VAWP) is currently chaired by the CSWO. During the reporting period, the EA VAWP continued to work to achieve the outcomes set out in the national [Equally Safe strategy](#) for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. This is a vibrant and

active partnership, with membership from HMP Kilmarnock, Fire and Rescue, Women's Aid, Barnardos, Break the Silence, the STAR Centre and Victim Support continuing to deliver a range of supports throughout 2019/20, such as: awareness-raising, information and advice, activities, peer support, advocacy, person-centred individual counselling, telephone counselling, drop in sessions, group work, training and refuge accommodation.



A number of events took place in November 2019 as part of the 16 days of Action Campaign, including a pan-Ayrshire gender-based violence conference, where delegates were given an opportunity to attend workshops highlighting some of the key issues relating to gender-based violence in the modern world. The East Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Policy was also launched on 22nd August 2019, which sets out the Council's commitment to assist anyone in East Ayrshire who is experiencing domestic abuse.



### **Child Protection Committee**

The East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (EA CPC) chaired by independent chair, Kate Thomson and Craig Stewart, Associate Nurse Director, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, continue to work to achieve the outcomes set out within the CPC Business Plan. Key issues within the Business plan include neglect, digital and online safety as well as child sexual exploitation and trafficking. The committee continues to be dedicated to raising awareness and understanding of child protection and promoting child safety, wellbeing and health throughout East Ayrshire. The committee and its sub-committee working groups drive forward key work including:

- Development of the updated East Ayrshire Care and Risk Management (CARM) guidance;
- Implementation of the Graded Care Profile 2 tool for practitioners when assessing neglect;
- Joint development of the 'Not at Home' policy with Police Scotland partners in relation to missing looked after children;
- Development of child exploitation and trafficking practitioner's guidance, in partnership with Pan Ayrshire partners; and
- Early implementation of the Safe and Together model, when working with families where domestic violence is present.

The EA CPC also support a number of events such as a conference on Recognising Neglect, held October 2017, the annual Safer Internet Day held annually each February and campaigns including the NSPCC's 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' Programme, Ask Every Child, No Knives Better Lives Festival & Mentors in Violence Programme. The EA CPC continue to champion the Scottish Governments vision to make Scotland the best and safest place to grow up for our East Ayrshire children and young people.

### **Children's Wellbeing**

Across services we have rolled out refresher of practitioner guidance with regards to parental drug and or alcohol use (Getting Our Priorities Right) with Whole Family Approach Guidance. This provides a framework to family inclusive practice and complements the Helping Everyone At the Right Time model of practice within East Ayrshire. This allows the child to be seen within the context of the family but understand the individual needs of parents and family members impacted by drug and / or alcohol.

We have established the High Risk Vulnerable Young Person Group (subgroup of the East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee) which focuses on areas of concern such as child exploitation in its varying forms, missing children/ young people, trafficking and extra familial harm. The group are currently developing a multi-agency training pathway, with Barnardos. The East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee supports the work of the GIRFEC group in the development of their tackling Neglect Strategy and action plan.



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## Looking Ahead

### Covid-19

We acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic has created significant challenges within our communities, with many families experiencing difficult circumstances, while some families who were vulnerable prior to the pandemic are now facing worsened situations. The pandemic has required services and staff to swiftly adapt and work in new, flexible and innovative ways to ensure the continued and safe delivery of core services to support and safeguard the wellbeing of children and families. To date, this has included following strict infection control measures and an increased use of technology to maintain contact with service users.

A key focus over the short to medium term will be on recovery and renewal from the impact of Covid-19. This will be a significant piece of work, requiring comprehensive engagement and collaboration between our services, partners and communities. This work will generate important learning to inform and strengthen future service provision, ensuring the best possible outcomes for our residents.

We will ensure that our 2020-2023 Children's Right's Report is more comprehensive, detailing our renewal journey, how we kept children and their families safe and protected throughout the pandemic and how we will bring our future plans into action.

### Next Steps

The following ambitions will be taken forward to shape preparations for the incorporation of the UNCRC.

#### Cluster 1

1. We will continue to develop mechanisms to ensure children and young people's voices are heard and are at the centre of all decision making in East Ayrshire.
2. All East Ayrshire Schools and Early Childhood Centres will sign up to UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award.
3. We will continue to support children and their families with facilitated and dedicated programmes within communities, ensuring poverty is not a barrier to access these.
4. We will continue to liaise with the third sector and partners to help support vulnerable people and families within our communities, ensuring all voices are considered.
5. We will continue to implement The Promise throughout local communities to influence and achieve positive transformational change. This will also ensure that the voices of children and young people are central in delivering our aspirations to further keep 'the promise'.

#### Cluster 2

1. We will continue to involve children and young people's voices in all decision making processes and implement software packages to help gather their views.
2. We will continue to adopt innovative approaches to service development and delivery, empowering members of our communities both young and old, to live happy, healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.
3. Education Services will continue to focus on developing approaches including children's feelings and preferences as part of the process of transitioning from early learning and childcare to schools across East Ayrshire.



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4. We will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administrator (SCRA).
5. We will also work in partnership with NHS Ayrshire and Arran to establish a working group to meet our children's needs and be the best corporate parents in compliance with the UNCRC.

### Cluster 3

1. Our Vibrant Communities service will continue to liaise with other Council services and partners to tackle ongoing issues such as hate crime and anti-social behaviour, ensuring children, young people and their families are protected within their community.
2. We will continue to develop programmes to support our looked after and accommodated children, helping them understand their story and dealing with trauma.
3. We will support the East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership's Strategic Plan, identifying key issues for women/children and delivering on actions.

### Cluster 4

1. We will continue to implement and follow procedures as outlined within the Child Protection in Scotland 2014.
2. Mechanisms will be embedded to take forward key priorities for developing the workforce across Children's services in East Ayrshire.
3. We will implement a model around interviewing children and young people who are believed to be a victim of, or witness to, criminal conduct.

### Cluster 5

1. We will continue to develop a range of workstreams to provide effective family support throughout East Ayrshire.
2. As echoed within 'The Promise', we will continue to support families to remain together and ensure children's views are at the forefront of all decision making, particularly in relation to looked after and accommodated children.
3. We will continue to review housing needs of families across East Ayrshire, developing affordable and sustainable homes.
4. We will embed mechanisms to support families whose children stop attending education establishments.
5. We will develop a wellbeing model through consultation with local families which will offer early help and community based support.

### Cluster 6

1. We will continue to explore ways in which we support new parents affected by addictions.
2. We will continue to encourage active participation with services to improve the health and wellbeing and outcomes of children who have complex health needs.
3. We will also tackle poverty throughout our local communities and implement a model to help those most vulnerable and in need of support.



## Cluster 7

1. We will continue to deliver and sustain our designed employability hub within East Ayrshire Council's Education service which supports young people and parents towards positive destinations.
2. We will promote and deliver a wide range of activities in both community and educational establishments through our Vibrant Communities service.
3. We will continue to invest in our learning estates to improve local outcomes, co-ordinating and integrating local services to support our communities and to progress the public sector reform agenda.

## Cluster 8

1. Our East Ayrshire Sports Council and Youth Work Network will continue to provide support to local affiliated sports clubs and youth work organisations regarding child protection.
2. We will ensure all Secondary Schools have access to PREVENT leads who will be responsible for monitoring issues of radicalisation and ensuring all staff are aware of what to look out for.
3. The Child Protection Committee will continue to deliver key priorities and drive forward multi-agency workforce bespoke training sessions.
4. The Learning and Development team will continue to focus on Children's Right's training and embed the UNCRC as a tool for assessment.
5. We will continue to deliver partnership workshops, identifying key themes which are impacting children and young people within our local communities.



# Appendix 1 - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

It is important that our children and young people are fully aware of their rights. The details below provide a summary of these rights from [the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The term 'Governments' also refers to East Ayrshire Council.

**1. Definition of a child:** A child is any person under the age of 18.

**2. Non –discrimination:** All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

**3. Best interests of the child:** When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

**4. Implementation:** Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.

**5. Family guidance as children develop:** Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.

**6. Life, survival and development:** Every child has the right to life. Governments must ensure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.

**7. Name, nationality and care:** Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

**8. Identity:** Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.

**9. Family separation:** Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after, for example if a parent hurts or neglects a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

**10. Family contact across countries:** If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.

**11. Protection from abduction:** Governments must stop children being taken out of the country by parents or relatives when this is against the law.



**12. Respect for views of children:** Children have the right to give their opinions freely and openly on issues that affect them. Adults should consider these views and take children seriously.

**13. Freedom of expression:** Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

**14. Freedom of thought, belief and religion:** Children can have their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents have the right and responsibility to guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to use this right.

**15. Freedom of association:** Children can set up or join groups or organisations, meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.

**16. Right to privacy:** Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation from any unlawful attack.

**17. Access to media information:** Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

**18. Parental responsibilities:** Parents are the main responsible individuals for raising a child. If a child does not have parents, another adult will have this responsibility (guardian). Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child and Governments should help them. Where a child has two parents, both should be responsible.

**19. Protection from violence, abuse and neglect:** Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and neglect by anyone who looks after them.

**20. Children unable to live with their family:** Any child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after by people who respect the child's religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

**21. Adopted children:** Governments must oversee the adoption process to ensure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

**22. Refugee children:** If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights set out in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

**23. Children with disabilities:** Any child with a disability should be able to enjoy the best life possible. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to be active in the community.

**24. Health:** Children have the right to high quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, a clean environment and education on health and wellbeing.

**25. Review of a child's care placement:** Every child who has been placed away from home for the purpose of their protection or wellbeing should have their circumstances reviewed regularly to ensure their experience is going well and to assess whether it is still the best place for the child to be.



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- 26. Social security:** Governments should provide financial or other social support to help children and families in need of such assistance.
- 27. Standard of living:** Every child has the right to a good standard of living, including sufficient meals, clothing and a safe environment to develop. The government should help families which are not able to provide this.
- 28. Access to education:** Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free and secondary and higher education should be available to all. Children should be encouraged to attend school and discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.
- 29. Education objectives:** Education should enable children to develop their personalities, talents and abilities, in addition to helping them understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences.
- 30. Children from minority culture:** Children have the right to learn and use their own language, culture and religion, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in their country of residence.
- 31. Culture, leisure and play:** Every child has the right to relax, rest, play and to participate in cultural and creative activities.
- 32. Protection from child labour:** Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and from undertaking work that is dangerous or harmful to their health, development or education. Governments must establish a minimum age for working and ensure that working conditions are safe and appropriate.
- 33. Protection from drug abuse:** Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs, including: taking, making, transporting or selling harmful drugs.
- 34. Protection from sexual abuse:** Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.
- 35. Protection from sale and trafficking:** Governments must protect children from being abducted or sold, or moved illegally to other countries or places to be exploited.
- 36. Protection from all forms of exploitation:** Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, even if these are not specifically mentioned in the Convention.
- 37. Inhumane treatment and detention:** Children who are accused of breaking the law must not be tortured, sentenced to death or suffer cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be imprisoned with adults.
- 38. Protection in war or conflict:** Governments must do everything in their power to protect children during a war or conflict. No child under the age of 15 can join the army or participate in war.
- 39. Recovery from trauma and reintegration:** Children have the right to receive additional support if they have been neglected, harmed, badly treated or affected by war, to enable them to recover their health and dignity.



**40. Justice:** Children who are accused of breaking the law have the right to legal assistance and fair treatment, and to be treated with dignity and respect. Governments must establish a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and ensure that their justice system enables children to reintegrate into society.

**41. Respecting higher national standards:** If a country incorporates laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, the country must retain these laws.

**42. Knowledge of rights:** Governments must make active efforts to ensure that adults and children are aware of the rights set out in the Convention.

**43 to 54. Working together to protect children's rights:** Articles 43 to 54 set out how adults, governments, the United Nations, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF, and other organisations must work together to ensure that all children enjoy all their rights.

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# East Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020 – 2023



*Committed to supporting, protecting and nourishing  
children & young people throughout East Ayrshire*

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## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to allow the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to update on our progress against statutory duties in accordance with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2020, covering the 2020-2023 period. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a core international human rights statement and articulates fundamental rights with the framework of children's lives and experiences. Due to the wide range of work delivered across our services and partner services, it is not feasible to highlight all activities across the Council, however this report will provide an overall update in terms of good practice throughout East Ayrshire in contributing towards the Rights of Children.

In September 2015, the Community Planning Partnership Board (CPP Board) endorsed proposals for the establishment of a new Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, accountable to the CPP Board. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership have collective responsibility for strategic planning and managing the improvement of services for children and young people.

The CYPSP have developed the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-2023, which identifies a number ambitions to achieve a vision of:

**“In East Ayrshire, our children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential”.**

This Plan contains a number of proposals to meet the immediate needs of local communities which the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership will deliver and update progress on. Over its lifespan, the Plan will focus on:

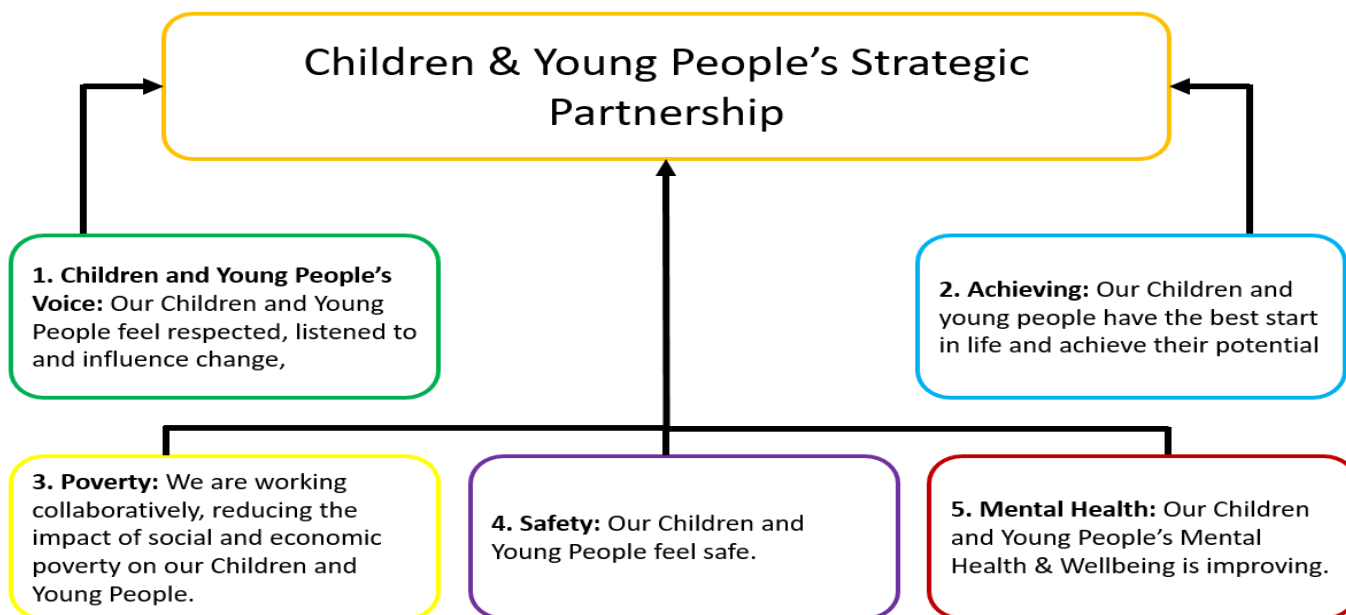
- Recovery and renewal from the impact of COVID-19;
- Tackling poverty;
- Respecting and promoting children and young people's rights;
- Improving wellbeing;
- Achieving; and
- Keeping safe.

The CYPSP will work in partnership across services, with local communities and partners, supported by a strategic programme of work. In East Ayrshire, we focus on making decisions with young people and not for them. Children's Rights apply to every child and young person under the age of 18 and to adults who are still eligible to receive a “children's service”. This includes all care leavers aged 18 to 26.

Locally, the CYPSP will update and report on Children's Rights across East Ayrshire on an annual basis. Officer Working Groups will be implemented with each respective workstream focussing on key themes feeding directly into the CYPSP. The Partnership will have oversight of the delivery of key actions, with a focus on continuous improvement for children and young people's wellbeing within their community. Officer Groups will meet regularly to coordinate activity and provide regular briefing updates.



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The [East Ayrshire Community Plan \(2015-2030\)](#) is the sovereign planning document for the East Ayrshire area, providing the overarching strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by all partners. The Community Plan sets out how outcomes for people and service delivery in East Ayrshire will be improved in working towards achieving the following vision:

**“East Ayrshire is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs”.**

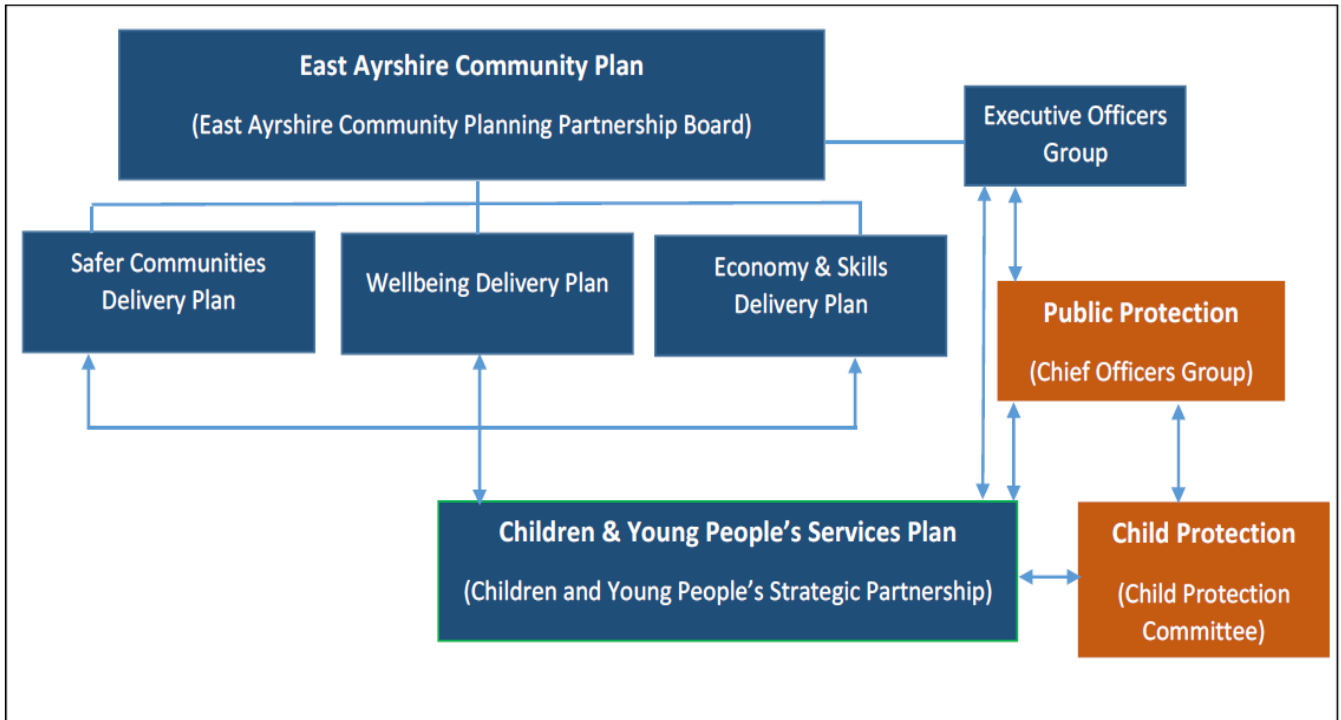
The Community Plan is underpinned by three thematic Delivery Plans which set out the actions that will be taken forward by partners. The development of new thematic Delivery Plans for the 2021-24 period was progressed within the review process and three new Delivery Plans for: [Economy and Skills](#), [Safer Communities](#) and [Wellbeing](#) were approved by the CPP Board on 10 June 2021. A number of the actions incorporated within these Delivery Plans positively impact on children and young people and their rights, with a pertinent strategic priority within the Wellbeing Delivery Plan being: *Children and young people, including those in early years and their carers, are supported to be active, healthy and to reach their potential at all life stages.*

The East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership [Strategic Plan 2021-30](#) sets out local ambitions and shared priorities for health and social care between the 2021-24 period and towards 2030, in delivering the vision of:

**“Working together with all of our communities to improve and sustain wellbeing, care and promote equity”.**



The Strategic Plan maintains a focus on recovery and renewal following the challenges experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic, in addition to focussing on the ‘triple aim’ of **better care, better health and better value**, in line with the national Health and Social Care Delivery Plan. Numerous priorities outlined within the Strategic Plan support children’s rights, particularly under the: Starting Well and Living Well; People at the Heart of What We Do; Safe and Protected; and Digital Connections themes.



## Background

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (under the age of 18) a comprehensive set of rights. The UNCRC is the most widely supported human rights agreement in the world and sets out a holistic framework for the rights of all children. 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 the human rights. There are 54 articles that are wide-ranging and cover a number of areas including: health, education, leisure and play, social security, child labour, children in care and juvenile justice. A summary of these 54 articles is available in Appendix 1.





### UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK



The intent behind the UNCRC Bill is to deliver a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. The Bill would apply to all public functions within legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament. Specific measures aim to remove barriers that children and young people may face in exercising their rights under the legislation and in accessing justice. These provisions include giving the Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland and the Scottish Human Rights Commission the power to raise claims in the public interest.

In East Ayrshire, we feel strongly about this work. One of the key priorities being taken forward in our new Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026 is the voices of Children and Young People, which is underpinned by the UNCRC.

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 UNCRC is underpinned by four guiding principles which are general requirements for all children's rights:

-  **Non discrimination**
-  **Best interests of the child**
-  **Right to live, survival and development**
-  **The right of children to express their views and have them given due weight**





## Reporting Duties

Public bodies are duty bound to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken to further children and young people's rights as set out by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some of the rights set out by the UNCRC are highlighted below:



## Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2020

The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 is an Act of the Scottish Parliament that amends the law relating to children. The Act aims to put children and their views at the heart of the decision making process and ensure fair treatment of children and families by Scotland's civil courts. The Act also introduces further amendments to the 1995 Act that centre on improving children's participation and extending special measures for the protection of parties who are victims of domestic abuse. The Act was passed on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and aims to:

- Bring the law further into line with children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC);
- Make sure children's views are heard in family court cases and children's hearings and the best interests of children are at centre of those cases; and
- Give more protection to victims of domestic abuse and their children.

## Getting It Right for Every Child

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is the national approach in Scotland to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the support they require. A key aspect of the approach is ensuring that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is central to the duties of all practitioners who work with children and young people. It is also incorporated in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2020. The GIRFEC wellbeing indicators: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANNARI), also compliment the UNCRC.

## The Promise

The [Independent Care Review](#) published seven reports on 5th February 2020 which identify and make recommendations for achieving lasting change in Scotland's care system in relation to transforming the care and wellbeing of infants, children and young people. In particular, [The Promise](#) report outlines what Scotland must do to ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe, respected and supported to realise their full potential. Children's rights is a consistent theme throughout The Promise, which states that *Scotland must respect, uphold, champion and defend the rights of children*, recognising that their rights are predominantly realised through relationships with loving and attentive caregivers. The Promise also explicitly states that *Scotland must fully incorporate and uphold the UNCRC*.



## Clusters

For the purpose of this report, a number of Children's Rights, relating to similar themes, have been grouped together into clusters (1-8) to provide an in-depth overview of progression. These clusters also evidence our vision in East Ayrshire of working in partnership to ensure children and young people have the best start in life and are at the heart of everything we do.

### Cluster 1. General Measures of implementation - Do we have the structures and resources to implement the UNCRC? (Articles 4, 41, 42 & 44(6))

Our vision in East Ayrshire is to continue to support, protect and nourish children and young people within our communities. Through our Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-2023, we are committed to ensuring that children and young people have a voice in East Ayrshire and we continue to incorporate the Getting It Right for Every Child principles within our child centred approach to service delivery.

#### What are Human Rights and Children's Rights?

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. Children and young people have the same human rights as adults. They also have specific children's rights under the UNCRC that recognise their special needs so that they can develop to reach their full potential.

#### Children's Rights and Wellbeing

In East Ayrshire, we utilise legislation underpinned by the UNCRC to support decisions for children such as the Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Children (Scotland) Act 2020. This is to support children effectively in relation to family life with brothers and sisters, protection from assault and domestic abuse. We keep a watching brief regarding the move to full incorporation of the UNCRC within Scottish legislation.

All children from birth to age 5 have a full GIRFEC assessment carried out by the named person (Health Visitor) using the SHANARRI, 'My Wider World' assessment and national risk frameworks such as the Resilience Matrix to support analysis of risk. Physical health, psychological health and wellbeing, and financial risk are also considered. Our Health Visitors also have access to Financial Inclusion Officers whom have generated just under 1 million pounds in unclaimed income for families with children aged 5 and under which will help to address poverty in this period of financial hardship and cost of living crisis.

#### Staff Training

We have developed a dedicated spotlight session for practitioners and managers across services focussing on Children's Rights and the UNCRC. Interest across services for this session has been positive, highlighting the commitment and dedication from the workforce to uphold Children's Rights and support understanding of the responsibilities of being a Duty Bearer.



## Rights Respecting Schools Award

All East Ayrshire schools are signed up to UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the basis of all UNICEF's work and its principles are at the heart of the Rights Respecting Schools Award. There are 3 levels to the award: Bronze – Rights Committed, Silver – Rights Aware and Gold – Rights Respecting. Every school has a RRSA co-ordinator who is kept up to date by the education manager who sits on UNICEF's RRSA Leads group and is also part of Education Scotland's UNCRC network. To date, 29 have achieved Bronze, 15 have achieved Silver and 6 have achieved Gold.

## Rights Respecting Early Childhood Centres

Many of our Early Childhood Centres hold or are working towards Rights Respecting Schools awards. Examples include Dalmellington Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (ECC) and Muirkirk Primary School and ECC, with both currently holding silver awards. Fenwick Primary School and ECC has also gained a gold award.

## Early Years Ladder of Participation

The concept of child participation is complex as there is not a 'one size fits all' approach. 'Steps to Participation' is a resource that has been developed by the Teacher Access Programme Team to support early learning and childcare staff self-evaluate their current practice and improve their approaches. Hillbank Early Childhood Centre was the first standalone early learning and childcare establishment in Scotland to achieve a gold award in 2019. Since then staff continue to sustain this level of achievement and contribute to national projects to support the development of approaches to embed the principles of the UNCRC in practice.

## Children and Young People's Committee

The Children and Young People's Committee (formerly Pizza and Coke) was established in 2015 evolving from the Corporate Parenting Group which was comprised of Elected Members, care experienced young people, service managers and Third Sector representatives. Pizza and Coke was formed to give children and



young people a platform to voice their opinions and concerns to leaders on what is important to them on topics such as corporate parenting developments/initiatives, brother and sister family time, education and employment. This committee is currently being refreshed due to declining numbers of young people in attendance impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. By working in partnership with children and young people, the committee will have less public officers at the meeting and continue to develop more ways for young people to have their say.

## Play and Parental Engagement

The Play and Early Intervention Team (PEI) at Vibrant Communities offer many different opportunities for children, families and communities to play. The PEI deliver seasonal events which also promote Article 31 through the "right to play" with the delivery and promotion of outdoor green space areas and free outdoor play events using everyday materials to ensure poverty is not a barrier to access these. Through our Vibrant Communities Services, East Ayrshire participates in the National Playday on an annual basis as well as holding events in communities throughout the year. The Playday 2023 theme focuses on the everyday low-cost or no-cost play adventures that children can enjoy at home, across various settings, and in our communities. Playday encourages families, communities and organisations, large and small, to consider how they can build opportunities for all children to play.



In East Ayrshire, children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential

In order to make our Parental Empowerment provision sustainable, we have worked in partnership with Columba 1400, parents and staff to co-produce a bespoke East Ayrshire values based programme. Programmes are currently underway in Littlemill, New Cumnock and Galston Primary Schools. It is anticipated that another 3 schools (Patna, Netherthird Primary School and Stewarton Academy), will follow in 2023/2024. Across the last 12 months, topical inputs have included: Water Awareness and Deliberate Fire Setting as well as Defibrillator Training by Scottish Fire and Rescue, input from our Stigma Officer, CPR and First Aid Training delivered by the British Red Cross and employability input by colleagues from SL33. SL33 is an employability hub within East Ayrshire Council's Education service who provide much needed supports to children, young people and their families.

The Family Involvement Programme has been delivered in Doon and Grange Academy with parents and carers shaping the programme. Bespoke themed sessions have also taken place focusing on benefits advice including: a Financial Inclusion assistant, Makaton, family cookery on a budget, substance awareness, health and wellbeing, managing teenage behaviour, social media and family budgeting.

### **East Ayrshire Advocacy Services (EAAS)**

The East Ayrshire Advocacy Service continues to advocate for vulnerable people in our communities to ensure that their voices are heard and their views considered when decisions were being made about their lives. Scottish Government funding for East Ayrshire Advocacy's Children's Hearing service was extended for a further two years until March 2024, which will allow for the continued support for children and young people aged 5-18 years who are involved in the Hearing System.

### **The Promise**

The Partnership's Promise Implementation Lead came into post in December 2021 to manage the newly formed Promise Participation and Improvement team, which comprises 3 Reviewing Officers, 3 Participation Leads and a Modern Apprentice for Participation. The team work to influence and achieve positive transformational change in East Ayrshire, ensuring that the voices of children and young people are central in



delivering our aspiration to #keepthepromise. A Promise Oversight Group has been established to take forward and oversee this work, who at the time of reporting, are undertaking a self-evaluation of progress against the outcomes identified in The Promise: Plan 21-24.





The Promise Participation team have established art club groups in both Kilmarnock and Cumnock. These co-curated visual art groups are led by care-experienced young people with an interest in contemporary visual art and activism. The groups enable young people from a range of care backgrounds to creatively engage with the issues that interest and affect them. Members successfully hosted the Agora exhibition in July 2023 reaching a wide audience across the community with their work.

## Bright Spots

In January 2022, the CELCIS Bright Spots survey programme was launched in Scotland to identify what was important to care experienced children and young people. East Ayrshire was one of three pilot areas who took part in the programme. The aim of the pilot was to understand how young people feel about their lives and for Local Authorities to action on what young people are feeding back. The East Ayrshire survey was co-developed with care experienced young people and following the analysis of feedback, we recognise that we need to think more widely and take the time to ask how children and young people are feeling and what their frame of mind is like. We are committed to The Promise and the Bright Spots programme further enabled us to put children and young people's voices at the heart of everything we do.



#keepthepromise

Our care experienced community also had an opportunity to share their views through this survey which the Promise Participation team implemented in 2022. Their feedback, along with the findings from a self-evaluation exercise regarding our progress in delivering on the Promise Plan 21-24 outcomes, has enabled the Promise Oversight Group to identify a number of key priorities within our Promise Implementation Plan. A Hope Hack was also hosted in partnership with The Hope Collective and What Matters to You to gather young people's views and change ideas around 7 key issues including: education, employment, youth work, housing, feeling safe in the community and the environment. We are hoping to take this work forward through a youth leadership academy in which young people will be supported to develop the leadership skills to identify and take forward the change ideas that arose from the Hackathon event.

A number of our teams and services are working on projects to explore how we can better facilitate and enable the participation of children and young people in decision making forums such as reviews and planning meetings. East Ayrshire has also taken steps to involve care experienced young people in the recruitment of social work staff and hope to establish this as a standard model in the future.



## Children's Houses

The Promise puts an emphasis on how we look after and support the people who directly care for our children. We were pleased to offer six day Social Pedagogy training to all Residential Workers during 2022/23, to equip our carers with the skills and resilience to meet the needs of our young people. The outstanding values of our staff were demonstrated in the Residential survey, with the top answer for what made their job most enjoyable in the last year being the relationships that staff had with our young people. This finding illustrates our commitment to 'The Promise' and the ask that we "find people who will be passionate and deeply care about the young people who we look after".



Our children's houses have been working hard to develop their understanding and commitment to meeting the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people. These children and young people often arrive in the UK with little in the way of possessions, English language, and understanding of the context within which they will be placed. Additionally many have been through traumatic events both at home and whilst travelling to the UK. Our children's house staff have developed an effective skill-set in welcoming these young people and being part of the team around them, which upholds their rights from translation services, through to meeting dietary requirements, being able to practice their religion and ensuring that they have social connections with other young people from similar backgrounds. Health needs and access to education are similarly prioritised to ensure that our unaccompanied young people have access to what any of their peers would have. We have been pleased to see one of our young people demonstrate their artistic abilities, showcasing their work at a local art event.

We have carefully considered how we write about children who live in our houses and how we capture their voice so that they are active participants in how they are cared for and what is written about them. Our houses are currently implementing new recording practices featuring changes to the language we use about children, helping practitioners to think about the child's rights when they write about them, and thinking about how we actively collaborate with children and young people to create a rich and thoughtful record of their time in their care. Many of our young people have large 'gaps' in their history when they look back on their lives due to so much change and loss, and as such we want to create an easily understandable picture for them to look back on, to help them piece together what has happened to them and answer some of the questions as to why it happened.

Additionally our houses continue to work to promote relationships for children and young people who have moved on. This has come in a number of ways, including examples of meeting up for social visits, helping a young person to practically and emotionally deal with the loss of their pet, and ensuring that young people know that there is always an 'open door' should they need any help. This is an essential requirement for us as a service as we seek to uphold the rights of many of the young people we have known who often have few natural support networks of their own.

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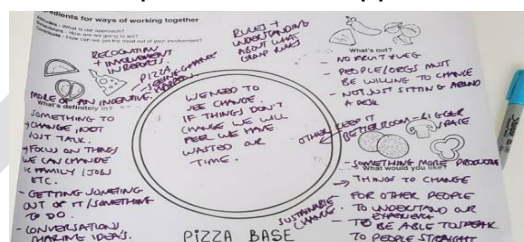


In East Ayrshire, children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential



## Whole System Approach

The Whole System Approach aims to divert children and young people away from formal Court processes and adult justice systems, recognising that these systems do not meet the needs of our children and young people. The team work in partnership with the Police, Procurator Fiscal and local solicitors to provide additional information regarding children and young people to help with decision making and consideration of alternatives to prosecution. The Whole System Multi-agency team have worked to replicate the national agenda of promoting Children's Rights and ensure that children who are in conflict with the law are still treated as children. The team have been working with partner agencies to address concerns reported by the public around our children and young people and have organised activities to provide more opportunities. Our Whole System Coordinators have worked to ensure that every child and young person under the age of 21 is offered support through Court. Some of these children and young people have been successfully diverted through remittal to the children hearing and the diversion from the prosecution process.



The voice of children and young people has also been a key area of focus for the Whole System Approach. Since June 2022, 6 young adults aged 18-25 have been supported to participate in a national study through the Scottish Universities Insight Institute, exploring young adults' experiences of the Justice system and co-designing more positive services in the local area. The group identified issues and stigmatisation in employment, making it difficult for them to gain experience and career opportunities. As a result, we have invited our partners within local community employment services to listen to the feedback and help create solutions to the issues raised. This group continues to meet, facilitated by Whole System Coordinators. Children in secure care and alternatives to secure care have also been supported through the Whole System Approach, developing guidance and through providing continued advice and support to colleagues on supporting children and young people effectively.

## Who Cares? Scotland

In East Ayrshire, Who Cares? Scotland provide independent advocacy for children and young people who are looked after and accommodated, and young people in East Ayrshire who are going through the permanency process. The service aims to:

- Provide individual representation, support and advocacy for a child or young person, where appropriate at meetings, panels and reviews;
- Assist the child or young person to understand and access complaints systems, understand Care Inspectorate standards and the level of service that is expected from the Scottish Social Services Council code of conduct and local authority policies / procedures;
- Provide information and support on rights and responsibilities;
- Work in with the Commissioners to raise awareness on issues affecting young people;
- Support the child or young person to become involved in sharing their experiences to directly influence policy, practice and training both locally and nationally;
- Participate / lead consultation with the child or young person and others regarding specific local themes and other areas linked to policies and activities, for example Service reviews;
- Encourage and involve the child or young person in local forums; and
- Provide opportunities for young people to be actively involved in organisation governance and to participate in national work such as campaigning, policy review and training delivery.



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## 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? (Articles 2, 3, 6 & 12)

### Mind of My Own

Mind of My Own is a software application utilised within Children's Services to gather children and young people's views. Young people can use it independently or be supported to express feelings about their wellbeing and on a range of issues that are important to them. An 'Express App' is also available for younger children with additional support needs.



#### Young person:

*"Its great that I can use it at any time. It helps me remember what I want to say"*

Mind of My Own empowers young people to have a voice and ensures that their views and feelings are heard, whilst providing an attractive way for children and young people to start the conversation. The app also enables staff to capture and evidence their views, ensuring they are heard and considered, meeting quality standards relating to the voice of the child.

### East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Cabinet

East Ayrshire's Children and Young Peoples Cabinet provides a platform for young people to highlight issues that affect them, whilst also contributing to local priorities and partners. Cabinet Members help to raise the profile of young people by joint working with Council Cabinet Officers and the Executive Officers of the Community Planning Partnership Team for East Ayrshire. This provides young people an excellent opportunity and platform to have their say through consultation and young people's interests are considered.



### Vibrant Communities

Our Vibrant Communities service has been operating since April 2013 and the approach is widely recognised to inform the community empowerment agenda across Scotland and the United Kingdom. Vibrant Communities adopts an innovative and often life-changing approach to service development and delivery, empowering members of our communities both young and old, to live happy, healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.

Youth Voice is embedded into all areas of work including planning, delivery and evaluations. Youth work ensures that all staff must include consultation with young people in the planning stages and evidence the need within their practice. Participants are asked for feedback on all sessions and evaluations highlight the impacts made for young people. Regular Team Around the Child multiagency meetings also take place and the Child's Plan ensures that children and young people are at the centre of all decision making.



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## Education

All East Ayrshire schools have pupil councils, with representatives from across the school. This allows them to be fully involved in all decision making related to the school. There is also a Rights Respecting Schools Award group for pupils where they are involved in the bronze, silver or gold level that the school is working towards, ensuring that all pupils are made aware of their rights as per the articles of the UNCRC. Schools use various tools for gaining the views of children and young people including 'Starting a Conversation' and 'Mind of My Own'. Children and young people are encouraged to be involved in their Wellbeing Assessments, Child Plans, to attend their Team Around the Child meetings and to contribute as much as possible.

### Statutory Consultation on Early Learning and Childcare

In 2022, 256 children aged 3 and 4 years who attended nine ELC settings and a sample group of childminders, shared their views about their time spent in early learning and childcare as part of the Statutory Consultation. A summary of key themes was included in a report to Cabinet on 18 January 2023 which can be found [here](#). Feedback from children on meals has also been used to inform the design of menus.

### Transition

In 2023, the early learning and childcare participation working party has focussed on developing approaches to include children's feelings and preferences as part of the process of transitioning from early learning and childcare to school. This work has led to the development of a practice note which includes guidance and suggestions for practitioners on approaches to consulting with children. All children attending a funded ELC setting in East Ayrshire have the opportunity to formally share their views as part of the process of transitioning to school.

### Enhanced Transition

The Home Link Team coordinated and delivered an Enhanced Transition programme for 188 pupils across all seven Education Groups. Throughout the academic year, 124 sessions took place accumulating in 166 hours of input. This enhanced service is greatly benefited by pupils and their families with feedback collated highlighting good practice:

**Parent/Carer:**

*"I feel less anxious about my child going to school after her positive experiences in the programme"*

**Parent/Carer:**

*"My child has made new friends and looking forward to going to Grange Academy"*

**Parent/Carer:**

*"Thank you for including C, he loved going along to Grange every week and meeting staff and doing activities"*



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## Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA)

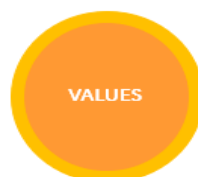
SCRA is committed to partnership working with East Ayrshire Council including sharing information to enhance processes, to benefit children and young people, creating the best possible outcomes for them. The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration Ayrshire are committed to ensuring decisions taken reflect SCRA’s core values. SCRA’s commitment to child centred, trauma informed decision making. In addition, the SCRA Kilmarnock office is currently being refurbished to ensure the hearing centre is suitable for those with sensory needs and adopts a trauma aware design further supporting East Ayrshire’s child centred approach.



Children and young people will be listened to, protected and supported to have a positive future where they are safe, valued and respected.



We protect and support Scotland’s children and young people by making high quality decisions, upholding their rights and working collaboratively as compassionate, inclusive Corporate Parents to enable the most positive and personalised experience possible of the Children’s Hearings System.



**Supportive:** We work with kindness to support children and families, our partners and each other.  
**Child Centred:** Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.  
**Respectful:** Everyone is respected and treated fairly, inclusively and lawfully.  
**Accountable:** We are responsible for our decisions, our ethics and our learning.

## Children’s Hearing

The Child Friendly Scheduling project is now underway across Ayrshire. The purpose of the project is to ensure that times of Hearings are made more flexible to fit around children’s lives, so that children attending Hearings within East Ayrshire will have a choice about the date, time and location of their Hearing (whether that be physical or virtual). The project aims to provide a more personal and bespoke service to every child and young person attending Hearings in order to maximise their opportunity to participate.

Assistant Reporters have been contacting the link person for review Hearings, to collate and action the child’s preferences. This is taking a considerable amount of time to organise, however this will make a very positive impact to children’s experiences of attending and participating in hearings. Data collated from the local pilot is displayed below:

	YES	NO	TOTAL
Child received their preference on date	96.43% 27	3.57% 1	28
Children received their preference on timing	100.00% 30	0.00% 0	30
Children received their preference on location	100.00% 31	0.00% 0	31
Children received their choice of Model (eg. F2F or Virtual)	100.00% 29	0.00% 0	29
Child wants to participate in their Hearing from the identified school	7.69% 2	92.31% 24	26
Child wants to participate from the identified school and is arranged to do so	7.69% 2	92.31% 24	26
No preference	61.11% 11	38.89% 7	18



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This data shows how effectively we are fulfilling the preference of requests received. In 100% of cases, children who expressed a preference went on to receive their preferred time, location and method of participation (face-to-face or virtual). 96.4% of children received their preferred date, meaning one child did not receive their preferred date due to the checklist being returned too late, which was fed back to partners to emphasise the importance of prompt return of checklists meeting deadlines. On two occasions (7.69%), the child wished to attend from their school which was facilitated. Schools have been supportive of children seeking to attend virtually from the school campus and have put arrangements in place for this to happen.

### NHS Ayrshire and Arran

The NHS Ayrshire and Arran (NHSAA) Corporate Parenting Task Force and NHS Corporate Parenting Strategic Programme Board have been established to help NHSAA drive forward actions required to meet our children's needs and be the best corporate parents that we can be for them. These new groups are underpinned by a robust governance and reporting structure to provide updates and assurance to the board's responsible director for Looked After Children and the NHS Board around corporate parenting activity and duties. These groups and structures facilitate reflection, improvement action and fulfilment of reporting requirements in system areas more specific to health, and allow for more efficient collaborative working. The Task Force has its own participation workstream, led by Corporate Parenting Leads from East, North and South Ayrshire Councils, to ensure we seek and action the voices and experiences of children and young people and their families to inform improvement work and system redesign whilst ensuring the rights respecting participation of our care experienced children.

### Health Visiting and School Nursing

During all contacts and health needs assessments, both school nurses and staff nurses are aware of the importance of listening to children and young people's voices. Their voices and views are captured in an age appropriate way and by which method they prefer. Some prefer tablet and electronic methods, some like using play with the sandbox, others prefer to walk and talk and some opt for writing it down. Children and young people will have access to advocacy services to support children express their views and inform decision making.

**Young person:**  
*"I feel like my brain is a racing train and all my thoughts are like loads of passengers trying to jump aboard all at once. These sessions make me feel really calm and my brain gets to be an empty train"*

Within Health Visiting, Children's Assessments are child focused with a holistic approach in ensuring all children's needs are met. Within the Child protection sphere, this is approached as a Team Around the Child to ensure all agencies who are supporting the child and family have the opportunity to share their assessment of the child to ensure correct support is in place and is meeting the needs of the individual. Where children are non-verbal/not yet verbal, evidence of the child's behaviours and reactions to situations are shared with family/carers/Team Around the Child/Child Protection forums to ensure the voice of the child can be demonstrated. A new test of change in the East Health Visitor Team is the use of an infant mental health tool that will provide a shared language to support the voice of the child. Health Visitors support and facilitate the formation of positive early relationships between the infant and the caregiver, setting the foundation to support child development and promote the family's wellbeing. This supports parents and carers to understand infant crying as a form of early communication, to enable responsive care and promote infant confidence and security.



## **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? (Articles 7,8,13,14,15,16 & 17)**

In East Ayrshire, through our Vibrant Communities service, we provide young people with information and awareness of the Young Scot website and opportunities that they could benefit from in terms of its rewards. As well as this, important and personal information can be obtained from this platform that enables children and young people to seek supports that they may require.

Hate crime is an area which is under constant review in East Ayrshire and at the highest level of scrutiny, ensuring that children and young people and their families are protected within their community. Highlighted below are some workstreams which help protect those most vulnerable within local communities:

- Youth work provides LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) young people with a safe and secure environment to participate in a range of universal activities and discuss issues that matter to them. More young people are aware of LGBT+ issues and some schools now have LGBT+ support groups run by pupils. The Terence Higgins Trust, in partnership with East Ayrshire Council, runs an LGBT+ group for people who are aged 18 and over, where local LGBT people and families and friends can talk about issues that are relevant to them;
- The 'Things Tae Dae' user led group for individuals who have learning disabilities, helps them to live full and independent lives in their communities and to develop their skills, talents and abilities. The 'Things Tae Dae' Group applied for and was successful in gaining Participatory Budgeting funding to produce a drama production, based on real life experience, and a DVD on Hate Crime. The drama production and DVD was shown to all Primary 7 pupils in the Cumnock area and at Cumnock Town Hall to a range of partner agencies across East Ayrshire;
- Campus police officers located within East Ayrshire's secondary schools continue to work with partners from the Council's Education Service and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the impact that hate crime has on victims and communities, and proactively encourage the reporting of hate crime; and
- The Campus Liaison Officer at Ayrshire College delivered a range of workshops, including Hate Crime and Third Party workshops, for students and staff, to support the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals.

East Ayrshire pupils are encouraged to express their views and opinions and can do this on a one to one basis or through various groups and forums. Every child and young person has a named person in the school to support them and ensure their rights are upheld. They are made aware of their right to privacy and through 'Getting It Right For Every Child', and we have information sharing guidance which is followed by practitioners. Children and young people have a national information sharing charter and access to our Safer Schools app which ensures they continuously receive up to date and relevant information.



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## Intensive Support Team

Over the last year, the Intensive Support Team has continued to provide support to our children, young people and families. The team continues to support a number of children and young people to remain in their communities, by offering a mix of tailored individual support and group activity opportunities for development and fun.

Two Social Workers were trained in Therapeutic Life Story Work (TLSW). This approach aims to not only help the young person understand their story, but also make sense and create meaning from their trauma, loss and experiences, as well as building resilience. TLSW provides increased opportunities for children and young people, and going forward the aim is for all staff to be trained in trauma informed approaches as well as working with play.



Group work and seasonal activities have continued to evolve, with an established calendar of group work now in place, offering opportunities for children and young people to express themselves through a range of activities from cooking to music. The Intensive Support team delivered a summer programme including gorge walking, cinema trips and gym passes for care experienced young people and young people. By offering these activities, the team were able to divert a number of children and young people from being involved in negative behaviours and conflict with the law in their communities. Key to success is working with partners like the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

to offer young people an opportunity to earn qualifications whilst becoming more informed about the Fire Service and participating in drills. This provides a range of learning, skills building and an opportunity to earn SQA, Saltire and John Muir Awards.

## Health Visiting Service

From day 11, Health Visitors in East Ayrshire are supporting families to ensure registration with a GP and encourage parents to register birth within 21 days. An assessment of family values, cultures, religion and community involvement is carried out and families are encouraged to participate within their community. Values and religious beliefs are respected and encouraged to ensure children have access to supports and acceptance within their own communities and extended families. Child protection training is provided to all staff working within the Early Years service to ensure early help and support, intervention and access to specialist services are received timeously to make sure children's needs are promoted, respected and protected.

## Violence Against Woman Partnership

The East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (EAVAWP) brings together individuals and organisations who can provide a comprehensive partnership response to violence against women. The EAVAWP is a large multiagency partnership which incorporates a wide range of public and independent organisations such as:

- East Ayrshire Council (Housing, Social Work, Education and Early Years);
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran;



- Strathclyde Police;
- Scottish Reporters;
- Procurator Fiscal Office;
- Kilmarnock Prison;
- Ayrshire College;
- South West Scotland Criminal Justice Authority;
- Victim Support;
- East Ayrshire Women's Aid;
- East Ayrshire Rape Counselling and Resource Centre; and
- Break the Silence.



The EAVAWP has a [Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#), which identifies key issues and themes surrounding violence against women and children, and outlines actions we have collectively agreed to tackle. In April 2022, the EAVAWP conducted a woman's survey across communities to gain views from woman and girls aged 16 and over, seeking their perception of personal safety in East Ayrshire. A total of 366 participants took part in the survey, with the findings being available on the East Ayrshire Council [website](#).

The EAVAWP coordinates the 16 Days of Action campaign every year. In 2023, a focus will be on Commercial Sexual Exploitation, including case studies of care experienced young people who are vulnerable and have been exploited. This will also consider the increased number of young people, male and female who are on 'Only Fans' and other sites. This is commercial sexual exploitation and very much violence against children.



## Cluster 4. Violence Against Children - to what extent do we uphold (Article 37(a))

Staff across all services respond to any concern or safety issues in relation to children and young people, recognising that it is everyone's responsibility to protect children at home, in school or within the community. All East Ayrshire staff follow procedures outlined in national guidance (Child Protection in Scotland 2021).

We have implemented the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act with multi-agency practitioners and within community settings, and we have specific guidance in place to promote good practice. Our Whole System working group have been promoting The Rights Respecting Approach to Justice for Children and Young People. Services in East Ayrshire have been benchmarking practice and processes against standards for those working with children in conflict with the law. As a Council, we are currently in the process of implementing the National Child Protection Guidance (2021), which will further strengthen our local practice of supporting young people within GIRFEC planning.

### Safety within Educational Establishments

All schools in East Ayrshire have access to a Campus Police Officer. Each Campus Officer can work with groups of pupils or address particular issues on a one to one basis. All secondary schools across East Ayrshire have Mentors Against Violence Prevention and all schools have a Child Protection Co-ordinator who follow child protection processes and safeguarding guidance. Kilmarnock Academy is currently rolling out Equally Safe within the school and Equally Safe At School (ESAS) training is delivered to all staff. The school has also delivered ESAS workshops to S1, S3 and S5 pupils. with the remainder being covered at the beginning of this term. These workshops were delivered by Rape Crisis Scotland and focused on gender based violence topics appropriate to age and stage. For example, consent was covered with older pupils and there was a focus on social media with younger pupils.

### Child Protection

The Child Protection Committee is a partnership between East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Police Scotland, Scottish Children's Reports Administration (SCRA), Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, East Ayrshire Children's Panel and the Third Sector. The East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is committed to raising awareness and understanding of child protection and promoting child safety, wellbeing and health.



We have developed a Multi-agency Children's Services Learning and Development Strategy which sets out the key priorities for developing the workforce across Children's Services in East Ayrshire. The development of a competent and confident workforce will enable services within East Ayrshire to deliver positive outcomes for children, young people and families through prevention, early intervention and effective protective measures when necessary. All multi-agency Children's Services learning and development activity is underpinned by the following three strategic priorities:



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1. Collaborative working, providing quality services aimed at responding effectively to the needs, risks and circumstances of children;
2. Early and effective intervention, thereby building strong and secure relationships, to enable sustainable change; and
3. Effective inter-agency communication enhanced public information and meaningful engagement.

NHSAA Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Addictions staff receive training on Childhood Sexual Abuse as part of their core Routine Enquiry training. All Routine Enquiry training covers Child Protection and has a trauma informed approach. It includes Safe and Together materials and discusses the impact of domestic abuse on young people. School Nurses also explain to children that no one is allowed to cause them harm. Within the East Health Visiting Team, any unmet need is addressed and child protection measures are put in place timeously to prevent further harm for children who cannot yet verbally communicate. It includes Safe and Together materials and discusses the impact of Domestic Abuse on children and young people.

### **East Ayrshire Joint Investigative Interview**

Joint Investigative Interviews are conducted by trained Police Officers and Social Workers where there is a concern that a child is a victim of, or witness to, criminal conduct and where information suggests that the child has been or is being abused or neglected or may be at risk of significant harm. We have implemented the new Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) in Ayrshire with East Ayrshire being the lead authority. At the heart of this is a more therapeutic approach to interview and recovery. Where children and young people are over the age of 16 but not yet 18 years of age in conflict with the law, we have actively sought alternative places of safety to Police custody to further support the Council's child centred approach.

### **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

East Ayrshire, along with North and South Ayrshire and multi-agency partners, have fully implemented MARAC which protects victims and their children at risk of death or significant harm as a result of domestic abuse. The East Ayrshire MARAC meets monthly to risk assess and safety plan for victims and children. The MARAC interfaces as appropriate with child and adult protection frameworks to ensure an effective and integrated safeguarding approach. The MARAC also provides access to specialist violence against women and children services.

### **Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)**

GIRFEC is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right place. We want to ensure that every child in East Ayrshire has the best start in life and we are committed to provide children, young people and their families with the best possible support.



The eight core indicators collectively known as SHANARRI are displayed in the adjacent chart. Each indicator is individually defined, however they can overlap and connect with other indicators which provide a holistic overview of each child and adults supporting them to consider strengths as well as growth. The Team Around the Child (TAC) is the operational means of the Single Planning Process supporting the Child's Plan in East Ayrshire for children from birth until 18 years of age. TAC is a key delivery mechanism for GIRFEC in East Ayrshire.



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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? (Articles 5,10,11,18,19,20,21,25,27 & 39)

We know that children achieve the best short, medium and longer term outcomes and aspirations where they are able to live with their family, when it is safe for them to do so. In East Ayrshire, we offer support and guidance to parents and carers to provide the best possible family environment. We recognise and uphold the right of children and young people to be well looked after out with family units when necessary and to remain protected and nurtured. We have a range of support streams and networks to provide effective family support, including:

- One to one support for children, young people and their families with a focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap;
- Parents/carers are linked with the Financial Inclusion Team and Universal Credit Team to access advice and support;
- Clear communication systems (SEEMIS and AYRshare) with timely and detailed chronologies ensures no missed opportunity to identify any raised concerns;
- Lifeskills and Inclusion provide access to free and confidential supports for Adults and Families looking to brush up on their reading, writing and number skills through family literacy approach to delivery. Family Literacies allows for parents and children to learn together through fun numeracy and literacy based learning activities. These supports ensure parents are equipped with person centred literacy and numeracy skills that best supports their personal, work, family and community life. It aims to impact positively on their child's learning and their engagement with their children in literacy and numeracy skills;
- Lifeskills and Inclusion provide English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL) supports to adults and their family unit to allow families to learning speaking, communication and core literacy and numeracy skills where English is not their first language;
- Support through the children & young people's befriending service allows children and young people to have time out with the family home and someone to talk to for social connections; and
- The PEI have the delivery and connections established with families through the support of the home link workers supporting specifically care experienced children and young people and ensuring these care arrangements are fully meeting the children's needs.

As echoed in The Promise, keeping families together when possible, is at the forefront of all supports and actions. Health Visitors complete GIRFEC Assessments for each child aged under 5 years which provides a single agency plan to support and maintain the family unit. This further incorporates other agencies and Third Sector services to provide additional supports. Children and young people are at the centre of all assessments and plans, with their voice being heard. Intensive family support plans are put in place to support families to remain together safely, which is put in place at the earliest opportunity. Children are asked their views on how they envisage their family when looked after and accommodated (LAAC). Keeping siblings together when alternative care is sought is always a priority, in addition to contact with parents and biological family members for LAAC children.



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## Corporate Parenting

The Fostering service continues to place a high emphasis on hearing the voice of each child who lives with a foster carer. This happens not only at annual review but also through the work of the Team Around the Child and access to advocacy through WhoCares? Scotland. In East Ayrshire, we are working towards the Fostering service playing a key role in keeping families together and ensuring their right to family life. This is evolving in a number of ways through the offer of support from experienced foster carers to birth families, to more substantive support such as the offer of regular short breaks.

Our Adoption service continues to balance the outcome of ensuring that every child coming into contact with the service achieves the right to be part of a stable family unit. This requires sensitivity in looking to the future and finding the best possible family for that child, through methodical linking and matching processes, and also reflecting on the past to recognise the rights of the child to know about their family of birth and indeed support birth parents to navigate a difficult experience. Ensuring that information relating to the child, their birth family and the prospective family, is known thoroughly and shared appropriately is key to upholding the rights of each child who has been affected by adoption. A commitment to child appreciation days and robust post-adoption support plans seeks to ensure that a child's journey, both past and future, is captured and planned for.

The growth of kinship care in recent years has realised the benefits of children and young people living with relatives and friends, albeit away from home, and all the benefits that derive from that. However, many kinship carers experience a range of challenges which make being a kinship carer difficult at times. The Kinship Support service work with kinship carers who are experiencing the most significant challenges. They work to provide a range of interventions including emotional, practical and training support to kinship carers, ensuring that they are equipped with the resources and support they require to provide the best possible family environment for the child that they care for. Our recent training event for kinship carers in relation to understanding trauma and what it means for parenting, was particularly well received by carers who gave some very positive feedback in regards to how relevant the training was in meeting the needs of the children they care for.

## Housing Services

Housing Services work in partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership to develop and build sustainable affordable homes across East Ayrshire. These homes help deliver key services, allowing families to stay together with the aid of adaptations and provide secure family units. Housing to 2040 is the Scottish Government's first long-term national housing strategy with a vision for the future provision of housing for the people of Scotland. East Ayrshire Council's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2019-24 sets out local objectives that support the Scottish Government's aspirations for everyone to have access to a warm, safe, affordable and energy-efficient home that meets their needs, in a community they feel a part of and proud of.



**Bellevue Road, Kilmarnock**



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The Council's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) continues to deliver a variety of homes across different sizes and types in response to the aims and objectives set out in the

LHS, including eradicating fuel poverty and improving house conditions across all tenures; with the provision of affordable and efficient homes contributing to reducing child poverty. Each new build Council home allows for a work / study space within the living room and is capable of receiving broadband installations as part of the warm, energy efficient homes delivery to support pupils and students to achieve their potential.



**Bellevue Road, Kilmarnock**

The Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) for East Ayrshire 2021/22, the third Report for the authority, has been produced in line with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Although this reporting duty is placed solely on local authorities and health boards, development of East Ayrshire's LCPAR has been undertaken across the wider Community Planning Partnership to reflect the ongoing partnership approach to child poverty. The LCPAR 2021/22 also notes the site starts achieved by both the Council and RSL partners of 104 homes and 29 homes respectively, with 18 of these Council homes part of the Council's first net-zero housing development.



**Mill O'Sheilds, Drongan**

East Ayrshire had a level of relative child (aged 0-19 years) poverty of 19.1% during 2020/21, 3.8 PPs higher than the national rate of 15.3%. This equates to 4,935 children and young people aged 0-19 living in poverty within our communities and underlines the significant challenge this presents. During 2020/21, East Ayrshire had the 3rd highest level of child poverty of the 32 Scottish local authorities, with only Glasgow City and North Ayrshire experiencing higher rates.

Nationally, child poverty levels are projected to continue to rise in future years. Research commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2018 on forecasting child poverty suggests that relative child poverty (after housing costs), will increase to between 35-38% by 2030 depending on the extent of policy implementation. Applying this estimate locally suggests that nearly 9,000 children and young people could be living in relative poverty by 2030 unless effective action is taken to mitigate against it. This situation is likely to be further exacerbated by the current cost of living crisis.

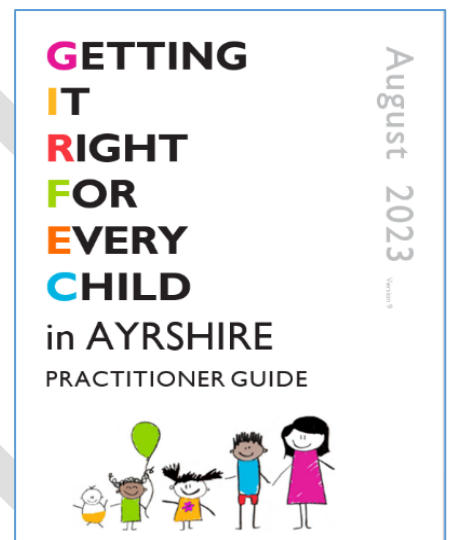




Set against these statistics, the LCPAR 2021/22 outlines the work across services led by the Community Planning Partnership with the aim of improving outcomes for local people, tackling inequality, and addressing the underlying drivers of child poverty. Specifically in relation to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), it notes that the AHSP continues to deliver 12 homes of sizes and types in response to aims and objectives set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24.

### Education

All schools follow the 'Missing From Education' protocol to identify any children or young people who stop attending school. There are many forums and support mechanisms for parents and carers to help them support their children within education. Schools respect the rights of each parent who have parental responsibilities. Schools signpost to the Financial Inclusion Team to ensure families are receiving the financial support they are entitled to. GIRFEC processes are currently moving to a team with the Family model to ensure that those working with parents and carers are also involved as part of the plan for the child/young person. This will provide more holistic support and also aligns with our HEART (Help Everyone At the Right Time) wellbeing model.



### The Blue Triangle

East Ayrshire works closely with the Blue Triangle Housing Association, in delivering supported accommodation for our care experienced young people. The promotion of children and young people's rights is a key role of this service to equip our young people with knowledge and an understanding of their rights and the confidence to exercise them as they develop into adulthood.

Blue Triangle developed a learning tool to give young people a better understanding of their rights pertaining to the four Categories identified below, with young people consulted as part of the development process.

Care Review – The Promise	SHANARRI and GIRFEC Indicators	The Law and You – Legislation	UNCRC
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A unique learning tool was created with a similar look and feel to a popular board game, but with additional sections involving 'all players', which generates confidence through group work. This approach was chosen as it provided opportunities for experiential learning, allowing young people to learn by doing, making young people's motivation to learn more natural, as it makes learning more fun.



The tool provides a better understanding of children and young people's rights, as these are areas many supported young people are not familiar with. This learning resource was disseminated across East Ayrshire Council areas and throughout the Blue Triangle Housing Association. Blue Triangle have subsequently embedded the learning tool into their learning platform for all staff to access. They created a [You Tube](#) video and in-house webinar which allows supported young people and practitioners to see what this learning tool looks and feels like.

### East Ayrshire Carers Centre

The East Ayrshire Carers Centre is a registered charity service who offer a carer led service by placing carers at the heart of the organisation and ensuring the services are effective and accessible to all carers regardless of location (urban or rural), personal circumstances or their caring situation. East Ayrshire Carers Centre offer support across young carers, young adult carers, and provide a range of wellbeing and support groups.

### Young Carers

During weekly groups, the East Ayrshire Carers Centre deliver sporting activities, arts and crafts, games, relaxation activities, themed nights, and social events for our young carers. This is in addition to providing training sessions around more serious issues including bullying, alcohol and drug misuse, healthy eating, debt and budgeting, internet safety and personal care. To ensure that every young carer receives a hot meal, dinner and desserts are also provided during the sessions. There are currently around 250 young carers attending these groups each week. Through listening to young people and their needs around mental health issues, the Carers Centre have introduced additional support groups around football, art and music. New music, art and football groups have also recently been implemented as a way to address growing concerns for young carers mental health. In accordance with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, every Young Carer is legally entitled to receive a Young Carers statement. Throughout the past year, East Ayrshire Carers Centre have made consistent efforts to complete as many Young Carers statements as possible.



To celebrate Christmas this year, a Christmas party for all of our young carers was held which included booking a large church hall, bus travel and a DJ. The Christmas party was a success and all the young carers had a great time dancing, eating at the buffet, meeting Santa and Mrs. Clause and receiving a selection box. Each year on Christmas Eve the Carers Centre make sure to bring joy to every single young carer on this project and their siblings by delivering large bags filled with presents. By providing these gifts, they aim to alleviate some of the stress that Christmas can bring to the families, particularly during the current cost of living crisis. Last Christmas, a total of 214 presents were gifted to young carers in East Ayrshire as well as gifting presents to 87 siblings.



**East Ayrshire Carers Centre case study:** We recently registered a young carer aged 14 to our service. He has had Alopecia since he was young as a result has been the victim of bullying at the way through school. He has always struggled to make any new friends and this has led to him having absolutely no self-esteem or confidence. Last year his dad became unwell that left him requiring care 24/7. This has added another huge strain to the young carers life with him no longer wanting to go to school and becoming anxious when even leaving his house. When we registered him, his mum was very apprehensive and didn't believe her would engage with any of our service.

After a long 1 to 1 session with our young carers support officer, the young carers decided he would come along to one group and see how he felt about it. During his first group he sat in the corner and preferred to just observe the games and activities rather than join in. The staff made sure to keep chatting to him so that he still felt included despite not taking part. Over the next few weeks he continued to attend the groups becoming slightly more confident each week. In the most recent Young Carers group, he opted to sit at a table with other young carers and involved himself in their conversations, and at the end of the group his peers encouraged him to join in the last few games. His mum has since been in touch to say that she can't thank us enough for the work we're doing and she can't believe how big a difference she's seen in such a small time-frame. Since the Christmas holidays the boy has also been back at school every day which is a massive success.

### HEART Wellbeing Model

East Ayrshire has developed the HEART (Help Everyone At the Right Time) wellbeing model which is based on the principles of early help and community based support. We have listened to families' experiences and know that many struggle to get help when and where they need it. The model was given the name 'HEART' an idea suggested by a parent and chosen through a public vote. A range of local services including: Education, Early Years, School Nursing, Health Visiting, CAMHS, Vibrant Communities, Social Work, Housing and Allied Health Professionals, have developed Community Teams, which were formally established on 4th April 2022. Recruitment has been ongoing to develop these teams, following funding being secured for Implementation Coordinators who will work alongside the Programme lead to support the Community Teams to work effectively together. As HEART continues to embed over the coming months and years, we hope that families and communities will experience the anticipated benefits in terms of early help and support. Our HEART model won a Bronze iESE Customer Focus Award in March 2023, in recognition that the Partnership has delivered an outstanding service through a transformational approach, to children and families.



### Children's Services

We have a tailored Family Support service and a Intensive Family Support service to maintain families of origins to live safely in communities and also to support all families including fostering, kinship and adoptive families. We have also carefully reflected on the findings and recommendations from the Independent Care Review to ensure we #KeepThePromise made to Scotland's children and families. In East Ayrshire, we want to make sure that we 'Help Everyone At the Right Time' by making support available at an early stage and in the local communities where people live.



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East Ayrshire has a multi-agency governance and scrutiny out with placement group to consider children's experiences when being cared for away from their respective communities with private providers. We also have an expectation that children in our direct care will have regular checks for their wellbeing. Local practice is for children and young people to have a Wellbeing Assessment updated and reviewed, every 12 months as a minimum.

### Family Support Team

The Family Support team continue to support families through providing a number of interventions. Seasonal activities have resumed and took place throughout the Easter, summer, October and winter holidays, enabling families to take part in a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, messy play, physical play and song/story time, and to make those all-important memories together. Families are supported to attend by the team and the activities also serve as an opportunity for signposting to additional supports, such as food larders or other community events.

Weekend activities have taken place throughout the year, offering families positive, low cost and easily accessible community activities that focus on health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation and fostering positive attachments. The weekend activities build on the work and relationships nurtured with families who work alongside the team through group work activity, focussed work and family time.



Group work activity within the Family Support service expanded throughout 2022, with a variety of groups being held across the authority that focus on: bringing people together with shared aims, promoting positive social interactions, decreasing social isolation, upskilling parents, carers and young people, and linking people to their local community. Groups that operated throughout 2022/23 included:

- Conversation Café – A weekly early morning get together for parents who may not be ready to attend parent and toddler groups. Focuses on parents with similar circumstances meeting to share strategies and offer peer support;
- Parent Chat – A 6 weekly parent's group offering help and advice with routine, boundaries, self-care and the importance of play;
- Let's Get Organised – Running in 6-8 week blocks, focuses on home conditions, improving day to day household management, improving hygiene in the home and building problem solving skills;
- Dad's Group – Aimed at dads and father figures, focusing on reducing social isolation, increasing knowledge and confidence in play, increasing knowledge of child development and dealing with challenging circumstances when parenting; and
- Boys Club – Delivered April-July 2022, focusing on health and wellbeing activities for boys aged 10-15 years. Five young people attended regularly throughout the programme and took part in cooking, boxing and outdoor play opportunities in a safe, non-judgemental environment.



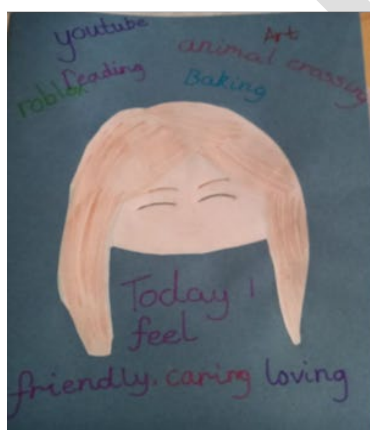
## Cluster 6. Basic Health and Welfare - to what extent do we promote health and welfare and consider the need of children who are disabled? (Articles 6,18,23,24,26 & 27)

Health and Wellbeing is one of the strands of Curriculum for Excellence and includes mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. All schools have access to a school nurse and dental services such as Childsmile. GIRFEC processes are followed to request assistance from any other appropriate agency depending on the wellbeing needs identified for the child or young person. Wellbeing concerns are sent to the Named Person service within Education from various partners including Police Scotland, Housing and NHS. Police Scotland also send a Trauma Informed Contact and care notification to schools before the school opens if the child or young person has been exposed to a domestic abuse incident in the previous 24 hours. This allows the named person to support the child or young person appropriately following the Ayrshire Child's Pathway. All schools follow Additional Support for Learning guidance and East Ayrshire's Anti-bullying: Respect for All Policy.



### School Nursing Service

The East Ayrshire School Nursing Service undertakes holistic wellbeing assessments, accessing community based resources and include all Looked After Children. Throughout the last year, the School Nursing Service has maintained a significant focus on listening to the voices of our children and young people and on adapting how it delivers engagement. The service recognises that all children are unique in how they prefer to engage with professionals and the complexity of children and young people presenting with emotional wellbeing concerns has challenged the service to be more creative in its approach to engagement. Sessions delivered have become more interactive and enjoyable, with new approaches such as using play to allow children and young people to express their concerns, being highly successful. Examples of other resources utilised include sand trays and tablets that allow children to relax and share their stories in a more natural way, which can be used both at home and at school. Additional fidget cubes and stress balls have also supported young people to remember coping strategies when anxious.





## Health Improvement Service

Through access to Commissioned services by the CORRA Foundation, our Health Visiting team are supported by two Health Care Support Workers from Barnardo's, to provide additional supports to new parents affected by addictions. Families requiring this additional support are identified from the ante-natal period onwards by Midwives, Health Visitors or Addictions services. Timely person-centred support is then delivered at home with the families in a non-stigmatising way, with early intervention being key to maintaining the family as a unit upon the birth of their baby. The Support Workers role model and share effective parenting strategies to support families, whom may experience complex issues as a result of addictions, to be the best parents they can. This initiative aims to provide a high level of care and support by building therapeutic relationships with parents, supporting families challenged by addictions to remain together whenever it is safe to do so, to give our children and young people the best possible start in life.

The Health Improvement Team works in partnership with others to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people across a number of health priorities. This includes delivery of the Child Healthy Weight programme. Health Improvement Practitioners deliver the Mental Health Improvement - A Practical Approach training programme to staff, parents and community groups. Mental Health Improvement Resources have also been included on the Council's GLOW pages (Scotland's national digital learning platform), for parents to access, which is available to those with additional support needs as well as mainstream needs. The Health Information and Resources service provides health and wellbeing information on a range of topics such as mental health and wellbeing, healthy eating and oral health, and in a variety of formats including teaching packs, visual resources and leaflets. More information on the service can be found [here](#).

## Quit Your Way

Quit Your Way (QYW) aim to support the principle that all children have the right to be protected from the harmful effects of tobacco and enjoy a smoke-free environment. QYW provide training for midwifery staff to facilitate conversations with expectant mothers about the benefits of stopping smoking in pregnancy and protecting the unborn child from the harm caused by smoking. The service provides training and support around reducing children's exposure to second-hand smoke to enable anyone working with children to be able to discuss the benefits of having a smoke free home with all parents and carers.

## Young People Sport and Diversion

The East Ayrshire Young People Sport and Diversion (YPSD) Team has an Active Schools Coordinator who is funded to support young people within our Additional Support Needs schools. This role is to encourage active participation and improve health and wellbeing. Specifically chosen sports are delivered and children and young people who have complex health needs are supported to actively participate. The team also has a Sports Mentor whom provides young people who are struggling with their emotions and behaviours, with a positive outlet to express their feelings. The Sports Mentor builds strong relationships (predominantly) with young males and this has been successful in changing negative attitudes.



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## Delivery of Play

East Ayrshire offer Delivery of Play therapy sessions for children and young people who have experienced: abuse, neglect or trauma, loss through bereavement, family breakdown or relocation, fostering or adoption, illness or disability, being a witness to violence or substance misuse, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Play therapy is an effective way of helping children recover from and make sense of difficult and painful experiences. This also allows children and young people to express and explore difficult feelings, achieve a more positive view of themselves and their own values, improve relationships, behaviour and readiness to learn, develop emotionally and socially and improve communication skills and emotional literacy. Pre and Post Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires are completed by pupils, teachers and parents/carers, which has demonstrated reduced Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores and evidenced improvements in all of the above areas.

## Financial Inclusion Team

The Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) together with its partners, has continued to support East Ayrshire residents to maximise their benefit entitlement and provide holistic support to deliver positive outcomes for people. The EA Money team received a record 3,089 referrals and advice enquiries throughout 2022/23, an 18.7% increase from the previous year. This figure does not include cases which were referred by partner organisations to the various new projects overseen by FIT during the year, in particular from Health and Education colleagues.



This has been a challenging year for many residents in East Ayrshire due to the cost of living crisis, however the FIT and its partners have provided vital support to ease financial pressures. Overall, the financial gains achieved for people in East Ayrshire totalled £4,981,700 in 2022/23, which is an increase of over £1.5m on the previous reporting period. This takes the cumulative total amount of financial gains since the establishment of the team in November 2013 to £40,151,325.

The FIT have been proactive over the last year by launching a number of projects, including: a schools-based pathfinder project to all secondary schools in East Ayrshire for one year, an Early Years project which works alongside Health Visitors to support families by ensuring their income is fully maximised at an important stage in the child's development, and a Welfare Advice in Health Partnerships project with FIT staff working within identified GP Practices.



## Cluster 7. Education, Leisure and culture - To what extent do we provide education services which are non-discriminatory? (Articles 28, 29 & 31)

The Gender 10 policy is deeply embedded in East Ayrshire to support gender equality in schools, and has been rolled out in collaboration with NHS Ayrshire and Arran and East Ayrshire Council.

### SL33

SL33 is a purposefully designed employability hub within East Ayrshire Council's Education service which supports young people and parents towards positive destinations. Using a 'one-stop-shop' model, SL33 is able to work collaboratively with partners to provide a holistic and person-centred service which targets end-users' specific needs. Young people from the age of 15 who are at risk of disengaging from mainstream education or who have left school with no positive destination are given the opportunity to gain skills and qualifications through a blended approach of vocational learning, wellbeing and positive relationship-building. This ensures that more young people are leaving school with the skillset and resilience necessary to navigate the world of work with the safety net of a nurturing environment when faced with challenges, particularly those who are care experienced or who may require more intensive support.

Embedded within SL33 is the Parental Employability Support Fund which holistically complements the other educational offers by targeting parents whose children are at risk of poverty. Parents can access support and opportunities, empowering themselves to increase their household income or improve their employment prospects. Additional support is also available for parents speaking English as a second language. A further provision within SL33 is DFN Project Search, an internship scheme for young people with additional support needs which spans an academic year and creates employment pathways through providing experiences in work settings. The project, coordinated with East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire College and the NHS, removes barriers and challenges in a supportive group environment.

### Vibrant Communities

Active Schools, Youth Work and Scottish Equity funded staff deliver a wide range of activities in both community and educational establishments. The activities, many of which are delivered by young leaders and volunteers, are providing opportunities to participate in structured sporting activities and youth groups, allowing participants to develop leadership skills and a voice. There is also dedicated provision for children with additional support needs to attend and participate in sport, physical and socialising activities in the community, which continues throughout the summer holiday period to ensure consistency and continuity.

### Lifeskills and Inclusion Service

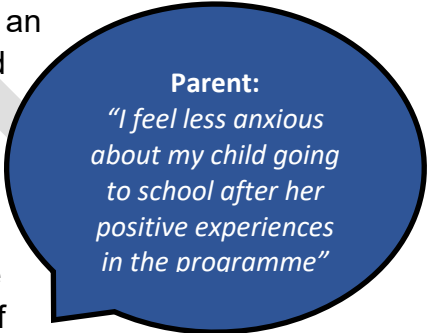
The Lifeskills and Inclusion service provides dedicated adult literacy 1:1 and hub based supports across East Ayrshire. This is a free and inclusive service open to any adult/young person aged 16 or over, allowing for young people who have left school to have access to literacies supports. It is learner centred and supports are offered across the authority on a weekly basis. Lifeskills and Inclusion Family Literacies enables parents and children to learn together through fun numeracy and literacy based learning activities. The supports equip parents with literacy and numeracy skills that best supports their personal, work, family and community life.



Lifeskills and Inclusion also provide ESOL supports to adults and their family unit (parent and child), to allow families to improve their language skills, core English literacy and numeracy skills where English is not their first language. The ESOL team provides a structured process of supports to adults: 4 introductory English language levels, Preparation for Literacies, Introduction to Beginners Literacies 1 and 2 and National 2.

### Home Link Team

The Home Link Team provides support for children and young people through key transitioning whether that be early years to primary, primary to secondary transitioning or post-secondary transitioning into positive destinations. This is further supported by the delivery of a bespoke Enhanced Transition programme across all Education Groups. This team also provides support and contact throughout school holiday periods, which offers an element of continuity and connects our children, young people and families to a range of valuable community activities and opportunities. Family support is offered across East Ayrshire at the earliest opportunity, assisting children and young people to overcome barriers that prevent them from achieving their potential. We have a clear focus on equity and we are continuously developing practice to address the impacts of poverty.



From April 2022 to March 2023, the Home Link Team have continued to make progress across all Education Groups, with the team providing tailored support where it is needed most to 298 Children, young people and their families. Over this period, 152 children and young people no longer required Home Link support. From those 298 children and young people, 226 (76%) were logged as having ASN, 207 (69%) were logged as in receipt of Free School meal entitlement and 45 (15%) children and young people were logged as currently or previously being looked after. The Home Link support also extends to the wider family. During this period, the team provided 5,624 coaching conversation telephone calls, 8,640 text messages, 2,001 home visits, garden visits and walk and talks, 208 Team Around the Child meetings and 513 requests from parents/carers for further general wellbeing support. Partnership working and communication continue to be a strong factor between the Home Link Team and Education with 2,771 calls and communication with colleagues, further bridging that gap between school and home.

### Education Estates

The Council's learning estate consists of the following establishments:

#### Early Learning and Childcare

- 36 x Early Childhood Centres (ECC): (12 Standalone, 24 Primary with ECCs), 7 x Funded Providers, and 39 x childminders;
- Total number of 0-5yr old children allocated a place in an ECC, Funded Provider, childminder: 2941.



## Schools

- 7 x secondary schools (3 have SLC's / Communication Centre's);
- 39 x primary schools plus the Gaelic Unit;
- 3 x special schools and 3 special units within primary schools; and
- Total pupil roll for 2022 is 16,149: Secondary (6,839) Primary (8,862) Special (448).

As part of the Council's Asset Management Framework, which supports the Council's strategic objectives, the Learning Estate Management Plan (LEMP) is reviewed annually and is aligned with the ten guiding principles as established within Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy 2019. The LEMP is submitted to the Scottish Government annually and details: the status of the existing learning estate, the vision for the estate, the required capital investment to meet this vision, and the timescales within which this vision would be achieved. The learning estate accounts for the largest element of the overall operational estate of the Council in terms of scale and investment demand. The past five years have seen an ambitious investment in the learning estate and it remains important that the learning estate is fit for purpose in meeting the needs of all learners. As part of the assessment of the estate and rationale for decision making in respect of investment, consideration is given to the following areas:

- Current and projected school rolls;
- Changes to the curriculum;
- Suitability and capacity of the environment for curriculum delivery;
- Inclusions;
- Running costs;
- Capital investment requirements;
- The needs of local communities; and
- Opportunities for wider Council and community use.

New builds and extensions feature innovative and flexible internal spaces, inspiring outdoor environments and excellent sports facilities from which children, young people and the local community can benefit. A programme of updating continues across the estate to bring as many establishments as possible in line with the undernoted guiding principles in the document 'Connecting People, Places and Learning' which can be found on [Scottish Government website](#).

Investment in our learning estate offers the opportunity for a place-based approach to improve local outcomes, co-ordinating and integrating local services to support our communities and to progress the public sector reform agenda. The Place Principle was adopted by the Scottish Government in March 2019 and promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more joined up collaborative approach to services and assets within our area to achieve better outcomes for all of our children and young people and communities. Investment and project development of our learning estate is based on inclusive design principles that seeks to maximise opportunities for all of our children and young people and community, whereby consideration is given to: shared facilities that support health and wellbeing, sports excellence, the arts, culture and events, community integration and lifelong learning, with the objective of ensuring the maximum level of activity and accessibility of the facilities on offer.



## Cluster 8. Special Protection Measures- To what extent do we protect those in need of protection? (Articles 22,30,32,33,24,25,36,37(a-d),38,39 & 40)

The East Ayrshire Sports Council and Youth Work Network provide support to local affiliated sports clubs and youth work organisations regarding child protection. In order to become an affiliated member of these networks, all clubs/organisations must have the appropriate child protection policies and protocols in place and must provide evidence of this. Alongside this, coach education and Child Protection Delivery (CPD) opportunities are provided at various times of the year for their members to attend specific Child Protection/Safeguarding courses in order to have suitable qualified and knowledgeable volunteers/staff within their organisation. These combined, provide assurances that the appropriate checks have been conducted, and that all members operate efficiently and in a safe manner.

Every secondary school in East Ayrshire has a PREVENT lead who is responsible for monitoring issues of radicalisation and ensuring all staff are aware of what to look out for. PREVENT panels are also held to support young people who are deemed to have been involved in radicalisation. All schools are trauma informed and there is ongoing work to strengthen this. *Included, engaged and involved part 2: A positive approach to preventing and managing school exclusions*, is followed to ensure a young person is only excluded as a last resort and that they are given appropriate support during the exclusion and on return to school.

### Child Protection

Within East Ayrshire the Child Protection Committee (CPC) hold the responsibilities to jointly identify and manage risk to children and young people, monitor and improve performance and promote the ethos that *"It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright"*. The CPC provide assurances of the identification, progression and impact of Child Protection work undertaken with East Ayrshire by key representatives to the Chief Officers Group.

At this time, key priorities of the CPC have been in relation to the development and roll out of the Whole Family Approach. This is East Ayrshire's refreshed approach to children impacted by parental drug and/or alcohol use, taking a family inclusive approach to support and safeguarding. The CP sub group and the High Risk Vulnerable Young Person Group (HRVYP) have also driven forward the focus of refreshed multi agency workforce training on child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, as well as the purpose and application of the National Referral Mechanism for decision makers within East Ayrshire. This is facilitated in partnership with Barnardo's. In line with this is work underway to refresh practitioner guidance on child trafficking and exploitation. The HRVYP group is a multi-agency group with representation of key partners including the EA Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Officer.

The CPC continues to have oversight of ongoing work such as the Cherishing Our Families strategy to tackling neglect, the continued implementation of the Safe and Together Model of working with families and perpetrators of domestic abuse and the implementation of the Age of Criminal Responsibility practitioners guidance, as well as the continued establishment of the Scottish Child Interview Model within East Ayrshire when interviewing child witness, victim or accused. The CPC continues to implement the revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, with local CP procedures developed with Pan Ayrshire partners.



In East Ayrshire, we have established the High Risk Vulnerable Young Person Group (subgroup of the East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee), which focuses on areas of concern such as child exploitation in its varying forms, missing children and young people, trafficking and extra familial harm. The group are currently developing a multi-agency training pathway with Barnardo's to ensure an effective joined up approach. The East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee supports the work of the GIRFEC group in the development of their tackling Neglect Strategy and action plan.

With reference to child protection training and child protection supervision, this supports staff to identify children and young people in need of protection and to follow correct processes to support and protect. Families are supported within East Ayrshire by our resettlement team where families have sought refuge from countries affected by war. Support is also given to access health care with ongoing holistic assessment of need undertaken by Health Visitors and School Nurses.

All children in East Ayrshire who are looked after and accommodated (LAAC) will have their health needs assessed every six months and any unmet health needs will be addressed, with measures in place through the legal system to support access to services. Continued multi-agency working in cases of domestic abuse takes place across Council services and partners such as Police Scotland, NHSAA, Primary Care and Women's Aid.

### **Learning and Development**

Child Protection training for Qualified Social Workers in East Ayrshire has children's rights as a key focus, however this has been developed further through the introduction of training on Care and Risk Management in 2022. As this guidance has a particular focus on the rights of the child, this allowed us to introduce the UNCRC as a tool for assessment in child protection and as means of considering the potential impact and effectiveness of any proposed intervention. This training session was well received and those present reported an increase in confidence in being able to use the UNCRC as a way of balancing actions taken when multi-agency teams are trying to reduce or manage risk. The UNCRC is also embedded throughout our Multi-Agency Protection training calendar. There is a specific focus on the rights of the child in Child Protection Training Level 1 and 2 as well as our Neglect and Child Sexual Exploitation Training. In addition, the Therapeutic Play sessions provide clear examples of focus on Article 12 and how to improve participation.

### **Resettlement**

In East Ayrshire, we have made a commitment to children who seek refuge or require to have a home in Scotland through our responses to unaccompanied children and young people. In line with the principles of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, East Ayrshire Council shares the vision *"for a welcoming Scotland where refugees and asylum seekers are able to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive"*.

The Council remains committed to supporting those displaced by war and conflict and well established arrangements are in place to support those settling within our communities, including across Housing and other services. Embedded within our core resettlement processes is the fundamental recognition of parental and safeguarding responsibilities. Prior to families and individuals arriving through UK-wide resettlement schemes, settled furnished accommodation is identified which is safe, habitable and will meet the needs of the children.



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Families are appointed a Key Worker who assists parents and carers with registration in nurseries and schools, school clothing grants and free school meals applications. Assistance with benefits claims is also provided alongside budgeting support and guidance. Child care arrangements are offered where required to give adults the opportunity to attend community language classes to assist with integration within our communities. Close working arrangements are also in place with colleagues within our Health and Social Care Partnership and with Scottish and UK Governments to highlight, respond and escalate any safeguarding concerns where required.

### Children's Wellbeing

Scotland has increased the age of criminal responsibility, and as such, on a pan-Ayrshire basis, we have written guidance for practitioners and managers regarding implementing the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. This includes identified Places of Safety when required and ensuring a rights based interview approach. We have rolled out practitioner guidance refreshers across services with regards to parental drug and/or alcohol use (Getting Our Priorities Right), with Whole Family Approach guidance. This provides a framework for family inclusive practice and complements the Helping Everyone At the Right Time model of practice within East Ayrshire. This also allows the child to be seen within the context of the family while understanding the individual needs of parents and family members impacted by drugs and/or alcohol.

In 2023, all S1 pupils who were entering S2 after the summer holidays participated in the Youth Action Team (YAT) roadshows. It was widely recognised that there is an increase in the number of youth disorder complaints being reported to the Police and whilst a number of these calls did not require reporting due to the nature of what the young people were engaging in, it is acknowledged that there are still some pockets of low level anti-social behaviour in our communities. With this mind, the YAT roadshows were devised by Vibrant Communities and through partnership working with colleagues from Police, Fire and Rescue Service, the Council's CHAT team, the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and Barnardo's, a number of themed workshops were delivered to the young people attending to raise awareness and increase knowledge of these concerns. The workshops were developed and delivered on themes that we recognised were affecting young people and communities therefore were relevant to those age groups. The workshops delivered included: Alcohol and Drugs Awareness, Fire and Water Safety, Stigma, and Anti-Social Behaviour and perceptions of young people by the wider community.

1,372 pupils have attended the roadshows to date from all S1 pupils going into S2 after the summer holidays. From this cohort, 383 young people completed the evaluations, with the following key findings:

- 85% felt there was an increase in their confidence;
- 92% improved their skills and knowledge;
- 76% improved their communication;
- 96% felt they would be more responsible in their community; and
- 81% felt they would feel safer in their community.



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## Pan-Ayrshire Joint Interview Team (SCIM)

The Pan-Ayrshire Joint Interview Team was established on 18 July 2022. This is a multi-agency team comprised of Social Workers and Police Officers co-located within the Kilmarnock Police Station alongside a Team Manager/Coordinator. The team conducts Joint Investigative interviews (JII) of children and young people, which are formal interviews conducted by specially trained police officers and social workers where there is a concern that a child is a victim of, or witness to, criminal conduct and where there is information to suggest that the child has been or is being abused or neglected or may be at risk of significant harm.

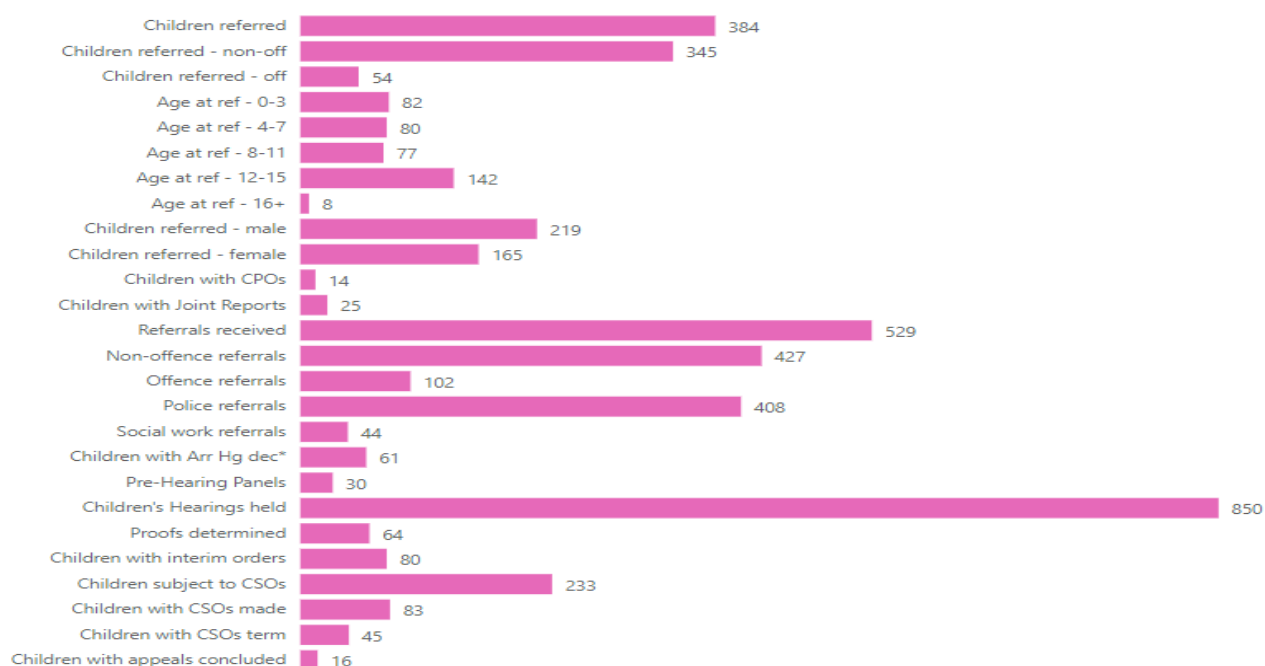
The main purposes for completing a JII is to:

- Learn the child's account of the circumstances that prompted the enquiry or concern;
- Gather information to permit decision making on whether the child in question, or any other child, is in need of protection;
- Gather sufficient evidence to suggest whether a crime may have been committed against the child or anyone else; and
- Gather evidence which may lead to a ground of referral to a children's hearing being established.

The newly implemented team completes their role utilising the recently developed Scottish Child Interview model (SCIM). This model of interviewing was developed to be both trauma-informed and to obtain the best evidence through robust planning and interviewing techniques. The approach is based upon five component parts: strategy, planning, action, outcomes, and ongoing support and evaluation.

## Children's Hearing

To further demonstrate partnership work undertaken with SCRA in ensuring that children and young people in need of protection are fully protected in East Ayrshire, the following data is provided covering the 2022/2023 period:



22/23



## Future Planning

The following Plan has been developed to shape preparations for the further incorporation of the UNCRC in East Ayrshire going forward.

<u>Cluster</u>	<u>Lessons Learned and next steps</u>
<b>Cluster 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop a fuller understanding of ‘children’s views’. This, if reframed to ‘children’s experience’ would support recognition pre-verbal and non-verbal children.</li> <li>• We will develop learning support and practice principles for leads who support / facilitate Team with the Family, Looked After Review and Child Protection Planning Meetings. This will ensure rights and participation is at the heart of all children’s experiences.</li> <li>• We have limited child friendly spaces within Council, HSCP and NHS buildings. The buildings we operate in do not give a message they are available, opened and designed for children. We aim to ensure children have a right to friendly and trauma informed space when they require to be supported.</li> <li>• We will develop a strategic framework to involve our children and young people across our partnership in line with the ambitions of the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child.</li> <li>• All schools will continue to be supported in their Rights Respecting School’s journey through Bronze to Gold Awards.</li> <li>• The move from the ‘Team Around the Child’ model to the ‘Team with the Family’ model will support partnership working between children and adult services to ensure the whole family receives more joined up support.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to undertake Children’s Rights Impact Assessments to consider how any decisions made in relation to structure or resources.</li> <li>• We will aim by June 2024 to have children and young people involved in all staff recruitment within Children and Families Social Work.</li> <li>• We require to develop more visual and tangible materials for children to view and know their rights.</li> <li>• Children and young people will have their say on the opportunities available to them enabling them to thrive, flourish and enhance their knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to support our children with safe interactions on social media.</li> <li>• Schools will continue to improve safeguarding processes by following Education Scotland's Child Protection and safeguarding self-evaluation.</li> <li>• We also require to provide further support to our workforce and caregivers to feel confident in understanding responsibilities.</li> <li>• LGBTQ+ children and young people face the same risks as all children and young people but they may experience some forms of harm such as homophobia, biphobic or transphobic bullying. We will ensure our children and young people have the right to access information and support in relation to their identity, that our records reflect their choice of name and identity and ensure there are clear messages about equality and rights in all spaces children and young people occupy.</li> </ul>



<b>Cluster 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnership with partners in Ayrshire, we will develop an implementation approach for integrating the national Bairns Hoose Standards within culture, process and practice, with transformational system changes in how we support children who experience harm.</li> <li>• We aim to have a therapeutic model of care and parenting that is led by attuned responses to children’s unmet needs and ensures physical intervention with children is only used as a last resort and in the context of their immediate safety.</li> <li>• The Promise has advocated an eradication of restraint. We also need to ensure that there is an agreed and consistent approach to the use of any form of restrictive practices across clinical, learning, community and care services that reflects the recommendations of The Promise.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We require to improve how we recognise children in conflict with the law and who may be perceived as displaying harmful behaviour to others. They are children first and most likely in need of care and protection in their own right along with support for the right to be cared for within, and by, their community of origin.</li> <li>• We will improve the safeguarding systems for children in their community, reducing the risk of exploitation.</li> <li>• We will aim to reduce the number of children who are either educated or cared for out with East Ayrshire.</li> <li>• We require to more fully develop not only therapeutic recovery services, but a therapeutic approach in everyday interactions with those experiencing trauma.</li> <li>• We require to develop a Lifelong Links approach to making connections and building family trees for children within universal supports.</li> <li>• As part of our Whole Family Support Approach we wish to ensure our children and young people have connection to their brothers and sisters, either when living together or when they are apart to have a supported connection.</li> <li>• We will continue to recruit families, and design care provision to ensure brothers and sisters can live together when safe to do so.</li> <li>• The further implementation of HEART (Help Everyone at The Right Time) within our communities will encourage parental involvement to support children and young people to thrive.</li> <li>• We aim to reduce instances of homelessness for families with children and any time spent in temporary accommodation.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years universal supports will look to develop more innovative supports for children aged 0-5yrs with additional support needs.</li> <li>• In relation to protection, there is a risk we do not fully understand children’s needs and rights when there is a disability.</li> <li>• We have a growing need to address how children with neurodiversity will be assessed and supported to ensure they have access to the provision they need.</li> <li>• To improve understanding and safeguarding in terms of domestic abuse, Trauma Informed Contact and Care will be rolled out to Early Childhood Centres.</li> </ul>



<b>Cluster 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families who home school will continue to be supported and have their rights respected.</li> <li>• Children and Young People who have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and are struggling to access education, will be supported by The Team with the Family.</li> <li>• We require to support a fuller understanding of child development so there is recognition across agencies of how fundamental the right to play is within children's growth and development.</li> <li>• SL33 will continue to develop and implement new and innovative work based learning programmes that improve employability prospects for young people.</li> <li>• Leisure and recreation opportunities will be designed following consultation with children and young people, which will enhance health and wellbeing prospects in our communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will align approach to when children are missing with the National Missing Persons Framework.</li> <li>• We will continue to support our unaccompanied asylum seeking children who arrive in East Ayrshire. Given their experiences of persecution and conflict, we will further develop our trauma recovery models to support this.</li> <li>• Implementation of the Whole Family Approach Guidance is in development with multi agency Learning and Development schedule to be agreed by the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Health partners.</li> <li>• Input on Children's Rights will be developed and provided to Child Protection Committee members to allow for high level understanding of where children's rights sit within the business of the Child Protection Committee.</li> </ul>

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# Appendix 1 - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

It is important that our children and young people are fully aware of their rights. The details below provide a summary of these rights from [the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The term 'Governments' also refers to East Ayrshire Council.

- 1. Definition of a child:** A child is any person under the age of 18.
- 2. Non –discrimination:** All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.
- 3. Best interests of the child:** When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.
- 4. Implementation:** Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.
- 5. Family guidance as children develop:** Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.
- 6. Life, survival and development:** Every child has the right to life. Governments must ensure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.
- 7. Name, nationality and care:** Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.
- 8. Identity:** Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.
- 9. Family separation:** Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after, for example if a parent hurts or neglects a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.
- 10. Family contact across countries:** If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.
- 11. Protection from abduction:** Governments must stop children being taken out of the country by parents or relatives when this is against the law.



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**12. Respect for views of children:** Children have the right to give their opinions freely and openly on issues that affect them. Adults should consider these views and take children seriously.

**13. Freedom of expression:** Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

**14. Freedom of thought, belief and religion:** Children can have their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents have the right and responsibility to guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to use this right.

**15. Freedom of association:** Children can set up or join groups or organisations, meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.

**16. Right to privacy:** Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation from any unlawful attack.

**17. Access to media information:** Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

**18. Parental responsibilities:** Parents are the main responsible individuals for raising a child. If a child does not have parents, another adult will have this responsibility (guardian). Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child and Governments should help them. Where a child has two parents, both should be responsible.

**19. Protection from violence, abuse and neglect:** Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and neglect by anyone who looks after them.

**20. Children unable to live with their family:** Any child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after by people who respect the child's religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

**21. Adopted children:** Governments must oversee the adoption process to ensure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

**22. Refugee children:** If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights set out in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

**23. Children with disabilities:** Any child with a disability should be able to enjoy the best life possible. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to be active in the community.

**24. Health:** Children have the right to high quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, a clean environment and education on health and wellbeing.

**25. Review of a child's care placement:** Every child who has been placed away from home for the purpose of their protection or wellbeing should have their circumstances reviewed regularly to ensure their experience is going well and to assess whether it is still the best place for the child to be.



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- 26. Social security:** Governments should provide financial or other social support to help children and families in need of such assistance.
- 27. Standard of living:** Every child has the right to a good standard of living, including sufficient meals, clothing and a safe environment to develop. The government should help families which are not able to provide this.
- 28. Access to education:** Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free and secondary and higher education should be available to all. Children should be encouraged to attend school and discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.
- 29. Education objectives:** Education should enable children to develop their personalities, talents and abilities, in addition to helping them understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences.
- 30. Children from minority culture:** Children have the right to learn and use their own language, culture and religion, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in their country of residence.
- 31. Culture, leisure and play:** Every child has the right to relax, rest, play and to participate in cultural and creative activities.
- 32. Protection from child labour:** Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and from undertaking work that is dangerous or harmful to their health, development or education. Governments must establish a minimum age for working and ensure that working conditions are safe and appropriate.
- 33. Protection from drug abuse:** Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs, including: taking, making, transporting or selling harmful drugs.
- 34. Protection from sexual abuse:** Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.
- 35. Protection from sale and trafficking:** Governments must protect children from being abducted or sold, or moved illegally to other countries or places to be exploited.
- 36. Protection from all forms of exploitation:** Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, even if these are not specifically mentioned in the Convention.
- 37. Inhumane treatment and detention:** Children who are accused of breaking the law must not be tortured, sentenced to death or suffer cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be imprisoned with adults.
- 38. Protection in war or conflict:** Governments must do everything in their power to protect children during a war or conflict. No child under the age of 15 can join the army or participate in war.
- 39. Recovery from trauma and reintegration:** Children have the right to receive additional support if they have been neglected, harmed, badly treated or affected by war, to enable them to recover their health and dignity.



**40. Justice:** Children who are accused of breaking the law have the right to legal assistance and fair treatment, and to be treated with dignity and respect. Governments must establish a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and ensure that their justice system enables children to reintegrate into society.

**41. Respecting higher national standards:** If a country incorporates laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, the country must retain these laws.

**42. Knowledge of rights:** Governments must make active efforts to ensure that adults and children are aware of the rights set out in the Convention.

**43 to 54. Working together to protect children's rights:** Articles 43 to 54 set out how adults, governments, the United Nations, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF, and other organisations must work together to ensure that all children enjoy all their rights.

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# **CHERISHING OUR FAMILIES STRATEGY 2023 – 2026**

## **Supporting the prevention and reduction of child neglect in East Ayrshire**



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## FOREWORD



This Strategy is the culmination of a great deal of work by a number of people reflecting the range of services and expertise that make up our Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership in East Ayrshire, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a personal 'thank you' to all of those involved in its development.

More importantly, our work here has the potential to improve the lives of children in East Ayrshire for years to come.

The direct purpose of this strategy is to prevent and reduce neglect within East Ayrshire.

A better understanding and a more strategic approach to neglect is essential for everyone as we all have the responsibility to protect children. We know that when children are neglected, not only does this impact on their development through childhood and into to adulthood, but will often have enduring consequences throughout their lives.

Our efforts to prevent and reduce neglect in East Ayrshire will not only protect individual children, but also have the potential to anticipate and avoid a wide range of potential problems cascading down through future generations.



### **Marion MacAulay**

Chair of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Chief Social Work Officer/Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services



# 1. BACKGROUND

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Neglect is one of the most damaging childhood experiences and is associated with some of the poorest behavioural, emotional and cognitive outcomes. These affect life chances and contribute significantly to widening social, economic and health inequalities. Evidence suggests that one in ten children in the UK experience neglect and that it is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment.<sup>1</sup>

Neglect can also result in children and young people having difficulties making and keeping relationships, which can affect how they parent their own children and can perpetuate inter-generational cycles of neglect. Consideration needs to be taken into individual development and context, including social and economic factors such as poverty and deprivation, family, environment and community resources. In addition practitioners should be aware that neglect is an area which can be open to personal and moral judgements.

Emotional abuse and neglect are the most commonly recorded concerns leading to the placing of children on the child protection register. Children may experience neglect and other forms of abuse at the same time.<sup>2</sup> 'Lack of parental care' was the most common ground for referral to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration in 2021.<sup>3</sup>

Recognising the context of risk and need requires understanding of the influence of structural inequalities, such as poverty. Effective support addresses the interaction between early adverse experiences, poverty, ill health and neglect. A disproportionate number of child protection interventions occur in the most materially deprived neighbourhoods.<sup>2</sup>

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and Child Protection Committee (CPC) have collective responsibility for strategic planning and improvement of services for children and young people and are clear that preventing neglect is a key priority.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government and University of Stirling, *Child Neglect in Scotland: Rapid review of the literature on intervention*, April 2018 p.2

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government, *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland*, 2021

<sup>3</sup> [Scottish Children's Reporter Administration – Official Statistics](#)



## 2. WHAT DOES THIS STRATEGY MEAN FOR YOU?

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If you are a child or young person, this strategy sets out what the services in East Ayrshire will do to listen to you and help you and your family when you need it. It will also tell you what services will do to protect you from neglect and how they will support you if you have experienced neglect.

The strategy has an action plan which will show you all of the things we are doing in East Ayrshire to make sure that we:

- Look out for you
- Understand what's important to you and make sure others know too
- Make sure you get the right support at the right time

If you are a parent or carer, this strategy sets out the early help and support you can expect from services in East Ayrshire. Services know how important it is to listen to parents and carers and ensure you are supported to be the best parent you can be.

If you are a practitioner, this strategy focuses on the importance of developing supportive and trusting relationships with families. It also give you a clear definition of neglect and information on the impact and experiences of neglect.



### 3. WHO ARE WE?

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[East Ayrshire Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership \(CYPSP\)](#) is a sub-group of the Community Planning Partnership and is made up of representatives from:

- East Ayrshire Council (early years; education; housing and communities, corporate policy);
- the East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (social work, health visiting; school nursing; adult services and planning & performance);
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran (midwifery, specialist services);
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- Police Scotland;
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration SCRA);
- the Third Sector;
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and
- Ayrshire College.

Key functions of the CYPSP include leading on the strategic priorities for children and young people's services in East Ayrshire and developing and monitoring the implementation of the Children and Young People's Service Plan.

The [East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-2023](#) supports the East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-30 and our long term aspirations for children, young people and families are designed to achieve our vision, which is:

**In East Ayrshire, our children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.**

The [Child Protection Committee \(CPC\)](#) is a strategic partnership with its membership made up of senior officers and staff from: East Ayrshire Council; NHS Ayrshire and Arran; East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership; Police Scotland; Scottish Children's Reporters Administration; Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service; Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Third Sector.



CPC members provide the views of their respective agencies or services, have delegated authority to make strategic and operational decisions and in addition, can provide a vehicle to ensure issues raised with them by members of the public or during community engagement activities, are brought to the attention of the committee.

The **aim** of this document is to set out the strategic aims and objectives of East Ayrshire's approach to preventing and reducing neglect across the community.



This includes working within the approach of the HEART model to ensure that issues are addressed early and holistically and within a family context, and to also pull together all the work happening across the CYPSP to reflect consistent ways of working to tackle the issue of neglect. The HEART (Help Everyone At The Right Time) wellbeing model was developed to change the way children and families are supported in East Ayrshire, so that people are able to get help at an early stage and in the communities in which they live. This will help us to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in East Ayrshire.



It is vital that everyone working with children and families work collaboratively, effectively and understand the role they play and the role of other practitioners when responding to neglect. We must acknowledge that neglect is a difficult concept for both practitioners and families to understand. The terminology itself can also be contentious.

Neglect differs in its presentation from other forms of abuse. Understanding the impact of neglect and the potential for both prevention and intervention is vital.

This strategy has been developed in conjunction with multi-agency partners working across the CYPSP and should be considered alongside other key strategies and plans such as:

- the [Getting It Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) approach. This is the primary policy framework for children’s services in Scotland since its inception in 2006 and introduced important elements of the current system such as the named person, the Team with the Family and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.
- [The Promise](#) was made following the Independent Care Review which made clear the current “care system” was not working. The aim of the promise is that every young person will grow up loved, safe and respected.
- the [National Guidance for Child Protection](#) published in 2021 which describes the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children and will support the care and protection of children.
- the national [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2026](#) which lays out the Scottish Government’s long-term vision and approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of everyone in Scotland.
- the national [Best Start, Bright futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026](#) which sets out how we will work together to deliver on Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty.
- the incorporation of the key concepts of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)
- [East Ayrshire’s Children’s Services Plan 2020-2023](#) contains our aspirations and ambitions for integrated services for children.
- the [Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2021-2030](#) which is working towards ambitious long term outcomes for families, as part of the broader wellbeing agenda and



- [East Ayrshire's Wellbeing Delivery Plan 2021-2024](#). This Plan secured the commitment of all Community Planning Partners to transform how East Ayrshire supports child and family wellbeing through the children's services wellbeing delivery model (HEART).
- East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership '[Whole Family Approach To Getting Our Priorities Right Practitioner Guidance](#)' 2023. The guidance is for all practitioners working with children, young people and families affected by problematic alcohol and/or drug use.





## 4. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

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The strategy has been developed to respond to the increasing concerns, relating to neglect, coming through child protection processes and identified through the Joint Inspection of Children's services. It is also important for the CYPSP to take cognisance of the significant stressors on parents (i.e. the cost of living crisis, mental health and wellbeing) which can impact on their parenting capacity.

### Key facts from East Ayrshire

Understanding how many children are affected by neglect is difficult as data is limited to formal reports and assessments of neglect in children's services and in addition much neglect is not reported, known or recorded.

Concerns of neglect recorded for children placed on the Child Protection Register at a Pre-birth or Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting have fluctuated over recent years coming to a peak in quarter 2 of 2021/22 of 50%. Most recently, there has been a significant increase from 13% in quarter 2 of 2022/23 to 41% in quarter 3. It should be noted that it is not common for neglect to be the only risk category recorded for a child on the Child Protection Register. Other risk categories typically found with neglect include parental mental health, domestic abuse, parental drug use and parental alcohol use.<sup>4</sup>

Comprehensive Child Protection Medicals are often carried out when there is a concern that a child is experiencing neglect. In quarter 2 of 2022/23, 14 medicals were carried out. This figure was decreased to 2 in quarter 3 of 2022/23 even though the Child Protection Registrations with concerns of neglect increased.<sup>4</sup>

In 2021/22, there were 100 referrals for ground (a) (lack of parental care) to the Children's Reporter which was a decrease from 115 in 2020/21. There was also a slight decrease in the number of Compulsory Supervision Orders made for the same ground - 32 in 2021/22 and 45 in 2020/21.<sup>3</sup>

[East Ayrshire's Services for Children and Young People Joint Inspection Report \(2018\)](#) found that *"when children were at risk of harm or neglect, staff worked hard to support parents to improve their parenting and provide more nurturing environments."* However, it was concluded that *"some children who experienced neglect would have benefited from earlier decision making and targeted action. This should include the joint response to cumulative neglect through the initial referral discussion process and improving the quality of chronologies."*

In response to the Care Inspectorate's findings, a Neglect Action Plan was developed and has been progressed by the CPC since 2018.

We know there are significant numbers of children in East Ayrshire live in poverty. East Ayrshire has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate of child poverty off all 32 Scottish local authorities with 4,935 children (0-19 years) living in relative poverty, (before housing costs) in

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<sup>4</sup> Local Social Work recording system



2021/22. At February 2022, 18.1% of all East Ayrshire households were on Universal Credit, compared to 13.6% of households across Scotland. This equates to 10,138 households and represents a significant increase from the pre-pandemic figure of 10% at April 2019.<sup>5</sup>

A key area of progress in supporting families where neglect has been identified has been the roll out of the Graded Care Profile Tool (see **Appendix 1**). This is useful as a tool for aiding practitioners in the assessment of child neglect and care. Research suggests that, when the tool is well implemented, it helps in the identification of parenting strengths as well as weaknesses, helps create a collaborative process, and helps parents understand professionals' concerns. The process should lead to a clear picture of what it is like to be a child in this family, and what needs to happen for the harm to stop.

## Consultation

Extensive engagement took place to develop the HEART wellbeing model. In order to ensure that a future model would begin with the experience of families, two main strands of listening and exploration took place. The first strand aimed to reach a wide range of children, young people, parents, carers and professionals within children's services in order to ask what was important to them. Between December 2020 and February 2021, there were 847 responses with the majority coming from children and young people. A second strand explored greater depths through a series of 20 telephone interviews with parents, kinship carers, foster carers and young people. The aim was to reach families who had used a range of children's services in order to understand their experiences and journeys from their perspective.

The key themes from the engagement that took place have been used to inform this strategy. These are detailed below:

- **Children and young people's** responses made clear that they valued family above all else in their lives. For the minority who mentioned supports outside of their friends and family, teachers featured most prominently with a smaller group identifying others such as social workers or home link workers.
- **Parents and carers** similarly spoke above all about the importance of family. Their responses particularly highlighted the need for social bonds and community. Those who had used additional services spoke of the need for services to work well together and for help to be available early rather than at crisis point.
- The overwhelming theme in responses from **professionals** was the importance of building up positive trust-based relationships with children and families.
- **Lost in the system** - Many interview participants described periods when they were experiencing great need but did not receive the right (or any) support, usually because they fell between the remits of different services, were on waiting lists, or were deemed not to meet thresholds to receive help.
- **Help when and where you need it** – Throughout the engagement, there were a number of examples of help being available informally and accessed through

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<sup>5</sup> [East Ayrshire's Local Child Poverty Action Report](#)



existing relationships or places. One parent described how she had got to know the community practitioner based in the nursery through dropping her child off and this had led naturally on to a discussion about her circumstances and the offer of help to resolve a financial issue.

- **Barriers to getting help** – In some instances, participants were able to see with hindsight that they had not appreciated their need for help at the time. In other cases, the barriers were around not knowing who to ask or how, or being deemed not to reach a threshold. In many cases, families did not ask for help out of a fear of being seen as failing in their roles.

To gather further feedback on the draft Strategy, a survey was created and published for a period of 4 weeks. There were 142 responses to the survey. The respondents were broken down into 39% members of the public, 60% were members of staff and 1% of elected members.

Feedback on the draft strategy was positive with respondents agreeing that the voice of the child and support for families are at the centre of the strategy. Further information on the consultation can be provided.



## 5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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This strategy sets out our approach to tackling the factors that we know can impact on neglect and neglectful behaviours in East Ayrshire. In order to be successful, our strategy needs to be grounded in the culture and ethos of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, and as such it will adhere to the following principles:

**Voice of the child** – it is vital to hear the child's voice, and to focus on their experiences and the impact neglect has had - and is having - on their lives. The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is paramount, and they must be kept at the centre of all of our work.

*"Voices of all children need to be heard."*

**Practitioner**

**Underpinned by Children's Rights** – Whilst families must be viewed collectively and not as isolated individuals, support must be underpinned by the [rights of the children](#). That means ensuring that all the rights of children are upheld in all decisions and support for the family.

*"I wasn't getting the support I was looking for – someone to help me understand what it meant to be a parent, not talk down to me."*

**Parent**

**Focus on families** – children live in families, and the neglectful environments that some children and young people live in are often linked to the needs and difficulties of their parents and/or carers. Our approach to neglect will recognise and respond to the needs of all family members holistically.

**Empowerment of parents and carers** – as with hearing the voice of the child or young person, it is crucial that parents and carers are involved in discussions and decision making which impacts on them. Meaningful participation of parents and carers means that they are able to contribute to assessments and plans in relation to them and their families.

**Right support at the right time** – we want children, young people and families to receive the right support and help at the right time, as early as possible in the life of a problem. Preventative and early responses to neglect are critical to avoid issues from escalating and children experiencing further harm.

*"Finally someone was listening to us"*

**Parent**

*"Need time to build trust with families"*

**Practitioner**

**Strengths-based** – our work with families to address neglect must maintain a focus on investing in the relationships we have with children, young people and their families, and with colleagues and partners to improve outcomes and prevent harm. Practitioners and agencies have a responsibility to offer both support and challenge to families and to each other in order to respond robustly to neglect, whilst appropriately utilising the strengths of the families.



## 6. WHAT IS NEGLECT?

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Neglect is defined as:

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty, and is an indicator of both support and protection needs.<sup>2</sup>

'Persistent' means there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent which has caused, or is likely to cause significant harm. However, single instances of neglectful behaviour by a person in a position of responsibility can be significantly harmful. Early signs of neglect indicate the need for support to prevent harm.

The [GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators](#) set out the essential wellbeing needs. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); to seek consistent access to appropriate medical care or treatment; to ensure the child receives education; or to respond to a child's essential emotional needs.

Six classifications of neglect<sup>6</sup> is commonly used:

<b>Medical neglect</b>	The child's health needs are not met, or the child is not provided with appropriate medical treatment when needed as a result of illness or accident.
<b>Nutritional neglect</b>	The child is given insufficient nutrition to meet their physical/developmental needs. The child may be given food of insufficient nutritional value (e.g., sugary snacks in place of balanced meals).
<b>Emotional neglect</b>	This involves a carer being unresponsive to a child's basic emotional needs, including failing to interact or provide affection, and failing to develop a child's self-esteem and sense of identity.
<b>Educational neglect</b>	The child does not receive appropriate learning experiences; they may be unstimulated, denied appropriate experiences to enhance their development and/or experience a lack of interest in their achievements. This may also include carers failing to comply with requirements regarding school attendance and failing to respond to any special educational needs.
<b>Physical neglect</b>	The child has inadequate or inappropriate clothing (e.g., for the weather conditions), they experience poor levels of hygiene and cleanliness in their living conditions, or experience poor physical

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<sup>6</sup> Jan Horwarth (2007), *Child Neglect: Identification and Assessment*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

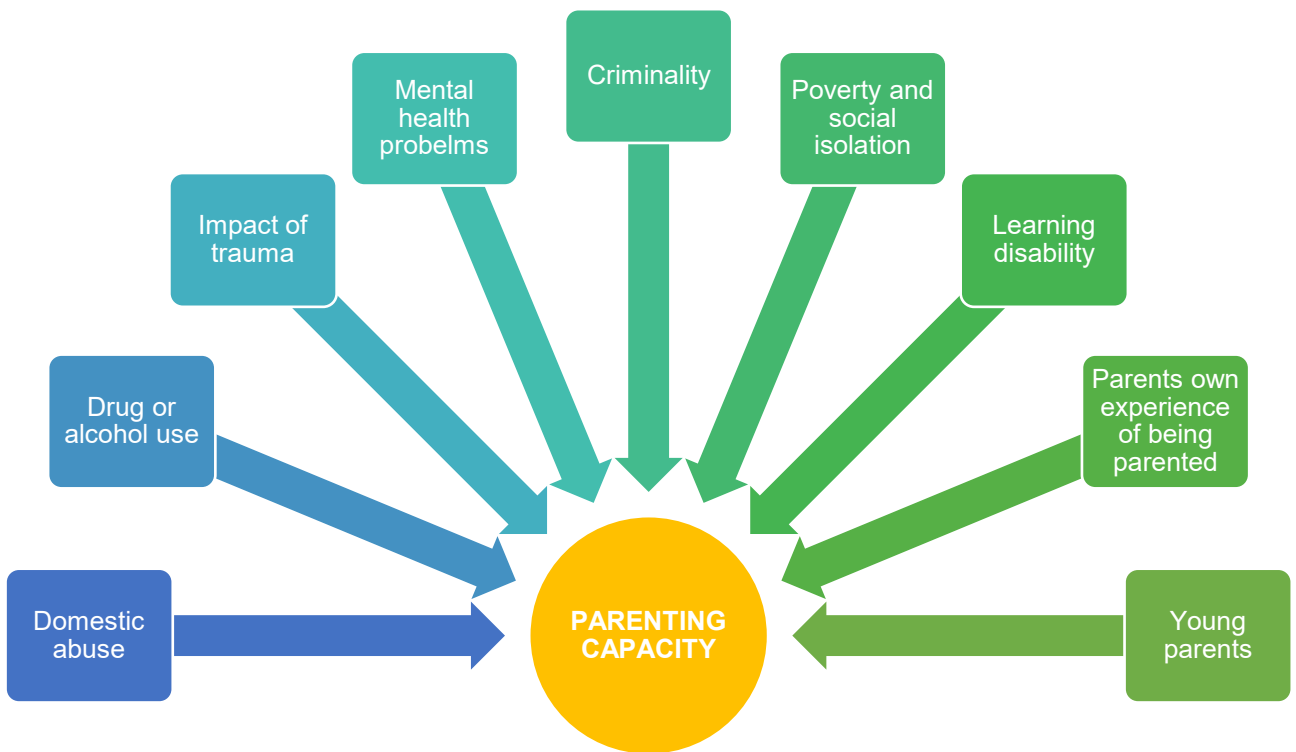


	care despite the availability of sufficient resources. The child may also be abandoned or excluded from home.
<b>Lack of supervision and guidance</b>	The child may be exposed to hazards and risks, parents or caregivers are inattentive to avoidable dangers, the child is left with inappropriate caregivers, and/or experiences a lack of appropriate supervision and guidance.

## Causes of neglect

It is not easy to say what causes someone to neglect a child. Most people do not set out to purposefully neglect another. Neglect rarely manifests in a crisis that demands immediate action, it can occur alongside other forms of abuse. It may be the result of other contributing factors such as parental mental or physical ill-health, parental learning disabilities, substance misuse, domestic abuse, unemployment and poverty. However, it needs to be pointed out that the presence of any of the contributing factors does not mean neglect will take place.

A wide range of circumstances and stressors exist for parents whose children experience neglect including, poverty and lack of capacity or knowledge about children’s/young people’s needs, housing issues, disability, asylum or refugee status and other circumstances for example chaotic and/or transient lifestyles, which might weaken parental capacity. The diagram below helps to illustrate some of the stressors that can impact on a parent’s capacity to parent.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Paul Bywaters et al. 2016 [‘The relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect: an evidence review’](#) The Joseph Rowntree Foundation



Whilst poverty can be a contributing factor to neglect, children from affluent families can also experience neglect. Affluence can also sometimes mask emotional neglect which may take much longer to recognise what is absent.<sup>2</sup>

## Recognising neglect

Circumstances causing neglect often take years to develop and can occur alongside other forms of abuse and commonly (not exclusively) where there are factors that affect parental capacity.

Children are best protected when practitioners are clear about what is required of them individually and how they need to work together so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates.

Whilst it is good practice that neglect should be seen through the experiences of the child, **prenatal neglect** can only be identified from observations of the experiences of the expectant mother and her family context, and so must be considered separately.

For unborn babies the need to ensure that services have a shared understanding of what constitutes a vulnerable pregnancy and use common approaches and language to identify, assess and support pregnant women and their partners/families is a crucial one. This will ensure that families get the help they need, when they need it, to maximise the potential for the baby to thrive and meet expected developmental milestones and outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

A pregnancy may be considered vulnerable if one or more of the following circumstances exist within the household: substance abuse, learning disability, domestic abuse, serious mental health issues, significant criminality or where there is a previous history of child abuse or neglect. All women are screened for vulnerability, and where present are referred to the safeguarding midwifery team for assessment.<sup>8</sup>

When working with neglect, it is important to consider the particular needs and characteristics of children, young people and their parents/carers which may make a child or young person more at risk of experiencing neglect, for example:

- there are issues of capacity for the parents or carers or an adolescent who is transitioning to adulthood;
- the child or young person is missing out on education or not achieving in education;
- the child or young person has complex needs and
- the young person has social, emotional or mental health needs.

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<sup>8</sup> Ayrshire Multi-Agency Guidance - Pathway for responding to vulnerability in pregnancy September 2022



In addition, some situations may make the identification of neglect harder including (but not exclusively) where:

- English is not the first language of the child, young person or their parents or carers;
- The child is educated through Elective Home Education;
- The child or young person is missing out on education or not achieving in education;
- The child or young person has complex needs.

## Impact of neglect

Children and young people experience the impact of neglect differently at different ages. It is important to remember that neglect should be seen in the context of each individual's experiences. The following summarises the main impacts of neglect at each stage<sup>4</sup>:

<b>Infancy (birth to two years)</b>
Babies' growth and development is linked to their interaction with the world and their caregivers. Emotional and cognitive development can come through play. Disinterest or indifference to such actions and/or failing to offer stimulation will limit the child's development and growth, and damage infant attachments.
<b>Pre-school (two to four years)</b>
Most children of this age are mobile and curious but lack understanding of danger. They need close supervision for their physical protection which neglected children may not experience. Children may not be appropriately toilet trained if they are in neglectful families as this process requires patient and persistent interaction and encouragement. Children's language development may be delayed if their caregivers are not interacting with them sufficiently and physical care may be inadequate, e.g., dental decay.
<b>Primary age (five to eleven)</b>
For some neglected children, school can be a place of sanctuary. However, if their cognitive development has been delayed and they are behind their peers at school, it can also be a source of frustration and distress. Signs of neglect, e.g., dirty or ill-fitting clothing, will be apparent to peers, teachers and to the children themselves, and may cause embarrassment and difficulties in their social interactions. Children without clear and consistent boundaries at home can struggle to follow school rules and get into trouble. Educational neglect can include failing to ensure that children attend school and high levels of absence can further impair their academic achievement.
<b>Adolescence (twelve to eighteen)</b>
Neglect is likely to have an impact on the young person's ability to form and maintain friendships and pro-social relationships, though the young person may be more reluctant to disclose their situation if they fear becoming separated from their family.





Adolescent risk-taking behaviour may be associated with, attributed to or exacerbated by a lack of parental supervision, which can expose neglected young people to the risk of harm through, for example, alcohol and substance misuse, risky sexual behaviour or criminal activity.

Resilience to neglectful situations does not increase with age, and can have significant consequences for young people's emotional wellbeing.

It is important to recognise the impact of neglect across the life course including the potential for experience of neglect to impact on parenting skills and dealing with life challenges as an adult.

The table in **Appendix 2** gives further examples of the different ways in which children and young people can experience the different types of neglect.



## 7. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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From the engagement we have carried out with families and our partners, we have identified four strategic priorities to tackle neglect in East Ayrshire:

### Priority 1 – Children’s voices are heard

- Children’s experiences of neglect are at the centre of their care.
- Practitioners have the skills and tools to creatively gather the views of all children.
- Children with complex needs and young children are able to express their views.

### Priority 2 – Right support at the right time

- Families are able to access the right support, in the right place at the right time.
- Support will be focused on the strengths of the families and will be non-stigmatising.
- Patient and consistent relationships are central to the support provided to families.

### Priority 3 – Improved understanding and collaboration

- Practitioners in all agencies work to the same definition of neglect, are able to recognise the various signs of neglect when working with children, young people and families.
- Each partner agency will provide appropriate and timely responses to children, young people and their families through a multi-agency approach in line with the guiding principles in this strategy.

### Priority 4 – Addressing poverty

- Families experiencing poverty are supported to address material hardship.
- Services work together to ensure families are receiving what they are entitled to and are not left destitute when experiencing a crisis.
- Community Planning Partners collaborate to achieve the actions set out in East Ayrshire’s Local Child Poverty Action Plan.

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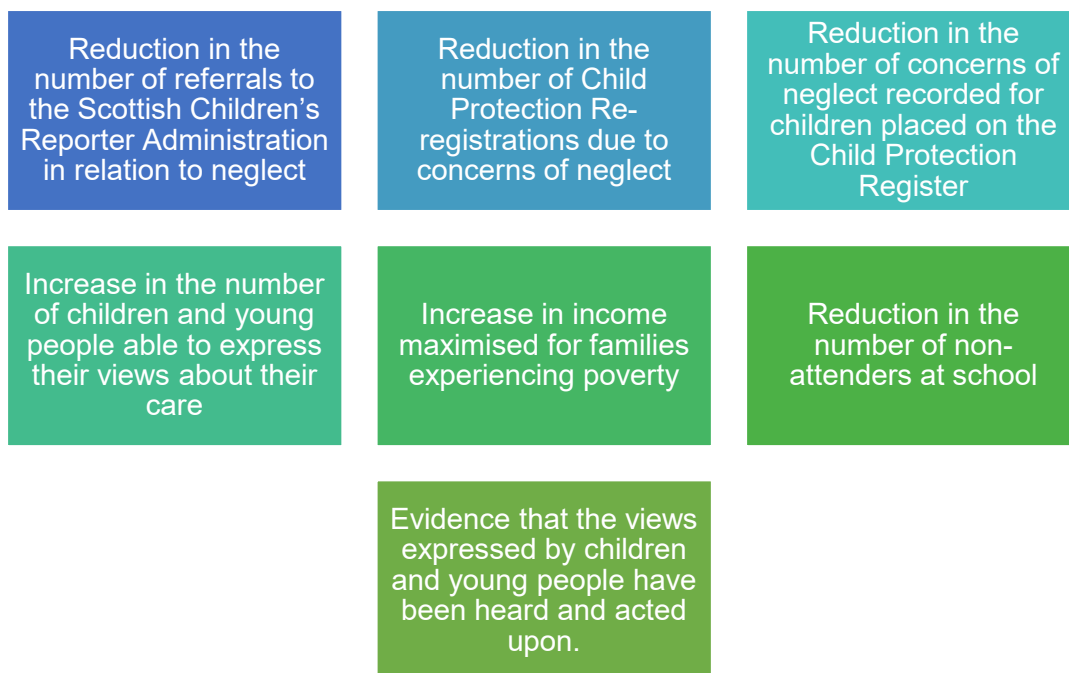
## 8. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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This strategy is owned and overseen by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Child Protection Committee. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership will monitor progress against the strategic objectives on an annual basis. The effective delivery of the strategy will be reported regularly by the GIRFEC Group through highlight reports.

### Key indicators for measurement of the effectiveness of the strategy

It is important that measures of success are established and agreed. The following indicators will demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategy and its implementation:



## 9. ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY 1 - CHILDREN'S VOICES ARE HEARD				
Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Indicators	GIRFEC principles
Empower children, young people and their parents, carers to actively contribute to their wellbeing assessment, ensuring their views are included and that they have an active part within their Child's Plan.	GIRFEC group chair	End of December 2023	Audit of Child's Plans Qualitative feedback from children and young and their families.	Safe, Respected, Included
Ensure children and young people are given the opportunity, in line with their rights, to attend their Team with the Family meeting giving their views and taking part in decision making.	GIRFEC group chair	End of December 2023	Audit of Team with the Family meetings. Casefile audit.	Respected, Included
Ensure children and young people have access to appropriate advocacy (including independent advocacy) based on relationships.	Senior Manager – Children's Health, Care and Justice	End of March 2024	Number of children and young people offered independent advocacy. Proportion of children and young people taking up independent advocacy. Case studies of children receiving appropriate advocacy.	Safe, Respected, Included
Train a Talking Mats tutor for East Ayrshire and roll out Talking Mats training to support the wider workforce to create opportunities for	Speech and Language Therapy Service Manager	End of March 2024	Training of tutor Number of staff trained in Talking Mats	Safe, Respected, Included



children and young people with additional support needs to express their thoughts, even in challenging and complex situations (sensitive content).			Audit of use of Talking Mats	
Carry out an audit of staff training needs with a focus on participatory and peer led approaches.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)	End of March 2024	Completion of audit	Respected, Included
Embed the use of the Infant Voice Tool across all Children's Services	GIRFEC group chair	End of March 2025	Number of staff trained in the use of the Tool. Use of tool evident through audit activity. Case studies.	Safe, Respected, Included
Increase the use of play and communication tools across all services to create opportunities for children and young people to express their views.	Senior Manager – Children's Health, Care and Justice/Health Improvement Team	End of March 2026	Use of play evident through audit activity. Case studies.	Healthy, Active, Respected
<b>PRIORITY 2 - RIGHT SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>GIRFEC principles</b>
Increase awareness to staff and families of what support is available across East Ayrshire by developing the online wellbeing directory.	Service Manager, Children's Health	End of December 2023	Children and families information on directory. Number of hits on directory. Communications campaign. Number of teams informed. Number of sessions.	Safe, Healthy, Included
Implement Team with the Family approach.	GIRFEC Group chair	End of December 2023	Audit activity identify meeting attendees. Case studies.	Safe, Respected, Included



Embed use of the Graded Care Profile Tool.	Senior Manager – Children’s Health, Care and Justice	End of March 2024	Number of staff trained in the use of the Graded Care Profile Tool. Use of tool evident through audit activity. Case studies	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Included
Implement improvement project on infant mental health and father inclusion in collaboration with Book Trust Scotland.	Senior Charge Midwife for Safeguarding	End of March 2024	Evaluation of engagement and feedback from fathers.	Nurtured, Respected, Included
Development of child and family friendly spaces across the authority in line with the HEART model.	GIRFEC Group	End of March 2026	Number of spaces developed. Numbers using the spaces Case studies	Safe, Nurtured, Included
Improve trauma-informed practice through training at the appropriate levels.	Trauma Advisory Board chair	End of March 2026	Number of staff trained appropriate to their role Evidence from trauma informed care from casefile audits.	Safe, Nurtured
<b>PRIORITY 3 – IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING AND COLLABORATION</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>GIRFEC principles</b>
Increase understanding of neglect by reviewing the Social Work Child Protection processes.	Performance and Quality Assurance Group Chair	End of December 2023	Audit activity.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Included
Identify all relevant stakeholders responsible for multi-agency workforce learning & development in relation to neglect and form a working group to support learning needs analysis.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)/Health Improvement Team	End of March 2024	Multi-agency working group for learning & development established	Safe, Nurtured, Respected



Develop Practice Guidance for all practitioners working with children and families who experience neglect at all levels of need.	Child Protection Lead Officer	End of March 2024	Consultation (baseline survey prior to guidance development then at regular intervals) with practitioners to understand their confidence in practice and their view of their impact.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Included
Develop a dataset for neglect to continuously tell us what our picture is here East Ayrshire.	Child Protection Committee Performance and Quality Assurance chair	End of March 2024	Dataset developed. Dataset regularly monitored by Child Protection Committee. Dataset used to inform practice.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected
Improve wellbeing support for staff dealing with vicarious trauma through reflective discussions and peer support.	Wellbeing Co-ordinator	End of June 2024	Case studies Numbers of staff accessing supports.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected
Increase awareness of neglect and early help and supports available by holding an Annual Conference co-designed with partners and families.	GIRFEC Group chair	End of June 2024 then annually	Number of attendees at conference. Survey at start of conference and survey at end of conference to evaluate increased understanding.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Responsible, Included
Establish a baseline of the knowledge of neglect amongst multi-agency partners by carrying out a learning needs analysis.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)	End of March 2025	Baseline data from training needs analysis.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected



Increase knowledge of neglect amongst multi-agency partners by establishing and implementing a training programme on neglect based on training needs analysis.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)	End of March 2026	Surveys at regular intervals to demonstrate improved understanding.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected
<b>PRIORITY 4 – ADDRESSING POVERTY</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>GIRFEC principles</b>
To develop a resource that can be used within ELC settings, initially during challenge poverty week, to help raise understanding and awareness about the impact of poverty.	Service Manager – Early Years (Development)	End of October 2023	Number of ELC settings using the resource and feedback from them on how they feel it has encouraged thinking discussion among children.	Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Establish a process for families to address immediate and urgent material need through Whole Family Wellbeing Fund	Senior Manager – Children’s Health	End of December 2023	Number of families supported by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. Audit of use of hardship grant	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Identify key local contacts across financial support services who can support and address immediate risks associated with material and environmental poverty directly impacting risk.	Financial Inclusion Team Manager	End of March 2024	Key contacts added to wellbeing directory. Case studies.	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Community Practitioners will work with families to reduce the impact of poverty by ensuring that families receive the right help and are supported with onward referrals to other services.	Service Manager – Early Years (Early Intervention)	End of March 2024	Data collection Case Studies	Achieving, Nurtured, Included





Learning settings to fully consider and undertake actions aligned to the Scottish Government's <a href="#">Child Poverty</a> Plan "Every Child, Every Chance" and evaluate the impact of such actions'	Education – Depute Head of Education: Equity, Inclusion & Employability	End of June 2024	Case studies	Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Increase awareness of support available through the Schools Project and the Early Years practitioners provided by the Financial Inclusion Team.	Financial Inclusion Team Manager	End of December 2024	Increase in income maximised by Schools Project	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Implement East Ayrshire's Local Child Poverty Action.	Financial Inclusion Team Manager	End of March 2026	Reduction in the number of children in poverty. Increase in income maximised.	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Reduce the impact of poverty by supporting families to access third sector support.	Vibrant Communities	End of March 2026	Case studies	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included



## Appendix 1: Graded Care Profile Tool Practice Insight<sup>9</sup>

### Identifying and addressing neglect: applying the Graded Care Profile

#### Purpose of this practice insight

This insight introduces the potential use and some necessary considerations in implementing use of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2).

#### Rights

The GCP2 fits well with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 19.2, which requires that “*States Parties provide protective measures, procedures and social programmes which can provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up to ...maltreatment.*”

#### Context

Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) is one adaptation of the original Graded Care Profile. The original tool has also been (or is being) adapted in other areas to suit the needs of different geographical areas across Scotland. Within Glasgow the tool has been adapted jointly by Glasgow HSCP and Action for Children and published as the Assessment of Care Toolkit. The Assessment of Care Toolkit is being used in partnership with families, to support early intervention and identify where aspects of intensive family support might be required.

The GCP2 may be a tested example of a structured assessment tool but is not a national requirement. This structured and licensed assessment framework has been evolved by the NSPCC from the work of Srivastava (1995-2015). Recent evaluation (Smith et al., 2019) has found it to be a useful tool in assessment and addressing neglect in a way that is collaborative, promoting shared understanding and purpose; and transparent, aiding analysis of needs and evidence of progress.

The GCP2 enables a shared and specific understanding of strengths and areas for support for change. Current care is ‘graded’ in four domains: Physical Care, Safety, Emotional Care and Developmental Care, drawing on Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs, and these are subdivided as follows:

- Physical Care: Nutrition, Housing, Clothing, Hygiene and Health
- Safety: In Parent’s Presence (Awareness, Practice, Online, Traffic and Practical Safety Features) and In Parent’s Absence
- Emotional Care: Parent’s Responsiveness (Sensitivity, Timing and Quality) and Mutual Engagement (Initiation and Quality)
- Developmental Care: Age, Approval, Disapproval and Acceptance

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<sup>9</sup> Scottish Government, [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021: Practice Insights](#)



Training, support and supervision should ensure that this tool is not applied in the manner of a 'tick-box' exercise but as one dimension of work to achieve change together and to form such professional judgement as may be required. A purposeful and structured approach should be applied in a way that is compatible with the emphasis in the 'The Promise' on provision of a responsive 'scaffolding of support', and on a workforce trained appropriately and empowered to work in relationship with families.

What do the 'grades' mean?	
Grade	Description
1	All the child's needs are always met and the parent goes the extra mile. The child is always put first.
2	All essential needs are always met. The child is a priority.
3	Most of the time the essential needs of the child are met.
4	Most of the time the essential needs of the child are not met. The child's needs are placed second to those of the parent/carer's.
5	The child's essential needs are not met. May be due to intentional disregard. The child is not considered.

#### When may the GCP2 be useful?

- as part of collaborative early help with parents
- as part of collaborative planning with a 'Team Around The Child' (<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>)
- as part of a multi-agency child protection plan
- by Health Visitors and Early Years Workers as a basis for referral to social work
- as a component in planned collaborative work within compulsory supervision
- guidance accompanying the tool has sections explaining how it can be used more flexibly and with different populations such as teenagers

#### Who should be involved?

Parents/carers are the primary partners in the assessment. It is essential that they understand the reasons for assessment; methods used; and they should be encouraged to take part in grading and to self-grade. Children can and should be involved as much as possible and as appropriate in each situation. Their involvement and understanding is often an area of consideration that receives less attention.

All members of the 'Team Around The Child' have a part to play in assessment and scoring processes. If information is not known no score should be given.

#### Planning and Reviewing



When applied, the GCP2 Assessment is used to inform development of the child's plan. Targeted help is agreed and specified with responsibilities and timescales for reassessment and review of progress by the Team around the Child. Concerns may focus in a specific domain but a holistic approach to wellbeing, needs and strengths remains a principal part of the underpinning national practice model.

### Supervision and self-evaluation

Supervision is essential for considering when the GCP2 is likely to be helpful and for supporting best application of the framework. For this reason it has proven necessary for team managers to be trained in GCP2. Completed assessments and reflections on grading, risk and progress are reviewed in supervision. Self-evaluation and quality assurance are necessary parts of implementation to ensure consistent and credible scoring and analysis.

### Strengths of using GCP2

Local feedback echoes findings in the evaluation of the GCP2 (Smith et al 2019). Practitioners valued the potential for an honest, methodical, strength-based, transparent and holistic approach with families. A shared language and shared knowledge and understanding of neglect is more likely.

- “I like that it's really visual. I used it with a parent with learning needs and she was quite resistant to start with but then when I sat down and went through the colours and numbers and really broke it down - she began to understand it more. When I showed it to her..., it made sense. She was able to see what was great and what was not so great and what needed to change.” (Social Worker)
- “Everyone likes the parent leaflet; that makes things a lot easier than what we had before!” (Implementation Lead)
- “It's got online safety in it, that's dead relevant,... it feels less kind of punitive... I think families can say “Yeah, okay, we've worked through that; I can see there are bits that I might need to look at” (Family Support Worker)
- There were some concerns about blind spots e.g. “[When] family are spending on everything but the rent... lack of sleep/staying with different relatives all the time so [the child] never has the right clothing with them and parent's inability to see that some routine/stability is necessary.” (Training Officer)

Concluding comment: The GCP2 clearly identifies areas requiring further support. It captures and frames the quality of care a child receives at one single point of time. This can be revisited, following intervention, to gauge progress and if needs be, to refocus the child's plan. Overall the tool supports a solution-focused approach and is consistent with the values, principles and core components of the GIRFEC national practice model. Decisions can be made with greater confidence because they are better informed by evidence achieved in collaboration.

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## Appendix 2: Ways in which children and young people can experience neglect

Experiences of neglect by age group.<sup>6</sup> Please note that the examples listed are intended to give an overview of what children may experience rather than provide an exhaustive list of ways in which neglect may present.

Age group	Experiences of neglect by Horwath's classifications					
	Medical	Nutritional	Emotional	Educational	Physical	Lack of supervision
<b>Infancy: 0-2 years</b>	Includes failure to notice that a baby is unwell and failure to seek medical attention. Not attending health screening appointments may be indicative.	Under-nourishment leads to restricted growth and brain development. There can be a link between neglect and obesity, e.g., if parents use sweets as 'pacifiers'.	Lack of stimulation can prevent babies from 'fixing' neural connections. Infant attachments are damaged by neglect, which makes learning skills more difficult.	Some parts of the brain are dependent on experience and stimulation to develop. Language relies on reinforcement and feedback from carers.	Dirty home conditions may affect infant immune system. Lack of changing and nappy rash, lack of encouragement may delay skill development.	Babies should be supervised at all times. If babies feel abandoned, this can affect the development of attachments.
<b>Pre-school: 2-4 years</b>	May include missed health and dental appointments and failure to seek medical treatment following accidents or for routine conditions such as head lice or squints.	Not eating 1200-1500 calories per day, and/or unregulated amounts of fat and sugar in the diet which can lead to heart problems, obesity and tooth decay.	Children without a secure attachment may experience difficulties playing with their peers, sharing feelings and thoughts, coping with frustrations and developing empathy.	Delay in a child's language development through the amount and quality of interactions with carers. This delay affects their education.	Child may present as dirty and malnourished and living conditions may be poor. Child may not have been toilet trained, sleeping sufficiently or have adequate boundaries.	Home may lack safety devices e.g., stair gates. Dangerous items may be within reach. Child may not have appropriate car seat. Child may be left home alone.
<b>Primary: 5-11 years</b>	Children may have more infections and illnesses than their peers due to poor treatment or lack of prevention e.g., hand washing, good diet or adequate sleep.	Food isn't provided consistently leading to unregulated diets of biscuits and sweets. Concerns should not just focus on weight; children of normal weight could still have unhealthy diets.	Insecure attachment styles can lead to children having difficulties forming relationships and may express their frustration through disruptive behaviour.	Children can experience a number of disadvantages at school, including low educational aspirations, lack of encouragement for learning and language stimulation.	Ill-fitting, inadequate or dirty clothing, poor personal hygiene, lack of sleep, lack of routines or boundaries which can lead to frustration with school rules and boundaries.	Children may be left home alone or expected to supervise younger children. They may be left to play outside alone or to cook meals without supervision.
<b>Adolescent: 12+ years</b>	Poor self-esteem and recklessness can lead to ignoring or enduring health problems rather than accessing services. There may also be risk-taking behaviour e.g., in sexual activity.	Adolescents may be able to find food but lack of nutritious food and limited cooking experience can lead them to unhealthy snacks which affects both health and educational outcomes.	Peer groups and independence are important at this age. Young people who are isolated by neglect (e.g., though poor hygiene) will struggle. Conflict with carers may also increase.	Likely to experience cognitive impairment e.g., in managing emotion so may result in challenging behaviour in school. Low confidence and academic failure can reinforce negative self-image.	Adolescents' social development is likely to be affected by their living conditions, inadequate clothing, poor hygiene and body odour. This can affect their self-esteem.	Neglected adolescents may stay out all night with carers not aware of their whereabouts which can lead to opportunities for risk-taking behaviours that can result in serious injury.

