

EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE  
BIENNIAL REPORT 2018 / 2020





IN EAST AYRSHIRE, CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE GROW  
UP LOVED, SAFE AND  
RESPECTED SO  
THAT THEY  
REALISE  
THEIR FULL  
POTENTIAL



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# FOREWORD

As Interim Chair of the East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (EACPC) it gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Committee, to present our biennial report for 2018-20. Normally, an annual report would be completed, however, due changes to the guidance issued by Scottish Government for Chief Officers and Child Protection Committees and having to await confirmation as to how the EACPC's report would link to the revised Children & Young People's Service Planning arrangements, there was no annual plan completed for 2018/19. This biennial report will therefore cover the two year period, to reflect the work of the Committee and its partners.

As with the plan for 2017/18, this plan has two clear sections, the first describes how our Committee fulfilled its functions by improving outcomes for children and young people during the last two years and includes practical examples of our work, as well as a 'snapshot' of statistical information. The second section is more forward looking and sets out how the Committee will take forward its child protection priorities, which are now explicitly linked to the Children and Young Peoples' Services Plan 2020-23.

During the development of the new plan for Children and Young Peoples' Services 2020-23, further work was undertaken to integrate the business priorities of the Child Protection Committee within the priorities for wider Children and Young People's Services. This work also allowed us to develop a shared vision for children and young people, that being:

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

As with previous CPC reports, this report provides an outline of the ways in which the Committee and its constituent partners have continued to work collegiately to improve the protection of children and young people in East Ayrshire, whilst refining our outcome focused practice. In addition, the Committee has helped to develop preventative and protective measures which will result in better outcomes for those we aim to protect. Reporting on outcomes rather than processes is something which does not happen over-night and continues to be an area where practitioners are actively seeking new methods and approaches to capture valuable levels of information on those outcomes being achieved for our most vulnerable children.

Without doubt the emergence of the COVID – 19 pandemic has had a colossal effect on the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people, not to mention those who are there to support them, whilst growing up. We have seen huge changes in the way agencies and services have had to adapt to continue to provide essential services and with no end in sight for a return to the 'old normality', the need for innovative, creative and resilient ways of working in the future are ever more essential, if children are to aspire to the vision outlined above.

As Interim Chair, I am acutely aware of the not unsurmountable challenges ahead but I am reassured in the knowledge that in East Ayrshire we have the highest quality of services available for children, which are provided by a motivated team of dedicated, experienced and skilled professionals and volunteers. During the response phase of dealing with the pandemic, this partnership's approach to protecting children has provided many examples of staff going above and beyond what would normally be expected of them, with a true sense of joined-up working and a genuine desire to make a difference to the lives and outcomes for our most vulnerable children. I am absolutely certain this positive and 'can do' attitude will prevail across the partnership in the months and years ahead.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank and commend everyone involved in protecting children and young people in East Ayrshire, for their dedication, drive and commitment in working together to keep our children safe.



Interim Chair of East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

# SECTION I: Introduction

The East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee's Biennial Report for 2018/20 will be in two parts. The first part will consider current arrangements which are in place for dealing with the Committee's business and what it has achieved between 2018 and 2020. The second part will focus more on how the Committee will take forward its work and what actions are intended for 2020 and beyond.

It is important to point out that the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (C&YPSP) and the Child Protection Committee (CPC) have joint responsibility for strategic planning and continuous improvement activity across children and young people's services, including child protection. In recent years, an opportunity was taken to integrate the previously separate sister plans, the Children and Young People's Service Plan and the Child Protection Committee Plan, within one single all-encompassing Plan for Children and Young People's Services.

The second East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Service Plan, will cover 2020 through to 2023 and is set out under the terms outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (and associated recent guidance). The Community Planning Partnership Board will continue to provide oversight of the plan. The C&YPSP and CPC will share a common vision, guiding principles, themes and outcomes across the two areas of business.

Community Planning Partners in East Ayrshire have a long established joint planning approach to children's services. The Service Plan sits within the overall Community Planning framework, which includes our sovereign planning document, the [East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-30](#). It is from these solid foundations that we have been able to celebrate strong performance, as confirmed by the [Joint Inspection of Children's Services](#) published in 2018, that we are:

- supporting children, young people and families through meaningful relationships
- achieving improved outcomes for children and young people despite challenges
- associated with high levels of poverty and deprivation
- building a vibrant community.

The joint plan fulfils our statutory responsibilities within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act), specifically Part 3 in respect of children's services planning. The plan also sets out how we are responding to Part 1 of

the Act regarding the duties of public authorities in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Act also enshrines the Getting it Right for Every Child Practice Model, supported by the wellbeing indicators, which are reflected in how we have developed our plan.

A key element of the plan is the performance management aspect, which is about making the best use of information and resources to support improvement in the delivery of outcomes. Reporting on performance information supports positive action to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families. Through adopting the national Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, effective performance management will ensure there is focus on the SHANARRI outcomes. The delivery framework adopted will ensure that both the Strategic Partnership and the CPC receive the necessary key information to scrutinise and be assured of progress against the Service Plan. Information requires to be both quantitative and qualitative in order to facilitate a well-formed overview and to reinforce the focus on achieving positive end-impact arising from partnership activities.

The Child Protection Committee partnership approach will continue to operate within the framework of the revised guidance '[Protecting children and young people: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer responsibilities](#)' (Scottish Government, 2019), and the current [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#) (Scottish Government, 2014), (due to be further revised in 2021) whereby the core functions of the Committee are:

- continuous improvement
- public information, engagement and participation
- strategic planning and connections
- annual reporting on the work of the CPC.

The current National Guidance (2014) provides a useful working definition as follows:

*Child Protection Committees are locally-based, inter-agency strategic partnerships responsible for the design, development, publication, distribution, dissemination, implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across the public, private and wider third sectors in their locality and in partnership across Scotland. Their role, through their respective local structures and memberships, is to provide individual and*



*collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services across Scotland. They work in partnership with their respective Chief Officers' Groups and the Scottish Government to take forward child protection policy and practice across Scotland.*

The Committee reports directly to the East Ayrshire Chief Officers Group (EACOG), which retains a strategic overview of all public protection matters. However, on a day-to-day basis the Committee is primarily a strategic partnership between key agencies and services who are involved in the protection of children. In the revised guidance – **'Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities (Scottish Government 2019)'** the role of Child Protection Committees is clarified in that they are seen as the key local bodies for developing, implementing and improving child protection strategy across and between agencies, bodies and the local community. The definition of being a locally-based, inter-agency strategic partnership responsible for child protection policy and practice is reaffirmed in the draft National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, currently in the consultation phase and likely for public release in mid-2021.

In practical terms, Committee members meet on a quarterly basis to consider child protection related matters and make collective decisions on how partners will come together to take action to safeguard children. The Committee works together to improve arrangements for keeping children safe by:

- Working collaboratively and in partnership to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in East Ayrshire
- Developing and implementing plans which are focused on keeping children safe
- Reviewing, evaluating, monitoring and approving multi-agency protocols, procedures and guidance which relate to child protection
- Having oversight of data about child protection practice, to inform improvements and developments
- Promoting key messages about protecting children and young people in our communities
- Developing training and learning opportunities for practitioners relating to child protection.

Underpinning the foregoing work is the Scottish Government's **'Getting it right for every child'** approach, whereby the Committee continues to work strategically to reinforce the focus of all partner agencies and services on the wellbeing and safety of particularly vulnerable children.

A revised Children and Young People's Services Planning and Governance Arrangements diagram (Appendix I) has been prepared to assist in outlining the various partnerships, strategic plans, multi-agency groups and how they all connect. The diagram provides a useful overview of the inter-related nature of protection streams operating

across East Ayrshire. These arrangements have been specifically designed to ensure connectivity and clarity of reporting channels through to the Community Planning Partnership.

Recognising the need to align and connect the various protection partnerships in operation across East Ayrshire, the Chief Officers conducted a review of Public Protection support arrangements and in October 2019, introduced a new dedicated Senior Manager for Protection & Learning (SM-P&L), sitting under Children's Health, Care & Justice Services, with line management from the Chief Social Work Officer. This appointment has resulted in the development of a joint Protection & Learning team, based at the Johnnie Walker Bond, Kilmarnock, which has in turn led to much stronger connections and maximisation of the effectiveness of resources across the various protection partnerships.

The value of this new team, and the coordinating functionality it provides, was in evidence shortly after lockdown was announced on 23 March 2020. At the East Ayrshire Chief Officer Group (COG), on 15 April 2020, the new Senior Manager proposed the introduction of a weekly multi-agency public protection oversight and governance process. Following agreement by COG, six Operational Oversight Groups (OOGs) were formed of key multi-agency/service managers to provide assurance that multi-agency public protection activities retained a particular focus on these key areas of business, whilst coordinating mitigation actions to the myriad of risks posed to vulnerable people by the conditions of lockdown and impact of COVID-19. The public protection areas included:

- Child Protection
- Adult Support & Protection
- Alcohol & Drugs
- Justice Services & MAPPA
- Violence against Women and Girls
- New & Emerging Vulnerabilities

The initial terms of reference for the OOGs outlined their purpose as being to identify risks and contingency / mitigation measures which required to be escalated to the Executive Strategic Oversight Group for further action or assurance. In addition, the groups supported the Executive Strategic Oversight Group by providing a co-ordinated and integrated multi-agency approach to the various protection areas, throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period, by sharing up to date information and relevant operational updates on multi-agency public protection priorities/actions in East Ayrshire.

These arrangements were regularly reviewed and have proved to be effective in providing assurance that any single agency adjustments made during lockdown did not cause any unintentional harm in other agencies/services. Furthermore, the oversight process provided assurance to the COG that multi-agency working arrangements had the

necessary flexibility, swiftness to react and coordination of activity to very effectively respond and mitigate any newly identified or emerging risks.

The Child Protection Lead Officer co-ordinated the Child Protection and Violence against Women OOGs and provided a common denominator across these closely linked areas of protection business. Following each cycle of OOG meetings the SM-P&L collated the respective OOG written updates into

one combined Protection report, which was circulated and discussed with the Protection theme Leads, thus providing a more joined up and collegiate overview of protection activity in East Ayrshire. Thereafter, the report was shared with the Executive Strategic Oversight Group for comments/action prior to it finally being submitted to COG for their consideration. It is of note that the Interim Chair of the CPC remains a core member of the COG and as such retained regular oversight and scrutiny in relation to all protection activity, not just that which is primarily Child Protection related.

During the COVID -19 crisis, several examples emerged where innovative and collegiate partnership work occurred to enhance the level of support available to vulnerable people. Examples included:

- Shared use of space in Education Hubs to allow for multi-agency services to help support vulnerable children and young people as well as their family/carers
- Creation by Education of a directory of Service/ Resources available for Team Around the Child discussions during COVID – 19 pandemic
- Public Health drew together a risk matrix regarding increased alcohol use, including risks to adults, unborn children and future risks following the COVID – 19 crisis
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) developed a short anxiety management programme and linked with school nurses regarding delivery of it
- Agreement was reached to use schools for Joint Investigative Interviews, where a wellbeing need for a child had been confirmed
- Schools were also made available to facilitate Children's Hearings, utilising available private space to maintain social distancing and use of appropriate IT equipment, all with a view to assisting SCRA with their Hearings backlog.



# SECTION 2: Context

East Ayrshire is a diverse area covering some 490 square miles with a population of approximately 122,010 people spread over both urban and rural communities. Kilmarnock is the largest urban area with a population of around 44,500 and other settlements that range from less than a hundred people in some villages and rural areas to around 9,000 in Cumnock, the second largest town.

Many parts of East Ayrshire are prosperous and it is a vibrant area in which to live, work and to visit; however, significant inequalities continue to exist within and between our communities. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 highlights that in East Ayrshire, the local share of most deprived areas has fallen by two per cent, going from 33 per cent in 2016 to 31 per cent in 2020. We also have the seventh largest proportion of population, in Scotland, categorised as most deprived. This level of poverty is reflected in the fact that there are currently sixteen active foodbanks, or 'Larders' as they are sometimes know, in operation in East Ayrshire and the table below provides an insight in the rising demand they have seen during the COVID pandemic.

FOODBANK STATS: CHILDREN		AYRSHIRE EAST FOOBANK				
	Number by Age					
DATE	0 – 4 yrs	5 – 11 yrs	12 – 16 yrs	Unknown	Total	Comment
1st Apr 18 – 31st Mar 19	631	1097	519	205	2452	
1st Apr 19 – 31st Mar 20	761	1363	813	489	3426	39.8% on previous year's total
1st Apr 20 – 31st Aug 20	140	260	112	2453	2965	86.5% of last year's total demand during first 5 months of the year. If current demand continues projected increase is approximately 108% increase on last year's figure or over 7,000 children.

The impact of rurality on our population is significant also, with increased access to services an important focus for partnership working. This, coupled with our high levels of poverty and deprivation, has the potential to negatively impact on child wellbeing and poverty.

In addition, the impact of the high incidence of misuse of alcohol and drugs is considerable across many aspects of our communities, from the loss of individual talents, pressures on health services, the impact on children and families and implications for justice services and community safety.





# SECTION 3: Our Vision

Taking the foregoing local context into account, the vision expressed for all citizens of East Ayrshire in the Community Plan is that:

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 combined vision of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Child Protection Committee is:

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

Therefore, our commitment to children and young people, their families and carers is to provide them with the support they need, when and where they need it, in order to help them achieve their aspirations and full potential at all life stages.

# SECTION 4:

## How do we protect children?

Taking a collective and collaborative approach to dealing with the problems associated with Child Protection in East Ayrshire is the key to success for the Committee. By connecting partners together in a regular, meaningful and consistent manner ensures there is a good exchange of specialist knowledge, experience and best practice. The Committee's coordination of a wide range of multi-agency resources allows it to respond quickly and effectively to a changing environment (particularly evident during the response to COVID – 19), whereby measures are implemented to improve governance arrangements, tighten policies/procedures, develop refined/innovative working practices and facilitate meaningful engagement with the public.

The Committee continues to be fully committed to driving forward the National Getting it Right for Every Child approach, with a view to: improving outcomes; supporting the wellbeing of the children and young people; and offering the right help at the right time from the right people. This approach is strengthened through the Committee's strong focus on continuous improvement and self-evaluation, ensuring services and supports for children and their families/carers are regularly reviewed and remain of the highest standard.

In working closer with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, we have a more holistic approach and commitment when working with children, young people and their families/carers to:

- Recognise the importance of people and relationships in our delivery of high quality services
- Develop vibrant and sustainable communities.

This aspirational approach continues to inform all that we do in East Ayrshire and it is experienced by children, young people and their families/carers through our work in building vibrant communities, in promoting positive relational based supports and involves focusing on strengths, relationships and the potential of people in this area to be caring and compassionate towards each other. Our commitment to Nurture, as set out in [East Ayrshire's Relationships Framework](#) and in the [Parental Engagement Framework](#), underpins our relational based approach to practice. All practitioners in East Ayrshire are encouraged to frame their practice in the context of FACE – so that they are Flexible, Approachable, Caring and Empowered.

To ensure the continued delivery of high quality services, the Committee has over the years actively commissioned and facilitated multi-agency participation in internal/external research, undertaken self-assessment activities and provided regular reflective learning opportunities, which allows the Committee to gauge the strengths as well as areas for improvement in relation to the provision of services for children. These activities serve to inform the collaborative approach to keeping children and young people safe through the Committee's multi-agency Learning and Development approach, where there has been a wealth of protection-focussed courses available via our Multi Agency Children's Services Learning and Development Calendar. These courses have been very well received and positively evaluated, although courses in the main have been temporarily suspended, with no further face to face training events likely to take place before April 2021, due to COVID -19 restrictions. Delivery of courses will re-commence across the full range of statutory and third sector partners in East Ayrshire once restrictions are lifted, however, the CPC will continue to work with Learning and Development practitioners to help make these important courses as widely available as possible, as soon as possible and, in any case, in a format which keeps everyone safe.



# SECTION 5:

## Our progress and achievements

During the past two years, the Committee has been involved in or driven forward a wide range of initiatives, programmes, developments and process changes, with a view to improving and refining child protection matters in East Ayrshire. Evidence of this work, under the core function headings, includes the following:

### STRATEGIC PLANNING/LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

- Presentations (involving practitioners where possible) to CPC members, on key identified themes such as: Multi-agency Relationship Framework; Child Poverty; SSSC Newly Qualified Social Worker Supported Year; Update on Family Nurse Partnership; role of the new Senior Manager for Protection & Learning; and Human Trafficking – Local experiences
- Integration of the previously separate sister plans, the Children and Young People's Service Plan and the Child Protection Plan, into a single all-encompassing Plan for Children and Young People's Services,
- Continued agreement on the three key priority areas for the CPC to focus on from 2020-23, namely, Neglect, Digital Resilience and Safeguarding
- Continued implementation and roll out of the Graded Care Profile 2 approach to child neglect
- Revision of Ayrshire and Arran Working Model for Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRDs)
- Revision of The Management of High Risk Pregnancies guidance
- Addition of a further 8 CPC Practitioner Briefing Notes and 2 updates, on a range of Child Protection related subjects including:
  - [Child Protection/Adult Support and Protection Interface Guidance](#)
  - [Clarity surrounding Police Information / Police Intelligence](#)
  - [Guidance for Local Authorities on Minors returning from Syria](#)
  - [Mental Health & Wellbeing – Support and Information Sites](#)
  - [Child Protection – Under Age Sexual Activity - Police Scotland's Standard Operating Procedure](#)

- [Case Management Transfer Protocol in Children & Families Social Work](#)
- [East Ayrshire HSCP Emergency COVID-19 Child Protection and Looked After Children Contingency Guidance](#)
- [Transitions Pathway Flowchart](#)

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/SELF EVALUATION

Evidence of continuous improvement and self-evaluation activity includes:

- Report submitted covering seven multi-agency file audits undertaken from June 2017 (27 files audited); September 2018 (16 files audited); December 2018 (37 files audited); March 2019 (25 files audited), June 2019 (32 files audited), September 2019 (28 files audited) and December 2019 (27 files audited). The total number of files audited between June 2017 and December 2019 was 192
- Continued work to conclude the Initial Case Review in respect of Child M (concluded in September 2020)
- Aligning of planning arrangements for the CPC and Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership, to create a joint Children and Young People's Service Plan for 2020-23
- Revision and updating of Safeguarding action plan for: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); Human (Child) Trafficking; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + (LGBT+); Suicide; Self harm; Force Marriage; Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Prevent (stopping people becoming a terrorist or supporting violent extremism).

## PARTNER ACTIVITIES

### Information from - Social Work

#### Impact of Covid on Identification of Child protection and Vulnerability

During the lockdown period locality social work services moved to agile working alongside a robust duty system which provided face to face assistance and support for our most vulnerable families. The teams implemented priority working with a direct focus on child protection, increased vulnerability and underlying/complex health needs. Home visits continued to take place to ensure contact with our most vulnerable. The teams work closely with our Education colleagues to support children and young people to access our Education Hubs through the summer period for continued face to face support.

A number of themes have been highlighted as we try to support families and reach out to our most vulnerability children these included

- Extra support required for our looked after children within foster, kinship and residential placements to avoid placement breakdowns and pressures associated with lockdown
- The need for increased support to encourage our children and young people to re-integrate back into nursery, school and community life safely
- Increased need for families to access support from social work services due to limited community supports and face to face contact from commissioned or universal services
- The impact of parental anxieties, mental health, alcohol and/or substance misuse on children and young people
- Impact and increase of financial hardship/poverty
- The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.

#### Safe and Together

The locality services continues to develop and train staff about how multi agency partners respond and support victims of domestic abuse. The focus remaining on supporting victims by enhancing trauma informed practice and increasing safety. The Safe and Together Model provides improved safety planning for children and adults and improves the assessment and management of perpetrators. Multi agency training has started to be delivered to key staff across children and families locality services. The training is planned to recommence in the 2021 via virtual/ blended delivery to accommodate Covid-19 restrictions.

### Graded Care

The training of staff in the use of the Graded Care Profile approach continues and this tool is proving to be useful for assisting practitioners in the assessment of child neglect and care. It is being successfully used from an early intervention perspective to identify neglect at a very early stage and helps in the identification of parenting strengths as well as weaknesses. This collaborative process is

invaluable as it helps parents understand professionals' concerns and at the same time gives everyone a clearer picture of the child's life and what supports may be necessary to support the child and to prevent harm. The service also continues to support practitioners to use graded care, for children registered under the category of Neglect, to help a parental understanding about the level of concern and to target areas for work as it highlights areas of greater risk. The tool also supports workers to highlight successes and monitor improved outcomes for children subject to a child protection plan.

### Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019

During the reporting period, the Scottish Government introduced a phased implementation of the Act ensuring children are not criminalised and to support multi-agency professionals working with children under the age of criminal responsibility who display problematic or harmful behaviour. It aids practitioners to take a child centre approach and places focus on the impact of socio economic, disadvantage issues and past or present trauma which often have a correlation on increased offending or risk taking behaviours. It places the focus on the actions taken to protect young children and what is need to interrupt harmful behaviours, provide support and prevent reoccurrence.

### Information from - Police

Between 2017 and 2019 Ayrshire Division worked with partners, and in particular the three Ayrshire Local Authorities, to improve understanding and develop practices in support of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma national discussions. A facet of this programme included developing the principles of Operation Encompass. This provision is a unique Police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership which ensures that a child's school is informed, prior to the start of the next school day, that there has been an incident of Domestic Abuse to which the child has been exposed.

Operation Encompass principles and referral criteria were developed between Ayrshire Police and the three Local Authority Education Leads, which led to a formal 'test of change' taking place between 29th April and 14th June 2019. Operation Encompass did not continue at the completion of the evaluation period. However, in order to continue to realise a collective and coordinated

approach to safeguarding the young people of Ayrshire, Police Scotland continued to work with Partners including Education leads from all three Local Authorities to develop a referral process into locality Named Person service.

### **Information from – Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)**

Like all public services, the children's hearings system was significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic. From March 2020 the way in which SCRA works and provides services had to change almost overnight. The way that Hearings are held, notifications sent, support provided turned all that we know upside down, and yet we managed – and are still managing, to ensure that the critical, core function of the hearings system remains intact and we have ensured that all children in Ayrshire have continued to receive a child centred, and sensitive and responsive service from our team.

The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 contains provisions which allow changes to current arrangements for children's hearings. The changes are outlined in schedules 3 and 4 of the 2020 Act.

These provisions were originally due to expire on 30 September 2020. However, they have now been extended by regulations approved by the Scottish Parliament until the 31 March 2021, and it is likely they will be further extended to the 30 September 2021.

Since March 2020 the majority of children's Hearings in Ayrshire have been conducted using a secure virtual video platform and we are currently working at enhancing this virtual platform.

In the summer of 2020 we also resumed face to face children hearings in East Ayrshire and building work was completed so that up to 22 people can attend a face to face hearing socially distanced, with all the appropriate health measures in place. This hearing room is also digitally enabled so we can have hybrid hearings allowing people to make the decision if they wish to attend virtually even if some will be attending in person. Currently, we are prioritising having face to face hearings for children and families that would find it difficult to attend and participate meaningfully digitally.

The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act allowed us to prioritise at the point of the first lockdown, preserving existing legal protections for children and young people and to convene hearings for consideration of children and young people in the most urgent and high risk situations. This, however, has also cause a backlog of cases which we are currently working through. To ensure that we did not push undue pressures on to other agencies we set up a small working group with Social Work, Education, Health, Advocacy, and Children's Hearing Scotland to ensure that the recovery plan is at a pace that all agency are able to cope with.

During these difficult and unprecedented times it is also essential that SCRA continue to plan, to look ahead with ambition and to ensure that no learning is lost from the rapid response the entire system has had to make to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children and young people. Our focus moving ahead is to ensure that there are planned paths for recovery out of the current situation brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic. We will look to ensure that we take the time to evaluate and to learn from the response that has been invoked and it looks to ensure that we are still driving forward in our key role in the Hearings System – to continually improve the service that we deliver to children, young people and their families – and that, as proud Corporate Parents, we continue to listen, learn and act. We will also continue to work collaboratively with partner agencies to develop and implement exit and recovery plans.

### **Information from – Alcohol and Drugs Partnership**

Following publication of the Scottish Governments new national drug and alcohol strategy 'Rights, Respect and Recovery' in late 2018, (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/rights-respect-recovery/>) with its commitment to ensure Children and families affected by alcohol and drug use will be safe, healthy, included and supported, the East Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (EAADP) alongside its key children and families partners undertook during 2019/20 a full review and redesign of services to children and young people affected by alcohol and drugs.

This large scale review not only engaged organisations and staff working with children and young people but in recognition of the commitment outlined in 'Rights, Respect and Recovery', involved children, parents and other family members (including kinship carers) in the planning and development of the revised updated service. This service review was in keeping with the commitment contained within the ADP strategic improvement plan (<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/A/Alcohol-and-Drugs/ADP-Strategic-Improvement-Plan.pdf>) that identifies children, their families and their carers as being a central element to the delivery of safer and healthier communities. The ADP further enhanced its commitment to the children and families agenda by refreshing the commitment to supporting the strategic agenda by reaffirming the dedicated resource allocation to children and families via the Children and Young Peoples strategic partnership (CYPSP). This renewed and reaffirmed relationship will see the allocation of resources for children and families being targeted at those most vulnerable families in our communities.



## Information from - Health Visiting and School Nursing

A homeless notification process has been developed in partnership with Health, Education and Housing. When a family is at risk of eviction or becoming homeless or has become homeless, Housing notify the Named Person. The Named Person then links with the family to identify any unmet needs or health and wellbeing concerns and offers appropriate support and signposting. The hope is that services can intervene before families become homeless.

'BabyChat' was developed to support infant feeding initially but has developed over the last two years and has helped reduce the loneliness and social isolation of many of our new mothers and their babies. It has allowed focus on baby massage for some of our most vulnerable babies, improving the mother and baby bond and maternal and infant mental health. All areas of wellbeing are covered such as play, nurture, language and communication, dental health but most importantly development of friendships.

East Ayrshire has chosen to deliver all visits within the Health Visiting Pathway in the family home. Continuity of Named Person has supported the development of therapeutic relationships with families, while being able to recognise concerns or need at a much earlier stage. School age children and young people are allocated a School Nurse when required and this nurse remains the health professional who continues to provide support as and when required, again supporting and developing a trusting relationship between them both. Improved use of the National Risk Framework tools has supported more thorough assessment of risk which has improved the development of a more robust plan of care interventions for our children. Children's views always recognised and included by both services.

Within both services a robust supervision process has been developed within Early Years to support staff managing complex child protection cases. This happens every 4-6 weeks and is delivered by Team leaders. Reflective and solution focussed, discussions are management of care with review of child health record and quality of recording and assessment completion.

We are very proud of the fact that we are able to meet our Chief Executives Letter (CEL) 16 Commitments and ensure our children who become care experienced or looked after are all offered a health needs assessment within 4 weeks. This supports early identification of health and wellbeing needs with support to access appropriate services when required. We now offer all our Looked After and Accommodated children and young people an annual review health assessment to identify any new concerns or worries for that young person.

## Information from - Child Protection Health Team (CPHT)

The CPHT continues to work with partners to progress improvement activity to ensure NHS Ayrshire and Arran (NHSAA) has a Child Protection Service that is of a high quality, safe and effective. Priority areas of work in the protection of children and young people is monitored and progressed via the

Safeguarding Children Performance and Improvement Group (SCIPG) Action Plan which also incorporates actions from multi-agency improvement plans and learning from Significant Case Reviews (SCRs) / Initial Case Reviews (ICRs).

## Covid-19

The Coronavirus Pandemic and subsequent "Lock Down" introduced on 23 March 2020 has had an impact on the normal delivery of key activity within the Child Protection Health Team, requiring staff to adapt quickly and effectively to this new context.

The CPHT continue to respond to all child protection activity with the required amendments in place to support social distancing and changes to national and local guidance, as required. Supplementary Child Protection Guidance and CPC Scotland updates have been widely circulated and the CPHT continue to engage in East Ayrshire's CPC Operational Oversight Group for regular feedback and updates from agencies.

It is recognised nationally that we are likely to see a rise in child protection concerns and activity due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on families as new stresses could be a trigger for child abuse, neglect and exposure to domestic violence. In response to this, the CPHT have reviewed the duty rota system for IRD/Advice & Support Calls to ensure there will be three Child Protection Advisors on duty each day to support a timeous response to IRDs.

## Significant Case Reviews (SCRs) & Initial Case Reviews (ICRs)

The CPHT continue to support a joint SCR (East & South Ayrshire) which commenced February 2019 and an ICR in East Ayrshire which commenced September 2018. Relevant findings and recommendations from SCR's and ICR's will continue to be discussed and improvement activity specific to health services actions are progressed via the Safeguarding Children Improvement and Performance Group (SCIPG) Action Plan. Where possible, improvement activity has been initiated in response to findings as they emerge.

## **Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD): Revised Working Model and Guidance**

The Ayrshire Working Model for IRDs has now been revised, updated and was implemented on 15 March 2020. Monthly IRD self-evaluation/audits of the revised process takes place on a multi-agency basis to support continuous improvements and quality assurance in relation to partnership decision making within IRDs.

## **Strengthening Safeguarding in Primary Care**

A working group was formed with General Practitioner (GP) representation in response to an East Ayrshire Significant Case Review recommendation to strengthen communication and information sharing from and to GPs / GP Practices, to support robust information sharing within child protection processes and procedures.

The work of this group has now concluded following the development and final approval of NHS Ayrshire and Arran "Guidance for Primary Care Contribution to Child Protection Procedures."

This guidance has been discussed at East Ayrshire CPC and the Child Protection Health Team will be supporting the implementation of this guidance in practice. Bespoke Child Protection Training continues to be offered to GP Practices as well as advice and support by the Child Protection Advisors and Paediatricians.

## **Mental Health & Safeguarding**

Improvement activity continues to be undertaken by Mental Health Services in partnership with the Child Protection Health Team and Child Protection training for Mental Health Staff is available on request.

The "Distressed Child and Young People Pathway Working Group" was established in August 2019 by Thelma Bowers, Head of Mental Health, in response to improvement and development requirements indicated as a result of ICRs/ SCRs (Initial Case Reviews / Significant Case Reviews) during the previous year regarding young people with multiple attendances at ED.

There is recognition within the working group that this is a whole system issue as many of these young people are known to multiple services including health, social work, police and education. A whole day Mapping and Learning Event took place on 24 January 2020 to highlight areas that could be done better or where there may be gaps. Service structure has been reviewed and clinical risk/needs of staff have been identified and are being responded to.

## **Emergency Departments and Paediatric Services**

The Emergency Departments (ED) and Paediatric Wards have an aligned Child Protection Advisor offering advice, support and child protection training with a focus on standardising Child Protection learning and processes across the two University Hospitals in Ayrshire.

## **Emergency Department Services**

Child protection guidance and referral processes have been revised and updated within the Emergency Departments and this will replace the current Care and Protection Liaison Process. The IT infrastructure required to support the revised process has been upgraded and this will ensure Child Protection referrals go directly from the ED electronic system to the relevant Social Work department timeously following the initial child protection telephone referral.

Audit and self-evaluation has commenced within ED in relation to children under 1 year attending ED and children under 16 years who have attended ED with mental health problems and self-harm.

## **Paediatric Services**

Child protection guidance and referral processes have been revised and updated within Paediatric Services and this will replace the current Care and Protection Liaison Process.

Bespoke Child Protection training sessions are being offered within Paediatric Services and a Child Protection Link Nurse development opportunity has been commenced from within the Paediatric Nursing Service to provide additional support and a 'train the trainer' model for ongoing training and development sessions and also become an associate member of the CPHT.

Regular peer review processes are in place with the Paediatricians, and the Child Protection Advisors are also invited to be involved in the discussions, learning and sharing of good practice.

## Health's Child Protection Training

Child Protection Training continues to be revised and updated to ensure key messages and learning from Significant Case Reviews, Care Inspectorate Inspections and National policy drivers are being embedded in practice. NHSAA is committed to safeguarding, promoting and supporting the protection and wellbeing of children and young people as follows:

- Calendar of Child Protection Training activities (single and multi-agency) is available on Athena Child Protection site
- Bespoke Child Protection Training is available on request as appropriate
- LearnPro Child Protection (MAST) Module has been revised and updated to reflect the latest policy changes and developments in child protection
- Development of 5 additional bespoke LearnPro modules including:
  - Child Sexual Exploitation
  - Cultural Issues in Child Protection
  - Emotional Abuse
  - Maltreatment in Infants
  - Child Protection Risk Assessment (National Risk Framework)
- Development of Child Protection Training to be delivered using Microsoft Teams.

The CPHT continue to support all staff with advice, support, risk assessment and decision making in relation to child protection. Everything the team are doing at the moment is within the current context where we are all working together to support effective service delivery of how we care for the most vulnerable children and young people and keep them safe within such challenging circumstances and how we change our systems to manage a whole new set of circumstances and challenges.

Within NHSAA it is recognised that success is founded on effective partnership working and we show this commitment in everything we do. Strengthening how we work together across services and with partner agencies to improve services and achieve a consistent approach to keeping children and young people safe, is the overarching priority.

## Information from – Early Years

Resource Allocation Group (RAG) statistics for children 0-5 years (predominantly 0-3 years) subject to Request for Assistance (RFA) are outlined below.

For the period August 2018 to July 2019 and then August 2019 to July 2020. There are 29 Banding criteria used to categorise and record the reasons for the allocation of additional resources, over the periods the percentage of RFAs dropped in all but 2 of the Banding criteria, those which increased are detailed below.

Resource Allocation Group	August 2018 – July 2019	August 2019 – July 20	Comment
Children subject to Request for Assistance	405	292	The second period includes over 4 months of lockdown and sees a 28% reduction in the overall number of RFAs processed via the RAG, however 97 children 0-5 years accessed Early Childhood Centres via the Hub RFA process during lockdown.
Children on Child Protection Register	22 children 5.1%	29 children 6.7%	This represents over 30% increase in only 75% of the time
Child affected by disability ( self)	17 children 4%	24 children 5.6%	Over 40% increase in 75% of the time.



The Children (Scotland) Act 2014 extended entitlement to funded early learning and childcare to 2 year old children who are Looked After; subject to a Kinship Care Order; have a parent appointed guardian or whose parents /carers are in receipt of qualifying benefits .

Entitled 2 year olds	August 2018 – July 2019	August 2019 – July 20	Comment
Looked after 2 year olds accessing up to 600 hours of early learning and childcare	23 of whom 16 or 70% accessed the full 600 hours entitlement	13 of whom 10 or 76% accessed the full 600 hours entitlement.	The second period includes over 4 months of lockdown.  Please note that recording on Pentana for LAAC 2 year olds accessing ELC ceased in April 2020 and statistics on Looked After 2 year olds accessing ELC are not available from this point.
Entitled 2 year olds accessing up to 600 hours of ELC	260 average 21.6 per month	182 average 22.7 per month	While the second period records a lower overall number this is achieved in 75% of the timeframe of the first period.  An initial base line assessment advised that only 24% of eligible children in the North West Area (NWA) of Kilmarnock were accessing a funded 2 year old placement. Following a targeted piece of work which involved working in partnership with the Dept. of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the childcare providers in the NWA the uptake increased to 79% of the eligible population of 2 year olds.
Child affected by disability (self)	17 children 4%	24 children 5.6%	Over 40% increase in 75% of the time.

### Information from – Vibrant Communities (East Ayrshire Sports Council and Youth Work Network / Play & Early Intervention)

Between August 2018 to July 2020 the following child protection workshops were facilitated by East Ayrshire Sports Council and Youth Work Network:

- Safeguarding and Protecting Children 1 = 6 workshops delivered and 79 attendances
- Safeguarding and Protecting Children 2 = 3 workshops delivered and 30 attendances
- In Safe Hands (Children’s 1st) = 4 workshops delivered and 28 attendances
- Youth Work safeguarding = 2 workshops delivered and 40 attendances
  - Total courses = 15
  - Total attendees = 177
- No courses were been delivered between January 2020 to July 2020 but they were planned, however, they were rescheduled for later in the year.

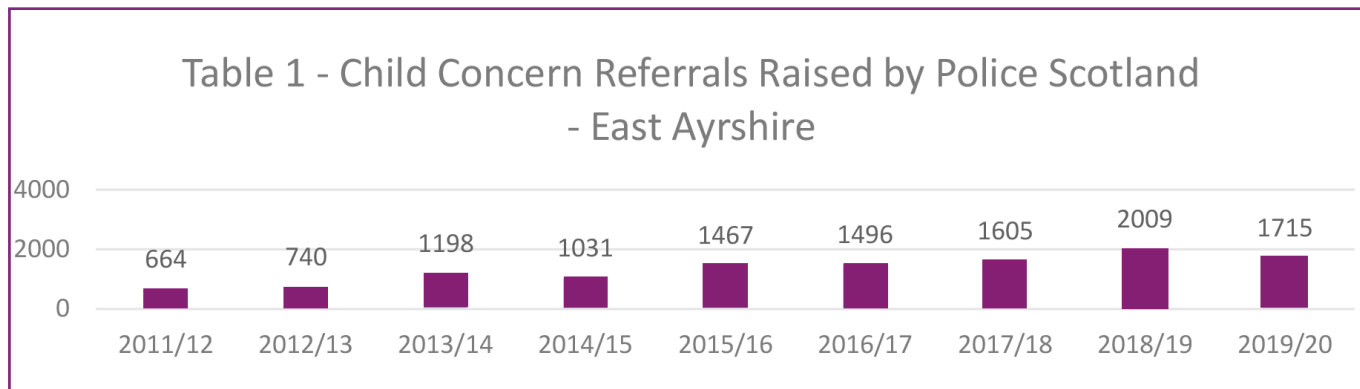
In respect of the Play & Early Intervention Teams, activities included:

- The delivery of 3 x Basic Awareness Child Protection training courses to volunteer befrienders and bank register staff
- 6 children on CP register supported through befriending services and multi-agency partnerships (including one befriending support to a young person that had been affected by trafficking)
- Family support to a family of 4 on CP register initially referred for befriending. Went onto support mum with a mix of befriending and in home supports. This intervention has since then allowed them be removed from the CP register.



# SECTION 6: Child Protection Activity

Members of the public and practitioners alike may raise concerns about a child or young person. Table 1 below indicates the number of Police child concern referrals made over the last 9 years. The table clearly shows an upward trend in Police referrals to Social Work services, rising from 664 in 2011/12, to a high point of 2009 concerns raised in 2018/19.



The general increase in child concern referrals from Police Scotland may be attributed to a growing focus being placed on reporting broader wellbeing concerns, as well as those which would have historically been reported, specifically around child protection concerns.

Child concerns are initially investigated to establish if there is any substance to the matter being reported and thereafter a decision is taken as to what level of support may be necessary to protect the child or young person. When an initial child protection case conference is convened, it will consider all the circumstances and where there are significant levels of concern for the safety of a child or young person, a decision can be taken to place the child on the Child Protection Register. The table below provides the numbers of children and young people in East Ayrshire who, over the last 17 quarters, have either been added or removed from the Register and the number of children on the Register at the end of each quarter.

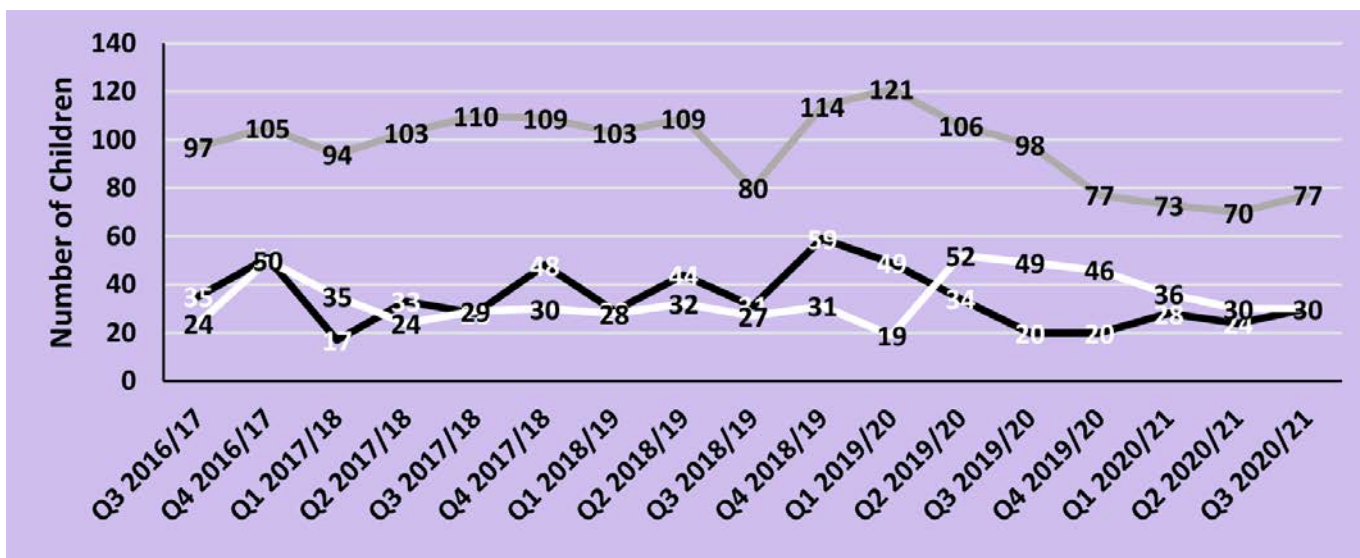


Table 2 - Children on Child Protection Register, including number registered/deregistered



**National Statistics comparison**

The number of children on the Child Protection Register in East Ayrshire per 1000 of 0-15 year old population was 1.2 below the national figure in 2015/16, however, for the last four years the East Ayrshire figure has sat above the reasonably static national figure but has started to descend over the last two years. At 3.7 the East Ayrshire figure, in the most recent year, is now only 0.8 above the national figure of 2.9.

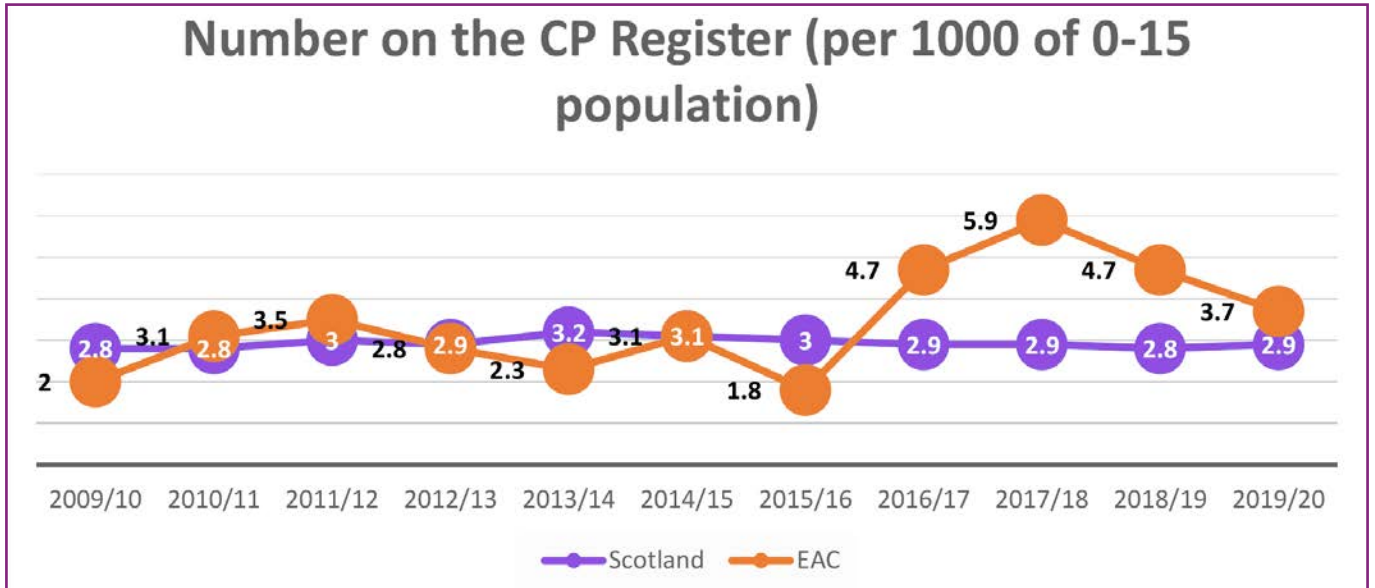


Table 5 – Number on the CP Register (per 1000 of 0-15 population)

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

Some examples of where the CPC has been engaged in raising awareness of child protection issues are as follows:

- Sponsoring of Club of the Year Award at East Ayrshire Sports Council Awards Ceremony, helping to promote Child Protection awareness within the Community
- Annual support and dissemination of information regarding Safer Internet Day, including sponsoring a prize draw on the Council's Facebook/Twitter pages to widen awareness of digital safety/resilience
- Contributing to Protecting People electronic newsletters, highlighting a variety of protection related issues which are made available to the whole community via the CPC's web pages, benefitting both practitioners and public alike
- Creation and distribution of a Child Neglect leaflet to help raise the awareness of indicators of neglect and what action to take if concerns are identified
- Regular updating of relevant links, documents and current information in relation to Child Protection, which is accessible via the CPC's web pages on East Ayrshire Council's web site, including information for practitioners, children and young people, members of the public and for parents/carers
- Use of Child Protection market stall with relevant public information material available, utilised at public events such as 'Playday' and during other partnership events (which led to useful public feedback and the voices of children being heard, assisting in creation of the new Children's Service Plan)
- Support for Education's Keeping Safe online posters
- The Ayrshire wide annual Westsound/West FM radio adverts highlighting child neglect, with a call to the public to report concerns they may have about a child.





# SECTION 7: Budget

The Committee is resourced annually through:

- A dedicated budget to meet the costs of the Lead Officer, Work Force Development Officer Post and part of the Administrative Support Post, along with essential running costs
- A separate budget to meet the costs of the Independent Chair, including necessary travel costs
- Resources in kind which are dedicated to support key activities e.g. Multi-agency Learning & Development events etc
- Resources in kind which all partner agencies make available to fulfil the functions of the EACPC e.g. contribution to multi-agency file audit etc.

The following is a summary breakdown of the Child Protection Committee's budget and actual costs for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

SUMMARY	BUDGET 18/19	ACTUAL 18/19	BUDGET 19/20	ACTUAL 19/20	BUDGET 20/21
SALARY COSTS	£97,830	£104,011	£101,240	£108,151	£105,570
COMMITTEE RECURRING COSTS	£28,170	£17,541	£26,030	£13,820	£26,030
NHS CONTRIBUTION	£4,030	£4,032	£4,030	£4,032	£4,030
POLICE SCOTLAND CONTRIBUTION	£8,280	£8,282	£8,280	£8,282	£8,280
NET COST	£113,690	£109,238	£114,960	£109,657	£119,290
<b>EXPENDITURE TOTAL GROSS COST</b>	<b>£126,000</b>	<b>£121,552</b>	<b>£127,270</b>	<b>£121,971</b>	<b>£131,600</b>

Included in the above figures is the continued part funding of the Joint Investigative Interview training officer post, now based at the Scottish Police College, and payment for the facilities and support now provided by CELCIS.

There has been an overall under-spend of £4,452 in 2018/19 and £5,303 in 2019/20, primarily due to savings in Publicity/Promotion, catering and built-in contingencies in respect of possible SCRs.

Reviews of the CPC budget continue to ensure monies align with appropriate cost centres, in line with the changing requirements and Committee's projected needs. It is likely there will be a further underspend in the CPC's budget during 2020/21 due to the restrictions placed on the CPC's activities, as a result of the COVID – 19 pandemic.



# SECTION 8:

## Continuous Improvement and Self Evaluation

The CPC along with the C&YPSP have responsibility for strategic planning and continuous improvement activity across children and young people's services, including child protection and now have a combined vision: in East Ayrshire, children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.

Self-evaluation is core to the continuous improvement and the realisation of the aspirations in East Ayrshire to improve outcomes for children and young people. Self-evaluation is used to enable partners to make informed judgements about what is working well and where action requires to be taken to improve outcomes. Self-evaluation is a process and is part of a regular cycle of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning related to the delivery of the Integrated Children and Young People's Service Plan.

In East Ayrshire, self-evaluation is based on Care Inspectorate guidance and as such we use their guidance and template for conducting our multi-agency file audits. As indicated previously at paragraph 32, we have been actively involved in conducting multi-agency file audits using the Care Inspectorates guidance and reporting template to collate the evidence. Due to the restrictions on social distancing related to COVID – 19, further multi-agency file audits have not taken place during 2020 but will be recommenced in 2021 using a virtual file audit approach.

### INITIAL AND SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEWS

In August 2018, the committee was advised of the death of a 15 year old child, who had been reported missing to Police and when found the circumstances indicated suicide. A comprehensive Initial Case Review (ICR) report was completed following a thorough investigation of the circumstances and the involvement agencies/services had with the child and his family in the lead up to the incident. An enquiry was conducted by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) around the Police involvement in the circumstances and a parallel review was undertaken by the National Health Service (NHS), which resulted in the creation of a Distressed Children and Young People Pathway, covering refinements to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)/Emergency Department (ED)/General Practitioner (GP) systems and processes in relation to the journey of a distressed young person through NHS services. The new agreed pathway is in place and has been tested for young people under the age of 16 years who attend ED at University Hospital Crosshouse. Due to delays in completing these detailed pieces of work relative to the ICR, the findings of this review were shared with the Care Inspectorate in September 2020.

In Early October 2018, the police were made aware of an incident involving a young child who had been found wandering alone in the street, apparently having been neglected. This matter was subject to Initial Case Review, which involved both South and East Ayrshire CPCs. The respective COGs agreed with the recommendations of both CPCs, that the matter met the criteria for an SCR and as such warranted progression to a joint Significant Case Review. The child's mother and mother's partner, having been charged with contraventions of the Children and young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, section 12(1) and assaults on Child H, were both subsequently convicted of an offence under section 12 of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court on Thursday 11 February 2021. The charges libelled in respect of the assaults on the child were deleted for legal reasons. On Thursday 11 March 2021, the Child's mother was sentenced to carry out 250 hours of community service and her partner was told to complete 180 hours. The sheriff told the pair their offending was "serious" and warned them a jail sentence was still an option if they failed to engage in rehabilitation. A Significant Case Review report is nearing completion and will be presented to a joint meeting of the respective COGs.







# SECTION 9:

## Multi-agency approach to child protection staff development

All learning and development events offered to multi-agency practitioners and managers are based on the key principles of the [Scottish Government's Getting it Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\) approach](#) and are underpinned by the content of:

- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450733.pdf>

- National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland 2012

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00409124.pdf>

- Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the "Children's Workforce" In Scotland (Scottish Government 2012)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00395179.pdf>

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

During 2019 to March 2020, the Multi Agency Children's Services Learning and Development worker delivered a total of 31 courses and these were attended by 351 participants. In addition to the core subjects such as Child Protection, Working with Resistant Families, National Risk Framework, Solihull and CEOP, a few new training sessions were added to the calendar. These included: Neglect - a one day session looking at the types of neglect and the impact on children, and Therapeutic Play, which builds on the ACES agenda, looks at trauma/the impact on the child, and introduces practitioners to basic approaches designed to support the child in trauma. Both courses have proved to be very popular.

### Good Practice Example – Buttons Mice

The CPC supported and promoted a resource developed by the Multi Agency Children's Services Learning and Development worker, called Buttons Mice. This interactive resource consists of a selection of stories and a mouse box with 5 'wee' felt mice. Children play with the mice in a decorated box, made to look like a room, and also hear the stories which relate to important issues such as: bullying, neglect, being hungry, fear, sharing, having fun, emotions, and dealing with loss. Current stories have been about COVID -19, being in lockdown and being tested for the virus. This resource has had very positive feedback from practitioners and several significant disclosures have been made by children using the Button Mice resource. The CPC and the Attainment Fund supported 30 Buttons Mice boxes to be placed in schools, with training for staff. A further 25 boxes have also been given out to schools, social work, Health and the Police.

Such has been the positive impact of this resource that its creator, Debbie Willett, was recognised at the East Ayrshire Excellence Awards Ceremony for her achievements in developing this excellent interactive resource for use with vulnerable children.



# SECTION 10:

## Future developments and priorities

The Scottish Government's Child Protection Systems Review along with Parts 1 and 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act), outline the duties regarding children's rights and the need for a jointly prepared children's services plan for this area covering a three year period, with the first plan produced commencing in 2017. The second iteration of the plan, [East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-23 \(PDF 3.3Mb\)](#), involved CPC members listening to and engaging with our children and young people, and their families/carers at several public events, to hear their voices and obtain their views on what should be included in such a plan.

The finalised plan has now been jointly endorsed by both the C&YPSP and the CPC. The plan sets out the strategic direction in respect of wider children's services and our collective promise to focus key areas that will make a meaningful difference to the lives of our children and young people, their carers and families.

Over the three year lifetime of the plan, the focus will be on:

- recovery and renewal from the impact of COVID-19
- tackling poverty
- respecting and promoting children and young people's rights
- improving wellbeing
- achieving!
- keeping safe (of particular relevance to the work of the CPC).





# SECTION 11:

## Planned activities for 2021/22

Looking forward to the year ahead, the CPC will focus its energies on a number of areas of activity, linked to its strategic priorities.

Key areas of development planned for 2021 – 2022 include:

- Implement the new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021.
- Update the Pan-Ayrshire protocol for conducting an Initial or Significant Case Reviews, to take cognisance of the new National Learning Review approach which has been developed to replace the National Guidance for Child Protection Committees – Conducting a Significant Case Review (2015)
- Developing the role of the Child Protection Operational Oversight Group, to become a key active sub-group of the Committee
- Roll out training and raise awareness around the 'Safe and Together' approach
- Maximise the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) to support early identification, assessment of risk and earlier interventions relative to child neglect
- When neglect is considered to be potentially more serious, Social Work practitioners to use Graded Care Profile as an evaluation tool, to review family circumstances and to help assess levels of improvement following appropriate intervention
- Provide a range of training and development opportunities for all front line practitioners, using a range of available learning mediums
- Raise the awareness of neglect and the signs of it in the community, whilst harnessing those communities to recognise and take appropriate action where neglect is suspected
- Recruit a Digital and e-Safety Support Officer to help develop and build upon the digital resilience plan, to encompass wider involvement of multi-agency protection partnerships with greater dissemination of digital safety messages, particularly in schools and to vulnerable sections of the community
- Fully support Safer Internet Day 2021 – with the theme - "An internet we trust: exploring reliability in the online world"
- Creation of easy reference handbooks for practitioners, providing essential information on key safety/protection related themes, along with available resources and key contacts
- Revision of the CPC's Missing and Unseen Child Protocol, in line with the Scottish Missing Person Framework and Police Scotland's new 'Not at Home' missing person policy
- Engaging constructively with children and young people, to hear their voice in line with the findings of 'The Promise' document, particularly those who are the most vulnerable, all with a view to keeping them safe and to improve the design and delivery of our services
- Continue to enhance wider public protection related information – via the CPC's website, social media and through other media outlets, utilising the new role of the Digital and e-Safety Support Officer within the Protection and Learning Team
- On-going dissemination of child protection materials to multi-agency practitioners via the Committee's Practitioner Briefing Notes, Protecting People Newsletters and CPC/wider Protection web pages
- Further strengthen collaborative links with other Protecting People Partnerships with a view to 'keeping people safe'
- Continue to look for opportunities to learn from and collaborate with other Child Protection Committees from across Scotland.

# SECTION 12: Conclusion

The 2018/20 Biennial Report of the East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee continues to demonstrate the wide range of positive activities undertaken by the Committee and its constituent partnership members over the preceding two year period, covered by this report. The link between the Child Protection Committee and Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has continued to evolve and strengthen, providing clear evidence of our shared and sustained commitment to working on a multi-agency basis to ensure all children, not just those who are vulnerable, are kept safe and protected from harm and abuse.

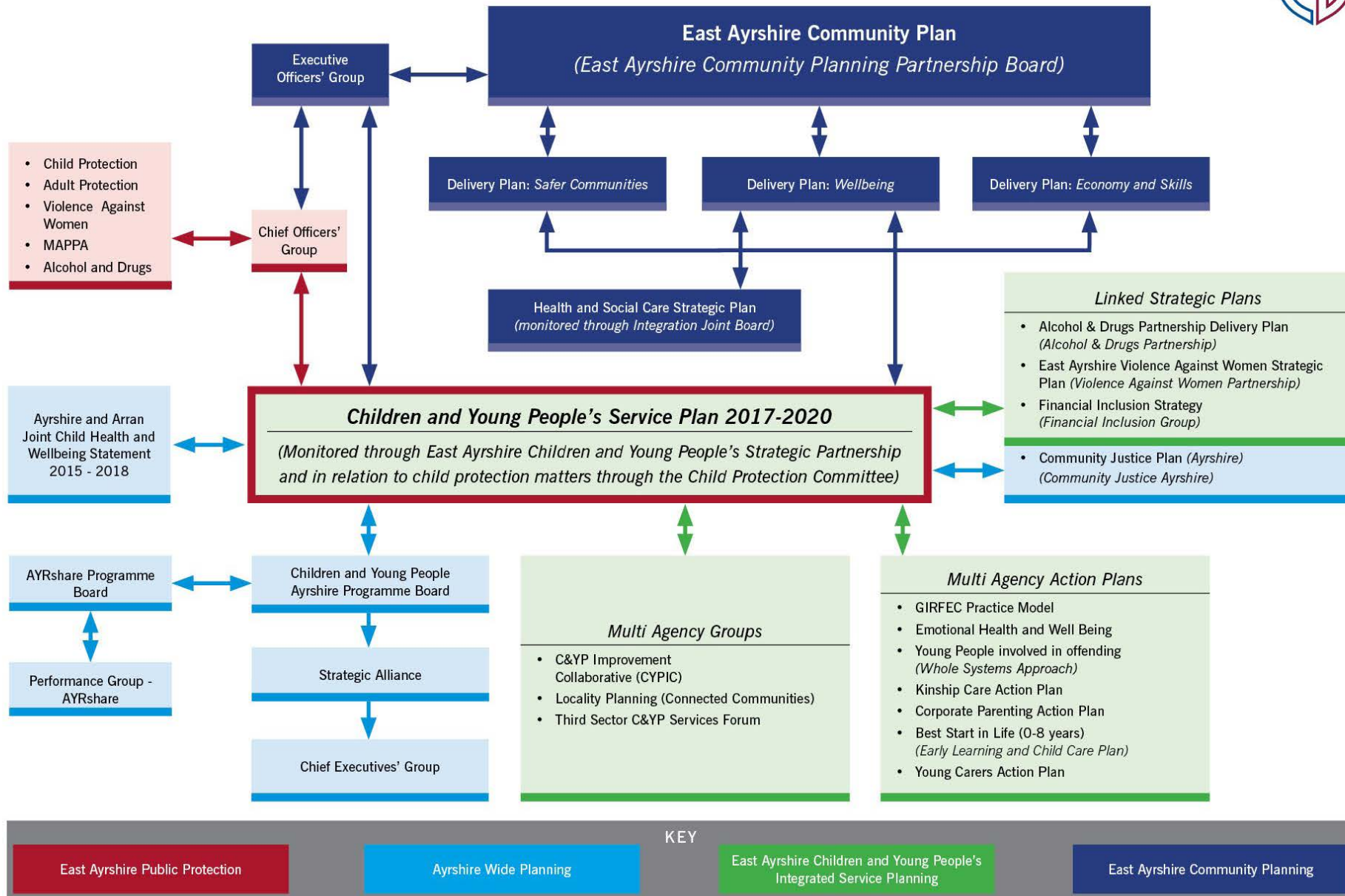
The Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People in East Ayrshire published by the Care Inspectorate in March 2018, fully recognised the positive approach taken in East Ayrshire to support children, young people and their families. The work of the Child Protection Committee was highly commended in relation strong collaboration, clear and effective governance arrangements, coordinated and challenging self-evaluation, a robust approach to quality assurance and performance measurement, as well as routine and regular consideration of emerging and potential risks. This approach has continued throughout 2018/20. That said, the impact of the COVID – 19 pandemic has resulted in the Committee and the Chief Officers Group having to resort to innovative and creative ways (such as the introduction of the Operational Oversight Governance arrangements) to continue to ensure positive activities in relation to keeping children and young people safe could still be carried out, even with social distancing and other restrictions.

This report clearly outlines the wide range of functions, positive activities and involvement CPC partners have in their work to keep children of all ages safe and protected in East Ayrshire. The Committee will focus its energy in the year ahead on the programme of planned activities and areas of development to ensure our achievements to date are built on. This requires a team effort, with a robust multi-agency approach taken whenever possible, so that collectively all partners are actively involved in keeping children safe and that

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

# APPENDIX I:

## Children and Young People's Services Planning and Governance Arrangements







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