

EAST AYRSHIRE

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT
2020|21



THE FIRST WORD

In East Ayrshire, we can pride ourselves on being a place that puts young people at its heart. Whilst we are still learning, the views and experiences of children and young people really matter to everyone within our local authority.

This report shows what young people can, and have, been getting involved in over the past year, and it is a fantastic display of excellence, passion, and dynamic thinking.

As you will know, Covid-19 presented unique challenges to everyone and especially young people. Overnight, the lives of young people changed drastically. When the doors of school buildings closed, the challenge of ensuring all young people had access to their learning environment was one felt by all young people. Many young people struggled with gaining access to Wi-Fi, laptops and courses. Others struggled with getting access to healthy and nutritious meals, and those that needed extra support and respite also struggled.

But East Ayrshire partners in services for children and young people were there to help!

One of the most significant issues raised by young people in the past year has been the concern for mental health and wellbeing. Young people have acknowledged that we are in a mental health pandemic. If you ask any young person, they will either be struggling with their mental health, know someone who is or know someone who has. That is a scary thought!

What we need now is for all adults and decision makers to recognise this as a second pandemic and pull together to help us.

Unsurprisingly, another key issue discussed by young people has been exams and how vulnerable this year has made them feel. Not just in terms of delivery, but the decision-making related to it. Young people felt let down with assessments this year, but mainly because their voices were not heard as part of the process. We now have an opportunity to make sure this never happens again. As we rebuild, recover, and revitalise our services, we need to place young people's views at the heart of every single one of them.

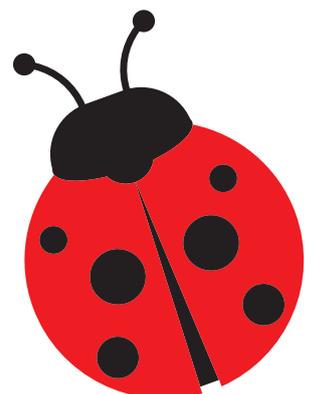
Focus on making decisions with young people, and not for them. If you ask a young person for their views on any subject, they will surely tell you. If you are ever unsure how to do this effectively, there is an easy solution. Ask a young person!

When I started writing this foreword, I promised I wouldn't be 'corporate' or too formal. After all, I am a young person and I have never been as proud to say that, than today. I am part of a group in society that no matter what you throw at them, we rise to the challenge.



Liam Fowley MSYP

A proud East Ayrshire wean





'Life is tough,
but so are YOU'

*artwork created by local young people
as a powerful and positive statement
about mental health*

A warm welcome

Welcome to the first Children and Young People's Plan 2020-23 progress report. Though further introduction hardly seems necessary following Liam's first words, I am proud to present it to you.

The report contains examples of how local children, young people, families and partners in services have worked together to make a positive difference and it continues to celebrate the contribution of children and young people to East Ayrshire. It also sets out how partners in services for children and young people have safeguarded, supported and promoted the wellbeing of children in the area, how activity has been focussed on prevention and early intervention; how services are integrated from the family point of view and how they have made best use of the available resources.

We published the Children and Young People's Plan 2020-23 in the midst of the Covid19 pandemic and though the virus continues to disrupt the lives of our children and families and the delivery of services, we have ensured that crucial supportive relationships are maintained. We continue to work to achieve our vision:

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

In our Plan we set 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***

and these continue to be our shared priorities. In this report, covering 2020/21, responding to and managing Covid-19 is understandably the focus in all areas and this has caused delays in progress with some important work. We know that many of our families have suffered setbacks, hardship and loss, which will have a lasting impact.

Even so, there have been successes and positive experiences. I want to express my thanks to everyone who has supported our children, young people and families during the past year- though we hope never again to face these circumstances, they have shone a light on how much good we can do together in dark days.

And I want to commend our children and young people- you have been brave and caring, you have played your part in responding to the emergency and you have provided much needed happiness and inspiration to the rest of us throughout all of this.

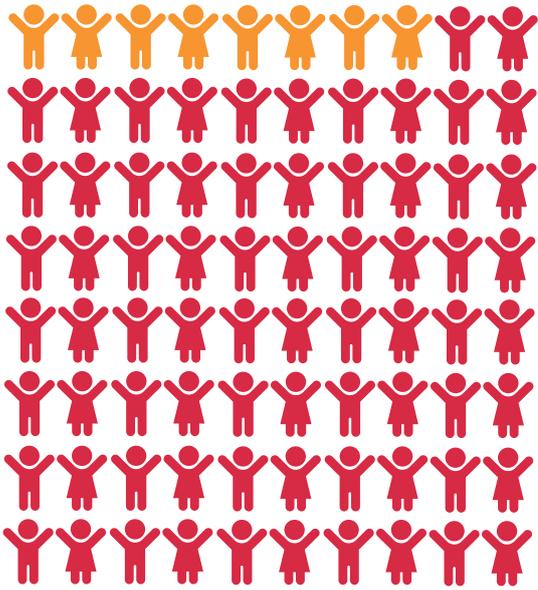
Please know that through compassion and commitment, relationships and working together as partners, we are recovering. In the months and years to come, I know we can build on this experience to do even more to improve our children and young people's lives and futures. I look forward to working with all of you as we move forward.

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

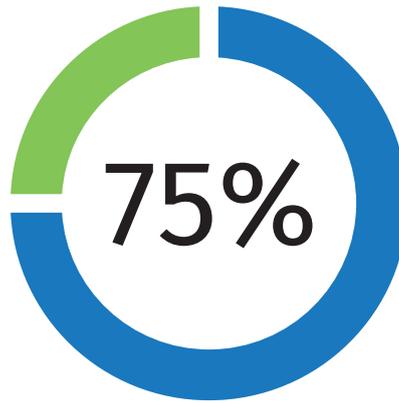


What we are working towards

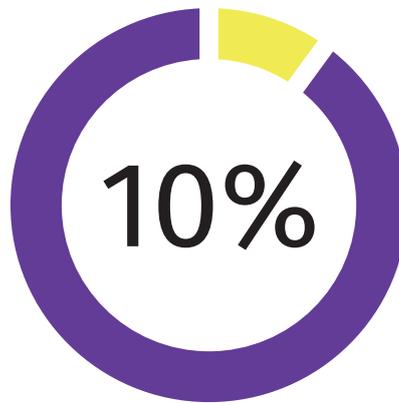
How we use our resources



We will reduce the % of children living in poverty



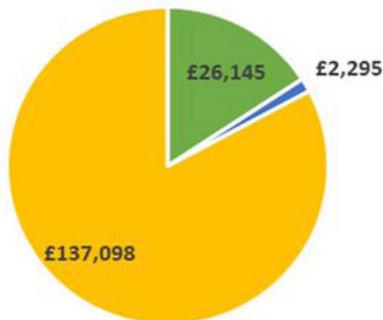
We will increase the % of children and young people who feel consulted about decisions and services that affect them



We will reduce the unemployment rate for young people

In 2020/21, we spent £165.5 million on education, health and social care and community learning and development activity to improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people in East Ayrshire. A breakdown can be found in the figure below:

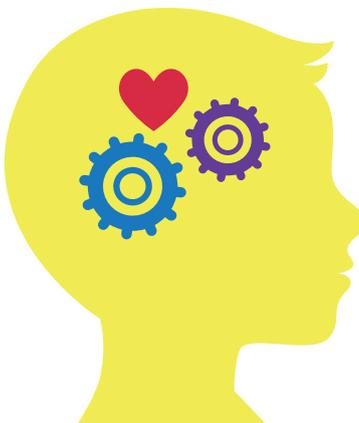
CYP Spend Information 2020/21
(£'000)



- Health & Social Care
- Community Learning & Development
- Education



We will reduce the % of child protection re-registrations within 18 months to 3%



We will increase the % of appropriate referrals to children and young people's mental health services to 75%



“Getting the enterprise packs has helped keep me motivated and I started up my own candle making business, I am feeling really proud of myself.”

East Ayrshire young person

Our philosophy & keeping our promise

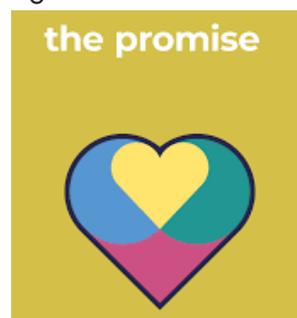
Our children, young people, families and carers all have the potential to flourish and be strong- the pandemic has shown how truly resilient they can be. Our philosophy continues to be about

cherishing and building on what's strong, not what's wrong

We will always:

- bring our compassion to all our work,
- build relationships as people around our shared values and around the needs and wants of every child and young person,
- be positive role models, and
- open doors to opportunities for more learning, development and engagement in meaningful activities.

We have pledged to #KeepThePromise of the Independent Care Review and we made important progress last year, though the pandemic has impacted this both locally and nationally. Partners have taken stock of existing local strengths that will help to implement The Promise and understand that our strong aspirations and shared value base to achieve positive change put us in a good place. At the same time we recognise that significant further work is required to achieve true system and cultural shift. We know that relationships are at the heart of trauma practice and we will invest to support our workforce in this area.



Our children's houses have been involved in transformation work in regards to service delivery and embedding the aspirations and values of The Promise within their practice. The service ensured that the care and support provided to each young person has been person-centred, coordinated, engaging and empowering, with children's rights being central to all practice. A trauma informed and holistic wellbeing and therapeutic approach was developed with partners within the reporting period, with investment planned for 2021 to provide social pedagogy training, learning and development opportunities for staff. The service also began to develop its outreach functions on an individual and collective basis, ensuring young people move forward when they are ready and that transitions and preparations for any move are carefully planned and fully supported.



We applied for and were successful in receiving a grant of £50k at the end of March 2021 from The Promise Partnership. We are using this funding to support recruitment of a service manager (implementation lead) post to help drive forward our ambitions to implement The Promise in East Ayrshire through transformational change and ensure we receive ongoing support and interaction with The Promise Scotland team. The Plan 21-24 provides the 'blue print' for action by partners:

- we need to ensure everything we do comes from ensuring we consider what matters to children and families as opposed to what we think is best. We need to be able to show this is the basis of our approach
- we need to demonstrate we are listening to what our care experienced children tell us. Not only listen but hear what they say and translate this into the changes made
- the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 outlines Scotland's targets in mitigating poverty, it is crucial we are able to demonstrate how we impact upon this
- we need to ensure we are demonstrating how we are fulfilling our duties in supporting our care experienced children to ensure their children's rights are upheld under the UNCRC
- we must be able to demonstrate destigmatising language and practices across the way we work



Biodiversity - over 300 children and young people are planting over 1000 trees, to benefit local wildlife and contribute to climate action by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere

Covid-19 recovery & renewal

*'Thanks for my iPad-
never believed I would
ever get one all my pals
are jealous'*

*'Met new people and
gained new experiences,
and more well-rounded
grasp on leadership'*

*'Having someone to talk
to when I feel like there
is no one really helps me
and they don't judge'*

*'Everyone was friendly,
Everything was broken down
so we understood clearly,
I enjoyed the visual tasks of the
module as I found it helped me
to understand important
aspects of communication.'*

*'I enjoyed the
experience because it
has allowed me to take
part in something that I
really enjoy and
helped me meet new
coaches.'*

*'She has really helped
my confidence to do
more in school and to
respect people'*

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:

Loneliness and isolation have been one of the many consequences of lockdown and to combat some of the effects, the Young People Sports & Diversions Team introduced "EA Chat" for young people to help them stay connected to their peers and access support. Local Mentor Development Officers continued their invaluable support to Care Experienced young people throughout the pandemic either in school settings or via telephone calls, online or in garden visits.

Since the beginning of the pandemic online delivery of volunteer and coach education courses have moved online using the platform of MS Teams. This has been used by the East Ayrshire Sports Council and Officers to upskill volunteers and coaches despite the obvious challenges of lockdown. Since April 2020 113 volunteers and coaches, many of whom are young people, have attended courses in:

- ♥ **Child Protection and Wellbeing**
- ♥ **Physical Literacy**
- ♥ **First Aid**
- ♥ **Communication**
- ♥ **Human Connection**
- ♥ **Goal Setting**
- ♥ **Planning Effective Physical Activity Programmes**

and have been able to remain in contact during a time when 'normal' face to face contact was not possible. This kept people engaged in their sport/activity and engaged with the officer or leader they were working with. Another benefit was the ease in which participants could attend training when held online. It negated barriers such as travel, which can be especially applicable for young people.

The positive feedback received highlights the benefit of the courses for young people in meeting new people from across East Ayrshire, sharing their experiences and developing their skills.

Keeping in touch with family, friends and mentors has been a key issue throughout the pandemic others as has being able to access essential information and support services. Through the Connecting Scotland programme, partners distributed 533 digital devices to support children and young people, either living with their families or who are experiencing care, including Barnardo's who took delivery of 90 of these devices to support families across East Ayrshire and signed up to become digital champions to support these families.

'I found lockdown really difficult but my cooking pack helped keep me busy, when this is over I am going to cook meals for my family and friends'.

'it's been great to have my weekly calls, WG13 chat groups and zoom groups which have helped me complete my qualifications. I feel much more confident and positive about my future and can't believe I have got paid employment in WG13 as it is a huge step forward.'

"We love our tent and enjoyed the festival – thanks for all the fun"



"You have kept me sane and safe when I was feeling lost and alone"

Young Carer

CASE STUDY

Care Leaver, 20, is a care experiences young man who is a newly qualified Chef. Due to Covid 19, his hours were cut as his work, however, he was able to use his new iPad and MiFi to connect with the benefits agency and apply for support. This has made it easier for him to gain any benefits he is entitled to during this current time.

He has also used his new device to look at new recipes and learn new cooking skills and to game with his friends and keep in touch with his brother. This is the only means for him to communicate with his family due to restrictions and living alone. He also uses the device for leisure activities and watching films when he is not able to work.

He stated that *"the iPad and MiFi has helped me at these times of being social isolated from the rest of the world. This has helped me connect with my friends and talk with people"*.

Young Carers have been disproportionately affected by lockdown, with many taking on an additional 10 hours of unpaid care each week. The Young Carers Staff team within East Ayrshire's Carers Centre delivered 1:1 support to older young carers who felt the pressure of the pandemic and in particular the increase in responsibility for their cared for person. These wellbeing calls gave them a place to vent and express their worries and concerns. Staff were able to offer reassurance or put in place practical solutions. Staff could also offer Time to Live budgets so Young Carers could access funding to purchase items to allow them to unwind and de-stress.

Young Carers took part in an 8 hour online "Carechella" festival organised by the Carers Centre. They were provided with tents and festival packs and enjoyed a variety of challenges and activities throughout the day and evening.

'We have started our arts and crafts activities which my son has been loving, it great to have the activity set its helped a lot, we are planning on cooking tomorrow, we've got something planned each day, thank you for this'

When trainees could no longer access the facilities at WG13 due to lockdown, CVO East Ayrshire provided weekly home creative enterprise packs so they could prepare meals at home. Not only did this help with trainees' life and work skills it helped to provide much needed food provision for those families living in poverty. Working remotely, trainees completed 130 SQA units toward their overall qualification, a remarkable achievement in the face of the pandemic. Trainees also followed activity programmes and challenges, social media group chats, receiving weekly one to one calls and three zoom sessions a week so everyone could have their voice heard during lockdown.

Partners worked to launch and deliver the 'iLunch' programme to eighteen schools (2019/20) to address food poverty and learning loss during holiday periods, with further expansion planned, aiming for twenty-six schools in 2021/22. Lunches and

food boxes were provided and with the food boxes, families were also provided with recipes and a cooking utensils kit to encourage them to cook healthy, low cost meals. As well as the face to face sessions the Home Link Workers also provided support over the holidays via phone calls and garden visits.

The Family Literacies team linked with iLunch families to mitigate against learning loss by providing tailored support that encouraged families to learn together.

Reassurance in times of adversity is a key factor in supporting our children & young people. Police Scotland have been on hand through their campus officers to provide support to all students with a particular focus on early years pupils in primary and first year transitional pupils. This has been via informal one to ones which enables pupils to feel at ease and comfortable talking about their issues. This has helped many pupils cope with worries by knowing they have someone to talk to. Campus officers have also been championing the message that they are "people that help us". This involves bringing in different departments of Police Scotland to speak with the pupils which has helped maintained a sense of normality for many students. Pupils (especially the younger ones) enjoyed the Mounted Branch attending at some of the primary schools in the Stewarton area and were very excited at seeing the horses up close.



'Thank you so much for the small amount funding you gave us. It has helped us get together as a family and enjoy time together, and rebuild relationships after so many times thinking my family would be torn apart. I know it might sound like nothing but we bought a trampoline for the garden which we normally couldn't have afforded. The kids spend hours on it and we have great fun as a family laughing at the adults using it. We also spent the day at Blair Drummond Safari park, seeing my boy, see an elephant for the first time was quite emotional. It's his favourite animal and he had only ever seen one on TV before. Without this funding we wouldn't have been able to afford these things or even dream of it. I hope other families are also getting the chance to make memories or change things for the better in these difficult times'

Our recovery and renewal journey has enabled us to reflect on our practices with children, young people and communities. The pandemic has demonstrated that families often hold the answers and solutions to their own issues and services need to continue to be shaped with a focus on co production and empowerment. Together services, employees and families have all faced the difficulties and challenges that the pandemic has brought, a journey we have shared together. However we have recognised that some these challenges were even more prevalent for our families living impacted by poverty. With this in mind we remained focused on ensuring that any family requiring support from our children and families services were viewed as experts in their own lives and our goal was to encourage them to

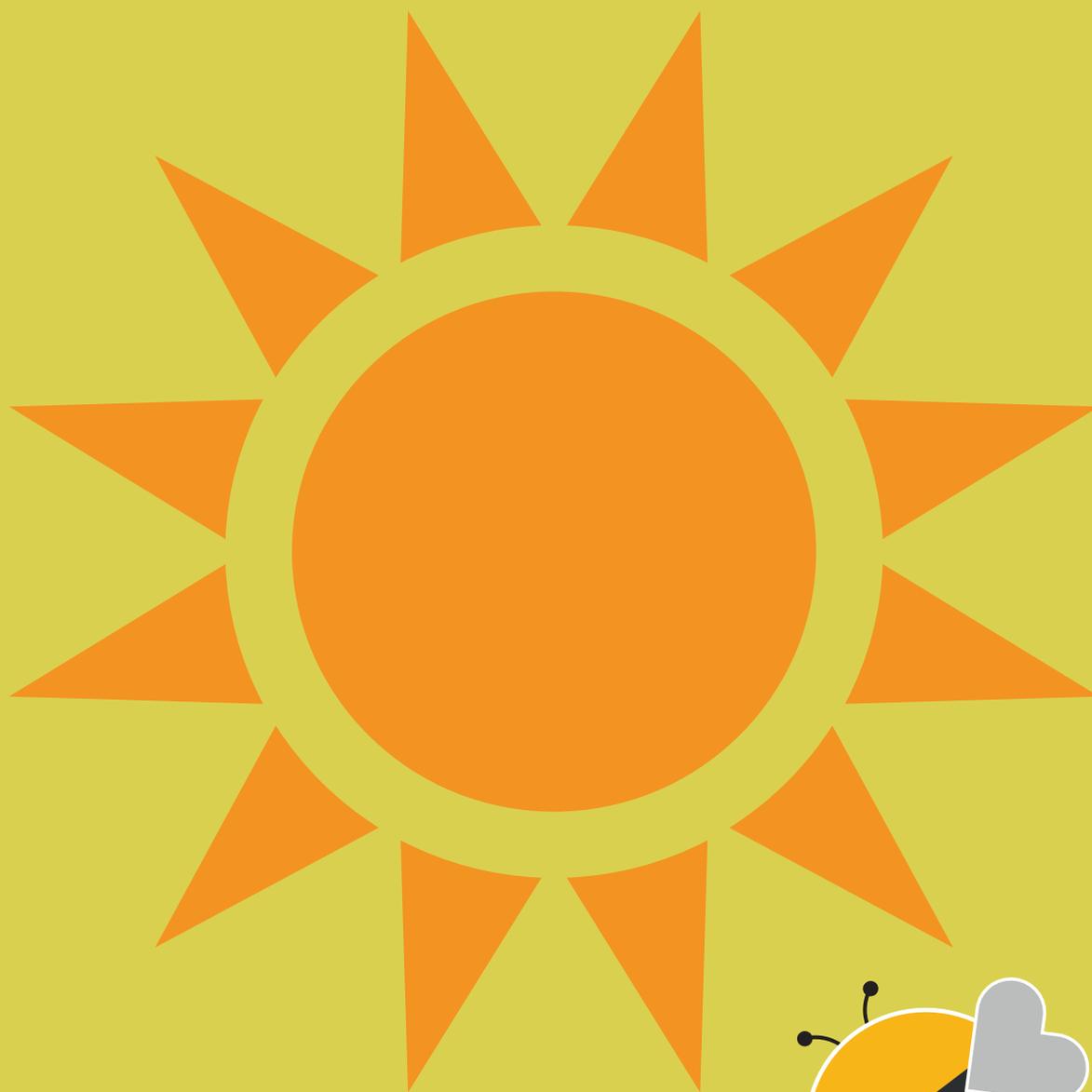
direct and manage their own support using the principles of Self-Directed Support (SDS). This was especially important during a period of uncertainty that people using our services were given choice and control and that participation was embedded in our practices, care planning and interventions.

We recognised that some of the smallest contributions or support packages made the biggest impact. This was evidenced through the use of small grants and our self-directed support principles when utilising some of the Government Covid-19 Winter Spend/recovery monies. Families shaped their own plans with ideas they came up with by asking the simple question 'What would make things better for you and your family'? Families told us that having control and being offered this chance changed their view of social work services, they described feeling empowered, trusted and valued by this approach. Social workers themselves stated that giving them these options helped them think differently and focused on strengths and by using asset based approaches shaped creative solutions for some of our most vulnerable and disengaged families.



A special thanks to our social work, social care and health services along with partners for the exceptional work they have done in continuing to provide both face to face and virtual support to our most vulnerable families.

Their unstinting efforts throughout this uncertain period have supported our children and young people. Every contribution, no matter how large or small has made a difference.



'I thought I had to put things like... have my own house and get a good job on the form (Young Carers Statement) – but I just had to think about what would be a nice thing for me to do (what would make me feel happy)... and then all the steps that I need to get there'

East Ayrshire young person

Improving wellbeing

"My son loved the kit he has been making his name and words he knows with the letters. We have been playing i-spy and holding up the letter. I love there are activities we can all do together. You are a great bunch, Thank you."



CASE STUDY

S in P7 had requested assistance for support following the separation of her parents. On assessment, she was found to be lacking in self-reflection and confidence and so the focus was to build her confidence to communicate her needs and concentrate on self-respect. Empathy and conflict resolution were other resource areas that were identified as needing support, an increase in both would aid communication.

Outcome: S engaged very well and noticed that she was able to build trust and feelings of safety. She felt safe enough to share issues and concerns that she had been keeping to herself. She expressed that she had learnt a new way of viewing herself, learning self-respect and positivity.

"I now have ways of managing my anxiety, I never thought that would happen"

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 siblings 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.

We did- key delivery examples:

To help support our children and young people, counselling has been delivered across all schools in East Ayrshire since January 2021 and is available to all children and young people aged 10 and over. 153 children and young people have accessed the service with 113 in secondary school and 40 in primary school.

The Exchange Counselling Service provides 1-1 counselling, small group targeted interventions, support and advice for families, capacity building for staff and arms-length support for schools and families where needed. As well as 1-1 and small group supports, The Exchange have also delivered whole class workshops for P7 pupils focused on anxieties around transition in 4 primary schools. 90% of young people who have attended counselling sessions reported that they found counselling helpful and 90% reported that they felt they benefitted from counselling.

Helping our families to support themselves has played a key part in 2020/21. Our Home Link team worked in partnership with Play Development colleagues and issued 67 Play@home packs which included books, creative materials and activity packs, to Home Link Families in October and a further 126 packs at Christmas. During the festive period, we worked with local charities and organisations to ensure that families and children didn't go without food or Christmas presents. The Salvation Army provided 113 food parcels and 168 Christmas gifts; Cash 4 Kids provided Christmas gifts for 22 families and Hillhouse, a local East Ayrshire charity, provided gifts for 199 families. Kilmarnock Football Club kindly donated 60 food boxes for Home Link families.

A new wellbeing focussed way of delivering children's services is coming to East Ayrshire, to reshape the way children and families are supported so that help is available at an early stage and in the communities where people live. In 2020/21, partners engaged around 850 people (mostly children and young people) to develop the core concepts of the model telling us what's important to them. A group of Changemakers from across the council, NHS and 3rd sector has listened to the voices of families to find key themes that will be the basis for future improvements in service delivery.

By taking appointments online, the Early Years & Families Community Nursing Team were able to deliver the "baby chat" health resource to some of the most vulnerable families. The team spoke with families discussing all aspects of health and wellbeing. We liaised with other agencies including other allied health services, social work, financial services, education, fire service, third sector to offer updated information and advice, signposting families to the right support and referring if required. We promoted the continued access to immunisations and GP when families were unsure and delivered bookbug and play@home packs to support emotional wellbeing and child development.

Children and young people have been able to consider their trauma and loss and find ways to cope through 1:1 and group support. Partners have used strengths based approaches and therapeutic relationships to create a springboard for change. Support programmes have helped children and young people to deal with death, family breakdown and separation; by believing that change, loss and grief are normal and valuable parts of life, children and young people have been able become resilient and accepting.



'I have loved being able to continue to learn about leadership in sport online even though we couldn't do it in person, I still enjoyed it'

East Ayrshire young person

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.
- ★ empower, engage and inform parents and carers in children and young people's learning across East Ayrshire

"It's been helpful to get experience in volunteering and be able to work as a sessional worker on the bank register. And it has gave me confidence to apply for other jobs."

We did- key delivery examples:

Young people and senior phase learners are now able to use the Developing the Young Workforce Partnership Hub in Titchfield Street, Kilmarnock to receive training to prepare them more effectively for the workplace. A range of partners have based their training offer at the new resource which is accessible seven days a week. Services are in place for care experienced children and young people to participate in decision making, while also offering a resource for attending review meetings or maintaining contact with friends, support workers or family members.

To assist parents in supporting their children, we have developed a partnership with Columba 1400 in developing a 'train the trainers' approach to Parental Empowerment. This collaborative enterprise has resulted in a place based, multi-agency approach in our work with families and communities building skills in coaching, health and wellbeing and understanding learning in order to support children and young people beyond the parameters of the school gates and into their communities. Early feedback shows enhanced opportunities for parents and carers in building supportive relationships, where these may have been less successful.

Our Play & Early Intervention Team have assisted young people in volunteering for a variety of opportunities including Fun for hire and grounds for play. A variety of training opportunities were made available in areas such as health and safety, bouncy castle training, protecting people training and face painting training, first aid and more. Young people have been given the opportunity do modern apprenticeships with Vibrant Communities to gain experience and prepare for the work place. Young people are employed as sessional workers on the bank register for vibrant communities. This has increased knowledge and resilience confidence, sociability, and employability which helps with their mental and wellbeing.

Due to the pandemic and risk of further restrictions for the hospitality and catering industry CVO East Ayrshire expanded training opportunities to different vocational roles in other suitable industries. Work skill opportunities were offered in a number of new social enterprises that were set up just before the pandemic and within existing established social enterprises. For 2020/21's Positive Destinations trainees, 16 care experienced young people signed up for the course with 13 completing it before moving into employment, further education or volunteering roles.

CASE STUDY

S had disengaged from education at 14 after being removed from the care of her parents. She was constantly running away from her foster carers and wasn't turning up for meetings with statutory or third sector partners. When S started at WG13 she wasn't independently travelling and wouldn't stay for the full training session. The job coaches worked with her and built up trust and supported her to use public transport and she thrived. S is now employed in WG13 and has started her Modern Apprenticeship.

In her own words: *"I cannot believe how I behaved at the start of the course but I was really scared of everything and everyone and refused to travel independently. I am really proud of how far I have come and I love being part of the WG13 team."*



I wanted a job to help my family and now I am able to keep what I earn, I can't believe how well I am doing...'

East Ayrshire young person

Tackling poverty

We said we would:

- ★ 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.
- ★ 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.
- ★ 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.
- ★ continue to; roll out free P1- P3 meals and early years expansion; delivery good quality affordable housing for families; rapidly rehouse people and families who are at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness.
- ★ improve information sharing and promote a consistent anti-poverty message across East Ayrshire.

We did - key delivery examples:

There are often barriers that can prevent individuals from taking up employment or gaining a better lifestyle. East Ayrshire Works Financial Inclusion Pathways Team – Employability was established in October 2020 with the aim to help break down these barriers. The team have assisted young people by preparing “Better off” calculations so they were aware of the changes to existing benefits before they move to employment. Referrals to Employability Work Coaches were made to arrange additional training that will help secure employment, for example, Construction Skills Certification Scheme. Devices were obtained from the Connecting Scotland programme so the young people are able to look for jobs, receive budgeting information and update their UC journal. The devices also assist with the barriers of rurality as they can use this to get shopping delivered and save on travel fares.



Community Care Grants have provided items such as washing machines/ cookers/beds for those starting their own tenancy and Aberlour Funds have been awarded to the young people with children to buy them new clothing & shoes.

Overall, the Financial Inclusion Team, together with its partners supported financial gains for East Ayrshire residents totalling £3,660,994.

The Young People Sports & Diversion Team supported the delivery of free school meals throughout the holiday programmes to households. Weekly food parcels were delivered to the home of vulnerable families on a daily basis ensuring that no young person or individual would go without food and at the first peak of the pandemic, up to 7000 meals were distributed per day.





In August 2020, the UK Government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme was up and running and we realised there was much more we could do to assist families at this time. Due to our creative application of the scheme, the price of school meals across East Ayrshire in the last two weeks of August, were reduced by 50%. This meant that that pupils received 10 days of meals for just £10.80 in the first two weeks of term.

Some households were assisted with receiving energy/fuel top up remotely throughout the pandemic when they were in financial hardship. Citrus Energy provided great assistance to the Council and supported our vulnerable residents with accessing fuel and liaising with their energy providers to ensure that they did not have their energy cut off when they

were in arrears. Families were supported to have fuel in their property thus were able to have their heating, hot water and could cook food for the family.

CVO East Ayrshire purchased equipment to start up a digital inclusive lending service for trainees and vulnerable community members so that they could access online services and build digital skills. Easy-to-use start up guides were designed to support people who weren't confident about using technology. Our job coaches worked with partners to make sure trainees were receiving appropriate benefits, supporting families with emergency food provision while increasing their chances of them securing employment.

In response to the challenges faced accessing clinic appointments for Covid-19 vaccination, NHS Ayrshire & Arran implemented a 'travel voucher' that provided the financial assistance for citizens to travel to their clinic appointment. The travel voucher scheme reduced the financial burden on families and helped support access to vaccination. Ultimately for families with children this ensured that money was not diverted from other household areas to pay for the cost of attending vaccination clinic appointments. This also supports the uptake of vaccination across the adult population which will ultimately impact upon the overall management of the pandemic and community transmission which will support an easing of restrictions.



CASE STUDY

Mark started as a trainee with WG13 and was focused on his learning and he had great ambition to work and support his family. We worked with his family and provided them with food parcels. We worked with Mark applying for jobs and improving his interview skills and we also completed a better off calculation and found his family were receiving minimum benefits. The coaches contacted his work coach at the job centre and she supported them to submit a new claim, they are in a much better position financially. Mark is now working part time in a supermarket and his family are receiving their full benefit entitlement



“I gained a lot of confidence in being part of the Cabinet, it helps me to see that we are genuinely making a difference to other young people and changing the way it used to be with adults making the decisions for us.”

East Ayrshire young person

Respecting & 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.
- ♥ strategically embed the rights of young carers, through implementation of young carers statements.

We did- key delivery examples:

Barnardo's have maintained their Children and Young People's Committee, the members of which are voted into their positions by their peers who attend the children and young people's youth groups within East Ayrshire. The age range of attendees is from 10 to 16+ years with a fortnightly meeting and annual election. Through their roles and responsibilities, elected members have an increased awareness of rights, are able to describe safety strategies, have increased resilience and are able to identify abusive/ exploitive behaviours.

Recovery and renewal has been an especially important piece of work with the Children & Young People's Cabinet, having been consulted on recovery measures and attended meetings to ensure children and young people are at the heart of the recovery process. Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament have individually been involved in National Campaigns such as working with MSPs to get the UNCRC passed into Scots Law, Lockdown Lowdown and Bounce Back Campaigns. Young people have also taken the lead in subject committees to work on projects relative to their subjects, for example the Health and Wellbeing Group are developing a Wellbeing Toolkit. The group have consulted with thousands of young people regarding Health and Wellbeing, Volunteering Opportunities, Wider Achievement and Youth Voice both locally and nationally.

A group of young people who have been in secure care settings have been involved in reviewing the new Secure Care Standards, providing real examples of whether they feel these were met in their experience.

"Chuffed when I got picked always wanted to be on the committee best bit is we get to choose all the games and who can come along to our group. Yoga was crap but some of the girls liked it"

"I have really enjoyed seeing the difference we can make as a group, it helps to understand the workings of the Council and breaks down barriers on a generational level. It has been especially important for me to be able to Chair at meetings and being taken seriously when working with adults, Councillors and Council Officers who show us all respect."

Five young people took part in a research project with the Scottish University Institute on how to create a socially just society, particularly around what a fair justice system would look like. These young people shared candid views on their experiences with the justice system in the hope of creating national change for young people coming into conflict with the law in the future.

Through funding from the Scottish Government, East Ayrshire Advocacy Services has further developed its service and now has an independent advocacy service for children and young people, aged 5-18 years. Two advocacy workers have been employed to be a voice for children and young people in the Hearing System and to ensure that their views are heard and taken into consideration when decisions are being made about their lives. Children and young people also have

advocacy support at other meetings outwith hearings, including Looked After and Accommodated Child reviews/Team Around the Child meetings. Advocacy workers are now building trusting relationships with children and young people and there is continuity for vulnerable children at meetings.

Young Carers have been encouraged to identify outcomes for themselves via the Young Carers Statements through EA Carers Centre. During lockdown the young carers statement was developed to be Covid-19 focussed on a short term basis to encourage carers to think about the outcomes they might want during lockdown. Many of the outcomes related to family contact and friendships as isolation and loneliness had been difficult for Young Carers. Trusted relationships have been built allowing young carers to feel supported to have their voices heard and have been supported to think about what is important to them.

Working in partnership with the Children and Young People's Cabinet, the 5000 Voices survey was developed to ensure that the views and opinions of children and young people are captured. The survey covered key topics including volunteering opportunities, celebrating young people, embedding the youth voice and improving the health and wellbeing of young people.



"I like that we can decide the sorts of things we want for our self. Somethings that I think are important to me don't matter to anyone else, but the staff listen and value what I have to say."



Mind Of My Own is an app used to gather the views of children and young people and was introduced in August 2020. Children can use it independently or be supported to use by practitioners to express their views on their wellbeing and on a wide range of issues that are important to them. Mind of My Own empowers young people to have a voice and ensures their views and feelings are heard, whilst providing an attractive way for children and young people to start the conversation. It also helps workers capture and evidence their views, ensuring they are being heard and considered, meeting quality standards around the voice of the child.

CASE STUDY

A care experienced young person started using the Mind of My Own app and finds this helpful in order to express her feelings and share her views with workers. She currently struggles with self-harming behaviours, particularly at night, and has been encouraged to use the app as an alternative activity to express her thoughts and feelings, which can then be discussed with whomever she chooses to share these with.



“I thought that all the police hated me because of my family but when PC Marshall comes in and gives us a safe talk, I think he actually cares about us.”

East Ayrshire young person



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.
- ★ 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:

Children in Primary 1-3 received vital inputs from campus officers on Road safety and Stranger Danger, whilst learning about "People Who Help Us". This gives them the knowledge and ability to recognise when something isn't quite right, and to take the appropriate action. Pupils benefitted from open discussions in the classes, which allowed them to hear the views of their peers and campus officers.

Campus officers are involved directly in the action taken by schools to address discipline and behaviour issues, this includes responding to issues such as anti-social behaviour and bullying. Restorative practices are carried out with pupils and campus officers to resolve any relationship / friendship issues.

In spring 2021, Catrine Primary and St Sophia's Primary in Galston took place in a School Streets trial. The aim of the trial is to increase the safety of vulnerable road users, particularly younger children, and to encourage active ways of travelling to school, such as walking, cycling or scooting. A School Street involves a part time restriction on driving motor vehicles on roads around a school.



During the restricted periods (weekdays at school opening and closing times), only permit holders, blue badge holders, school transport vehicles (including contracted taxis) and exempted vehicles can drive on these roads. The School Streets project was established after Ayrshire Roads Alliance successfully bid for Spaces for People funding from Sustrans. The funding enables temporary measures to be put in place to make social distancing easier for people who are walking and wheeling during the Covid-19 pandemic.

CVO East Ayrshires social enterprises address the lack of employment and training opportunities for young people with multiple barriers to employment in East Ayrshire. The courses provide opportunities for young people who are

“WG13 is my safe place to come, I always feel welcome and safe to speak up if anything is worrying me”

furthest from the labour market and who may otherwise disengage from education or training and struggle to gain employment.

Many of the young people often come from backgrounds where alcohol, drugs and associated crime featured heavily. By introducing them to training and employment opportunities within the hospitality industry we can begin to have conversations about responsible alcohol consumption and the impact on both their own and other people’s lives of criminal activity while providing them with practical work experience and training.

Our Youth Action Team works collaboratively with Police, Fire Service, Social Work and many other key partners. This wraparound approach sees a Whole Systems approach to this important area of work and ensures that the appropriate services are supporting young people, communities and each other.

Young people continue to receive the key messages and consequences of online activity and risk taking behaviours. Delivered by Youth Workers and Scottish Attainment Challenge staff, these vital messages are relayed throughout the year to get young people to understand their actions, the impact that it may have on others and the potential consequences.

Intervention from the Young People Sports & Diversion staff and partners has seen a reduction in the number of antisocial behaviour incidents that have been reported by communities to Police and Fire Service. Relationships between young people and the workers involved have developed significantly over the last year due to the non-judgemental and supportive approach that they take when engaging with young people. Young people have disclosed important information to staff about wellbeing/welfare concerns about family and friends. In many instances these have been followed up by the appropriate agencies.

“Being part of the training programme has helped me realise I won’t be peer pressured into doing things I don’t feel comfortable doing anymore



On the 7 November 2020 the ‘Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019’ came into force in Scotland. Promoting the principles of UNCRC, it is the vision for Scotland that there is a fundamental change in how children are both respected and treated equally with adults. This means that all forms of physical punishment of children by parents and carers are unlawful in Scotland and it is envisioned that parents will develop alternative, positive parenting strategies when disciplining their child.

To support the implementation of the new legislation and to ensure we continue to provide a continuum of support to families, East Ayrshire GIRFEC service partners have successfully developed a multi-agency practice guidance, that not only embraces the national vision of Scotland but ensures that we promote the principles of early help family support via our existing GIRFEC and Child Protection support frameworks for children.



'Be the light in the darkness'

local young people using their knowledge of the holocaust to think about inequality and action that can address it as well as how to cope with change and loss.

In one young person's words:

'I would like to take this moment to try light peoples' weeks because we aren't getting to see loved ones and friends and it's a hard time but let's look to when this is all going to be done and think of it this way.. you are getting to spend time with mums and dads and when it's all done we will get to see everyone so let's be happy and all stay safe.'

THE LAST WORD

The last year has proven that young people are some of the most resilient and determined people within our communities. From pushing through a global pandemic, dealing with home and school life, getting out and volunteering, and checking in on their pals.

The list of achievements from young people is endless, and that is something we can all be very proud of.

One final note, remember that engagement with young people isn't always easy, but it is always worth it!



Liam Fowley MSYP

A proud East Ayrshire wean



Appendix 1: Improving Local Outcomes

During the year, Community Planning Partners reviewed East Ayrshire's Community Plan 2015-30 and its Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, developing a single suite of outcomes measures that all partners are working towards together. The work of partners in services for children and young people contribute to these and, through in depth data analysis, we have identified a number of additional indicators that we will use to measure how much of a difference we are making in our priority areas. The table below sets out the performance improvement framework in use during the lifetime of our Plan:

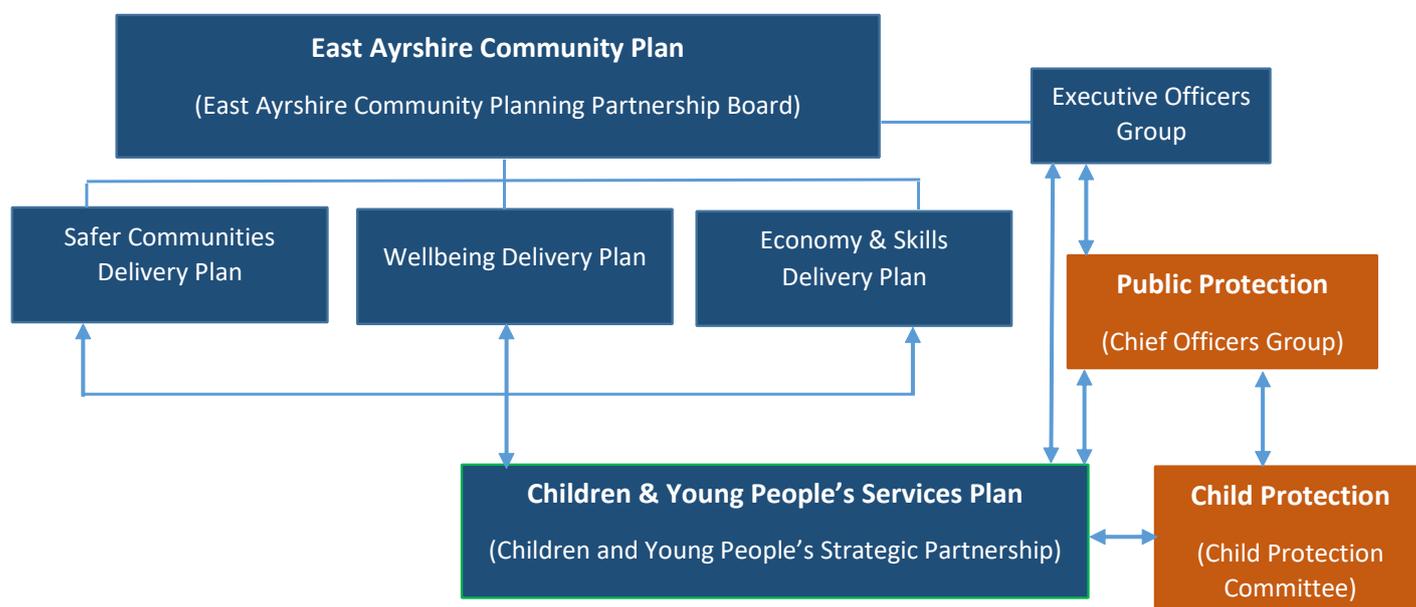
Measures of Success	Current East Ayrshire	Current National Average	Baseline	Outcomes
The % of children in living in relative poverty (after housing costs). (Source: DWP Stat xplora)	Children 0-15 23% (2019/20)	Children 0-15 19% (2019/20)	Children 0-15 22% (2018/19)	Reduced by 2024 and reduce the gap with Scotland
The % of children/young people who feel consulted about decisions and services affecting them. (Source: East Ayrshire 5000 voices survey)	43% (2020/21)	N/A	43% (2020/21)	Increased to 75% by 2024
% babies born a healthy weight (Source: ScotPHO)	84.42% (2017/18-19/20)	84.07% (2017/18-19/20)	83.81% (2016/17-18/19)	Maintained above 84% until 2024
The % of children with no concerns at 4-5 years (Source: ISD)	71.9% (2019/20)	71.2% (2019/20)	62.2% (2018/19)	Maintained above 72% until 2024
P1 healthy weight (Source: ScotPHO)	72.70% (2019/20)	76.25% (2019/20)	75.81% (2018/19)	Increased to above 75% by 2024
The % of Primary 1 with no obvious dental decay experience (Source: ScotPHO)	60.1% (2018/19)	71.6% (2018/19)	63.5% (2017/18)	Increased to above 62% by 2024
The % of Primary 7 with no obvious dental decay experience (Source: ScotPHO)	54.1% (2018/19)	72.9% (2018/19)	62.97% (2017/18)	Increased to above 62% by 2024
The % of school leavers progressing into positive and sustained destinations (employment, training or education) (Source: Annual, Scottish Government)	91.5% (2018/19)	92.9% (2018/19)	93.6% (2017/18)	Increased to above 92% and the gap between SIMD 1 and SIMD 5 is narrowed
Unemployment rate for young people aged 16- 24 (Source: Annual/Nomis)	15.5% (Year to Sept 20)	9.1% (Year to Sept 20)	8.8% (Year to Sept 19)	Reduced to below 10% by 2024
The percentage of requests for CAMHS assistance that are appropriate (Source: CAMHS service, annual)	70.4% (March 2021)	76.5% (March 2021)	60.1% (March 2020)	Increased to above 75% by 2024
Child Protection registrations: proportion of children protection re-registrations within 18 months (Source: Local Government Benchmarking Framework)	5.3% (2019/20)	6.9% (2019/20)	5.3% (2019/20)	Reduced to below 3% by 2024

It is important to note that due to the events of last year, these are not normal times for managing performance improvement. While improving these measures represent our ambitions for our children, young people and families, we must recognise the as yet unknown harm caused by Covid-19 and lockdown. The pandemic will also continue to have an impact on the availability and quality of data; it will be difficult to accurately compare one year to another as we move forward.

We also know that lives cannot be described purely through data. Personal stories, experiences and examples show how services are delivered to improve outcomes and we use them throughout our reports. As we move forward, partners are developing a co-ordinated approach to hearing the voices of children, young people and families so that we can better measure the difference we are making.

Monitoring & Review

The Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (‘CYPSP’) and Child Protection Committee (‘CPC’) have collective responsibility for strategic planning and managing the improvement of services for children and young people.





East Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear