

Cherishing our Families Summary

2023 – 2026



Supporting the prevention and reduction of child neglect in East Ayrshire





What is neglect?

Neglect is one of the most damaging childhood experiences and is associated with some of the poorest behavioural, emotional and cognitive outcomes.

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

Guiding Principles

- Voice of the child
- Underpinned by children's rights
- Focus on families
- Empowerment of the parents and carers
- Right support and right time
- Strengths based

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

"Finally someone was listening to us"
Parent

"Need time to build trust with families"
Practitioner





Our strategic priorities

From the engagement we have carried out with families and our partners, we have identified four strategic priorities to tackle neglect in East Ayrshire:

PRIORITY 1 – Children’s voices are heard

- Children’s experiences of neglect are at the centre of their care.
- Practitioners have the skills and tools to creatively gather the views of all children.
- Children with complex needs and young children are able to express their views.

PRIORITY 2 – Right support at the right time

- Families are able to access the right support, in the right place at the right time.
- Support will be focused on the strengths of the families and will be non-stigmatising.
- Patient and consistent relationships are central to the support provided to families.

PRIORITY 3 – Improved understanding and collaboration

- Practitioners in all agencies work to the same definition of neglect, are able to recognise the various signs of neglect when working with children, young people and families.
- Each partner agency will provide appropriate and timely responses to children, young people and their families through a multi-agency approach in line with the guiding principles in this strategy.

PRIORITY 4 – Addressing poverty

- Families experiencing poverty are supported to address material hardship.
- Services work together to ensure families are receiving what they are entitled to and are not left destitute when experiencing a crisis.
- Community Planning Partners collaborate to achieve the actions set out in East Ayrshire’s Local Child Poverty Action Plan.



Action Plan

Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Indicators	GIRFEC principles
PRIORITY 1 - Children's voices are heard				
Empower children, young people and their parents/ carers to actively contribute to their wellbeing assessment, ensuring their views are included and that they have an active part within their Child's Plan.	GIRFEC group chair	End of December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of Child's Plans • Qualitative feedback from children and young and their families. 	Safe, Respected, Included
Ensure children and young people are given the opportunity, in line with their rights, to attend their Team with the Family meeting giving their views and taking part in decision making.	GIRFEC group chair	End of December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of Team with the Family meetings. • Casefile audit. 	Respected, Included
Ensure children and young people have access to appropriate advocacy (including independent advocacy) based on relationships.	Senior Manager – Children's Health, Care and Justice	End of March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children and young people offered independent advocacy. • Proportion of children and young people taking up independent advocacy. • Case studies of children receiving appropriate advocacy. 	Safe, Respected, Included
Train a Talking Mats tutor for East Ayrshire and roll out Talking Mats training to support the wider workforce to create opportunities for children and young people with additional support needs to express their thoughts, even in challenging and complex situations (sensitive content).	Speech and Language Therapy Service Manager	End of March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of tutor • Number of staff trained in Talking Mats • Audit of use of Talking Mats 	Safe, Respected, Included



Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Indicators	GIRFEC principles
Carry out an audit of staff training needs with a focus on participatory and peer led approaches.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)	End of March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of audit 	Respected, Included
Embed the use of the Infant Voice Tool across all Children's Services	GIRFEC group chair	End of March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff trained in the use of the Tool. • Use of tool evident through audit activity. • Case studies. 	Safe, Respected, Included
Increase the use of play and communication tools across all services to create opportunities for children and young people to express their views.	Senior Manager – Children's Health, Care and Justice/Health Improvement Team	End of March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of play evident through audit activity. • Case studies. 	Healthy, Active, Respected
PRIORITY 2 - Right support at the right time				
Increase awareness to staff and families of what support is available across East Ayrshire by developing the online wellbeing directory.	Service Manager, Children's Health	End of December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families information on directory. • Number of hits on directory. • Communications campaign. Number of teams informed. • Number of sessions. 	Safe, Healthy, Included
Implement Team with the Family approach.	GIRFEC Group chair	End of December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit activity to identify meeting attendees. • Case studies. 	Safe, Respected, Included



Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Indicators	GIRFEC principles
Embed use of the Graded Care Profile Tool.	Senior Manager – Children’s Health, Care and Justice	End of March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff trained in the use of the Graded Care Profile Tool. • Use of tool evident through audit activity. • Case studies 	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Included
Implement improvement project on infant mental health and father inclusion in collaboration with Book Trust Scotland.	Senior Charge Midwife for Safeguarding	End of March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of engagement and feedback from fathers. 	Nurtured, Respected, Included
Development of child and family friendly spaces in line with the HEART model.	GIRFEC Group chair	End of March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of spaces developed. • Numbers using the spaces • Case studies 	Safe, Nurtured, Included
Improve trauma-informed practice through training at the appropriate levels.	Trauma Advisory Board chair	End of March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff trained appropriate to their role • Evidence from trauma informed care from casefile audits. 	Safe, Nurtured



Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Indicators	GIRFEC principles
PRIORITY 3 – Improved understanding and collaboration				
Increase understanding of neglect by reviewing the Social Work Child Protection processes.	Performance and Quality Assurance Group chair	End of December 2023	• Audit activity.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Included
Identify all relevant stakeholders responsible for multi-agency workforce learning and development in relation to neglect and form a working group to support learning needs analysis.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)/Health Improvement Team	End of March 2024	• Multi-agency working group for learning & development established	Safe, Nurtured, Re-spected
Develop Practice Guidance for all practitioners working with children and families who experience neglect at all levels of need.	Child Protection Lead Officer	End of March 2024	• Consultation (baseline survey prior to guidance development then at regular intervals) with practitioners to understand their confidence in practice and their view of their impact.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Included
Develop a dataset for neglect to continuously tell us what our picture is here East Ayrshire.	Child Protection Committee Performance and Quality Assurance chair	End of March 2024	• Dataset developed. • Dataset regularly monitored by Child Protection Committee. • Dataset used to inform practice.	Safe, Nurtured, Respected
Improve wellbeing support for staff dealing with vicarious trauma through reflective discussions and peer support.	Wellbeing Coordinator	End of June 2024	• Case studies • Numbers of staff accessing supports.	Safe Nurtured, Respected, Included



Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Indicators	GIRFEC principles
Increase awareness of neglect and early help and supports available by holding an Annual Conference co-designed with partners and families.	GIRFEC Group chair	End of June 2024 then annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees at conference. Survey at start of conference and survey at end of conference to evaluate increased understanding. 	Safe, Nurtured, Respected
Establish a baseline of the knowledge of neglect amongst multi-agency partners by carrying out a learning needs analysis.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)	End of March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline data from training needs analysis. 	Safe, Nurtured, Respected
Increase knowledge of neglect amongst multi-agency partners by establishing and implementing a training programme on neglect based on training needs analysis.	GIRFEC Group (all relevant partners)	End of March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys at regular intervals to demonstrate improved understanding. 	Safe, Nurtured, Respected, Responsible, Included
PRIORITY 4 – Addressing poverty				
To develop a resource that can be used within Early Learning and Childcare settings, initially during challenge poverty week, to help raise understanding and awareness about the impact of poverty.	Service Manager – Early Years (Development)	End of October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of ELC settings using the resource and feedback from them on how they feel it has encouraged thinking discussion among children. 	Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Establish a process for families to address immediate and urgent material need through Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.	Senior Manager – Children's Health	End of December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of families supported by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. Audit of use of hardship grant. 	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included



Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Indicators	GIRFEC principles
Identify key local contacts across financial support services who can support and address immediate risks associated with material and environmental poverty directly impacting risk.	Financial Inclusion Team Manager	End of March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key contacts added to wellbeing directory. • Case studies. 	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Community Practitioners will work with families to reduce the impact of poverty by ensuring that families receive the right help and are supported with onward referrals to other services.	Service Manager – Early Years (Early Intervention)	End of March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection • Case Studies 	Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Learning settings to fully consider and undertake actions aligned to the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Plan "Every Child, Every Chance" and evaluate the impact of such actions.	Education – Depute Head of Education: Equity, Inclusion & Employability	End of June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies 	Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Increase awareness of support available through the Schools Project and the Early Years practitioners provided by the Financial Inclusion Team.	Financial Inclusion Team Manager	End of December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in income maximised by Schools Project 	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Implement East Ayrshire's Local Child Poverty Action.	Financial Inclusion Team Manager	End of March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of children in poverty. • Increase in income maximised. 	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included
Reduce the impact of poverty by supporting families to access third sector support.	Vibrant Communities	End of March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies 	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Included

