



North Ayrshire
Community Planning Partnership

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership



North Ayrshire Joint Child Poverty Action Plan Report 2018/19



Contents

Foreword..... 01

1. National Context02

2. North Ayrshire Local Context06

3. North Ayrshire Strategic Context11

4. Monitoring of this plan.....17

5. Actions Approach 18

6. Action Plan.....20

Case Studies22



Children and their families face unfair challenges. This is not through their own choices but the circumstances they have found themselves in.

Foreword

“North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership pledges to tackle the root causes of child poverty and mitigate its impact to create a better life for local people.”

Children and their families face unfair challenges. This is not through their own choices but the circumstances they have found themselves in.

Child poverty is a serious and persistent issue in North Ayrshire. As a Council and a Community Planning Partner we have a clear focus on addressing the Fair for All Strategy. This is our Partnership Strategy for promoting equity. The key pledge within this is “North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership pledges to tackle the root causes of child poverty and mitigate its impact to create a better life for local people.”

The Child Poverty Action Plan gives this work a renewed focus and energy, and reinforces our commitment to our North Ayrshire children.

While the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act places duties on Local Authorities and Health Boards and not Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) we have developed this action plan with our CPP. This is in acknowledgement of the strong partnership approach needed to effectively tackle this issue.



1. National Context

To ensure Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up, and lives up to the Fairer Scotland vision, eradicating child poverty is fundamental. Child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of the children who experience it. And it also has a wider cost for society. A 2013 study found that child poverty in the UK was costing at least £29 billion a year¹.

The Fairer Scotland Duty is an overarching strategic duty on public bodies (including local authorities). It has interactions with the Equality Act 2010; Scotland Act 2016; and came into force on 1 April 2018.

The Duty requires that: "An authority to which this section applies must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage."

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act sets out four ambitious headline targets for 2030 that establishes Scotland as the only part of the UK with statutory income targets on child poverty.

Local Action Reports/Plans

The Act introduces a new requirement for local authorities and each relevant Health Board to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report, as soon as practicable after the end of each reporting year. The Act does not specify a cut-off point for submission of reports; however, it does require that the Scottish Government's annual progress reports be submitted within 3 months of the end of the reporting year which is the subject of the report. To align with these timescales, local partners should therefore aim to publish their reports by 30 June of each year.

Child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of the children who experience it.



What is child poverty? The targets

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act sets out four measures of relative poverty and statutory targets for Scotland to reach by 2030. These targets are:

Figure 1: National Child Poverty Targets

Target	Description	Rationale
For less than 10% of children to be in relative poverty	The proportion of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median (middle) UK income in the current year.	Recognises that individual and household needs are relative to societal standards of living and measures whether the incomes of the poorest households are keeping up with growth in average (middle) incomes in the current year.
For less than 5% of children to be in absolute poverty	The number of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median UK income in 2010/11, adjusted for inflation.	Assessment of whether living standards at the bottom of the income distribution are rising or falling (keeping pace with inflation) irrespective of those elsewhere in the income distribution.
For less than 5% of children to be in combined low income and material deprivation	The number of children living in households with incomes below 70% of the median UK income AND going without certain basic goods and services (such as a warm winter coat, a holiday away from home, money to replace worn out furniture etc.)	Enables an analysis of a household's ability to use resources to buy essentials as well as of the income coming into the household.
For less than 5% of children to be in persistent poverty	The number of children who have lived in relative poverty in 3 of the last 4 years.	Living in poverty for a significant period of time is more damaging than brief periods spent with a low income.

1. <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/child-poverty-costs-uk-29-billion-year>

Who is affected?

Figure 2: Percentage of Children Living in Relative Poverty by Household Type and Economic Status: Scotland, 2015/16

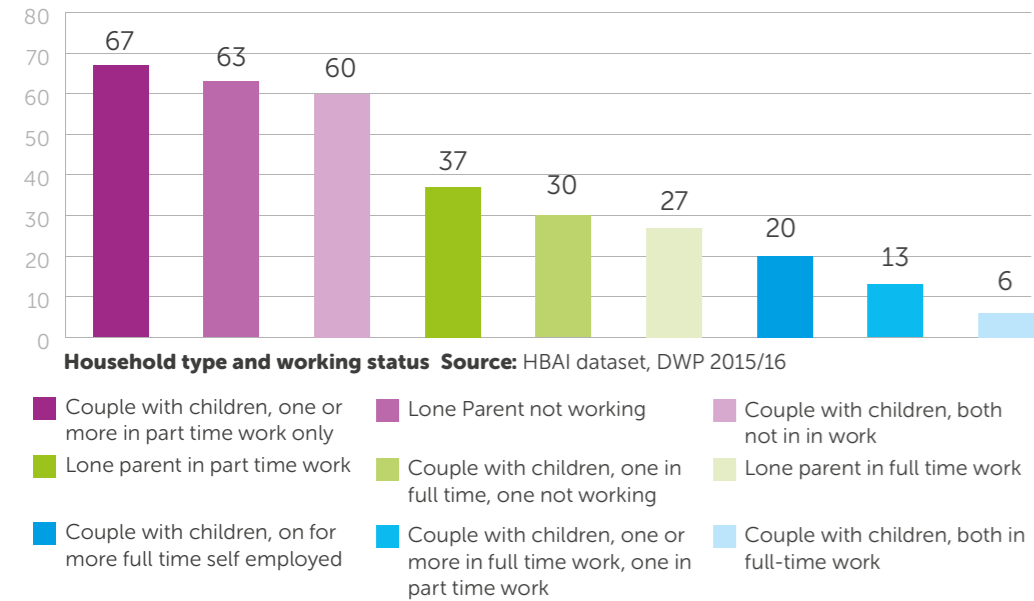


Figure 3: Projected Child Poverty Rates: Scotland

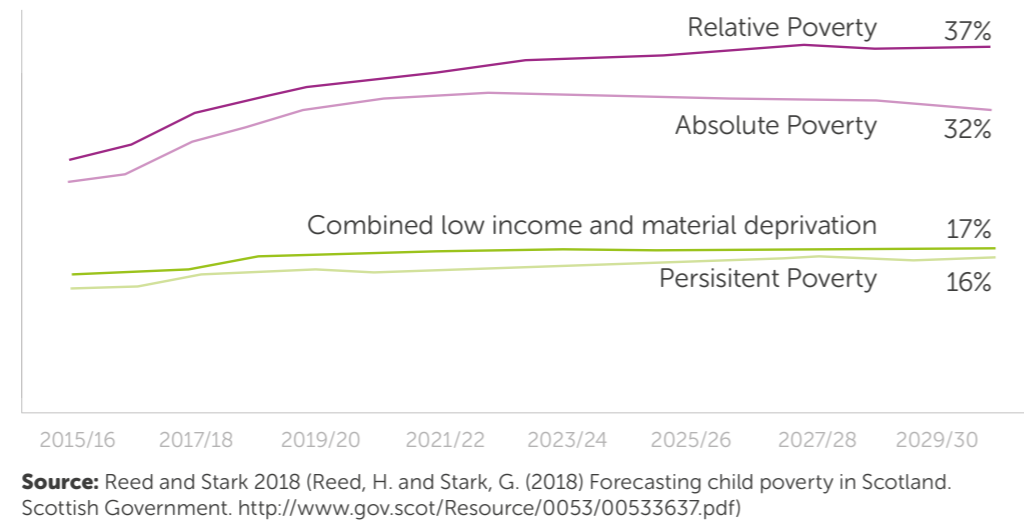


Figure 2 above shows the levels of children living in relative poverty by Household Type and economic status.

Figure 3 above shows the projected trend of child poverty for each target. By 2030/31, it is estimated that 38% of children will be in relative poverty, 32% of children will be in absolute poverty, 17% of children will be in combined low income and material deprivation and 16% of children will be in persistent poverty.

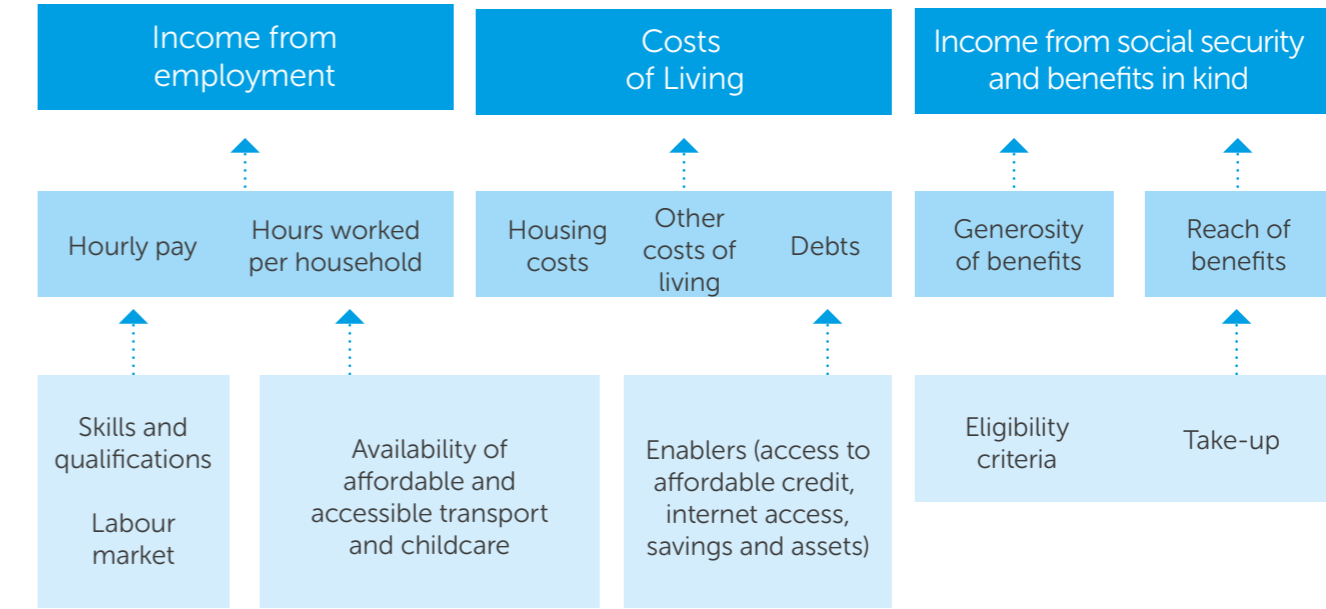
The key reason for these projected rises is the impact of welfare reform, primarily the benefit freeze and the two child limit on tax credits. The impact of these cuts is most acute between now and 2020.

The Scottish Government recognises that, in the context of these projections, the child poverty reduction targets the Act sets out are ambitious. However, Scottish Ministers are clear that the backdrop of conditions which threaten to make many families worse off strengthens the case for concerted action at national and local level to tackle child poverty.

The key reason for these projected rises is the impact of welfare reform, primarily the benefit freeze and the two child limit on tax credits.

The direct drivers of child poverty fall into three main categories as described below in Figure 4. These drivers are the key priority areas for action which will help to reduce Child Poverty.

Figure 4: Summary of direct drivers of child poverty



Who is at the highest risk of child poverty?

To support the evidence base for this delivery plan, the Scottish Government has produced focused analysis on priority groups, which are households with children that are known to be at high risk of poverty. These groups have been identified using available data but we know this does not cover all groups at higher risk of poverty. These groups, taken together, do cover the majority of households in poverty.

- Having a lone parent (mainly women)
- Having two or more siblings (3+ children)
- Being disabled or having a disabled sibling or parent
- Being from a minority ethnic background
- Having a young child in the household (<1 years old)
- Having young parents (using data for households where the mother is aged <25)

2. North Ayrshire Local Context

High levels of inequality, particularly poverty exist in North Ayrshire. North Ayrshire is one of the most deprived areas in Scotland. Deprivation levels are significantly higher than the Scottish average. The last Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) highlighted continuing levels of deprivation in North Ayrshire. More than 50 of the 186 datazones now fall within the top 15% most multiply deprived datazones in Scotland, significantly higher than the Scottish average. With an average population of 760 people per datazone, this suggests that well over a quarter of our population (approximately 38,800 residents) live in areas which fall within this most deprived category. In addition, unemployment levels in North Ayrshire are high, there are significant numbers of people on low income and almost a third of children live in poverty.

Inequalities in outcomes can be seen across all sectors including education, employment, income and health and wellbeing. They are the result of an imbalance in power, money and resources across society, further compounded by the recent economic conditions of recession, austerity and welfare reform.

The charts below show the breakdown of child poverty in North Ayrshire split into Electoral Wards, as at 2017 and as at 2018/19. This information has been taken from the End Child Poverty Coalition. This is not a direct measure of exactly how many children are in poverty on the official definition, but is based on the closest to an equivalent measure of local levels of child poverty. Currently there is no more up to date data available.

The data shows that there are variations in the levels of child poverty across all of our areas and also in North Ayrshire we continue to have higher levels compared to East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire. We also recognise that we have one of the highest levels of Child Poverty of any Local Authority in Scotland, with Glasgow having the highest proportions (37%).

The comparison of the two charts below show that levels of child poverty in North Ayrshire have decreased slightly from 2017 to 2018/19, from 29.26% to 26.59%. The reduction is a positive movement for North Ayrshire and required further investigation into the contributing factors.

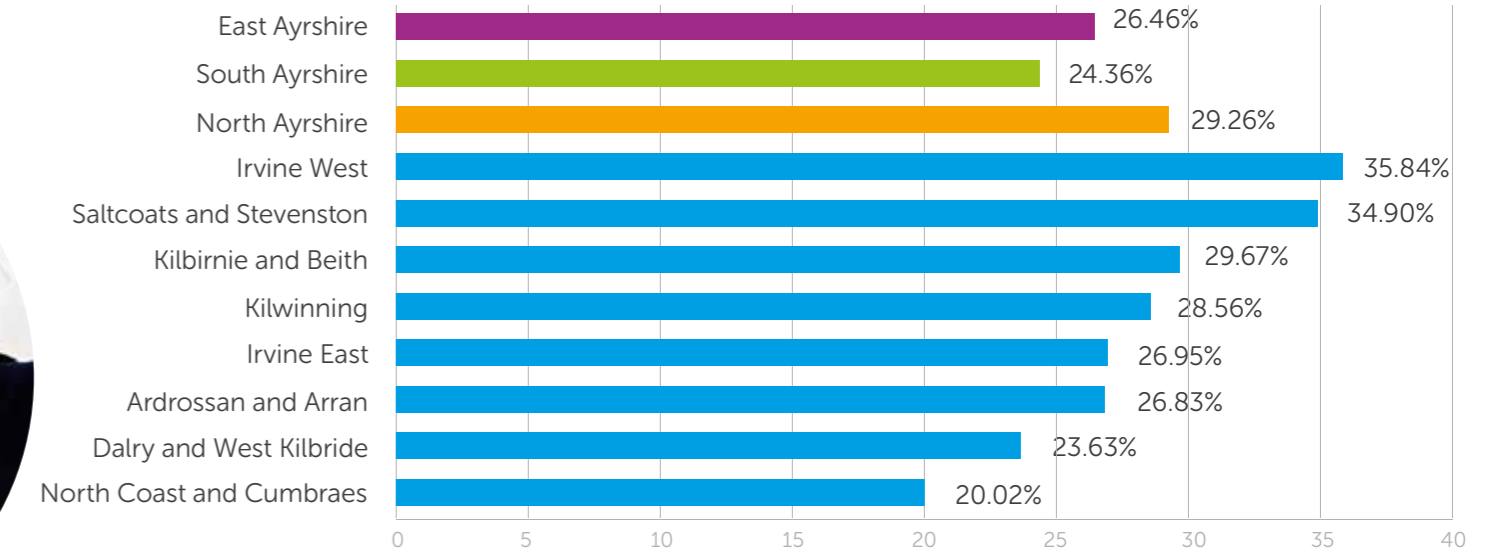
However, these figures are treated with caution. It should be noted that these are estimated figures only and are based on experimental methodology and do not represent accurate counts of how many children are in poverty in each area. Rather, they use the best local data available to give an indication of where child poverty is particularly high. Caution should also be used when comparing the two available time periods due to changes in methodology.

Inequalities in outcomes can be seen across all sectors including education, employment, income and health and wellbeing.



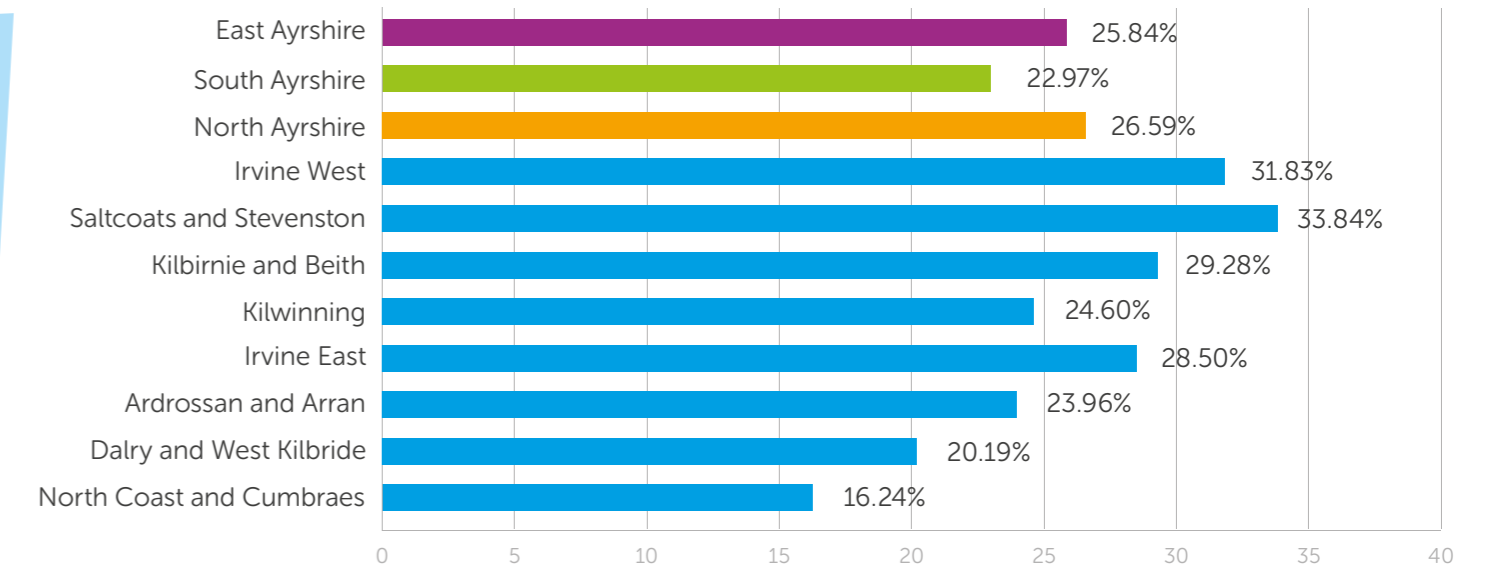
The data shows that there is variation in the levels of child poverty across all of our areas and also in North Ayrshire we have higher levels compared to East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire.

Figure 5: Child Poverty in North Ayrshire – After Housing Costs (Jan 2018)



Source: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>

Figure 6: Percentage of children in poverty, 2018/19, after housing costs



Source: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>

Child Poverty Drivers – Local Context

The table below summarises some of the data available for North Ayrshire that link to the key direct drivers of poverty as reviewed at figure 4. This has allowed us to assess and confirm our knowledge of the required actions to address the direct drivers of poverty within our area.

Figure 7: Local Poverty Related Indicators

Indicator	North Ayrshire	Scotland
Employment rate (2017-18)	69.8%	75.4%
Unemployment Rate (2017-18)	6.4%	4.1%
Incapacity benefit/ severe disability allowance Claimant count	7.40%	6.10%
Working age population claiming out of work benefits (2016)	14.6%	10.6%
Children in low income families (2015)	23.30%	16.30%
Children registered for free school meals (2018)	22.30%	15.60%
Households with children living in fuel poverty (2014/16)	18.1%	16.7%
Children admitted to hospital due to asthma, rate per 100,000 population (2015/16- 2017/18)	235.1	145.1
Children looked after by Local Authority, rate per 1,000 (2017)	22.2	14.3

Indicator	North Ayrshire	Scotland
Domestic Abuse Rates, per 10,000 population (2016/17)	123.4	108.8
Employment rate for 16-24 year olds (2017)	57.8%	59.4%
Households with children living in homes that fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standards SHQS (2014/16)	52.4%	41.2%
Proportion of Population Income Deprived (2017)	17.3%	12.2%
Proportion of Working age population employment deprived (2017)	15.3%	10.6%
Young people in prison per 100,000 (2012-2014)	484.7	300.2
Young people living in the most income deprived quintile (2017)	47.9%	21.5%
Proportion of people earning less than the living wage (2017/18)*	21.40%	18.40%
Proportion of people aged 16+ underemployed (2017)** (Respondents who would like to work longer hours, given the opportunity)	11.8%	8.0%

Source: Scottish Public Health Information for Scotland (https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/)

***Source:** Local Government Benchmarking Framework

****Source:** Annual Population Survey (Jan to Dec)

“High levels of inequality, particularly poverty exist in North Ayrshire. North Ayrshire is one of the most deprived areas in Scotland.”



Data and Mapping Approaches

Further to the information presented, we have been developing a mapping approach to our data to allow us to identify small areas (down to postcode level) where there may be higher concentrations of poverty. This has been overlaid with other sources of data to build a visual representation of potential issues that could impact on our localities and residents.

This work is ongoing and will be reviewed as part of our ongoing activity. Also, we have planned activities that include the commitment to use our data sources in a more joined up approach.

An example of our mapping approach has been attached as Appendix 2. This is an example of how we can use our data to generate a visual picture of our information and gather additional insights. Internally we can use multiple datasets at postcode level to identify and look into patterns that may not be so visible in a table format.

Further to the information presented above, we have been developing a mapping approach to our data to allow us to identify small areas (down to postcode level) where there may be higher concentrations of poverty.



3. North Ayrshire Strategic Context

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is a strong and effective partnership of a wide range of organisations. We come together as we appreciate the benefits of sharing our resources, knowledge and skills to improve the lives of local people. All partners have a shared commitment and partnership vision – North Ayrshire – A Better Life.

Fair for All is our partnership strategy for promoting equity. This strategy and the pledges we are delivering on are available at www.northayrshire.community/about-us/fair-for-all/

The key pledge within Fair for All is: “North Ayrshire CPP pledges to tackle the root causes of child poverty and mitigate its impact to create a better life for local people.”

In our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2022, we have increased our focus on child poverty. This is in response to very concerning local trends in child poverty levels.

Underpinning this we have four priority areas:

- A Working North Ayrshire
- A Healthier North Ayrshire
- A Safer North Ayrshire
- A Thriving North Ayrshire – Children and Young People

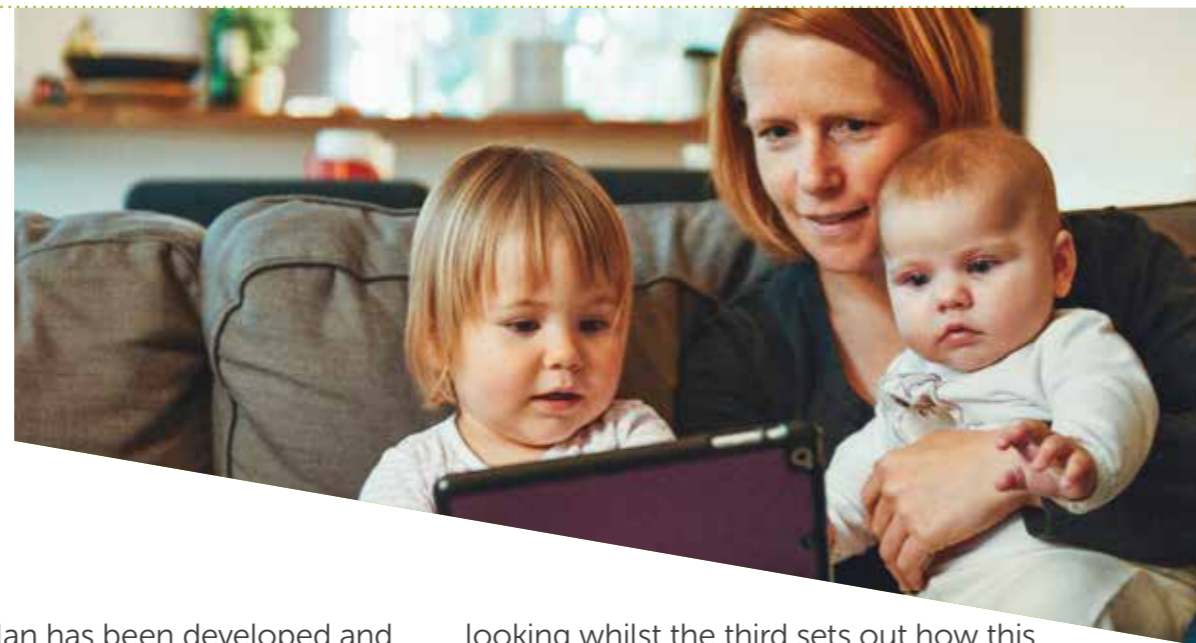
Our cross cutting themes influence our approach to these priorities:

1. **Building stronger communities** – by this we mean enabling communities to increase control over their lives, being supported to do things for themselves and having their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services.
2. **Prevention** – by this we mean tackling issues early to stop things from happening in the first place or from getting worse.

North Ayrshire CPP pledges to tackle the root causes of child poverty and mitigate its impact to create a better life for local people



A new Council Plan has been developed and a consultative draft was approved by Elected Members at a meeting of North Ayrshire Council on 27th March 2019. The new Council Plan has clear links to the Fair for All Strategy and places as emphasis on child poverty.



These do not operate in isolation. We draw from a range of partner plans to support these priorities. Our Locality Partnership and Connected Communities teams are fundamental to ensuring that plans are built on lived experience.

We recognise that high levels of inequality, particularly poverty exist in North Ayrshire. *Fair for All: A strategy to reduce inequalities in North Ayrshire* is our overarching strategy and focusses on the impact of poverty, and the opportunities, based on evidence, of where and how North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) partners can work to achieve the greatest effect in reducing inequality. Our key strategic plan, our [North Ayrshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan](#), describes our approach in more detail.

A new Council Plan has been developed and a consultative draft was approved by Elected Members at a meeting of North Ayrshire Council on 27th March 2019. The new Council Plan has clear links to the Fair for All Strategy and places as emphasis on child poverty.

The Council's Vision and Mission in the Plan are:

Vision:

A North Ayrshire that is 'Fair For All'.

Mission

Working together to improve well-being, prosperity and equity in North Ayrshire.

The draft Plan is constructed around three strategic themes. The first two are outward

looking whilst the third sets out how this Council will work moving forward. This forms the basis of our approach to transformation.

- **Aspiring Communities** – A society where everyone has the same life chances to grow, prosper and have fulfilling and healthy lives.
- **Inspiring Place** – An enterprising, vibrant and sustainable environment, appealing to investors, attractive for visitors and a place our residents are proud to live and work in.
- **A Council for the Future** – Our Council is forward-thinking – motivated to transform and improve services for our communities through innovation, reshaping our approach and focusing investment to our priorities.

“The Children’s Services Plan contains a clear action plan made up of promises, which keep the wellbeing of children at the centre.”



Some of the Priority Outcomes included in the draft plan are directly linked to Child poverty. For example priorities are –

- North Ayrshire’s children and young people have the best start in life.
- North Ayrshire has an inclusive, growing and enterprising economy.
- North Ayrshire’s residents and communities enjoy good, life-long health and wellbeing.

Our [Children’s Services Plan](#) was launched by our North Ayrshire Children’s Services Strategic Partnership in March 2016. This plan details how North Ayrshire Children’s Services Strategic Partnership aims to give Children in North Ayrshire the best start in life and to make it the best place in Scotland to grow up.

The [Children’s Services Plan](#) contains a clear action plan made up of promises, which keep the wellbeing of children at the centre. Although the plan is not exclusively written to address Child Poverty, there are a number of promises which work towards the ambition of addressing poverty and equality.

These promises strive to ensure that children in North Ayrshire have many opportunities to enable them to progress and break the cycle of poverty. The promises also focus on the support for parents to empower and enable them to provide the most positive start for a child and to improve their future life chances.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge focuses on closing the poverty-related attainment gap by providing targeted support to increase the attainment of children living in North Ayrshire’s most highly concentrated areas of

deprivation. North Ayrshire Council is one of nine Challenge Authorities supported through the Attainment Scotland Fund and is granted an allocation of this £750m fund to develop and deliver targeted initiatives and interventions to increase attainment in the highest concentrated areas of deprivation.

We became the first Child-Centred Council in Scotland, putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do and making sure that we give our young people the best possible start in life.

During 2017/18, we set up a Year of Young People Strategic Group to listen and engage with children and young people, individuals and communities. The Strategic Group included Year of Young People Ambassadors, elected members from all political groups, and officers.

In relation to poverty, the key proposal which emerged from the Year of Young People Strategic Group was a proposal to establish and brand a Young People's Commission to inform actions to address young people's experiences of poverty. This would be the first such commission in Scotland and would be informed from the ongoing Fair for All Commission in North Ayrshire.

Inclusive Growth/ Community Wealth Building

North Ayrshire Council has led in Scotland on the development of the inclusive growth agenda. We worked with the Scottish Government to develop and pilot the "inclusive growth diagnostic". The main purpose of the diagnostic was to identify constraints and opportunities for driving inclusive growth in North Ayrshire on order to prioritise actions to address them at a time of constrained public sector resources.

The findings from the Diagnostic have been used to inform the Councils investment decisions, for example in establishing a supported employment programme to help more disabled people access and sustain employment. The diagnostic has been rolled out on an Ayrshire Regional basis and its findings have been used to inform the priorities of the Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal.

Community Wealth Building

The Council and Community Planning partners are working to develop a Community Wealth Building strategy for North Ayrshire, and in collaboration with East and South Ayrshire for the Ayrshire region as a whole. A community wealth building approach seeks to provide resilience, local economic security, and to ensure that economic opportunity is widely spread and inclusive. Community wealth building provides a concrete and practical approach to help deliver on the aspiration of inclusive growth.

This strategy has five key elements or pillars:

- Employment
- Procurement
- Assets
- Ownership
- Financial Power.

Over time, a successful Community Wealth Building strategy will help to grow the local business base, producing more and better jobs which can be accessed by the full range of people across our communities. Community Wealth Building is therefore key to the Council and Community Planning partnerships approach to tackling poverty and deprivation in North Ayrshire and, in particular, Child Poverty.



Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal

The Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal was agreed in March 2019 between the three Ayrshire local authorities and the Scottish and UK Governments. The Growth Deal represents a major investment in the Ayrshire economy, worth over £250 million over the next 10 years, with the aim of radically boosting the economic performance of the area - supporting the development and expansion of companies and the creation of thousands of new jobs across a range of key sectors. The Growth Deal has been informed by the opportunities and challenges identified by the Inclusive Growth Diagnostic.

In addition, the Growth Deal has allocated £3 million to support the development of a Community Wealth Building strategy across Ayrshire. This will be central to ensuring that the investment through the Growth Deal will benefit the whole Ayrshire community and play a major role in helping to tackle poverty in the region.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The Community Planning Board is committed to supporting pan-Ayrshire work on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in conjunction with Community Justice Ayrshire. ACEs are stressful events that occur in childhood and can have a lifelong adverse impact on sustained health and behaviour. We have held screenings across our localities of "Resilience – The Biology of Stress and Science of Hope" documentary. Over 65 multi-agency screenings of the documentary took place in 2018, led by colleagues from Public Health and Police Scotland (Ayrshire Division). It is estimated that over 4,500 people across Ayrshire have attended a screening and panel discussion.

A follow up to the first Pan-Ayrshire conference on ACEs and trauma took place on 25 March 2019. The event was entitled "ACEs: Adversity is Not Destiny". The morning session provided an opportunity to celebrate

some of the work being done across Ayrshire, with the afternoon session focussing on what ACEs have to do with justice. We were delighted to welcome local, national and international speakers to the event.

Following a motion to Council for North Ayrshire Council to become 'trauma informed', the Director of the Health and Social Care Partnership convened a meeting to discuss a proportionate response to achieve this. Colleagues from Human Resources, Learning and Development, Community Planning, Community Justice and the Health and Social Care Partnership are now developing a plan to take this forward.

The Fair for All Advisory Panel

As part of our Fair for All Strategy, we have a dedicated Fair for All Advisory Panel. The panel includes experts in poverty and inequality from across Scotland and will make sure that the work that needs to be done is carried out in the best way possible to have the biggest impact on the areas that need it most.

The Growth Deal has been informed by the opportunities and challenges identified by the Inclusive Growth Diagnostic.

In addition, the Growth Deal has allocated £3 million to support the development of a Community Wealth Building strategy across Ayrshire. This will be central to ensuring that the investment through the Growth Deal will benefit the whole Ayrshire community and play a major role on helping to tackle poverty in the region.



The Panel provides governance and direction to the Partnership. It will drive the changes needed to achieve the pledges outlined in the strategy. The Panel will also act as a 'critical friend' for our Child Poverty Action Report to ensure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for our residents and will help to identify any gaps and further activity areas that can be introduced. We are confident that this approach will ensure our actions are robust and ambitious.

Fair for All Commission

Effective local action to reduce child poverty requires understanding the local picture, levels of need and how to address these. Generating a shared understanding of the issues, common priorities and strategic approach to planning will involve working with a range of partners with differing perspectives, including people with lived experience of poverty, and potentially diverse ways of using evidence.

North Ayrshire welcomed its first-ever Fair for All Commission Officer in 2018 to help make the area a fairer and more equal place to live. The appointment follows start-up funding provided by the Scottish Government to make sure the voices of people with direct experiences of poverty are heard locally.

The role of the Fair for All Commission Officer is to:

- Empower people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities
- Embed engagement and participation practices and culture for those who experience poverty related issues and whose voices are least often heard
- Create and develop a Poverty Truth Commission organisation in North Ayrshire to address the barriers people face in life due to poverty. The group will gather evidence to create recommendations on how to make North Ayrshire 'Fair for All'
- Work with South and East Ayrshire, where appropriate, to ensure the successful advocacy of poverty issues to Scottish Government and other influences/partners

Over the next two years, this work will focus on 'giving a face to the facts' – ensuring that the movement to tackle poverty has those who experience it at its heart.

The Fair for All Commission Officer aims to establish 12 Community Commissioners – people who have or are experiencing poverty – who will share their stories and knowledge of the issues that affect them and others across North Ayrshire.

Working closely with them will be 12 Civic Commissioners – who can be anything from business leaders, policy developers, journalists, third-sector leaders – who can listen and try to find solutions to any of the issues that are encountered.

One of the anticipated outcomes for the Fair for All Commission is to improve sensitivity and effectiveness of the practices and services delivered by Community Planning Partners – bringing positive actions to address the causes and symptoms of poverty.



“Empower people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities”

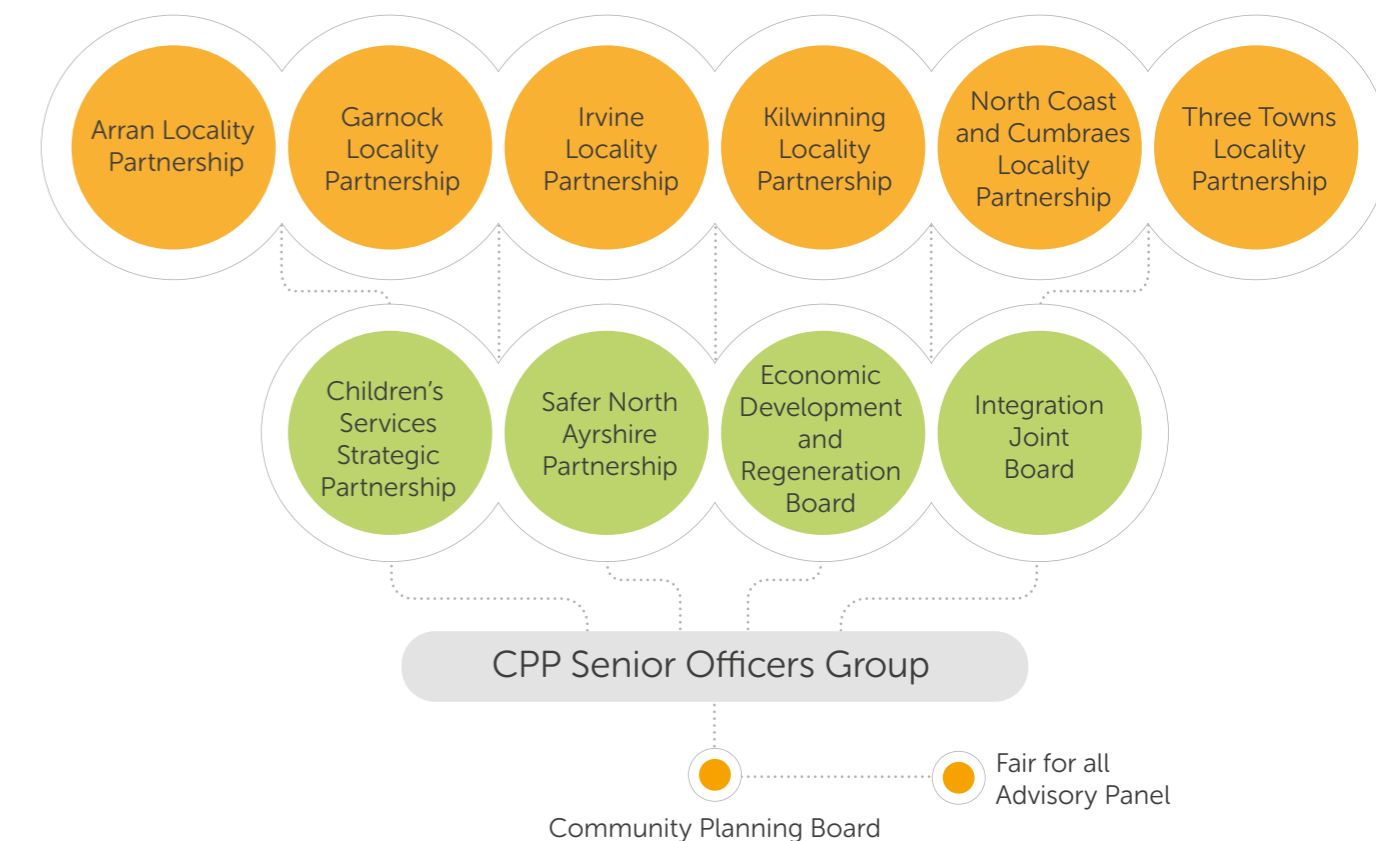
4. Monitoring of this plan

This report will be agreed and monitored by the Community Planning Partnership. Reporting will link to other strategic groups as required.

An Action Plan and supporting Performance framework will be monitored using Pentana, the Councils Performance Management System. This will ensure consistency in reporting across all of our plans and strategies.

We aim to report on our progress internally every six months to ensure the child poverty agenda is drive forward.

Figure 7: Community Planning Structure in North Ayrshire



5. Actions Approach

Our Action Plan has been developed in order to ensure clear links to our Fair for All Strategy. We have used this as a basis of our understanding of inequalities, its causes, and the most effective ways of responding. In this report we are looking at inequalities relating to Child Poverty.

Understanding Inequalities – Fair for All Approach

A range of factors which, when distributed unequally in society, result in inequality of outcomes across socio-economic groups.

Inequalities in individual outcomes are directly linked to wider socio-economic inequalities in society. The distribution of power, money and resources has a direct influence on environmental influences such as:

- availability of health enhancing work
- access to good quality and affordable housing
- social and cultural experiences
- transport

- education and learning opportunities
- availability and quality of services

While there will be some fundamental causes of poverty which are out with the control of North Ayrshire CPP, there are many areas where an impact can be made.

A review of the literature suggests that in order to be most effective, interventions need to be taken at all three levels:

- *undo* the fundamental causes
- *prevent* the wider environmental influences
- *mitigate* the individual experiences



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“A range of factors which, when distributed unequally in society, result in inequality of outcomes across socio-economic groups.”



In order to ensure links with our existing strategies we have decided to group our actions into these three levels.

As well as needing to ensure that our approach intervenes at all three levels described above, research also demonstrates that a combination of approaches across three areas of the population is essential to effectively tackle inequalities. These three approaches are:

- 1. Targeting** – Targeting the worst off in society
- 2. Enhanced** – Reducing the gap between groups
- 3. Universal** – Reducing the gradient across the population

Our action plan will reflect these approaches where relevant.



6. Action Plan

Our key actions have been identified and included in Appendix 1. Our key actions can be linked to and summarised in terms of the key drivers of child poverty. We have included actions where the greatest impact will be made taking into account scale and pace.

Income from Employment:

- Skills for Life programme
- Family Futures programme
- We Work for Families programme
- Focus on the poverty related attainment gap
- Vocational programmes and Activity Agreements in the Senior Phase
- Positive Steps initiative
- Supported Employment Team
- Employability Pipeline Services

Costs of living:

- Better Off North Ayrshire
- Money Matters
- Childcare – early years expansion
- Healthy Start Vouchers
- School Holiday Meals programme
- Period Poverty Initiative
- Transport initiatives
- Local Housing Strategy

Our key actions have been identified and included in Appendix 1.



Priority groups will also be considered as part of the development of our future actions to ensure that the needs of these groups are met.

Income from social security and benefits in kind:

- Better Off North Ayrshire
- Money Matters
- Discretionary housing payments
- Scottish Welfare Fund administration
- Referral tool for NHS staff to sign-post families to appropriate specialist services.
- North Ayrshire digital strategy
- Uptake of Free School Meals, Clothing Grants and Education Maintenance Allowance

The six priority groups (lone parents; families where a member of the household is disabled; families with three or more children; minority ethnic families; families where the youngest child is under one year old; and mothers aged under 25) have been considered in our actions and mentioned where appropriate. These priority groups will also be considered as part

of the development of our future actions to ensure that the needs of these groups are met.

More details on our actions including how impact will be assessed and details of timescales can be viewed in our detailed action plan as attached at Appendix 1. This has been split into three tables.

Table 1 below shows a wide range of actions that are currently taking place and have a direct impact on the drivers of Child Poverty.

Table 2 shows the actions that are current but have a more indirect impact on the drivers of Child Poverty or are universal actions.

Tables 3 and 4 show future actions that are either planned or require further investigation to consider for future years that we think will have an impact on the drivers of Child Poverty.



Case Studies

Case Study 1 – We Work for Families

Mum was registered with We Work for Families October 17. At time of registration she was in a Woman's Refuge with her 3 year old daughter. The main barriers were identified as housing issues, low confidence and she had debts she needed help getting sorted. Through one to one appointments, help was accessed via Better Off North Ayrshire for debt issues. Access to food provision was provided through Centrestage as well as Hill House provision for clothing for her daughter. Support was provided for housing issue through telephone calls and support to attend housing appointments.

When mum secured her new tenancy she accessed funding through 1st Alliance to help her furnish her house. At this stage she felt an increase in confidence and positive about making steps to move into work.

Mum attended We Work for Families Pre-Employability Training workshops in January 2018 where her CV, cover and speculative letters were revamped, as well as covering topics such as introducing yourself to an employer, benefits of working, identifying key skills and competency based interviews. During the workshops mum had a foot injury and rather than her not attend, We Work for Families funded taxis for her; this kept her momentum to progress towards her goal of employment.

Help was provided with speculative calls to employers and job searching where mum identified she would like to work. Mum secured an interview with NHS in March 2018. We carried out interview preparation with her and accessed funding to allow her to purchase new interview clothing.

Mum was successful at her interview and started work with NHS in May 2018. We Work for Families funded travel costs for her to attend her training. Mum described the support from We Work for Families as "uplifting, very helpful, supportive and good for mental health being independent".

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“Without the support from We Work for Families I would not have had the confidence and motivation to go to college and have now Completed Level 5 Creative style Hair and Make-up.

Case Study 2 – We Work for Families

Mum of 2 living in a jobless household with her partner and the family in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. The main barriers were identified as long term unemployment, mental and physical health problems, low skills and being the primary carer for her two children. Mum stated she wanted to do more with her life but was unsure what this was. Due to a hectic day to day life, she thought initially this was to move into employment but she was unsure about the financial implications. A better off in work calculation was carried out and a CV was compiled.

We had a number of one to one appointments with mum, initially in her home then progressed to meeting her at the local primary school where she had joined the parents group. Mum attended the We Work for Families confidence building workshops which

gave her confidence to take the step to move into full time education.

“Without the support from We Work for Families I would not have had the confidence and motivation to go to college and have now Completed Level 5 Creative style Hair and Make-up. I am nominated for hard work and excellence award at Ayrshire College excellence awards and am moving on to study HNC Hairdressing”.

As well as one to one support and workshops mum has also had financial support to buy a warm jacket and boots to wear to college throughout the winter months. Mum feels her life has turned around and is more positive in herself and about her future and also feels her mental health has improved.



“Nearly half of the participants, approximately 48%, lived in the most deprived communities in North Ayrshire.”

Case Study 3 – Skills for Life programme: North Ayrshire Council

Skills for Life is an innovative programme that offers intensive support for long term unemployed lone parents.

The programme is built around a 6 month mentored vocational placement within the council. The Programme is delivered in partnership with DWP, Ayrshire College and other local partners.

Lone parent families are one of the priority groups for addressing child poverty, with 36% of children in lone parent families in Scotland being in relative poverty. 90% of the participants on the programme were women. The parents who have participated in the Skills for Life programme faced a range of barriers to entering and sustaining employment, challenges including childcare, the cost of travel and low levels of self-confidence. The initial Skills for Life Programme provided 21 placements to lone parents.

Nearly half of the participants, approximately 48%, lived in the most deprived communities in North Ayrshire. 70% of the participants were aged over 30 and there was a total of 35 dependent children.

Skills for Life has a three-stage approach. At each stage intensive support is provided to the participants to ensure that they can fully take part in the programme and that their worries and challenges are addressed in a way that maintains their dignity and helps boost their confidence. The mentoring support provided by the programme, and the wider range of services provided to participants at all three stages accentuate the importance of treating participants in an unconditionally positive manner and that their needs are met, and barriers are removed. The mentor works with

participants on a one to one basis and in group sessions to provide the support they need in a format that they are comfortable with.

The Council has adapted its employment policies to be more flexible to meet the needs of Skills for Life participants, for example around 16 – 20-hour posts and in shift patterns for the care at home service. This increased flexibility allows us to meet the employment needs of participants rather than simply suiting the needs of the authority.

As an employability programme, Skills for Life addresses two of the key drivers of child poverty, unemployment and the consequent reliance on welfare benefits which are insufficient to lift families out of poverty. At the outset of the programme, participants receive a “better off” calculation from welfare/ money

advisors which shows the difference taking paid employment will make to their household income. For the initial cohort of participants the average increase in weekly income was £93, which had the effect of lifting their household out of relative poverty.

There has been an internal evaluation of the initial Skills for Life Programme. This evaluation consisted of a review of the outcomes of the Programme and a qualitative survey of participant’s views of the programme, prior to starting the programme, immediately on completion and at a 6 month follow up.

The evaluation demonstrates considerable success to date. Of the first cohort of participants that went through the programme, 20 of the 21 progressed after the 26-week work placement, as follows:

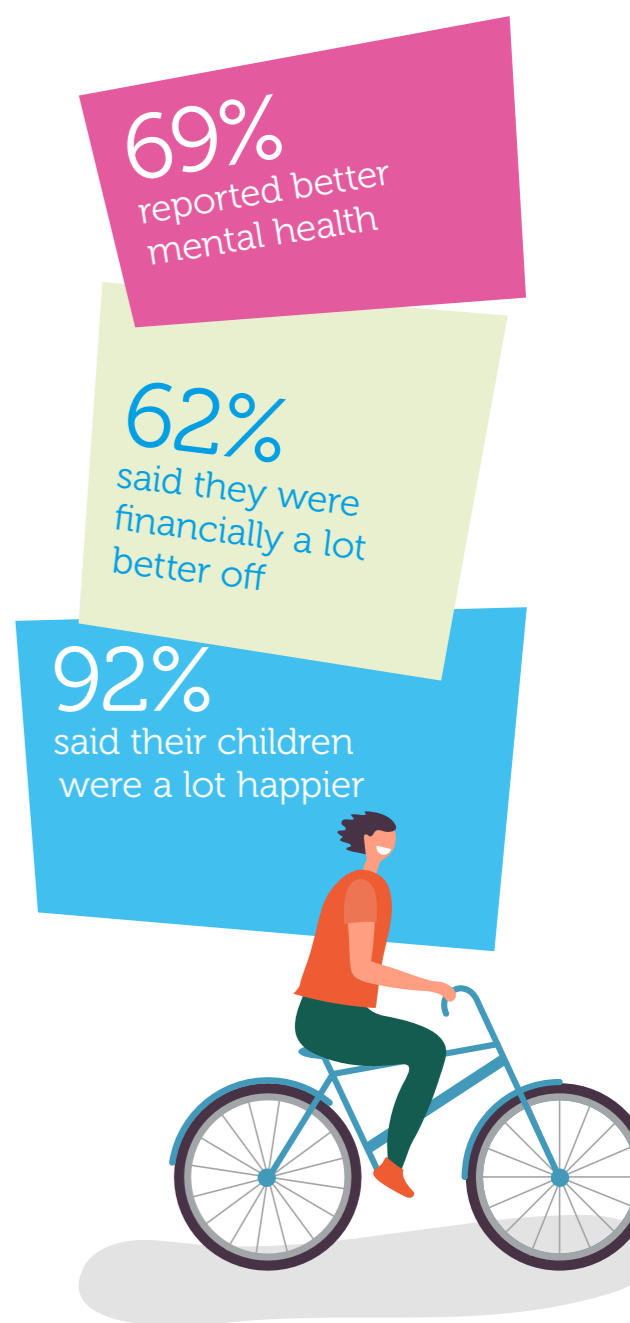
- 12 were retained by North Ayrshire council
- 6 found work in the private sector

- A further 2 participants went into further education to do early years care and professional cookery.

Skills for Life is demonstrably a successful programme. In the 6 month follow up of the programme:

- 92% said their children were a lot happier
- 62% said they were financially a lot better off
- 69% reported better mental health
- 85% reported they were a lot happier
- 85% said they felt more positive

The Programme has been developed by the Employability team in the Council and has been supported by directorates which have provided the work placements for participants. The key partnership is with Ayrshire College, which provides the six-week pre-employment course at stage 1 of the process.



Several partners refer into the Skills for Life programme. These include:

- **We work for families** – this programme provides 1-1 specialist employability and skills service for participants from vulnerable families. Referrals are made through a health visitor to provide in depth support to parents wishing to return to work. Support is given with, debt, other money issues, childcare and housing advice. The programme helps participants understand the process of returning to work and develops personal return to work plans.
- **Housing support employability programme** – engages with parents in temporary accommodation to engage with an employability and skills programme. This is a 14-week accredited programme.
- **Family Futures** – This is an early years programme, operating in our nurseries to assist parents with their journey to

employment education or training. This is a three-stage model of support for parents, the majority of whom have never been in employment. It is an early engagement “soft” approach which can access additional support such as SALUS health interventions, life coaching and well-being support, welfare reform and money advice support.

- **Youth Justice** – Referrals are made to Skills for Life for parents involved in the youth justice system.

In addition the DWP can refer claimants onto Skills for Life on a non-mandatory basis. All these programmes are part of our employability pathway, supporting people who are very far from the labour market. The Skills for Life programme is the final stage of parent’s employability journey, giving the access to a paid work placement with the Council, and ultimately a job.

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