



25 June 2021

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **ARGYLL AND BUTE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will be held via **MS TEAMS** on **WEDNESDAY, 30 JUNE 2021** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

AGENDA

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES (PIPPA MILNE)** (Pages 3 - 4)
Including Video by Cameron Garrett, MSYP
2. **APPROVAL OF LAST MINUTES AND REVIEW OF ACTIONS (RONA GOLD)**
(Pages 5 - 20)
3. **OUTCOME 4 - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**
 - (a) The Promise – Presentation by Brian Reid, Acting Chair of Children's Services, HSCP (Pages 21 - 42)
 - (b) Children's Rights Update (Pages 43 - 46)
 - (c) Youth Participation Structure
4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM AREA COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUPS (PATRICIA ONEILL)** (Pages 47 - 54)
5. **CROSS CUTTING THEMES**
 - (a) Digital Inclusion (Martin Turnbull)
 - (b) Building Back Better (Communities) (Rona Gold)
 - (c) Community Wealth Building (Fergus Murray, Morag Goodfellow and Takki Sulaiman)
 - (d) Child Poverty - Poverty Training for Partners (Fergus Walker) (Pages 55 - 124)
6. **CLIMATE CHANGE**

- (a) Climate Change Website

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/cpp-climate-change>

- (b) CPP Group Update (Stan Phillips)

- (c) Cowal Youth Forum video on Keep Scotland Beautiful and Video

<https://youtu.be/fhICuACmh9g>

7. OUTCOME 3 - CLD PARTNERSHIP (NICOLA HACKETT)

8. AOCB

- Data to inform vulnerability
- Seeking leads for Outcome 5 (People live active, healthier and more independent lives) and Outcome 6 (People live in safer and stronger communities)

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 29 SEPTEMBER 2021

10. CLOSE

MSYP Cameron Garret video message - Links for further information

Link to video:

These are the links to the campaigns mentioned in the video:

[Bounce Back - Scottish Youth Parliament \(syp.org.uk\)](https://www.syp.org.uk/campaigns/bounce-back) – the campaign for a human rights based approach to recovery from Covid-19.

[COVID-19: LockdownLowdown - Scottish Youth Parliament \(syp.org.uk\)](https://www.syp.org.uk/campaigns/covid-19-lockdown-lowdown) – views of young people on their concerns of the impact of Covid-19.

- [The results of this for Argyll and Bute](#)

[Pack it up, Pack it in - Scottish Youth Parliament \(syp.org.uk\)](https://www.syp.org.uk/campaigns/pack-it-up-pack-it-in) – campaign in 2019/2020 concentrating on reducing pollution levels which contribute to climate change by focusing on reducing single-use packaging and waste, and improving recycling in Scotland. The KEY FINDINGS report that Cameron mentions is found on this page in two formats; one easy read format.

This page is intentionally left blank

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP -
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held by MS Teams
on WEDNESDAY 10th MARCH 2021 at 14.00**

Present:	Joe McKay, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Chair)	
Martin Jones, Argyll College UHI	Pippa Milne, Argyll & Bute Council	
Kirsteen Murray, Argyll & Bute TSI	Derek McCrindle, Scottish Enterprise	
Morag Goodfellow, HIE	John Paterson, Police Scotland	
Rona Gold, Argyll & Bute Council	Laura Evans, Police Scotland	
Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council	Stan Philips, NatureScot	
Joanna MacDonald, HSCP	Stuart Green, Argyll & Bute Council	
Alison McGrory, NHS Highland	Shona Barton, Argyll and Bute Council	
Samantha Somers, Argyll and Bute Council	Councillor Robin Currie, Leader of Argyll and Bute Council	
Ian Brodie, MAKI Community Planning Group	Kevin Champion, OLI Community Planning Group	
Cristie Moore, Gaelic Development Worker, Argyll and Bute Council (Guest)	Kirsty Flanagan, Argyll and Bute Council	
Willie Lynch, Bute & Cowal Community Planning Group	Sheena McLean, Argyll and Bute Council (Guest)	
Sarah Griffin, NHS Scotland (Guest)	Emma Grimason, Police Scotland	
	Nicola Reaney, Argyll & Bute Council	
Apologies:		
Anthony Standing, Skills Development Scotland	Patricia O'Neill, Argyll and Bute Council	
Stuart Mearns, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park	Albert Bruce, H&L Community Planning Group	
Donna Bell, Scottish Government	Martin Turnbull, Argyll and Bute Council	
Frances Calderwood, DWP	Stuart McLean, Argyll and Bute Council	
Marlene Bailey, Police Scotland	Murray McEwan, Scottish Ambulance Service	
Teresa Correia, Scottish Enterprise		

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES (JOE MCKAY)

Joe welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. Joe advised that Marlene Baily and Laura Evans are the Police Scotland Community representatives and Brian Gibson has now retired. He welcomed the newly appointed Area Community Planning Group (ACPG) Chairs and that it was great to see a youth member as the vice chair of OLI ACPG. Joe gave special thanks to Joanna MacDonald for all her hard work and efforts for leading outcome four of and also chairing the Child Poverty Group on behalf of the CPP and wished her all the best in her new role. Joe also welcomed Cllr Robin Currie to his first CPP MC meeting as Leader of the Council. Joe encouraged new members to look at the online CPP Welcome Pack. ([Welcome Pack for CPP](#))

2. APPROVAL OF LAST MINUTES AND REVIEW OF ACTIONS

Minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Outstanding actions were updated as follows:-

Issue of the national recovery report to CPP MC - action to be marked as complete as this has been circulated to members.

ACPG format to ensure youth engagement - Discussion are ongoing with Rona and Stuart McLean to consider and move forward on this.

MAKI membership update and attendance - Shona advised that the MAKI ACPG February meeting discussed this and they agreed to issue a survey to partners to see what the barriers are to attending meetings. Results expected to be presented to the April/May meetings and a further update can be provided as required by Shona to the CPP MC.

Partners to forward details of all groups sitting under the 6 outcomes. **Action - Rona asked for responses by 19 March 21 with details of all the partnership groups that sit under each outcome.**

3. CROSS CUTTING THEMES

(a) Community Wealth Building (CWB)

Following on from the presentation on CWB to the committee in December, Samantha gave an update on the work looking at what CWB means and what is happening in Argyll and Bute, led by Fergus, Morag and Kirsteen. Details of proposed workshops and attendees were included in the meeting pack. After the workshops there will be a map created of what is happening which will also identify any gaps. The committee was asked to input to the draft proposal. Cllr Currie asked when the workshops will be held and if the wider community was included and was advised that the dates had not yet been set and that some community groups had been included in proposed attendees under each pillar. John felt it was important to have community groups and youth represented in the workshops. Pippa agreed it would be helpful to invite attendees from community groups, especially those involved in recent community asset transfer / requests and community trusts. Kirsteen suggested a wider participation at the start of the process to ensure individual communities' needs are met, and not have only partners involved.

Action - comments on inclusions to workshop attendees to be forwarded to Samantha.

Fergus added that Council procurement have written a paper on CWB which is very informative and this would be forwarded to the CPP.

Action - Fergus to provide CWB paper to cppadmin to distribute to committee.

The proposal for 5 CWB workshops was agreed, with the recommendation to look at wider participation.

(b) Update on Child Poverty

Joanna noted that the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) last met on 17 February 21 and meets on a monthly basis, at this meeting the priorities for the next 6 months were agreed, including recovery from the pandemic and new work extending support for children and young people, and an impact assessment on the plan has been completed. To ensure the plan was informed there was close liaison between education, young people, NHS, HSCP and the Local Authority. Joanna also noted delight at the support received from the Poverty Alliance, led by Peter Kelly, and links to the third sector that underpins this work. This outcome links to outcome 5 and 6 in relation to healthy, independent lives and safer stronger communities, as well as the links to outcome 4 which Joanna Leads. The CPAG are trying to link into work across the other outcomes.

Joanna will provide the CPP with the written handover being prepared for the new Chief Officer taking over from her. In the interim, the outcome deputy will chair the CPAG. Joanna gave thanks to Mandy Sheridan of Argyll and Bute Council for being a driving force coordinating and moving the CPAG forward in positive way. Recruitment is underway for a new project assistant for child poverty, which reflects the ambition to meet requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Cllr Currie added that the Council sees child poverty, and poverty, as a high priority. He said that monies are now coming through from the Scottish Government to assist the Council to take more action on this. Joanna said she is incredibly proud of the work being done “behind the scenes” to make it easy to support people around poverty in a dignified way, saying that there was great proactive work on this within Argyll and Bute.

(c) Update on Climate Change

Samantha provided an update on the Climate Change Working Group. They are creating an interactive web directory showing climate change action around Argyll and Bute, and have been provided a wealth of information on this from community groups and partners. The webpage is scheduled to go live at end March. Samantha thanked partners for information received so far and encouraged them to continue to forward examples to her, noting the recent announcement by Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) to establish a climate change hub in Blarbuie and two satellite hubs in Bute and Cowal. ACT are keen to present to the committee on this in the future. Joe added that the Fire Service have plans to install electric charging points and solar panels in stations - so there is lots of good work going on in the community.

Action - Samantha to send link to partners to climate webpages once live. Partners to forward examples of good climate change proactive work to Samantha to include on website.

Ian asked if the group was looking at coastal erosion, as the last council study on this was in March 2015, stating concern that in coming years it is predicted that

some areas on the east of Kintyre and the B842 will be under threat from rising water. Fergus responded that coastal erosion is a major concern for Argyll and Bute and that any sea level rise will impact our communities and infrastructure adversely. Argyll and Bute Council are looking at flooding impact action plans for towns and roads where they can and highlighting the issue to the Scottish Government. This is a huge problem nationally that needs addressed.

Stan agreed with the scale of problem. He advised of Adaptation plans being drawn up in the Western Isles and that it would be useful to look at these.

Action - Samantha to contact Western Isles to access their plans to inform the CPP MC.

(d) Update on Digital Inclusion

An update was provided by Samantha, on behalf of Martin Turnbull. In Argyll and Bute the response to tackle digital exclusion has focussed on two projects - Connecting Scotland and Digital Connections. Despite issuing a significant number of devices there still remains a steady flow of requests for support.

Via Connecting Scotland, national programme, there have been 360 devices and “mifi” packs issued. A further 19 devices and packs have been awarded by Connecting Scotland to help meet the high levels of need.

Digital Connections is a local partnership project in Argyll and Bute run by Inspiralba. It was established at the start of the pandemic to respond quickly to digital needs. 220 refurbished devices have been purchased and over 150 devices donated by the local community and businesses. There has also been a healthy response from the community and businesses to an appeal for devices that can then be recycled and redistributed to families and individuals in need, and discussions are at a very early stage in exploring the viability of developing a project which will access and recycle end of use devices. More information on this project is at [Digital Connections – Supporting Digital Inclusion](#).

Cllr Currie highlighted a range of good news stories in the council budget that included setting up a fund of £250,000 to tackle digital exclusion. The eligibility criteria to apply is currently being worked on and news on this will be issued once finalised.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM AREA COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUPS (ACPGs)

Shona noted her report which detailed discussion across the four ACPG meetings held in February. These were held virtually and well attended. MAKI ACPG raised an action to the CPP relating to youth engagement. Shona will advise MAKI ACPG that this is already being taken forward by the CPP.

Kirsteen noted the survey taking place about partners ability to attend the MAKI ACPG meetings and suggested a central calendar of all area partnership meetings would be useful to prevent conflicting clashes in diaries for partners. Kirsteen also noted that the updates for each committee can be similar and for those attending all 4 ACPGs they experience hearing the same messages repeatedly. She asked if agendas can focus on local planning, updates and involvement of partners, rather

than standard updates. Alison agreed this was a really important point for the CPP, as part of the recovery work involved a duty to empower community planning groups to respond to local recovery agendas. Alison would be happy to be involved in discussions to review how the ACPGs identify priority areas for agendas. Shona said there are meeting with chairs and vice chairs in advance of agenda setting for the next round of meetings in August and that comments made would be taken on board to try to standardise agendas with increased local content.

Action - ACPG Chairs to look at how to avoid meeting diary clashes with key partners and present suggestions on how to address repetitive messaging for partners attending all four.

Kevin highlighted the importance of the youth voice, and noted that the OLI ACPG vice chair is also part of the local youth forum. Joe agreed it was great to have a diverse attendance at ACPGs and that he would like to meet with the OLI vice chair to discuss her views alongside those of the Members of Scottish Youth Parliament who are part of the CPP Management Committee.

Willie said he would be grateful for any suggestions from partners on how to improve youth involvement in Dunoon ACPG. Joe also asked if we can speak to the Council's Community Learning on how best to engage with young people. Shona confirmed that they are aware of this and are preparing information to assist with this.

Action - Rona to set up meeting for Joe, OLI vice chair and MSYPs on how to involve youth in community planning.

(a) Update on Wild Camping

Fergus noted how the pandemic exacerbated issues that have been in existence for some time around wild camping. A group has formed, including representatives from landowners, private sector and council services, to develop an action plan identifying key matters to take forward. A survey was also undertaken with over 150 responses received from community trusts and individuals, which will be used to identify future hotspots and how best to respond to those. The Council announced in the budget a substantial fund to address the staycation pressures moving forward, including the current recruitment of 4 wardens to supplement existing support and provide resource to hotspots. Fergus added that a webpage is being developed to inform and educate visitors and manage expectations of what is available in the area and they are also linking that into social media channels used by motorhome owners. Work is being undertaken with partners and businesses looking at identifying a network of where waste disposal points and fresh water can be obtained to ensure communities are not overburdened. Working closely with the National Park, portaloos are to be installed at Duck Bay that will be maintained by the Friends of Loch Lomond. Permanent interventions include improvements to facilities in Tobermory and Gigha.

Fergus noted that this is a critical period for preparations in the run up to lockdown easing, and latent demand will undoubtedly put pressure on the area, especially as some tourism and other local businesses have noted they will not open fully when restrictions are eased. This will add more pressure to informal camping sites despite the best efforts underway to mitigate this. Tourism provides support to lots of other

essential services in communities, and is hugely important to Argyll and Bute - unemployment has doubled in the area due to lack of current jobs in tourism.

Ian asked if the strategy is being broken into action for specific areas, or a general area wide approach. Fergus advised the intention is to create a map with specific guidance for each area identifying waste disposal, potable water etc. Cllr Currie added that he has had discussion on this across all council areas and has information on identified hot spots and the resolutions needed that he will share with Fergus. He also noted the budget allocation to be utilised by the staycation initiatives, providing facilities and marketing to visitors for the summer. John wanted to recognise the fantastic work being done on this by Fergus and his team and suggested the use of interactive apps could be explored to get the information out and that motorhome suppliers could be contacted to get service points updated to on-board satnavs.

Fergus agreed that was useful and confirmed they are exploring the use of social media channels and apps to share information.

Pippa wanted to emphasise the tight timescales to put facilities in place for this season, and that some work will roll into future years. There is the opportunity for community groups and development trusts to align these plans with existing facilities. Pippa encouraged them to engage with Fergus's team on this, and to be aware that although there is a need to ensure that communities have access to a range of services across an area, not all services may be available in all areas in the short term.

(b) Update on A83

Pippa advised that there has been a lot of work on the A83, with bunding and the reopening of some parts of the trunk road, but the key focus is on provision of a permanent solution and maintaining pressure on that. The Council Leader and local MSP have written to the Scottish Government asking for that permanent solution to be delivered within next parliament. The response to this is to be shared with the CPP. Pippa asked partners to add their voice to this to maintain the pressure and get this accelerated as much as possible.

Fergus said that the uncertainty around the A83 is challenging for area businesses as it is a vital trunk road. He noted that Transport Scotland have been attending economic forum meetings and they are to report back on options for short term mitigation to secure the A83 is open as much as possible, and the delivery of a permanent solution. It is expected that the government will announce the preferred option for this in the next few weeks. Local business pressure groups also been formed as this is a top priority for the local private sector.

Willie thanked the Council for the maintained pressure on Scottish Government as there have been a few recent instances where the A83 has been closed, and ferry services stopped, literally cutting Dunoon off. He welcomes any action to move this forward rapidly. He added that the Old Military Road (OMR) is also in very poor condition. Cllr Currie said the A83 is the main road into most of Argyll and Bute, the road to 23 islands, access to the western isles and large parts of highland area - it is a major road. He felt if this was happening in the central belt a solution would have

been found. Ian asked when the last survey of the OMR had been undertaken as it was unfit for purpose and in terrible condition. Shona said the A83 has been discussed at the ACPG chairs and vice chairs meeting and Shona has written to the Scottish Government looking for an updated response on the A83.

Action - Robin and Shona to share response to their letters to Scottish Government via cppadmin. CPP partners are then to write to Scottish Government regarding the permanent solution to the A83.

5. OUTCOME 5 & 6 UPDATES - HEALTHY INDEPENDENT LIVES AND SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES

(a) Community Safety

Sheena spoke about the Community Safety Strategy 2021-2023 which has been developed in partnership with Police Scotland, who have lead responsibility for Outcome 6. The strategy will be overseen by the Community Safety Partnership Tasking and Coordinating Group, an unincorporated partnership of agencies and organisations with membership drawn from the public sector, third sector, community organisations and partnerships that have an interest in the Argyll & Bute Community Planning Partnership Outcome 6: People Live in Safer and Stronger Communities. The strategy was developed by consulting with members and the responses were collated to ensure intelligence analysis informed the decision the theme and trends for 2021- 2023.

Meetings are held at the end of every quarter and the purpose of the group is to provide a forum where members involved in the delivery of Outcome 6 and related community safety activities can meet to exchange information and discuss matters relating to ongoing community safety risks and good practices. Statistics will be collated and analysed to identify any risk and improvements, and if necessary, ad hoc specific meetings will be held to focus on any risk to the community.

Laura advised the group is chaired by Marlene Bailey, Police Scotland and the vice chair is Dave Graham, Coastguard. The 5 main areas of concern identified are:

- Suicide Prevention - that group doesn't report to Community Safety Partnership but is included in the groups monitoring.
- Water Safety - lockdown measures easing and increased staycations make water and road a key priority in the group involving Police, SFRS, Coastguard and RNLI.
- Fraud - added due to significant increase in fraud during Covid. Laura identifies activity and sends a text alert to carers (who have access to over 5000 vulnerable people) to be aware of current scams. A working group including Police Scotland and the Council is also looking to install call blockers to stop scam calls getting to vulnerable people resulting in fraudulent access to finances. Devices have been purchased from the CPP budget and Laura gave her thanks for that.
- Drug deaths - Argyll and Bute is not immune to this and there is partnership working aims to address this including how wider partners can work with police to identify issues.

- Children and young people - child online sexual exploitation continues to grow during lockdown. The group is linking with child protection high risk working group to identify actions around how children can report risk.

Laura advised that through monitoring these measures, and increased membership, the aim is to reduce offending, and they are keen for the CPP to approve the strategy and add value to the existing work.

John noted that the strategy is a first class document, and expressed his major concern regarding the sharing of indecent images of children and young people. The Police have seen a rise in quarter 3 (reporting quarter) from 34 recorded crimes to 78, and a large number of those involved those aged 10 to 15, which should be a major wake up call to us all. John asked the press for support on getting messaging out on that and said communication has gone out recently to parents.

Pippa commended the innovative partnership work being done on the strategy by Sheena and Laura, adding that it was good to see in the delivery plan good outcome measures. Her only additional comment was to add to the terms of objective: is it possible to get feedback from communities on how safe they feel, and feedback from victims of domestic abuse on how it was dealt with and the support available? Can we get sense of the extent of those suffering abuse, and who are coming forward? John agreed fully with Pippa's comment, and highlighted there are a number of surveys ongoing at the moment around how safe do you feel in community and interaction with the Police, but it is right to consider something from the wider partnership, victims and survivors of domestic violence. John noted that although he reports on recorded incidents of a crime that is only a small portion of what is going on. If people do not want to go to Police or social services, how can we support third and voluntary sector if people wish to report to them, and how we can work better with those organisations?

John requested an amendment to page 5 of the document, changing: "Our vulnerable groups are supported and included" to read "Our communities are supported and included". The CPP approved the strategy with the minor amendment included.

(b) Suicide Prevention Steering Group

Alison noted that this matter needs high level commitment and leadership. This was taken on by Joanna and CPP support is sought to identify a new chair to replace her and maintain the momentum on this group, which meets monthly, as a priority.

CoSLA have identified 5 clear actions that are to be taken forward. These are in the group action plan and sub groups have been set up to address each action area. The overarching theme is "safer community" and an existing app is being investigated to see if it can be customised for Argyll and Bute citizens.

Action - Any volunteer to take the lead on this please contact Rona. Alison to send information to Rona to explain the role.

6. COVID 19 IMPACT AND BUILDING BACK BETTER

(a) Building Back Better as CPP cross cutting theme?

Kirsteen outlined the proposal to have the Building Back Better (Communities) (BBB(C)) work stream into the CPP as a cross cutting theme. The BBB(C) was originally set up to address the impact and learning experienced by community groups and those in communities following the initial Covid response, and to use that to strengthen more resilient communities in the future. Six engagement sessions were held with community groups involved in the response and also those members of the community who experienced very challenging circumstances during the initial lockdown period. The outcome from these sessions was priority themes that informed the creation of an action plan. The last meeting of the group discussed next steps and felt that to be successful the work needs real partnership effort, including across the area planning groups, and that it fits well as a cross cutting theme under the CPP.

Rona added that this work does not move out from the council overall recovery strategy, but recognises that what we need to work with is best achieved via Community Planning. Fergus, as Chair of the Argyll Recovery Group asked for clarification on how the relationship between this work and the wider work on recovery themes would look in the future. Rona responded that this was about making better links with ACPGs and having conversations with communities to create improved communication routes as part of the recovery strategy within the CPP. This is based on conversations and feedback received from engagement with community groups.

Kevin asked for clarity on how that will facilitate efficient communications and ideas when the CPP only meets every 3 months, when recovery moving faster than that. Rona provided reassurance that the BBB(C) working group meets fortnightly and that will remain, and they will be reporting to the CPP, the recovery group of the Council and ACPGs. Shona asked for clarification on how that will be taken forward with ACPGs as agendas are already agreed for April/May. Rona noted that the ACPGs action plans are due for revision and in the discussions for revising the plans the recovery from Covid will be included.

Action - Rona and Shona to meet to plan out how to work into ACPG plans.

(b) Joint strategic needs assessment highlighting impact of Covid

Sarah gave a presentation on her analysis looking at the impact of Covid. She noted that the data was produced in December but as new evidence is emerging updates would be needed. Sarah was asked to look at this by the HSCP to revise their strategic joint needs assessment to identify health and social care needs in the population of Argyll and Bute, taking into account the impact of Covid 19 using the Scottish Government framework to look at the "4 Harms" of Covid 19 - direct impacts, other health impacts, societal impacts and economic impacts. Included in the presentation is data showing the rolling 7 day rate of confirmed cases in Argyll and Bute lower than the Scotland averages, and the evidence around long Covid is still emerging (10% expectation of cases).

Sarah noted how the impact on health and social care provision has included reduced visits to GPs, A&E and Out of Hours service, reduction in emergency and planned admissions to hospital, reduction in outpatients, reduction in cancer

diagnosis and reduction in cardiovascular services. Societal impacts have been enormous due to school closures, increased online abuse of youth, increased domestic violence against women and girls, and the impact of shielding and loneliness and increased inequalities for vulnerable groups. However, support for community resilience has increased. Joe thanked Sarah for her very interesting presenting. John also thanked Sarah for her valued presentation and requested that it be sent to members of the CPP.

ACTION - cppadmin to share the presentation slides to CPP MC.

(c) Social Mitigation

Alison advised that the Social Mitigation strategy is going to the NHS Highland Board at the end March and this will be shared in due course. In normal times this would focus on the delivery of health and wellbeing and prevention of problems before they arise. The social determinants of health, occupation and housing are all tied up with health outcomes so the key outcomes in the strategy include income maximisation, education, child poverty, improving mental health, person centred work and building capacity in communities. She added that it is important to empower communities to support this and the strategy has overlaps with the Building Back Better objectives discussed earlier.

Willie asked about the provision of proof that you have received a vaccine. Alison advised that decisions on that sat at a very high level in UK and Scottish Governments and that it was not a matter within the remit of the CPP.

7. PROMOTION AND CONSIDERATION OF GAELIC (CRISTIE MOORE)

Cristie submitted a paper to the committee on her remit to promote and support the growth of Gaelic in Argyll and Bute and to deliver the Gaelic Gathering, which has a first planning meeting on 11 March. If you would like to get touch with Cristie, sign up to the Gaelic newsletter or share what you are doing around Gaelic, you can contact her at cristie.moore@argyll-bute.gov.uk. Cllr Currie said he would like to have sight of what all the partners in CPP are doing to promote Gaelic and to identify any areas of overlap and where assistance can be provided from a combined resource. Joe noted that development of Gaelic is supported by SFRS and Martin would be keen to share the UHI Gaelic Plan to see how it fits with Cristies work. Rona advised that Cristie will be in post for 18 months and that the remit includes support to community planning partners.

Action - Partners are asked to share information on their Gaelic plans to cppadmin and any items for the Gaelic newsletter to Cristie.

8. AOCB

CPP Bulletin - Nicola thanked partners for the good news stories already submitted for inclusion in the CPP Bulletin and encouraged further submissions of content from partners. Nicola noted that she will email the committee members to ask for feedback and suggestions on how we can continue to improve the bulletin.

Action - Nicola to email members for feedback on CPP Bulletin.

Rural Growth Deal - Derek McCrindle noted the good news in the recent UK Budget announcement to accelerate the rural growth deal payments and asked how future discussion could support this. Pippa responded to advise that a lot of the deals were originally over 15 years, and it was good news that these are now to be delivered over 10 years. She added that there is nothing that partners can do at the moment as the focus is to develop the business cases which will take a year to 18 months to complete.

9. DONM and CLOSE

Joe added thank all committee members for their input and support papers and advised the next meeting will be held on 30 June 2021 at 10.00 via MS teams.

CPP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ACTION GRID – from 10th March 2021

Complete	In Progress	Outstanding	<i>Please highlight actions as per traffic light system to show progress</i>
----------	-------------	-------------	--

Date Set	Action	Who	Required by Date
23/9/20	Add Outcome 3 update to future CPP MC for discussion.	CPP Team	June 2021
2/12/20	Rona to look into where discussion already exists to ensure that all CWB pillars are addressed at the same time and who is to be involved in the discussions.	CPP Team	March 2021
2/12/20	Rona and Stuart to discuss ACPG meeting format to ensure youth can still engage with that.	Rona / Stuart McLean	February 2021
2/12/20	CPP team to liaise with MYSPs to raise matters to the Management Committee.	CPP Team	March 2021
2/12/20	Partners to forward ideas or good practice of how they are engaging with youth to Rona.	All	February 2021
2/12/20	All Partners to raise the issue of the A83 to the highest levels in their organisations.	All	January 2021
2/12/20	Partners to forward details of all groups sitting under the outcomes to Rona.	All	19 March 2021
10/3/21	Comments on inclusions to Community Wealth Building workshop attendees to be forwarded to Samantha.	All	30 June 21
10/3/21	Fergus to provide CWB paper to cppadmin to distribute to committee.	Fergus	March 21
10/3/21	Samantha to send link to partners to climate webpages once live. Partners to forward examples of good climate change proactive work to Samantha to include on website.	Samantha / All	April 21
10/3/21	Samantha to contact Western Isles to access their adaptation plans to inform the CPP MC.	Samantha	30 June 21
10/3/21	ACPG Chairs to look at how to avoid meeting diary clashes with key partners and present suggestions on how to address repetitive messaging for partners attending all four.	Governance	30 June 21
10/3/21	Rona to set up meeting for Joe, OLI vice chair and MSYPs on how to involve youth in community planning.	Rona	30 June 21
10/3/21	Robin and Shona to share response to their letters to Scottish Government via cppadmin. CPP partners are then to write to Scottish Government regarding the permanent solution to the A83.	Robin / Shona / cppadmin	30 June 21

10/3/21	Any volunteer to take the lead Suicide Prevention Group are to contact Rona. Alison to send information to Rona to explain the role.	Rona / All	30 June 21
10/3/21	Rona and Shona to meet to plan out how to work Building Back Better recovery into ACPG plans.	Rona / Shona	30 June 21
10/3/21	cppadmin to share the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment presentation slides to CPP MC.	cppadmin	30 June 21
10/3/21	Partners are asked to share information on their Gaelic plans to cppadmin and any items for the Gaelic newsletter to Cristie.	All	30 June 21
10/3/21	Nicola to email members for feedback on CPP Bulletin. Partner responses requested by 9 April 2021.	All	9 April 2021

This page is intentionally left blank

CPP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ACTION GRID – from 10th March 2021

Complete	In Progress	Outstanding	<i>Please highlight actions as per traffic light system to show progress</i>
----------	-------------	-------------	--

Date Set	Action	Who	Required by Date
23/9/20	Add Outcome 3 update to future CPP MC for discussion.	CPP Team	June 2021
2/12/20	Rona and Stuart to discuss ACPG meeting format to ensure youth can still engage with that.	Rona / Stuart McLean	February 2021
2/12/20	CPP team to liaise with MYSPs to raise matters to the Management Committee.	CPP Team	March 2021
2/12/20	Partners to forward ideas or good practice of how they are engaging with youth to Rona.	All	February 2021
10/3/21	Samantha to send link to partners to climate webpages once live. Partners to forward examples of good climate change proactive work to Samantha to include on website.	Samantha / All	April 21
10/3/21	Samantha to contact Western Isles to access their adaptation plans to inform the CPP MC.	Samantha	30 June 21
10/3/21	ACPG Chairs to look at how to avoid meeting diary clashes with key partners and present suggestions on how to address repetitive messaging for partners attending all four.	Governance	30 June 21
10/3/21	Rona to set up meeting for Joe, OLI vice chair and MSYPs on how to involve youth in community planning.	Rona	30 June 21
10/3/21	Robin and Shona to share response to their letters to Scottish Government via cppadmin. CPP partners are then to write to Scottish Government regarding the permanent solution to the A83.	Robin / Shona / cppadmin	30 June 21
10/3/21	Any volunteer to take the lead Suicide Prevention Group are to contact Rona. Alison to send information to Rona to explain the role	Rona / All	30 June 21
10/3/21	Rona and Shona to meet to plan out how to work Building Back Better recovery into ACPG plans.	Rona / Shona	30 June 21
10/3/21	Partners are asked to share information on their Gaelic plans to cppadmin and any items for the Gaelic newsletter to Cristie Moore (Gaelic Development Officer).	All	30 June 21
10/3/21	Partner feedback on CPP Bulletin requested by 9 April 2021.	All	9 April 2021

This page is intentionally left blank



#KeepThePromise



Corporate Parenting

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced concept of “Corporate Parents”
- Applies to all statutory bodies in Scotland
- Introduces legal **duties** towards care experienced children
- Duties extend to care leavers -up to 26yrs
- To want and provide for care experienced children all we would hope for and want for our own children.

Duties of **every** Corporate Parent

include

- Be alert to needs and issues affecting care experienced children
- Work together collaboratively
- Promote the interests of care experienced children
- Provide opportunities
- To take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people

**“We grow up loved, safe,
and respected so that we
realise our full potential.”**

Scotland's Ambition for children and young people





#KeepThePromise



Independent
Care Review

5,500+
voices heard

c.300
families

943 sources of research \Rightarrow **56** outputs

150+
volunteers

all 32 local
authorities

2,640+
infants, children,
young people and
adults with lived
experience

2,321+
parents, carers and the unpaid
/ paid workforce

charities and
providers

regulation

data

organisations
500+

education

20
reviews /
commissions /
inquiries

justice

Corporate
parents /
national
bodies

schools and universities

inspection

poverty

curious collaborative of
FUNDERS

think tanks

health



Super-speedy recap and update

Seven reports:

1. the promise
2. the pinky promise
3. the plan
4. the money
5. follow the money
6. the rules
7. thank you





Messages

- Scotland's care system is broken
- Children are failed and outcomes poor
- Too many children in Scotland come in to care
- Scotland's support for families is failing too many
- Care is institutional and institutionalizing - lacking love
- Valued relationships are ruptured
- Scotland disproportionately criminalises care experienced children

More than a Children's Services Issue

- Scotland must meet the needs of its adults to ensure its children grow up loved , safe and respected to achieve their full potential
- Flexible whole family approach where problematic substance and poor mental health
- More support – accessible in and from communities
- Tackle Poverty and lessen impact on children

Improve education outcomes

- End formal or informal exclusion of care experienced children
- Stop exacerbating the trauma of children by imposing consequences for challenging behaviour that are restrictive, humiliating and stigmatising.
- Be ambitious for care experienced children and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising that they may experience difficulties associated with their life story.
- Provide space and opportunity members of school staff to develop kind, supportive relationships with care experienced children.

Culture change

- Scotland must stop stigmatising the children it cares for
- Scotland must understand that 'language creates realities'.
- The way in which support is delivered must not stigmatise the family.
- Carers and workers must act, speak and behave like a family so that Scotland can be the best parent it can be
- Stop using institutional language

The Change

- Scotland's Care system need a fundamental overhaul
- 10 year transformational change programme
- No sector untouched
- Change at pace
- Children and families at the heart
- Voice of lived experience as a partner
- Rights based – embedding UNCRC

'follow the money' showed the human and financial costs of the 'system' failures



The Five Foundations of 'the promise'



Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties that get in the way.



Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focused on children and those they trust.



Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.



The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.



Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.





By 2030, it must be kept.

For Scotland to #KeepThePromise it will mean that love is no longer the casualty of the 'care system,' but the value around which it operates. There will be deliberate, persistent attention to upholding safe, loving relationships that are important to children and young people.

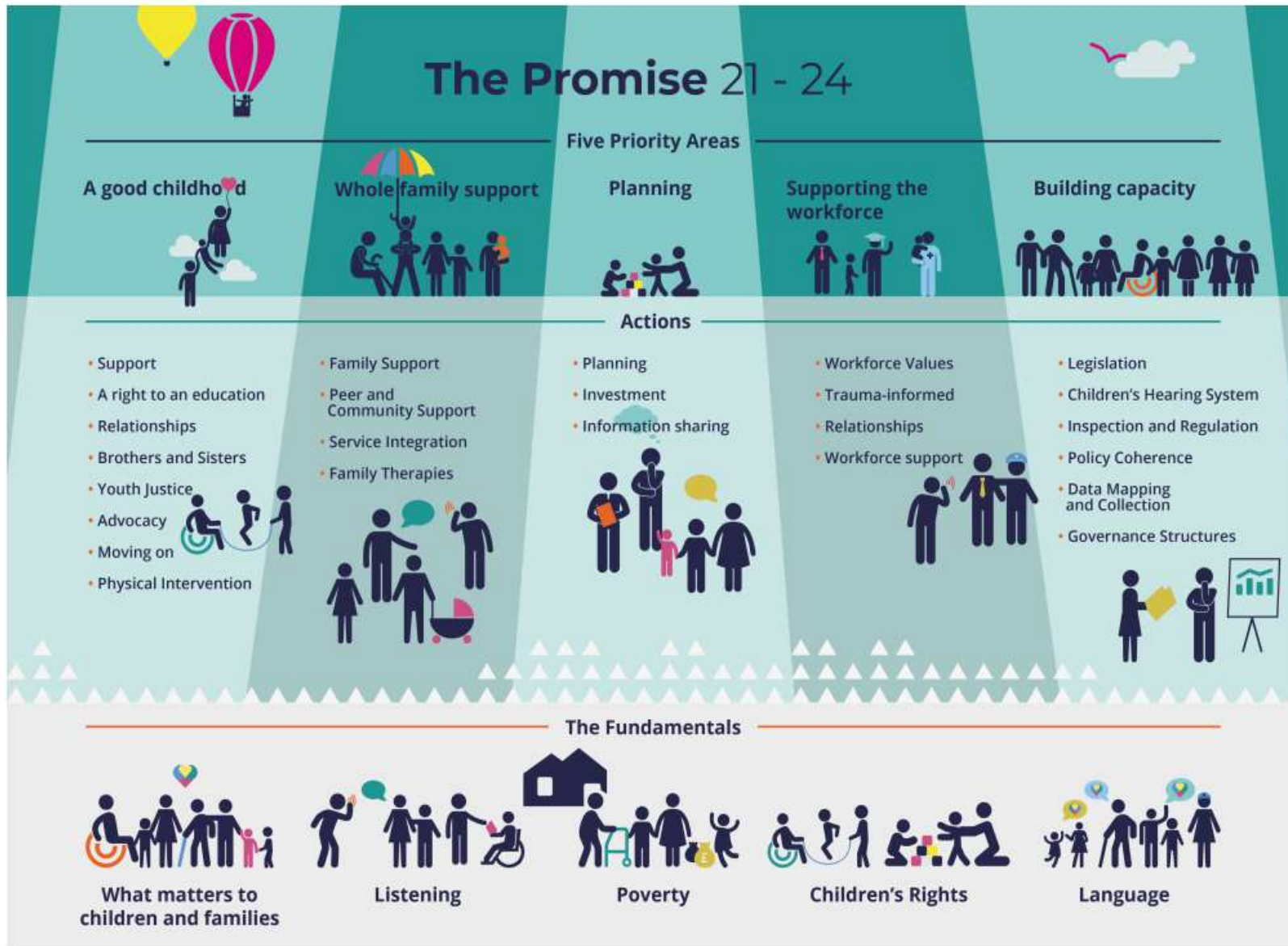
Wherever safe to do so, Scotland will make sure children stay with their families and families will be actively supported to stay together. The wider structural and social inequalities that impact families' abilities to stay together and to thrive will be tackled so that no child or family in Scotland is left behind.

Children, young people and their families will be listened to, respected, involved and heard in every decision that affects them. Where children and families need additional or intensive support, it will be given in timescales which meet the needs of the child. The workforce will be supported to provide the support children and their families need to flourish. Care will be re-orientated and (the 'system') decluttered to create a sustainable approach, that upholds and cherishes relationships.

#KeepThePromise Timeline



Plan 21-24: In Summary



Plan 21 - 24

The Fundamentals



What matters to children and families

At all stages in the process of change, what matters to children and families must be the focus. Organisations will be able to demonstrate that they are operating from their perspective rather than the perspective internal to the 'system'.



Listening

Organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children and families, and those on the edge of care will be able to demonstrate that they are embedding what they have heard from children and families into the work that they are doing to #KeepThePromise.



Poverty

Scotland will have made consistent improvement in reducing poverty, in line with the definitions and targets in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Organisations will be able to demonstrate how they are ensuring that they play their part in mitigating the impacts of poverty.



Children's Rights

Organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children will be able to demonstrate that their rights under the UNCRC are being consistently upheld.



Language

Organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children and young people will be able to demonstrate that they are embedding destigmatising language and practices across the way they work.



The role of The Promise

Oversee and scrutinise



Connect and collaborate



The Promise
Scotland

Coordinate and support



Challenge



Communicate



This page is intentionally left blank

Management Committee**Date: 30 June 2021**

Children's Rights

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the CPP Management Committee with information on work that has taken place in the area of children's rights.

2.0 Recommendations

The CPP Management Committee are asked to:

- Note the work being carried out in the area of Children's Rights in Argyll and Bute.

3.0 Background

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 said that:

As soon as practicable after the end of each 3 year period, an authority to which this section applies must publish (in such manner as the authority considers appropriate) a report of what steps it has taken in that period to secure better or further effect within its areas of responsibility of the UNCRC requirements.

This local authority duty sits alongside the Ministerial duty to promote public awareness and understanding of the rights of children under Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The guidelines for producing a local report stated that those involved in producing a local report could include a Local Authority, Health Board and an Integrated Joint Board. In Argyll and Bute a SLWG was formed which included representatives from the HSCP, Education and Youth Services. A report was produced and approved by the IJB and Council, in November 2020. This report will cover the period from 2020 to 2023.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/health-and-social-care-partnership>

Guidance issued for the report stated that:

Public authorities should create opportunities for stakeholders, including children and young people, to scrutinise the findings of Children's Rights Reports and provide mechanisms for feedback.

In order to accomplish this education partners produced a Children and Young people's Argyll and Bute UNCRC Report. This has been used in Schools to help children and young people to understand their rights and what has been going on locally and nationally to ensure that their rights are understood and respected. The report contains a link to the main Argyll and Bute Children's Rights Report.

<https://sites.google.com/ab.glow.scot/ab-uncrcreporting-cyp/home>

On 16th of March 2021 the Scottish Government passed the UNCRC Incorporation Scotland bill.

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-incorporation-scotland-bill>

In April The UK Government has decided to refer the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill to the UK Supreme Court. The UK Government is concerned that parts of the Bill may go beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament. This is a constitutional matter and work on embedding the UNCRC will continue locally. The Scottish Government will produce a set of guidance that will assist public authorities to understand the purpose of the Bill, consider their status as a public authority, assess their functions, and undertake a process to review current compatibility and readiness. These guidance notes are currently awaited.

4.0 Detail

Following the publication of the Argyll and Bute Children's Rights Report and the Scottish Government passing the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill; a multi-agency Short Life Working Group was set up and Brian Reid (Interim Head of Children and Families and Justice Services) became the Lead for Children's Rights in Argyll and Bute. The group has met once with a further meeting planned for mid-June. The aim of the group is to look at how children's rights and the UNCRC can best be respected and embedded into the policies and practices of the Council and its partners. A key point made at the initial meeting is that children's rights are an issue that concerns all departments of the Council and not just Children's Services or the HSCP. This can best be understood when we look at what the bill actually does:

- directly incorporates the UNCRC as far as possible within the powers of the Scottish Parliament
- makes it unlawful for public authorities and anyone undertaking functions or providing services to children with public money to act incompatibly with the incorporated UNCRC requirements
- gives power to the Children's Commissioner to take legal action in relation to children's rights
- requires Ministers to produce a Children's Rights Scheme setting out how they comply with children's rights and to report annually
- requires listed public authorities to report every three years on how they comply with children's rights
- gives children, young people and their representatives the right to go to court to enforce their rights, if necessary

The Argyll and Bute’s Short Life Working Group will consider how best to meet these requirements and what development and training requirements might be necessary. In the initial meeting there was support from its members regarding the idea of a Children’s Rights Officer post being created and this will be explored further.

5.0 Conclusions

The children’s Rights journey in Scotland is a long one, the Bill follows a decade of developments that have been furthering children’s rights across legislation, policy and practice in Scotland – including [GIRFEC](#), the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), [Scottish Government’s 2018-21 Action Plan](#), and most recently the [Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#). It follows a Scottish Government consultation in May 2019 to seek views on the best way to incorporate the UNCRC.

In Argyll and Bute a Children’s Rights Report, and child / young people’s version, have been produced and a working group set up, under the leadership of Brian Reid, to move the agenda forward. Already a number of key plans and policies, such as the Children and Young People’s Service Plan 2020-2023, the Argyll and Bute Education Annual Plan 2020-2021 and the Child Poverty Action Plan are closely linked with Children’s Rights Report. In addition work is being undertaken to incorporate Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact (CRWIA) Assessments into our existing Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIA).

Progress will be enhanced by the awaited Scottish Government Guidance on implementing the UNCRC and it is anticipated that positive progress will be reported throughout the coming year.

6.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	There are strategic implications from this area of work as Argyll and Bute will be expected to deliver on the requirements set out in the Bill, noted in this report.
Consultations, Previous considerations	Children and Young People within our schools have been engaged and consulted with through their engagement with the children and young people’s version of the Children’s Rights Report. Further engagement plans will be considered by the working group.
Resources	There are resource implications that have yet to be determined. These will relate to training and other service development needs identified. The issue of whether Argyll and Bute should have a Children’s Rights Officer also needs to be considered.
Prevention	No issues identified
Equalities	Equalities are at the heart of this area and it will be important to consider the needs and rights of children with Protected Characteristics.

For more information, contact

Mandy Sheridan

01631572952

Mandy.Sheridan@argyll-bute.gov.uk

References

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf>

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; in child friendly language

<https://www.unicef.org/sop/convention-rights-child-child-friendly-version>

Management Committee**Date: 30 June 2021****Agenda Item:**

Area Community Planning Groups – April/May 2021 Meetings**1. Purpose**

This paper presents key matters arising during the Area Community Planning Group meetings that were held virtually in April/May 2021.

2. Recommendations

The Management Committee is asked to:

- a) note the Highlights detailed at 4.0;
- b) note the change to administrative arrangements for the Helensburgh and Lomond ACPG; and
- c) consider the request from the Area Community Planning Groups in relation to contributing to the work of the Climate Change Working Group.

3. Background

There are four Area Community Planning Groups, one in each of the Council's administrative areas (Bute and Cowal; Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands; Helensburgh and Lomond; and Oban, Lorn and the Isles).

In accordance with decisions made by the Management Committee in June 2017 the groups are supported by staff from the community planning and community development team in all areas, with administrative and governance support for meetings provided by the Committee Services team with some elements of the Helensburgh and Lomond ACPG meeting being undertaken by Police Scotland/SFRS.

These meetings were the second round to be held on a virtual basis. Prior to the meetings discussion took place with the 4 Area Chairs/Vice Chairs and a standard agenda template was agreed. There was good attendance at all 4 meetings by a variety of partners.

4.0 Highlights

All groups considered:

- CPP Management Committee Update
- Covid-19 information on case numbers and vaccinations
- UK Withdrawal from the EU
- Campervan, Motorhome and Staycation Activity
- Area Community Planning Action Plan Update
- Basecamp Trial Update
- Police Scotland Community Engagement Team

Cristie Moore, the Council's Gaelic Development Worker attended the Oban Lorn and the Isles and Bute and Cowal meetings having previously attended the MAKI and Helensburgh and Lomond meetings in February.

Highlights from specific meetings were as follows:

Bute & Cowal

The Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group heard from Police Scotland that some summer events have been cancelled in the area including Butefest, Bute Highland Games and Cowal Games with the position of Argyll Rally still to be decided. Inspector Boyle also reported that that funding had been granted from the Scottish Government to put in place partnership working and support in anticipation of an influx of tourists into area over the summer months.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service reported that Test and Protect facilities delivered within the Dunoon and Rothesay stations had been in operation since February and March respectively and would be in place for the foreseeable future.

Bute Island Alliance (BIA) provided a verbal update concerning the position of Ardenraig Gardens. The Group noted that a meeting with BIA and the council's asset management team had been arranged for the end of May following receipt of BIA's expression of interest in facilitating the formation of a community trust.

Charles Dixon-Spain, on behalf to the Colintrave and Glendaruel Development Trust, advised that due to poor connectivity in the area a Community broadband project had begun. Whilst they had been unable to attract suppliers large enough to

execute the project they are exploring solutions via connectivity testing and promoting the use of hotspots on mobile phones.

John Hair introduced Forestry and Land Scotland's current priorities in the area, including the management of *Phytophthora ramorum* and their land management plans for individual forest areas. Discussion focussed around keeping community groups up-to-date on road closures with Mr Hair also responding to a number of questions submitted by the representative from Sandbank Community Council.

Helensburgh & Lomond

The meeting was well attended by a number of partners who provided updates. A number of partners are involved in initiatives around the National Park area including the provision of extra litter bins and additional toilet facilities which have been well received so far. Kenny Auld from Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park advised that they were awaiting the outcome of a bid to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund for funding to assist with strategic work in researching where there are gaps in terms of toilets, litter bins, waste disposal facilities and general visitor needs. He also noted the Park were working with partners to provide regular communication updates.

As the Covid restrictions are relaxed groups and organisations are able to get back to opening up services with it being noted that the Garelochhead Station Trust had recently relaunched with a successful pop up café and the group Fun First had resumed their sessions with limited group numbers. Angela Anderson, Plastic Free Helensburgh and Time for Change Argyll and Bute advised that there were a number of litter picks being organised.

Alan Comrie from SPT was in attendance and provided an update on the ongoing cycle route works and updated on the measures in place on public transport due to the current restrictions. He also noted that there were a number of additional services in place which were enabling transport to vaccination appointments and that the West Highland Line would see additional capacity for bikes being introduced. Discussion took place around the options for additional bus routes with it being noted that SPT were constrained in what services they could provide if there was already a commercial service in operation on a route but that requests would be dealt with on a case by case basis if submitted to SPT's operational team for consideration.

Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland provided information to the Group around various works which had been completed in the area. He also gave an update on the Visitor Management Strategy for the area which was being worked on with the National Park, Police Scotland and the Council to monitor and manage traffic as lockdown restrictions are eased.

The Group heard a presentation from Eddie Cusick of Helensburgh Community Hub who provided information on the background to the organisation and the work that was ongoing to prepare the building for re-opening in early July. It was hoped that partnership working would ensure that the space would be at the heart of the community and would provide volunteering opportunities as well as services which were needed in the area.

Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands

A number of partners were in attendance and provided updates to the Group – this included representatives of 6 Community Councils.

The Group heard an excellent presentation from Elaine Whyte from the Clyde Fisherman's Association which provided detail on the fishing industry in Argyll and Bute and covered what impact Brexit and Covid-19 was having.

A presentation was also provided by Eric Spence, South Kintyre Development Trust who provided detail on the Covid-19 response provided by the Kintyre Community Resilience and Recovery Group. The co-ordination of the response in the area was commended by the Group with a number of partners commenting on the positive experience and assistance that they had received.

Linda Syed from Furnace Community Council advised of ongoing concerns in relation to Furnace Surgery, with it being noted that the building has been closed due to restrictions. Further detail on the concerns of the community was provided following the meeting and has been passed to the HSCP for response.

The Group discussed the report on campervan and staycation activity and a number of points were raised which were forwarded to the Head of Development and Economic Growth for response.

The results of the partner attendance survey were discussed and taking account the responses it was agreed that one meeting per year would be held in the afternoon on a trial basis starting with the November 2021 meeting. It was also noted that the majority of respondents welcomed the opportunity to participate virtually and that once restrictions are eased that hybrid meetings may become the norm.

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

The Group considered an update from the Department for Works and Pensions which detailed their response to Covid-19 as well as various initiatives they were involved with. It was confirmed that the easing of restrictions had resulted in Oban Job Centre's case size decreasing by 25% as hospitality re-opens, creating job opportunities.

The Group considered a verbal update from Eleanor MacKinnon, Oban Communities Trust, in relation to The Rockfield Centre. The Group noted that the opening of the building was delayed due to Covid-19 but that the Centre continued to operate as a community anchor organisation by moving most of their activities online. However, with more staff coming on board they aim to develop more face-to-face activities such as working with Atlantis Leisure Centre to facilitate a summer camp programme.

Joan Best advised the Group that Crossroads - North Argyll Carers had been very busy with referrals for respite for unpaid carers and are currently providing 150 hours a week. North Argyll Carers had placed an advert for staff on the islands but had not received any applications, Ms Best asked that anyone with an interest in securing a position to get in touch.

Catriona Petit, on behalf of Hope Kitchen, advised the Group that the Greenshoots Garden had remained open throughout the pandemic by working with partners and had started a new initiative working with primary care mental health teams and social prescribers to deliver woodland based activities and run the Looking on the Bright Side Allotments initiative. Hope Kitchen also worked in partnership with the Rockfield Centre, through the Community Fund, to deliver their response to people's emotional and mental health issues due to the impact of Covid-19.

Police Inspector Mark Stephen advised the Group that a successful bid to Argyll and Bute Council for funding enabled them to employ an officer to work with new wardens around Staycation activities and police bicycles will soon to be available to officers to enable them to access places where cars cannot.

The Group considered an update by Marie Harrower, Oban Access Panel, on the work of the Panel in promoting social inclusion and securing a more accessible environment in Oban and the surrounding area. The Group noted that the Panel aim to make improvements for locals and visitors by linking into national campaigns and working with the local authority to identify potential problems accessing buildings. The Group heard how the Panel were keen to engage with young people to help them continue in the development of an access plan for the area. They are also working on an initiative to try to ensure products in shops can be identifiable for all by labelling products in braille.

4.1 Administrative Arrangements for Helensburgh and Lomond Area Community Planning Group

Following the decision taken by the Management Committee in June 2017 the Helensburgh and Lomond ACPG has been supported in terms of administrative arrangements by Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and by members of the Community Planning/Development Team. These arrangements allowed all of the

Groups to continue with a quarterly meeting schedule and that support was very much appreciated at a time when Council resources were stretched. A review of this support has recently been undertaken and as from June 2021 the administrative and governance arrangements will be provided by staff from the Council’s Legal and Regulatory Support Service. This change will provide a consistent approach to these arrangements across all 4 Area Community Planning Groups.

4.2 Climate Change Working Group and Area Community Planning Groups

At a recent meeting of the Climate Change Working Group a suggestion was made that information could be shared with Community Councils by one of the members who is also Chair of the Bute and Cowal ACPG. This was then discussed at the recent meeting of the ACPG Chairs and Vice Chairs to agree the draft agendas for the August round of meetings. At this meeting the Chairs and Vice Chairs felt that a discussion at the ACPGs could provide examples of initiatives taking place in local communities as well as highlight areas which could contribute to the climate change agenda. They asked if there could be a short paper provided to the meetings on the work of the Climate Change Working Group which could be used to facilitate discussion – and if possible an officer to attend to speak to this item.

4.3 Further Actions

It is requested that the Management Committee note the report and the successful meetings held in April/May 2021.

The Management Committee is also asked to note the change to the administration arrangements for the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Community Planning Group.

The Management Committee is asked to consider the request in relation to the Climate Change Working Group.

5.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	Meetings of the Area Community Planning Group held in February covered various Outcomes.
Consultations	No prior circulation of this report.
Resources	No direct resource implications however consideration of the issues raised and following courses of action may have a knock on effect on finance and/or staff resource
Prevention	Contributes to the prevention agenda
Equalities	Contributes toward reducing inequalities

--	--

For More Information:

Shona Barton, Committee Manager, shona.barton@argyll-bute.gov.uk

References: n/a

Appendices: n/a

This page is intentionally left blank

Training

Supporting Families with Financial Impact of Covid

30 June 2021



INTRODUCTION

- Procure a training programme
- General poverty awareness
- Specialist training courses
- Similar courses have been delivered by;
 - CPAG,
 - The Poverty Alliance and
 - One Parent Families Scotland
- Cover our aims, objectives and learning outcomes
- Proposed activities
- Next Steps



SETTING THE SCENE

- In 2017 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act introduced by SG
- Projected levels of poverty in Scotland would increase due to Welfare Reforms such as benefit freezes and 2 child limit on tax credits.
- Anticipated impact if nothing was done is that by 2030
 - 38% of children would be in relative poverty
 - 32% of children in absolute poverty
 - 17% of children would be combined low income and material deprivation
 - 16% of children would be in persistent poverty
- Responsibility on the Council and the HSCP to work to reduce child poverty by 2030/31

IMPACT OF COVID ON FAMILIES

- IPPR report Weathering the Winter Storm published October 2020
- In A&B – SWF for Crisis and Community Care Grants stats comparing 2019/2020 volumes to 2020/2021 show;
 - Increasing number of applications up by 12.9% to 2,613 in 2020/2021
 - Increasing number of awards, 17% to 1,593
 - Increase in number of claims with children in the household of 22.3%
 - Disproportionate increase in number of households with children claiming SWF grants

TRAINING - RAISING AWARENESS

- Overarching training programme
 - General poverty awareness programme
 - Specialist training course for specific sectors of workforce
- Aimed at all Council staff primarily in Education, Social Work, Housing, Customer Services, Revs and Bens
- NHS Highland, HSCP, third sector, other Community Planning Partners including RSLs, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Argyll College , DWP



AIM

Develop and deliver high quality, engaging and accessible programme of training which would improve local workers' understanding of poverty and their interactions with people experiencing poverty, including particular vulnerable groups

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage a wide range of workers in Argyll and Bute to see that they have a role to play in supporting people experiencing poverty
- Make the voices of people with experience of poverty an integral part of the training
- Address myths, negative stereotypes and views towards people living in poverty and enable all participants to engage with people positively and act with respect and empathy



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Increase understanding of the nature of poverty in Argyll and Bute, its causes and consequences, and how these link with inequalities.
- Increase awareness of discrimination and stigma associated with poverty and how workers can positively address this.
- Increase knowledge about the different impacts of poverty and ways in which it affects people such as food poverty, fuel poverty, homelessness, the impacts of welfare reform and in-work poverty.
- Improve skills in engaging and working with people experiencing poverty, including the practical ways of working that are most likely to help
- Increase the knowledge of local sources of support and advice including the Argyll and Bute Advice Network
- Provide an opportunity to share good practice and learn from examples of things that have worked well.



ACTIVITIES

- Depending on staff numbers;
 - Up to 12 poverty awareness training sessions to be delivered by teleconference
 - 2 specialist Single Parent poverty awareness training sessions
 - Up to 6 specialist Benefit awareness training sessions
 - An e-learning module that can be shared with all CPPs

GENERIC SESSIONS

- Half Day sessions focussing on;
 - Raising general awareness of poverty in Scotland and how it relates to Argyll and Bute.
 - Increasing their knowledge of key drivers of poverty, low pay, welfare reform
 - Increasing their knowledge of experiences of living on a low income
 - Increasing their knowledge of the impact that stigma and negative language/attitudes can have on people living in poverty
- Sessions to be participative and interactive, working in small groups through a series of exercises and presentations

SPECIALIST SESSIONS

SINGLE PARENTS

- Half day sessions with focus on
 - Increasing awareness of the misconceptions around single parents and the unique issues they encounter that lead to poverty
 - Enabling an understanding of the impact of poverty and the barriers to the alleviation of poverty
 - Enabling an understanding of the barriers to work faced by single parents and how working practices can be single parent proofed.
 - Promoting and celebrating the voice of single parents and providing ongoing resources to support practitioners working with single parents in Argyll and Bute.
- Explore real single parent case studies as a method to identify with and focus on why a single parent may move into poverty.
- Enable interaction and discussion throughout with participants working in groups in the exercises to embed an understanding of single parent poverty, challenge stigma and explore barriers faced by single parents such as a alack of childcare and welfare reform.

SPECIALIST SESSIONS

BENEFITS AWARENESS

- For staff from different sectors across Argyll and Bute, sessions to cover;
 - Supporting low-income families manage benefit change
 - Support vulnerable clients manage the benefit system
 - Supporting young learners claim entitlements to benefits and student funding
 - Care-leavers and the benefit system
 - Child Poverty and welfare reform
 - Scottish Welfare Fund issues for decision makers

DEVELOP E-LEARNING COURSE

- Short interactive course covering;
 - What causes poverty, how people experience poverty and what the consequences are
 - What staff are likely to encounter people impacted by welfare reform and struggling to make ends meets
 - Practical tools to help staff support hard-up households and sources of other learning and information.

NEXT STEPS

- Identify the number of staff across all CPP organisations that could benefit from this training – Friday 15 July 2021
- Issue a mini – tender specification seeking a delivery partner to deliver this training – 31 July 2021
- Evaluate response and award contract 30 August 2021
- Planning time with delivery partner and CPP organisations to schedule sessions in a way that maximises attendance to include twilight sessions for Education staff and/or others
- Training delivery to commence from 1 October 2021.

CONTACT DETAILS

Fergus Walker

Revenue and Benefits Manager

Argyll and Bute Council

01586 555237

Fergus.Walker@Argyll-bute.gov.uk



This page is intentionally left blank

Management Committee**Date: 30 June 2021**

Child Poverty

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the CPP Management Committee with information relating to child poverty work, the Argyll and Bute Child Poverty Action Group and the Child Poverty Action Plan Review 2020 – 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

The CPP Management Committee are asked to:

- Note the work taking place to address child poverty locally
- Approve the Child Poverty Action Plan Review 2020 - 2021

3.0 Background

1. In 2017 the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act came into force as an attempt to put in place measures that would reduce the concerning increase in child poverty, both on a national and local level. The Act introduced a new requirement for local authorities and each relevant Health Board to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report and to review it on an annual basis through to 2030.

The Scottish Government publishes a national child poverty report, “Every Child Every Chance” which sets out the national measures taken to address the issue and this too is reviewed annually.

Of particular relevance to the duties under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act are Parts 1 and 3 of the **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**. Part 1 requires public authorities to publish, as soon as practicable after the end of each 3 year period, a report of what steps it has taken in that period to secure better or further effect within its areas of responsibility of the UNCRC requirements. Of particular relevance to the issue of child poverty are the following articles:

- Article 3 (best interests of the child)
- Article 6 (life, survival and development)
- Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)
- Article 26 (social security)
- Article 27 (adequate standard of living)

Hence the Child Poverty Action Plan and the Children's Rights Report are closely linked and should in turn be linked to key Council and Health Board strategies and plans, for example the Children and Young People's Service Plan 2020 – 2023. It should be noted that child poverty and children's rights are issues not limited to Children's Services or the HSCP but are a wider responsibility that Council departments and partners need to be cited on.

The Plans also link to the **Fairer Scotland Duty**. This is an overarching strategic duty on public bodies (including local authorities). It has interactions with the Equality Act 2010 and 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."

In ensuring that this obligation is met, Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (EQSEIA's) must be carried out when new plans and strategies are being developed. Children's rights obligations call for a similar process to be carried out and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA's) to be completed. Work is currently taking place in Argyll and Bute to integrate these two assessment documents into one process.

2. The 2017 Act set four targets relating to ending child poverty, which the Scottish Government committed to trying to achieve by 2030. The targets for children living in households in Scotland are that:

- less than 10% of children live in relative poverty (relative poverty is less than 60% of average household income for the year taking account of the size and composition of the household);
- less than 5% of children live in absolute poverty (absolute poverty is less than 60% of average household income for the financial year beginning 1 April 2010);
- less than 5% of children live in combined low income and material deprivation (low income is defined as less than 70% of average household income for the year, material deprivation is when families are unable to afford three or more items out of a list of basic necessities);
- less than 5% of children live in persistent poverty (persistent poverty is where a child has lived in relative poverty for three out of the last four years).

These are all measured after housing costs are deducted. The Act also sets out interim targets which are to be met in the financial year beginning 1 April 2023 and these targets now represent a challenge given the impact of Covid19.

- Less than 18% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 14% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 8% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- Less than 8% of children are in persistent poverty

3. Child Poverty Figures for Argyll and Bute:

Data from research by the charity “End Child Poverty” in October 2020, which includes the child poverty data published by the Department for Work and Pensions in March 2020 and housing cost data from the Valuation Office Agency and income data from the Understanding Society survey found the following.

Children Living in Poverty below 60% median income before housing costs (BHC) and after housing costs (AHC) in Argyll and Bute.

2014/2015 AHC – 20.7%

2018/2019 BHC - 17.3%

2018/2019 AHC – 23.4% - (3056 children)

New Scottish Government figures for Argyll and Bute released on 19/05/2021:

2019/2020 AHC - 23.3% (3000 children)

Figures to be released next year will reflect the impact of the pandemic economic impacts of EU exit and are likely to be higher.

4.0 Detail

In 2019 the Argyll and Bute Child Poverty Action Group was formed to oversee the implementation of the local Child Poverty plan, review it annually and find ways to best use existing resources and develop new initiatives. Members of the group included Councillor Currie, Senior Managers from the HSCP, Employability, The Food Group, Education, Benefits, Advice Services, Housing and the Third Sector; the Lead on child poverty work was taken by Joanna MacDonald, Chief Officer for the HSCP.

The Covid19 pandemic and the first lockdown prevented meetings for a period as group members were called away to other work but were continued later in the year. This was reflected across Scotland and the Government’s review of the Every Child Every Chance Report was not released until August. Local area plans were also delayed and Argyll and Bute completed theirs in November. However the Scottish Government wanted to get reviewing back on track, hence there will be a shorter time between reviews this year, with the next being required by the end of June or as soon as possible after this date. The second review report 2020 – 2021 will go to the Community Services Committee on 10/06/2021, the IJB on 16/06/2021 and the CPP on 30/06/2021. Following approval and publication there is an obligation for it to go to Scottish Government.

5.0 Conclusions

The current Child Poverty Action Plan Review 2020 – 2021 sets out the current situation in terms of child poverty in Argyll and Bute and makes particular reference to areas such as children’s rights, sustainability and the challenges facing our island communities. The plan sets out work that has been happening to address child poverty in Argyll and Bute and some plans for actions going forward. This will be led by Fiona Davies and the CPAG group; training, engagement and data analysis are key issues for the coming year.

6.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	
Consultations, Previous considerations	
Resources	
Prevention	
Equalities	

For more information, contact

References

Appendices:

Appendix 1

Links to Argyll and Bute’s Child Poverty Action Report 2019 and the 2019 / 2020 Review:

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/child_poverty_action_plan_0.pdf

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/child_poverty_action_plan_review.pdf

Link to Council’s Challenge Poverty Website:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/challenge-poverty>

Link to Argyll and Bute's Children's Rights Report:

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/childrens_rights_report_2020_final.pdf

Scottish Government's UNCRC Guide for Children and Young People

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/un-convention-rights-child-guide-children-young-people-2/>

Appendix 2

Description of measure:

Relative poverty - the proportion of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median (middle) UK income in the current year.

Absolute Poverty - The number of children living in households below 60% of the median UK income in 2010/11, adjusted for inflation.

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.).

Persistent Poverty - The number of children who have lived in relative poverty in 3 or more of the last 4 years.

This page is intentionally left blank

Child Poverty Action Plan Review 2020 – 2021

Introduction:

Welcome to the second annual review of Argyll and Bute's Child Poverty Action Plan 2020 - 2021. We have all experienced the impacts of Covid19 over the last few months and now more than ever it is important to show how we are working to address child poverty in Argyll and Bute and what progress we are making despite the increased challenges.

It is already clear that low income families – who reported lower levels of financial resilience coming into this crisis – are at risk of deepening insecurity. In the months ahead, increased pressure from the withdrawal or disruption of care services puts parents and carers at risk of long-term reductions in earnings, or of being pushed out of the labour market altogether. This presents a significant threat to women's equality in Scotland's labour market.

IPPR Scotland's report on Financial Insecurity in Scotland

<https://www.ippr.org/files/2020-10/weathering-the-winter-storm-oct20.pdf>

The Argyll and Bute Child Poverty Action Group recognises that it is vital that the Council, Health Board, the third sector and communities work together to tackle child poverty. Argyll and Bute's people demonstrated their ability to come together and support each other and the most vulnerable amongst us during the pandemic. Between 27th of March and 26th of July 2020 the Caring For People Group answered 4080 different requests for assistance. By the 7th of May the Third Sector Partnership, working on behalf of the group, had registered 963 volunteers across our communities. Council, Health, Social Care and Education staff also stepped up, assuming new roles, longer hours and different ways of working.

Measures were quickly taken to ensure that those being shielded would be supported and food made available to children and families during lockdown. There was a shared understanding of the pressures that lockdown created and School and Education Psychology staff kept in touch with pupils and parents, offering support and advice. As well the Violence against Women and Girls Partnership worked to give advice and support to women experiencing domestic abuse; for example Women's Aid worked with the Housing Consortium to support women and children fleeing violence.

This review applauds the determination of Argyll and Bute's people to protect its families and communities, to ensure that no child is left behind and that it is understood that poverty is not the fault of those experiencing it. This is more than ever the case with young people struggling to find work and many families working long hours in low paid jobs; some facing the additional challenges of living remote and rurally. We may not all be in the same boat as some face additional challenges but we can all pick up a paddle and make sure that everyone's boat stays afloat.

Despite all of the challenges and changes that Covid19 and EU exit have brought to tackling child poverty, our vision remains:

We want an Argyll and Bute where no-one lives in poverty. Everyone should be able to achieve their potential and feel healthy, happy and valued. We want to be a place where everyone understands that tackling poverty is a shared responsibility. We believe that if we act locally, and in partnership, we can make a difference.

Children's Rights:

Article 27 of the UNCRC states that Article 27(1) – States 'Parties recognise the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development'. While this is the most relevant article of the UNCRC when thinking about child poverty, there are many other articles that are important.

The Scottish Government has committed to putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the centre of decision making both politically and legally. The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 1st September 2020 and was passed unanimously on 16th March 2021.

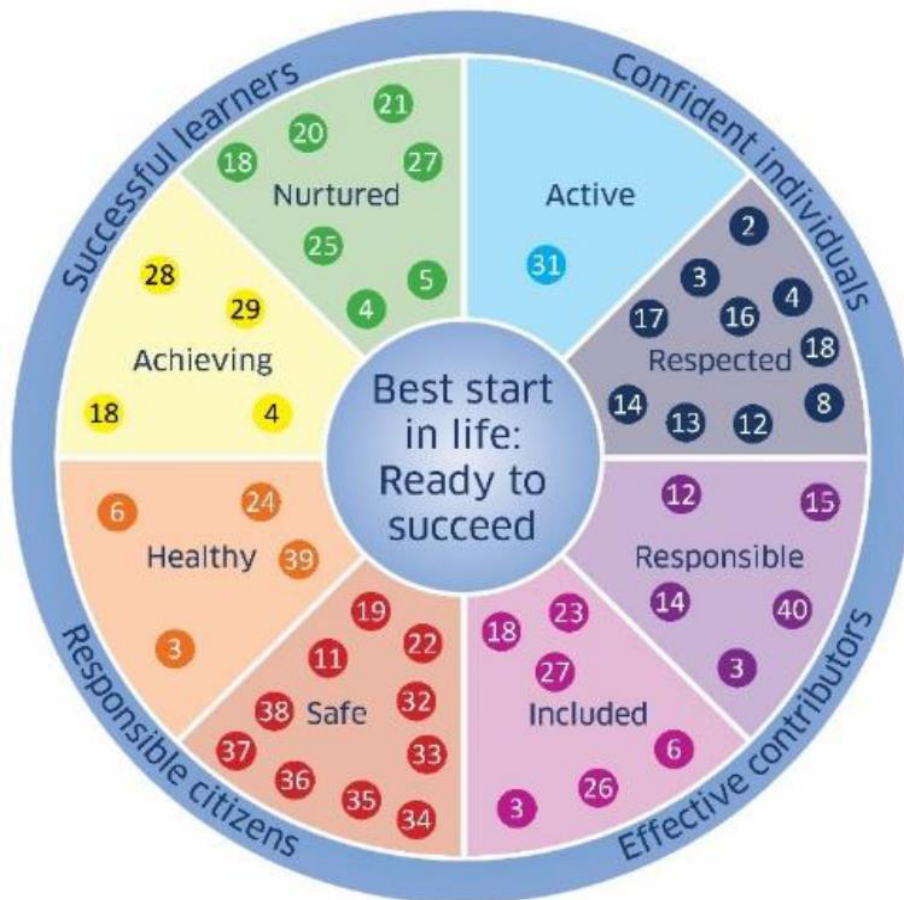
In 2020 Argyll and Bute produced its own Children's Rights Report 2020 - 2023 and will use its principles when tackling child poverty. This demonstrates a commitment to the articles of the UNCRC and delivering them through The Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) assessment approach (SHANARRI), which encompasses 8 Wellbeing Indicators (safe, Healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included). GIRFEC recognises that all children are unique and that each child should be helped to reach their full potential. The National practice model incorporates the 8 well-being indicators into planning, decision-making and practice, and endorses the Articles of the UNCRC.

A range of experiences can have negative effects on young people; these are recognised in the work on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or other adversities such as bereavement or bullying, or where a family is affected by illness, disability or poverty.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences/>

A multi-agency group has been formed to look at how the Council and its partners can work together to achieve the integration of the UNCRC into services and practice. It will also look at how to engage with children and young people on children's rights and how they need to be supported to understand and embrace this change. Other issues to be looked at will include staff training on children's rights, UNCRC and how this impacts on the law. Links to community groups and media posts will be used to keep people informed of progress.

The UNCRC Articles that apply to the Wellbeing Indicators:



Links to Argyll and Bute’s Child Poverty Action Report and 2019 / 2020 Review:

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/child_poverty_action_plan_0.pdf

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/child_poverty_action_plan_review.pdf

Link to Council’s Challenge Poverty Website:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/challenge-poverty>

Link to Argyll and Bute’s Children’s Rights Report:

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/childrens_rights_report_2020_final.pdf

Scottish Government’s UNCRC Guide for Children and Young People

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/un-convention-rights-child-guide-children-young-people-2/>

Reasons for this Child Poverty Review:

First and foremost the reason for this review is to show how we are addressing child poverty. Argyll and Bute's Chief Officer for the Health and Social Care Partnership leads our local Child Poverty Action Group, a multi-agency group whose members include the Council Leader, Heads of Adult and Child Services, Health Managers and key people from: Employability, Benefits, The Food Group, Education, Public Health, Housing, Community Planning Partnership and the third sector. This group ensures that child poverty is prioritised and there is cooperation that encourages new ideas and initiatives.

This review also exists because in 2017 the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act came into force as an attempt to put in place measures that would reduce the concerning increase in child poverty, both on a national and local level. To evidence the need for such action the Scottish Government commissioned research which found that by 2030/31, if no action was taken, it was estimated that 38% of children would be in relative poverty, 32% of children would be in absolute poverty, 17% of children would be in combined low income and material deprivation and 16% of children would be in persistent poverty.

The 2017 Act set four targets relating to ending child poverty, which the Scottish Government committed to trying to achieve by 2030. The targets for children living in households in Scotland are that:

- less than 10% of children live in relative poverty (relative poverty is less than 60% of average household income for the year taking account of the size and composition of the household);
- less than 5% of children live in absolute poverty (absolute poverty is less than 60% of average household income for the financial year beginning 1 April 2010);
- less than 5% of children live in combined low income and material deprivation (low income is defined as less than 70% of average household income for the year, material deprivation is when families are unable to afford three or more items out of a list of basic necessities);
- less than 5% of children live in persistent poverty (persistent poverty is where a child has lived in relative poverty for three out of the last four years).

These are all measured after housing costs are deducted. The Act also sets out interim targets which are to be met in the financial year beginning 1 April 2023 and these targets now represent a challenge given the impact of Covid19.

- Less than 18% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 14% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 8% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- Less than 8% of children are in persistent poverty

Sustainability:

There are areas of work such as those tackling period poverty, school clothing, food and others which offer an opportunity for poverty actions and sustainability actions to be more closely aligned in a way that helps to tackle stigma while enabling dignity and choice for those in need. This is a future area of development that will be given further consideration in future plans and actions.

The Picture in Argyll and Bute:

Child Poverty.

Data from research by the charity “End Child Poverty” in October 2020, which includes the child poverty data published by the Department for Work and Pensions in March 2020 and housing cost data from the Valuation Office Agency and income data from the Understanding Society survey found the following.

Children Living in Poverty below 60% median income before housing costs (BHC) and after housing costs (AHC) in Argyll and Bute.

2014/2015 AHC – 20.7%

Note: This new data include previous years from 2014/15. Due to a small technical adjustment in the official figures, past data are slightly different from those published previously.

2018/2019 BHC - 17.3%

2018/2019 AHC – 23.4% - (3056 children)

New Scottish Government figures released on 19/05/2021 show a very small decrease in child poverty figures for Argyll and Bute

2019/2020 AHC - 23.3% (3000 children)

Figures to be released next year will reflect the impact of the pandemic and are likely to be higher.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). If an area is identified as ‘deprived’, this can relate to people having a low income but it can also mean fewer resources or opportunities. SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. They do help with regards to understanding where deprivation exists but it needs to be remembered that there will be families and individuals who experience deprivation but live out with these areas. This will particularly be the case given the impact of Covid19 on employment and businesses.

The Results for Argyll and Bute from the SIMD 2016 shows:

- 4 data zones in the 10% most overall deprived data zones
- 11 data zones in the 20% most overall deprived data zones
- 9 data zones are in the 20% most income deprived data zones.
- 6 data zones are in the 20% most employment deprived data zones
- 6 data zones are in the 20% most health deprived data zones
- 10 data zones in Argyll and Bute in the 15% most overall deprived data zones.
- 8 data zones are in the 15% most employment deprived data zones.
- 12 data zones are in the 15% most health deprived data zones.
- 41,738 people live in the 53 data zones (38%) that are amongst the 15% most access deprived data zones.
- 13 of Argyll and Bute's data zones, more than 10%, are in the 1% most access deprived data zones.

These figures looked at by Ward show that our most deprived areas are; Bute, Dunoon, Helensburgh Central, South Kintyre and Oban South and the Isles (SIMD 2020V2).

Employment.

In Argyll and Bute we face challenges presented by being the second largest local authority in Scotland geographically at 690, 899 hectare and also the third most sparsely populated area with only 13 people per square kilometre or 0.13 per hectare compared to the Scottish average of 0.70 and along with its five towns it includes 23 inhabited islands. Whilst this brings benefits, recognised by the many tourists who flock to our area, it also means that we have fewer jobs in manufacturing and finance than is the Scottish national average and higher than average employment in the Public Sector, tourism, forestry and fisheries. The top 3 employment sectors in Argyll and the Islands are accommodation & food services (15.0%), human health and social work (15.0%) and wholesale and retail (13.3%). Together they account for around 13,000 jobs across the area. 13,750 people are employed in the sectors most exposed to the economic effects of COVID-19 (46%) of total employment - higher than the average regionally (39%) and nationally (37%).

Jobs at Risk.

Analysis based on estimated share of jobs furloughed by sector in April 2020

The share of jobs in sectors most exposed to COVID-19 is higher in Argyll and the Islands than regionally and nationally. Argyll and Bute is ranked 21st out of Scotland's 32 local authorities on share of jobs in exposed sectors

Argyll and Bute is ranked 1st out of Scotland's 32 local authorities for jobs at risk.

The Impact of Covid19 on the Highlands and Islands; Sub-regional analysis;
HIE 2021

NOMIS figures for January 2020 – December 2020 show that 77.2% of people in Argyll and Bute were economically active compared with 76.8% in Scotland. However wages are noted to be lower in Argyll and Bute.

Earnings by Place of Residence 2020

	Argyll and Bute Pounds	Scotland Pounds	Great Britain Pounds
Gross Weekly Wage			
Full Time Workers	553.6	595.0	587.1
Male Full-Time Workers	606.7	626.3	622.9
Female Full-time Workers	477.1	562.5	544.3
Hourly Pay – Excluding Overtime			
Full-Time Workers	14.64	15.63	15.18
Male Full-time Workers	15.60	15.87	15.64
Female Full-time Workers	13.54	15.31	14.42

Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis

Notes: Median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area.

The impact of the pandemic on incomes has been substantial with significant numbers losing their jobs or being furloughed. the Department of Work and Pensions reporting that In February 2021, there were 212,600 Universal Credit claimants in Scotland, an increase of 3,900 (1.9 per cent) over the month and an increase of 100,300 (89.3 per cent) over the year. (Economy and Labour Market: A National Statistics Publication for Scotland; Scot. Gov. March 2021).

In Argyll and Bute DWP noted that in December 2020 the live caseload for Universal Credit was 6,126 cases at 10 December 2020 before the most recent lockdown. 40% of these claimants are searching for work and a further 37% are working with or without requirements.

The impact of the pandemic on families with children in Argyll and Bute can be seen in figures for those claiming Crisis Grants. In the period 1 April to 31 December 2020 there was an increase of 19% in the volume of applications received and awards made and a 50% increase in their value. 357 claims are from households with children. 213 of these claims

were successful thereby supporting 404 children in these households. This represents a 53% increase in the number of households with children being supported by Crisis Grant between 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 and a 56% increase in the number of children supported by the grant for this period of the year.

In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 there was an increase of 14% in the volume of applications received in Scottish Welfare Fund from 2,314 to 2,627 and expenditure in the fund increased from £459,000 in 2019/2020 to £658,000 this year an increase of 43% year on year.

In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 there was an increase of 17.52% in the volume of applications for Community Care Grants from 812 to 968 with the expenditure of grants increasing by 41.95% from £387,284 in 2019/20 to £549,733 in 2020/21.

Spend and committed spend on the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) fund at March 2021 sits at £852,000 but this will be subject to yearend adjustments still to be processed. Last year 2019/2020 £656,000 was spent, therefore there has been a 30% increase in spend year on year.

It is young people who are experiencing the most severe downturns in employment and employment opportunities. From August 2019 youth unemployment rates in Argyll and Bute rose to 525 in August 2020, an unemployment rate of 12%. This was above the Highlands and Islands (9.5%) and the national (9.7%) rates, suggesting barriers for young people wishing to enter the labour market.

The Impact of Covid19 on the Highlands and Islands; Sub-regional analysis;
HIE 2021

In January – December 2020, the employment rate for young people (16 to 24 year olds) in Scotland was 51.9 per cent, 6.0 percentage points lower than a year ago (57.9 per cent), which represents a statistically significant change. The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds is now the lowest since the series began in 2004. The employment rate for young people had been gradually increasing since 2013 but has decreased over the last year, the largest decrease seen in a single year.

It does appear that unemployment rates for young women are increasing faster than for young men. In January – December 2020, the employment rate for young men (16 to 24 year olds) in Scotland was 4.9 % lower than a year ago. The employment rate for young women (16 to 24 year olds) in Scotland was 7.1 % lower than a year ago. (Economy and Labour: Scot Gov. March 2021).

On 20/04/2021 the ONS announced that In Scotland, there were 2.567m people aged 16-64 in employment, with 120,000 people in that age range being unemployed.

The tourist and hospitality sectors that traditionally employ large numbers of young people are badly affected and this is of concern to areas such as Argyll and Bute. It remains to be seen how tourist areas will bounce back following the ending of lockdown restrictions.

Lone parents may also be affected by this as a third of lone parents work in sectors, such as tourism, that experienced shutdown. The vast majority of lone parents are women, and are more likely to be living in poverty. (Close The Gap, 2020; Improvement Service, 2020a). As with the rest of Scotland, women in Argyll and Bute have been particularly impacted on by the pandemic:

Women find it harder to escape poverty and are more likely to experience persistent poverty than men. There is a particularly high risk of poverty among disabled women, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women, lone parents, and refugee women due to the additional barriers to economic resources and support services they face. A key factor to this is the gender pay gap, occupational segregation and women's over-representation in lower paid work which puts them at a greater risk of poverty. Due to women carrying out on average 60% more unpaid work than men, women have higher rates of part-time work than men.

Socio-economic Disadvantage and Protected Characteristics: Sex and Gender – Women. Improvement Service March.2021.

What's the evidence on women's different economic realities?

- Scotland's Gender Pay Gap is 13.3%, this is the difference between women and men's average earnings;
- Full-time equivalent rate for women was 42% compared to 58% of men demonstrating women's participation in the labour market is lower than men's;
- 85% of those who are deemed 'inactive' in the labour market due to caring responsibilities are women;
- 8% of women in employment aged over 16 were self-employed compared to 16% of men;
- Median hourly earnings for women was £11.81 per hour compared to £13.89 per hour for men;
- 78% of women earned the living wage or more compared to 84% of men;
- Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic women undertook 60% more unpaid work than men;
- Unemployment among women in Scotland increased at a higher rate than men at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Elected Members Briefing; Improvement Service; April 2021.

In addition disabled people, particularly women, are more likely to experience poverty and less likely to be in employment.

They are also more likely than non-disabled people to work in sectors which have been hit hard by COVID-19, including public administration, education and health, as well as the distribution, accommodation and catering sectors. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are, therefore, more likely to affect disabled people compared to non-disabled people. A survey carried out in the UK in April 2020 showed that disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to say that they will come out of the pandemic in more debt. 34% of disabled women said their household has already run out of money, compared to

24% of non-disabled women. Furthermore, research by GDA showed that among disabled people in Scotland, 57% have been worried about money and hardship during the pandemic.

(COVID-19 and Disabled People in Scotland - Health, Social and Economic Harms. Equality and Welfare; Social Research. Scot Gov. Mar.2021)

Island Poverty.

There are many challenges facing our Island populations and as Argyll and Bute has 23 populated islands, this is a key issue for us. Officers from Argyll and Bute have been engaging with Scottish Government and with other Island Local Authorities to ensure that food insecurity issues that affect island communities are known, understood and addressed.

Challenges for our remote and island communities include: fuel poverty, cost / shortages of housing, transport challenges, difficulties in accessing employment and training opportunities, higher costs for food, online connectivity issues and access to services. In addition young people face issues relating to loneliness and emotional wellbeing. A University of Edinburgh study has found that the number of young people in rural Scotland who say they are lonely is substantially higher than elderly people in the same communities. Over 3,000 people, aged 16-96, from across rural Scotland, including Argyll and Bute, took part in the RuralCovidLife survey. The study, which took place in October and November 2020, showed 32% of those aged 18 to 29 said they feel lonely most or all of the time, compared with 3% in the 70-79 age group, and 8% of the total surveyed.

Locally a range of activities are taking place to support and develop island places and communities. These include:

- The Council supports the Community Food Forum that was launched On 6TH OF February 2020 to be a network through which existing independent food-banks, food waste and community food initiatives can share experience, advice and ideas. A huge amount of work was done during the pandemic by this forum helping to supply food across Argyll and Bute, including to island communities.
- Allenergy gives a range of advice and practical help to those experiencing fuel poverty.
- Council subsidise scholar flights from Colonsay and Coll to Oban free of charge to enable students to access education and travel home at weekends.

In 2019 the Scottish Government published The National Islands Plan. The Islands Scotland Act 2018 - The Act sets out some of the key areas to achieve this by increasing population levels; improving and promoting sustainable economic development, environmental wellbeing, health and wellbeing, and community empowerment; improving transport services and digital connectivity; reducing fuel poverty; and enhancing biosecurity. The Islands Plan is laid out over 5 years and is underpinned by 4 key values: fairness, integration, environmental protection (green) and inclusiveness.

National Islands Plan: Annual Report 2020 - There are two key pilots currently ongoing in this area. Working with the Woodland Croft Partnership, exploring the expansion of the Woodland Croft Initiative to facilitate further access to land, crofting and forestry, and working with Rural Housing Scotland to develop a toolkit based on the experience of projects currently exploring small-scale mixed accommodation and business unit developments to support population, entrepreneurialism and home working. The pilots include communities in Orkney, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Argyll and Bute, and Highland. These pilots will help inform the development of the Repopulation Action Plan.

An example of local action is Ulva Island, which was bought by the North West Mull Community Woodland Company in 2018 for £4.4m, has doubled its population and is set for even more residents under expansion plans. There were only five people living on the island at the time of the purchase, but the population has since increased to 11, and six properties are to be refurbished in preparation for new residents. Funding for the project has come from the Scottish Government's Rural and Island Housing Fund, Argyll and Bute Council, Ecology Building Society as well as from NWMCWC's own funds.

On 15th March the Scottish Government published its first Population Strategy, see:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-future-opportunities-challenges-scotlands-changing-population/>

Argyll and Bute's Economic Growth Manager sits on the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (COHI) Senior Officers' Group and its population sub-group, where a joint paper has been produced with the Scottish Government Population and Islands Teams for the COHI meeting. The key areas of focus in that paper were Argyll & Bute, Western Isles and Caithness & Sutherland.

To create linkages between the national Strategy and to focus a more localised approach to population issues, it is suggested that there is merit in developing a concept and delivery framework around a specifically designated set of areas that may be entitled "Repopulation Zones." This approach would also have the important psychological benefit of reframing the discussion away from the negative connotations of depopulation onto a more positive, development-orientated repopulation approach.

The overarching principle of these Zones would be to be place-based and provide a methodology to focus interventions on specific identified geographies. The work Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is undertaking on their Inclusive Growth Model could help inform this identification. This Model was highlighted in the October 2020 COHI paper and has two analytical components. One dealing with the area characteristics and profile and one dealing with the organisation's investment and its impact. HIE is currently working with the James Hutton Institute and SRUC on the area profiling and area clusters.

Key Areas of the Plan:

A. Increasing Income from Employment and Earnings:

1. Employability:

Delivery of the **Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF)** has commenced within the broader context of the No One Left Behind policy direction Phase 1.

Eligible participants are:

- Lone Parents who are unemployed or experiencing in work poverty
- Parents with a disability or families who are unemployed or experiencing in work poverty and have a disabled child
- Parents who are unemployed or experiencing in work poverty and have 3 or more children
- Parents from a minority ethnic background who are unemployed or experiencing in work poverty
- Parents who are unemployed or experiencing in work poverty and have a youngest child <1.
- Parents who are aged <25 who are unemployed or experiencing in work poverty
- Parent must have the right to live and work in the UK

The main objectives/expected outcomes are to support the delivery of the Scottish Government's Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) to deliver a flexible and user-based model of employability support for the parental groups identified in Every Child, Every Chance: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022, through:

Appropriate support focusing on intensive key worker support that provides:

- Person-centred help for parents to address their barriers to work, which might include a lack of skills or work experience, and / or signposting to health support, money advice or motivational support. The funding for this is made available under the 1973 Act and the 1999 Regulations.
- Help in meeting the increasing challenge of in-work poverty, targeting support to help parents already in work through the provision of training and employability support to remain active in the workplace and gain progression through a rewarding career. The funding for this is made available under the 1999 Regulations.
- Promote fair working practices, including payment of the Living Wage as this relates to the Grantee's areas of responsibility.

Delivering employability support to parents by:

- Identification, (re)engagement and support for parents who require support to access or progress in the labour market; and multi-agency partnership working within the partnership to ensure sufficient and suitable onward progression opportunities are available.
- Deliver intensive in and out of work employability support, including support to upskill, apply for jobs, etc. for low income parents who are not ready for Fair Start Scotland and other local or national programmes.
- Help in meeting the increasing challenge of in-work poverty, targeting in-work support to help parents already in work to upskill, providing access to training and support to progress in employment.
- Person-centred help for parents to address their barriers to work, which includes training, upskilling, as well as support to access health support, money advice, or motivational support through supporting individuals to access these wrap around support services.
- Delivering Employability Key Worker support services throughout a participant's journey. Key Workers will work with participants throughout the process and continue to provide support for up to 26 weeks following the participant's progression into work.
- Ensuring Employability Key Workers have the skills and local awareness to support the implementation of Action Plans, including full awareness of all support provided locally by partner organisations.
- Carrying out an initial assessment of all participants to ascertain specific barriers and needs; providing an Action Plan to participants identified as requiring this intervention.
- Providing aftercare support for up to 52 weeks that enables participants entering employment to sustain and further improve their skills.
- Delivering an employability system that supports more parents, particularly those facing multiple barriers - to move into the right job at the right time.
- Putting in place arrangements that maximise the opportunity for inclusion and investment of partner funds.
- Enhancing links between ELC expansion and local employability services to support new training and employment opportunities- and upskilling and progression of existing staff - enabled by the funded 1,140 ELC provision. To opportunities specifically available within the expanding ELC sector.

Further support available under the No One Left Behind policy direction is the **Argyll and Bute Employer Recruitment and Training Incentive (ABERTI)**. This incentive is aimed at job ready participants aged 16 to 67 years. Employers are able to recruit a maximum of two employees per annum and must be able to evidence employment is in addition to their existing workforce and will lead to a sustainable job. The funding, a maximum £3,500 per employee, may be used by the employer at their discretion to help towards the costs associated with employing the additional member of staff. However a minimum of £500 must be spent on direct training provision (which may include in-work

training) and must be evidenced on the employee's Learning Action Plan and copies of relevant certificate/s provided.

Fair Start Scotland (FSS) is currently being delivered by Argyll and Bute Council's Employability Team on behalf of People Plus.

To be eligible participants must be:

- Living in Scotland and eligible to work in the United Kingdom;
- over 18 and out of work; or
- 16 or 17 and are either disabled or in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit

This service is targeted at those who wish to receive individually tailored support to find and remain in employment or self-employment.

Dedicated Key Workers provide:

- One-to-one meetings, focusing on and offering a holistic approach to meet individual needs and issues.
- Life coaching, a counselling type approach with guidance and advice.
- Creation of an in-depth action plan to provide pre work support for 12-18 months.
- Participants with the job searching skills required to actively job search, reviewing job applications and CVs.
- Conduct mock interview and interview technique sessions.
- Ensure awareness of other services within the community and signposting as appropriate; Debt Management, Addiction Services, Literacy and Numeracy, Housing Services, Welfare Rights, Citizens Advice, etc.
- Encourage participants to engage in an array of E Learning courses provided by PeoplePlus.
- Provide the opportunity to move into some form of work experience which meets the participant's skills sets and aspirations.
- Offer high quality in-work support for 12 months following the transition to employment.

Business Support.

The Rural Skills Accelerator Programme within the Rural Growth Deal:

- Rural Growth Deal (RGD), revised Rural Skills Accelerator Programme (Economic Growth Manager) submitted to the Scottish Government on Thursday, 19th November 2020. Skills is integral to all RGD proposals, but the key components of the Rural Skills Accelerator Programme are:
- Network of circa five STEM Hubs across Argyll and Bute – online and face-to-face learning experiences (including mobile delivery) for all ages and capabilities. Phased delivery approach starting in Dunoon.

- Support the development of the built environment of Argyll College UHI in Dunoon.
- Pan-Argyll and Bute business (SMEs and social enterprises) focused skills, education and training support.

In December 2020, through a competitive bid, the council secured £490k (plus £50k of match funding; £540k budget in total) from the Clyde Mission Fund to support the re-purposing of the council's Hill Street office in Dunoon to create a STEM/Community Hub. This opportunity will act as a pilot in terms of the establishment of similar hubs across Argyll and Bute aligned to the RGD Rural Skills Accelerator Programme.

Economic & Social Recovery.

- Economic data over the period continues to show a challenging economic outlook. Although there has been a slight decrease, February to March, in the number of people claiming unemployment benefits (down by 20) across Argyll and Bute, the number of claimants is 5.7% of the working age population, is higher than that pre-pandemic and slightly lower than the overall Scotland figure of 6.1%.
- Ongoing participation on Highlands and Islands Skills Leadership Forum with regard to the implementation of the revised Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan (Economic Growth Manager) and through the LOIP Outcome 3 Group consideration is being given to the preparation of an Argyll and Bute Skills Strategy.
- Economic Growth (including Business Gateway) is now finalising the dissemination of the Strategic Framework Business Fund (SFBF), which closed to applications on 22nd March 2021. The council's Economic Growth Team received 3,079 SFBF applications in total. As of 9th April, 2,347 were approved for payment, of which 551 were for Islands Equivalent Payments (IEP). Nearly £13.1m grants were awarded plus nearly £3.1m under IEP. Restart grants were paid to SFBF recipients on 19th April 2021 along with a final SFBF payment; circa £23m total for this final payment run.

Future Planned Activity.

Based on the No One Left Behind policy direction, focus has been given to strengthening Local Employability Partnerships to take forward the No One Left Behind Phase 2 Delivery Plan, the preparation of a Local Delivery and Improvement Plan, and the COVID-19 response based on the principles which underpin the approach contained within the partnership agreement with the Scottish Government.

- Submit a bid(s) to the UK Community Renewal Fund through the council's open and transparent competitive bid process at the local level.

- Argyll and Bute Council is a Gateway Organisation for the UK Government's Kickstart Scheme for 25 employers and 50 placements further to approval from the DWP on 18th February 2021. It is hoped that the Young Person's Guarantee will be used to augment the support provided through the UK Government's Kickstart Scheme by a further six months.
- Under the Scottish Government's Programme for Government Young Person's Guarantee (16-24 year olds), Argyll and Bute Council' Employability Team has accepted an offer of grant to deliver this scheme across the area. The Interventions for Argyll and Bute (2020/21 and 2021/22) are as follows:
 - a waged opportunity with employers (to cover all employment costs for a young person on a 26 week work placement, with 25 hours per week);
 - formal volunteering; and Modern Apprenticeships delivered by Argyll and Bute Council's 'Growing Our Own' Team;
 - Ongoing delivery of all current employability contracts (e.g. Fair Start Scotland) and the No One Left Behind Policy Interventions;
 - Focus on Economic and Social recovery going forward through the Argyll Economic Resilience Forum (chaired by HIE) and the supporting Officer Advisory Group (key partners and agencies).
- Under the Scottish Government's Programme for Government Young Person's Guarantee (16-24 year olds), Argyll and Bute Council' Employability Team has accepted an offer of grant to deliver this scheme across the area. The Interventions for Argyll and Bute (2020/21 and 2021/22) are as follows:
 - a waged opportunity with employers (to cover all employment costs for a young person on a 26 week work placement, with 25 hours per week);
 - formal volunteering; and Modern Apprenticeships delivered by Argyll and Bute Council's 'Growing Our Own' Team.
- Argyll and Bute Council will shortly be advertising for a Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) Engagement Worker, as single point of contact for employers and individuals across Argyll and Bute.
- Argyll and Bute Council's Employability Team has a number of sources of support available to help people into work - whether for young people looking to go into a job or further education, employers looking to set up job placements, or supporting the long-term unemployed to access skills, training and jobs. See: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/helping-people-work> and <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/contact-employability-team>

2. Skills Development Scotland:

School Service Offer - Our careers advisers work in partnership with every state secondary school in Argyll and Bute, delivering career guidance to enable young people from S1-S6 to develop their Career Management Skills via a range of group work and 1-1 coaching conversations. We work closely with the our partners within the school to identify young person who are considered to be most at risk of not making a positive progression from school, helping those young people to develop their career management skills and move onto education, employment or training when they leave school. For more information please click on the following link. [What We Do - Scotland's Career Service](#)

Due to COVID and the challenges and uncertainty that it has brought we have continued to work closely with senior leaders and pupil support within schools to ensure that any young person that needed our support was identified. Since 20 March 2020, when schools closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our careers advisers were able to quickly move form a face-to-face service delivery to a virtual offer. This has continued as lockdowns were eased and then re-established, we continue to offer a blended approach (face to face & virtual).

The COVID- 19 pandemic has brought challenges but also opportunities for new ways to support at our customers in Argyll and Bute. We were able to offer a range online webinar to school pupils and all school leavers explaining the support that was available. In partnership with our colleagues in with our schools organised a very successful Higher Education Fayre for pupils who were considering apply to university. As part of our "I can do anything session" we continued to encourage our young people in S2/S3 to think about career opportunities that are available to them and the skills required. This was via a virtual platform which ensure that all young people had the opportunity to be involved. We focused our support for parents and carers and ran parental engagement webinars around subject choice and opportunities after school. We have received excellent feedback from our young people, parents, and partners around all these events.

School Leaver Cohort 19/20 - There were 702 young people who left school during the 19/20 school cohort and our team worked hard over the summer months to follow up whose had left to ensure support was offered.

Post School Service Next Steps - Service to support young people aged 16 – 18 (extended to 26 for care experienced young people) who are unemployed, helping them to build up their career management skills and move on to and sustain a range of options as appropriate: Activity Agreements, Employability Fund and other training programmes, education and employment.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our service supporting young people to develop their career management skills and progress through the employability pipeline continued via our virtual delivery methods. Following closure of our centres on 19 March 2020 our advisers have supported via on-line and telephone delivery and continued to provide targeted and universal support for adult customers, including Next Steps support. In line with the Scottish Government road map we are hoping to open our centres for face to face service delivery from 17th May onwards.

Post school service; adults & PACE - Working in partnership with a range of partners to support local job clubs helping unemployed adults to develop their career management and employability skills and move into employment. In Argyll & Bute our post school advisers have worked closely with the employability partnership to deliver support via DWP's Youth Hub format.

Together with our colleagues in UHI Argyll College our team also supported Virtual Open days which also offered virtual career coaching appointments to anyone within the college setting

PACE: Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is the Scottish Government's initiative dedicated to responding to redundancy situations. Through providing skills development and employability support, PACE aims to minimise the time individuals affected by redundancy are out of work.

PACE brings together 24 organisations, together with the Scottish Government to provide free and impartial advice, guidance and support for individuals affected by redundancy.

PACE support is available to **all individuals** affected by redundancy.

Advisers have extensive experience of dealing with redundancy situations and can:

- Help with CV, job search, applications, and interviews
- Advise on benefits staff may be entitled to
- Provide information on learning and training opportunities.

Despite restrictions on face to face contact because of COVID-19, PACE support continues to be delivered through the PACE Helpline, through webinars and enhanced online resources.

Visit www.redundancyscotland.co.uk for more information or call 0800 917 8000 to speak to an adviser.

My World of Work- Our website provides trustworthy, expert information and advice and it's free to access for people at any stage in their career. The site is designed to support people of all ages and stages, with activities and tools to help them identify the opportunities open to them. Our school, post school and PACE career coaches have been supporting Argyll and Bute customers during the Pandemic by sign posting them to my world of work for opportunities and developing their career management skills. Parents and schools have been using this service to support pupils with their career journey.

Care Experienced: Work in partnership with Throughcare/After Care workers to support young people who are care experienced. Active members of Throughcare/After Care local and central forums. Our advisers continue to work in close partnership with the Argyll and Bute Council Throughcare/After Care and Social Work teams to work with young people who are care experienced and to ensure our support is delivered at the right time and with the relevant support from other key workers supporting the young person.

3. Council Apprenticeships:

As a result of Covid, no further apprenticeships were offered in 2020, however in 2021, 4 vacancies have been successfully recruited to with a further 5 in the process of recruitment to date. This will bring our total apprenticeships offered since 2014, up to 70 once recruitment has concluded. During 2020, a further 6 apprentices who started in previous years, completed their apprenticeship. All of them went onto secure a positive destination, with 4 of them going onto secure employment with Argyll and Bute Council. We have a high rate of apprentices going onto secure employment with Argyll and Bute Council on completion with 76% off all apprentices completed securing a job with the council, this has increased since the last plan. By linking all our vacancies to workforce planning we are hopeful that this trend can continue. We have also continued to offer our foundation apprenticeship in social services children and young people across schools within Argyll and Bute. The foundation apprenticeship offers the opportunity for a school pupil to gain work experience and a vocational qualification whilst in school. They gain a qualification which is equivalent to a higher and at the same time get to experience a work placement which provides them with key experience, skills and knowledge. This is not only a brilliant addition to a school leavers CV but it allows Argyll and Bute Council to grow a quality Early Years workforce for the future. Despite delivering this during a pandemic, the pupils have still been able to access a work placement which will be of real benefit to them in the future.

Argyll and Bute Council works closely with schools to facilitate work placements for young people where possible and has established links with DYW Argyll to offer opportunities for young people in the local area where it is possible to do so. Linked to workforce planning it is hoped that we will be able to continue to offer opportunities for young people within Argyll and Bute.

4. Education Recovery/ Supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds /Remote learning and teaching:

Between March and June 2020, Argyll and Bute Education Recovery Work stream 2 comprised 14 members from across education sectors, roles and areas of expertise. It addressed 10 areas identified by different Scottish Government's COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) Work streams: SG Work stream 1 – Term 4 Learning; Work stream 3 – Curriculum and Assessment; Work stream 4 – Supporting Learners from Disadvantaged Backgrounds; Work stream 5 – Pastoral Care for Children and Young People.

Following the closure of schools on 23rd March 2020, across the authority, teachers were effective in engaging with pupils at home and in the area hubs which were set up for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Teachers provided and assessed online learning via a number of online platforms, such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams and SeeSaw. Many pupils were identified who had no or insufficient digital devices at home to allow engagement with online learning. Schools were responsive by lending out hundreds of devices to pupils and their families, and ensuring that learning materials were available in

the formats that individual families required, including paper-based formats when necessary. Feedback to schools from parents and carers on provision during this period of school closure was positive.

The key aim of Work Stream 2 was to build on such successes, and support the building of further capability and expertise in online provision in advance of the expected Blended Learning model which was being suggested for August 2020 by the Scottish Government. The work stream made a series of recommendations relating to the following key areas:

- Ensuring the learning and teaching provision to all learners during the period of school closure and any future periods of Blended Learning was of the highest possible quality;
- Ensuring coherence and progression between learning at home and face-to-face learning in schools during anticipated periods of Blended Learning;
- Tracking and monitoring the health and wellbeing of pupils during school closure or Blended Learning, and associated appropriate interventions to address issues;
- Supporting learning in the home or Hubs for pupils with Additional Support Needs;
- Ensuring effective support for and communication with parents and carers during periods of home learning;
- Maximizing the usefulness of GLOW, the online portal which staff and pupils use to provide and access online learning;
- Updating Curriculum for Excellence Guidance to reflect the context of home learning;
- Reporting on pupils' progress in Broad General Education and Senior Phase during school closure;
- Supporting disadvantaged learners through term 4 and into the new school session;
- Addressing the long-term impact of school closure on learner progress and attainment, with particular focus on disadvantaged children and young people;
- Delivering Equity in provision during term 4 and into the 2020-21 session, including the key focus on digital equity, through provision of digital devices and connectivity solutions to all pupils who required them to engage effectively with online learning at home;
- Developing the skills and confidence of teaching staff in the provision of high quality and engaging online learning experiences.

In early August 2020 the Scottish Government announced the full-time return of all pupils to school on 17th August, thus negating the need for blended or home learning for almost all pupils at that time. However, the work of Work stream 2 continued between August and December 2020 as described below, and the above recommendations were implemented during the period of school closure between January and March 2021.

Wellbeing of pupils, families and staff.

Mar 2020– June 2020	<p>The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) continued to provide almost all services, with an increase in remote access to children and families. In addition the EPS provided a parent / carer support line during the period of the initial lockdown to provide help and advice on supporting children during these difficult circumstances.</p> <p>The EPS provided online interactive sessions on wellbeing for children, families and staff when children and young people returned to schools, which was well attended and received.</p> <p>Trauma training at informed and skilled levels were made available for all education staff through e-learning modules.</p>
Aug 2020 – Dec 2020	<p>The EPS provided further online interactive sessions on wellbeing as children and young people returned to schools.</p> <p>Successful interviews took place for school counsellors to provide a service for primary children from age ten upwards. The Team Leader took up post in November 2020.</p> <p>A skilled and experienced principal teacher (PT) for Nurture was appointed to support the nurture developments in schools in line with the recommendations of the Nurture Strategy Group and the recovery work stream with representation from primary Head Teachers. Primary schools signed up for the initial phase of nurture developments to ensure effective early intervention to support primary age children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who may have experienced trauma.</p> <p>There was significant engagement with the trauma e-learning modules by staff across primary schools with an increase in discussion of how we can respond to trauma evident through head teacher and other meetings. Named persons engaged with facilitated on line trauma skilled training to support changes to practice to improve outcomes for all.</p>
Jan 2021 – Mar 2021	<p>Remote access to the educational psychology service continued with strong engagement across primary schools.</p> <p>7.5 fte school counsellors took up post and began a robust programme of training and induction regarding Argyll and Bute procedures. Information on the counselling service was circulated to schools and referrals began to be received. Robust evaluation of the service began from the outset with support from the EPS and research assistant.</p> <p>The PT Nurture was released from his substantive post and began engagement with schools to support the embedding of effective nurture practices, building in evaluation of impact from the outset.</p>

5. Early Years.

Mar 2020-June 2020

During this first period of lockdown in each locality an Early Years childcare hub was opened to provide care for Keyworker and vulnerable children under school age. A number of our very valuable partnership childminders also opened to provide care for our youngest children. The Early Learning and Childcare Work Stream (5), working from Scottish Government Guidance provided advice and support to open settings to ensure they operated safely whilst still providing quality care. Also, during this time the central Early Years Team completed the admissions process to allocate every eligible child a place of their choice in a setting or with a childminder. This process was made more challenging by restrictions on children not being able to attend two different settings, unless in exceptional circumstances. In addition, to all children successfully being allocated a place, we were one of only a few Local Authorities able to offer every eligible child 1140 hours despite the delayed implementation date. Something we are extremely proud of.

6. Clyde Mission Fund and Rural Growth Deal.

Argyll and Bute Council has been awarded £490,000 of funding from the Clyde Mission Fund, which aims to repurpose buildings close to the Clyde; the Council has identified a building in Dunoon to be repurposed to consist of both a STEM hub and a community hub. The STEM hub is being designed, and will be run, by the Digital Learning Team. The concept of the STEM hub is to establish both a venue in Dunoon which learners can attend, and also offer a mobile element where a van with STEM equipment is used to deliver learning to learners across Argyll and Bute.

The Clyde Mission Fund also ties in to the Rural Growth Deal, through which it is hoped that five hubs will be established throughout Argyll and Bute, each with a theme that leveraged its location (for example, a focus on defense and engineering in a Helensburgh hub, and on marine sciences and aviation in an Oban hub). If the Council can secure more funding from the deal, it would help with establishing another hub in addition to the one in Dunoon; a business case has been produced for this, and the Council is awaiting a response to determine what the available funding might look like.

7. Argyll College and University of the Highlands and Islands:

As a college our aim is to provide high quality, innovative educational opportunities to local, and often remote populations. Knowing that better education can lead to greater opportunities to increase income, we work constantly to refresh and examine our curriculum to see how we can embed employability skills to match local employment needs. We work closely with local employers to provide educational routes that provide workforce-ready skills, thereby supporting the Argyll economy and enhancing the quality of life for the communities we serve.

Work experience and work placements are an important component of our courses and where possible, are built in to enhance students' work-related skills and employability. Enterprise activities simulate workplace initiatives. The college delivers a variety of SVQs,

and Modern Apprenticeships to further promote work-based learning, and we have strong links with Argyll's schools; through our Schools Link programme, we offer a range of vocational qualifications from S3 upwards. Foundation Apprenticeships are additionally available for S5 and S6 pupils, further enhancing work-based skills. The college is working alongside the council and with the Rural Growth Deal with a particular interest in marine and aquaculture.

Argyll College is fully committed to the Scottish government's period poverty scheme so that menstruating students can have free access to period products so that they need not be disadvantaged if they cannot afford to purchase their own.

Because we are aware that there is very often a link between poverty and domestic violence we have invested resources to train front line staff in how to respond to reports of gender based violence the better to support students and their children who may be living this experience.

The College and UHI recognise that not all students will be able to meet the conventional course entry requirements. We are therefore able to consider a potential student's life and work experience based on contextualised interviews to determine the most relevant course route and level for each applicant. The Admissions Department continue to develop processes which enable students to access interviews online.

Argyll College and UHI continue to provide a wide range of support services and have developed ways to deliver this support remotely during the COVID-19 situation. As teaching moved to being fully online and using a variety of technologies, students who did not have suitable IT equipment were able to have college laptops on loan. This year the college accessed funding from the Scottish Government's Digital Poverty Fund, allowing us to provide eligible students with the use of a laptop for the duration of their course. This was particularly helpful for those of our students who needed access to a second device so that they could continue with their own studies while home schooling children.

Where students could not afford internet, bursary systems have been used to help support students to buy dongles or to source some internet. Support Assistants have continued to provide one to one learning support via phone and WebEx technologies. The College has a Student Counsellor and Wellbeing Officer who has trained in online counselling, and college staff remain in frequent contact with students, referring them to the college counsellor for mental health support if necessary.

Over the winter months, over 25 households within our student body were helped financially from various Winter Covid Funds.

Student Services continue to support our students with their applications for Bursary, EMA, Care Experienced or Enhanced Care Experienced Bursaries for full time students. We support students to access as much funding as they are able to from SAAS and the Student Loan Company.

The College and UHI recognise the barriers that Care Experienced young people can have to further and higher education. All Care Experienced students can receive support to apply for enhanced bursary, general wellbeing support and additional learning support if required.

B. Increasing Income through Benefits:

1. Flexible Food Fund:

Launched on 11 January the Argyll and Bute Flexible Food Fund (FFF) uses funds provided by the Scottish Government to support people with financial insecurities to pay for food and fuel during these tough times. The fund provides a payment made to householders if they prove that they do not have the minimum income in their bank accounts to cover the costs of food and/or fuel for a month. Householders or claimants are then incentivised to engage with the advice agencies, Bute Advice Centre and Allenergy, by securing a second monthly payment if there is evidence that they have taken advantage of these professional services to help them learn how to manage their financial situation in the medium to long term. Failure to engage with the service means that no further grant funded support is made to the claimant.

Householders or claimants are encouraged to make claims to the Flexible Food Fund online using an electronic form on the Council website however an alternative gateway is available through the Argyll and Bute Community Food Forum which involves all of the foodbanks in the area. Scottish Welfare Fund Team are administering the This means that people regularly presenting at foodbanks for food packages are also getting referred to the FFF project where their needs for immediate support is assessed as is their overall circumstances. They are given the support they need to enable them to live on the resources that they are entitled to receive. Over 95% of householders or claims submitting a claim are engaging with the advice services.

Advice services provide the following support:

- Money advice, money management and budgeting skills;
- Income or benefit maximisation;
- Debt advice;
- Fuel poverty advice including:
 - o Access to fuel vouchers;
 - o Debt relief;
 - o Warm home discounts;
 - o Home heating, efficiency measures, switching, support with appliances and the home heat fund.

At the end of April 2021, after just under 4 months there had been 523 applications for support with 273 awards being made. However even households that are not given short term grant funding through the project are still given the opportunity of support from the advice services and a total of 388 cases have been opened by Bute Advice centre and Allenergy.

The total client gain at 30 April is £504,000 meaning that the average client gain per household is £1,300 based on the 388 open cases. In addition the team are managing a debt portfolio of £51,000 across all claimants negotiating with creditors to reduce the arrears.

The case studies below show the impact that this project is having in supporting people in Argyll and Bute.

Case Study 1 Family

This is a single parent who was finding providing for her children really challenging particularly over the lockdown. Unable to access her cheaper shops on the mainland and with limited choice locally, her food bill had increased to a level where she was panicking. The Adviser Heather, was able to support the client to access the FFF and she received two pots short term grant funding of £320 per month from the Council's FFF team. The claimant was very concerned about the state of her threadbare carpets, particularly on the stairs as the children had caught their toes in the threads and almost fallen down the stairs a number of times. A Community Care Grant was applied for and £1300 was awarded allowing the claimant to get new carpets for her house and some other goods. When she knew of her award the client contacted Heather in tears, saying that for the first time in a long time she was going to fill her store cupboards full and she would no longer feel ashamed of her home. She was so grateful that the FFF project existed and had helped her family. The client suffers from anxiety and depression, she told her adviser how much better she felt, the impact on her wellbeing had been so positive.

Case Study 2

Ms H came to us via FFF and was paying £100 a month but was not submitting meter readings or checking her account. She knew the £100 a month wouldn't be enough to pay for her debt and ongoing usage but couldn't afford to increase this and had been ignoring this along with other debts. With Allenergy's support, Ms H set up her online energy account and submitted meter readings online. This produced an accurate bill of £1,038.34. Ms H did not have the funds to pay any more than the £100 so paying this debt was not possible. The debt also prevented Ms H from switching to a cheaper tariff. Allenergy applied to the Home Heating Support Fund for help with energy debt relief. The application was successful and Ms H was awarded £1,300. This cleared her debt and helped with ongoing costs. Ms H is now confident she can submit regular meter readings to ensure her bills are accurate, and continue with her £100 monthly payment comfortably while we continue to work with her to check her tariff options.

Case Study 3:

Ms M came to us via FFF having just moved into a new tenancy after fleeing domestic abuse. Ms M was worried about affording her heating on her low income while also suffering health issues. Allenergy made a successful application to the Home Heating Support Fund and Ms M's energy account was credited with £700. Ms M told us due to her health issues she had to wash her clothes and bedding daily and without a tumble dryer this was a concern. Allenergy recognised the impact on damp and condensation from trying to dry this amount of clothing and bedding so made an application for a tumble dryer. Ms M was awarded £300 to purchase a tumble dryer and bedding.

The FFF project has been hugely successful to date bringing together the teams from the council, the third sector and the community to support people with significant food and fuel insecurity. The original project was due to run to June 2021 however with more funding from the government an extension to the project has been agreed to 31 March 2022. This extension will allow the project to scale up more and support more households as it has been clear that there remains significant demand in Argyll and Bute for this type of support.

2. Universal Pathway Quality Improvement Collaborative Financial Inclusion Practicum (UPQIC):

Background

In October 2019, teams, consisting of money advisors and Health Visitors from across Scotland came together to work with Improvement Advisors from the 'Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative'. The aim was to implement or improve the processes already in place in relation to financial inclusion discussions between Health Visitors and families as part of the Universal Health Visiting Pathway, referring them for financial advice where required.

The project originally commenced in October 2019 and was due to finish in 2020 however, due to Covid-19 pandemic, the project was put on hold until January 2021, when work was able to re start.

The team from Argyll and Bute consists of 2 Health Visitors from Bute and Cowal, and Bute Advice Service. They have developed a referral pathway between the services, where Health Visitors refer families directly to Bute Advice for further advice and support.

Project Aim:

'By September 2021, Health Visitors in Argyll and Bute (Bute & Cowal), will have a financial discussion with parents at 80% of contacts on the Health Visiting Pathway, and where a need is identified 100% will receive the requested money advice and benefit support'

Progress to date from January – May 2021

In conjunction with Bute Advice Centre the Health Visitors in Bute developed a financial referral pathway which allows them to directly refer families with ‘money worries’ into local money advice service (Bute Advice). This has provided a single point of contact for families to a money advice service. Between January and April 2021, Bute Advice have received 13 referrals as a result of Health Visitors having ‘money worries’ conversation with families. Families have also shown good engagement with Bute Advice, with 11 out of the 13 families referred engaging with the process.

A service feedback questionnaire is starting to capture the impact of the referral outcome for families. In feedback from families they reported 100% satisfaction with the service received, easiness of the referral process, and confidence in accessing Bute Advice service again. They highlighted the experience as being quick, professional, efficient, and being given financial help that they weren’t aware of. Benefits to these families, included, *‘help with gas, electricity, rent,’*, *‘freed up more money’*, *‘very much got myself and my family back on our feet’*. Client financial gain has been significant having been supported through access to The Flexible Food fund and Allenergy.

As part of the quality improvement approach, PDSA cycles continue and data is being captured to ensure the referral pathway and feedback process is robust. The project in conjunction with The Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative runs until September 2021, when it is hoped that a Financial Referral Pathway and the learning from this project can be implemented in other areas in Argyll and Bute.

3. Client Gain through Advice Activity:

The table below shows the client gain from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 for the citizens of Argyll and Bute as £9,129,380.

Organisation	2020/2021 (£)
Bute Advice Centre	621,441
Argyll and Bute Council Welfare Rights	3,364,133
ACHA Welfare Rights	4,177,180
Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau	557,688
Allenergy	408,938
TOTAL	9,129,380

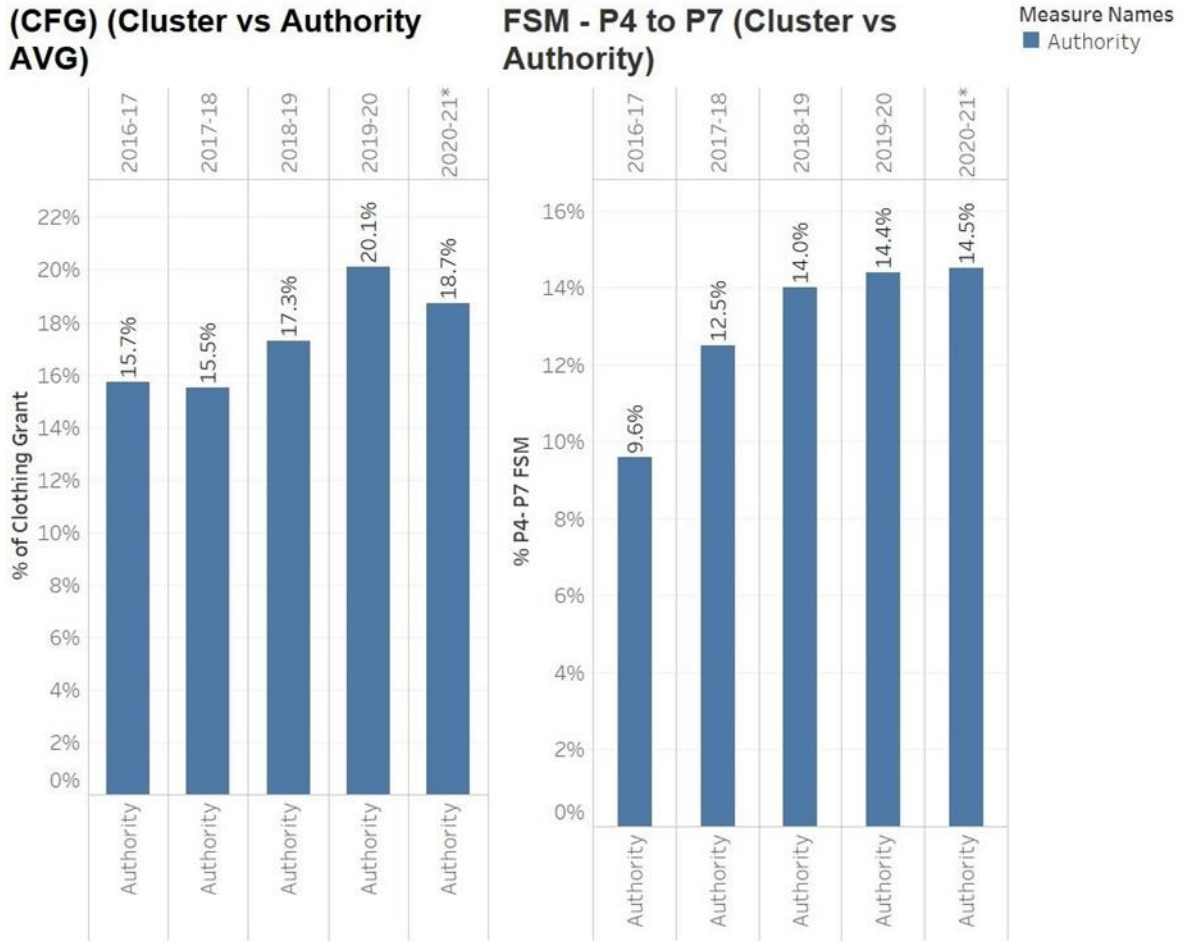
C. Cost of Living:

1. Free School Meals and Holiday Hunger:

Since the last Action Plan Update, free school meals support for entitled pupils has remained in place:

- For children and young people who have been learning at home, parents have received a cash payment of £15 per week, paid fortnightly, as a replacement for their free school meal.
- For children and young people attending Hub schools since January 2021, hot meals have been available on site, and for children entitled to free meals that has been in addition to their cash payments.
- Cash payments have continued throughout the Easter holiday and will also continue throughout all future holiday periods, funded by Scottish Government.
- Work is underway to implement free school meals for all pupils in receipt of 1140 hours of childcare in early years' settings.
- Work is also underway to implement the extension of universal free school meals to all Primary school pupils by August 2022, beginning with extended provision for pupils in P4 from August 2021.
- Pupil feedback continues to be the basis for the development of school lunch menus, subject to them meeting the revised Food and Drink in Schools standards which came into effect in April 2021.
- Free school meal uptake remains higher than the Scottish average, at around 82% in P1 – P3.

Update of Free School Meals in 2019-21 was 1,030, for the same period in 2020-21 it was 1,286, an increase of approximately 20%. This increase is directly linked to the pandemic.



2. School Clothing Banks:

Consultation with Schools has taken place on the need for School Clothing Banks. Feedback from 34 Schools has been received. 65% of schools are operating some sort of clothing bank but the idea for Community led clothing banks is popular with 91% of respondents in general. It is planned to fully evaluate the responses by the end of June and talk to schools and community groups seeking volunteers to prepare the clothing banks going forward. The objective is to have a school clothing bank run in the community in each of our 6 main towns by the end of March 2022.

3. Housing:

During the Covid Lockdown, it was necessary to source temporary accommodation across Argyll and Bute. As a result, a small number of families with children were housed in the short term in unsuitable accommodation. These cases are all now resolved, and all families with children who are residing in temporary accommodation are in self-contained accommodation.

Housing Services is currently working with key partners to provide a set of detailed Specialist Provision templates which will provide appropriate evidence of the scale and type of Specialist Provision in the local area; demonstrate a clear understanding of the current scale and type of unmet need, and provision required in future for new build properties. This will ensure that children's needs are met moving forward. In addition, the Housing Service has employed a full time Occupational Therapist to work within the housing service to ensure needs are met both within new build RSL properties and adaptation referrals for Private Sector Housing Grant.

Argyll and Bute Council is working with our RSL partner ACHA to carry out improvements to Duncholgan and Bayview Gypsy/Travellers Sites. Consultation is being undertaken with residents to determine the scope of works and funds have been made available by the Scottish Government to carry out these improvement works.

4. Fuel Poverty:

Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Energy Agency (Allenergy) continues to provide energy efficiency and affordable warmth advice to households in Fuel Poverty across Argyll and Bute. We accessed £2,520 for families we were working with from Home Start's Winter Fund earlier this year. This fund awarded cash payments to parents to help with purchasing new beds, prams, clothing, shoes, white goods and heating bills.

Allenergy registered with the Fuel Bank Foundation in February 2021. Reporting on 5th May, we had accessed 216 fuel vouchers for pre-payment customers with a total value of £11,368.

Fuel Vouchers are worth £49 November to April and £30 May to October. These vouchers have been a lifeline to prepayment customers unable to heat, light and cook in their homes when finances have been tight.

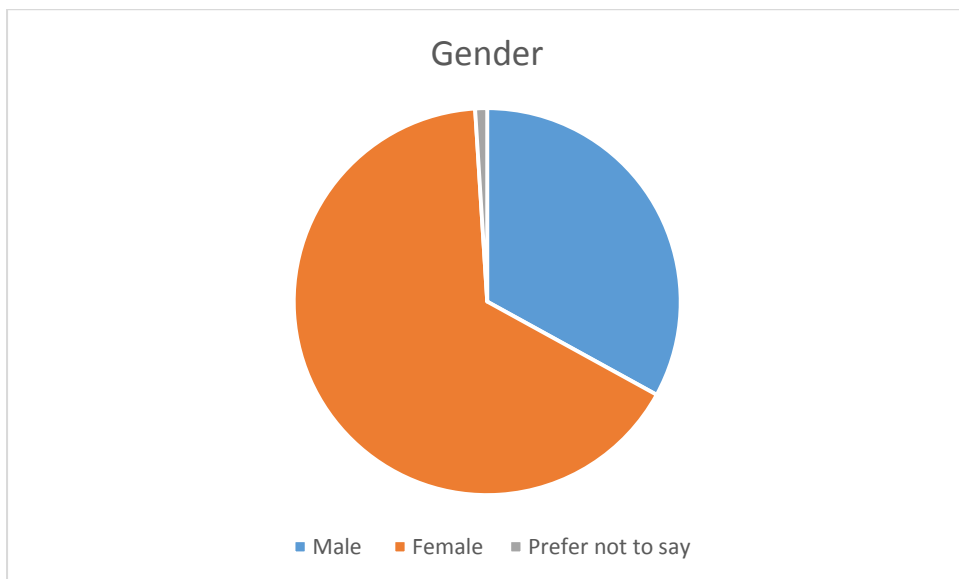
Fuel Voucher Report as of 05/05/2021			People Helped		
	Redeemed	Total Issued	Adults	Children	Total
21/22	60	60	55	31	86
20/21	172	173	200	123	323
Total	60	60	55	31	86

The Fuel Bank Foundation are piloting the Heat Fund which offers free bulk heating fuel deliveries including coal, oil and wood. As a large area of Argyll and Bute is off the gas grid, this fund has been invaluable for householders reliant on more expensive heating fuels, the majority of which in social housing and no options to change to a cheaper or renewable heating system. Successful applications have been awarded 5 bags of coal with a value of £95 or 1,000 litres of oil with a value of £400.

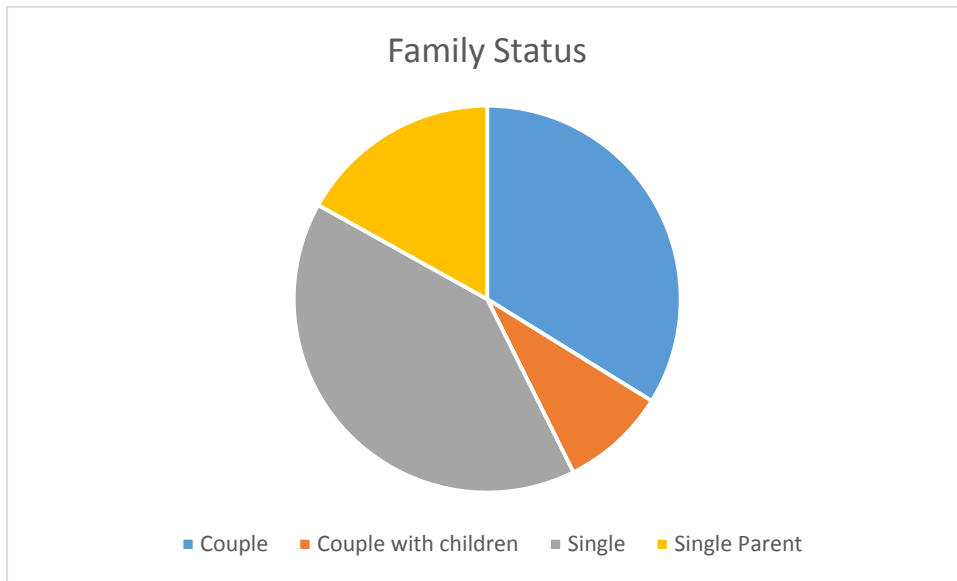
The Scottish Government allocated £4M to the Home Heating Support Fund in response to COVID-19. This fund helped with energy debt and customers who were self-rationing. In the 5 weeks of the Home Heating Support Fund being available, our Affordable Warmth team made 106 applications with a total award of £60,010.80. This money was paid directly to suppliers to cover energy debt, ongoing costs and pre-payment vouchers.

AlIenergy migrated to new case recording system in 2020. In 2020-21 we opened 649 new cases, delivered 2322 energy advice sessions, made 600 referrals including referrals to Home Energy Scotland, foodbanks and the Fuel Bank Foundation, and recorded 1136 other case activities including tariff checks, liaising with suppliers, checking eligibility, etc.

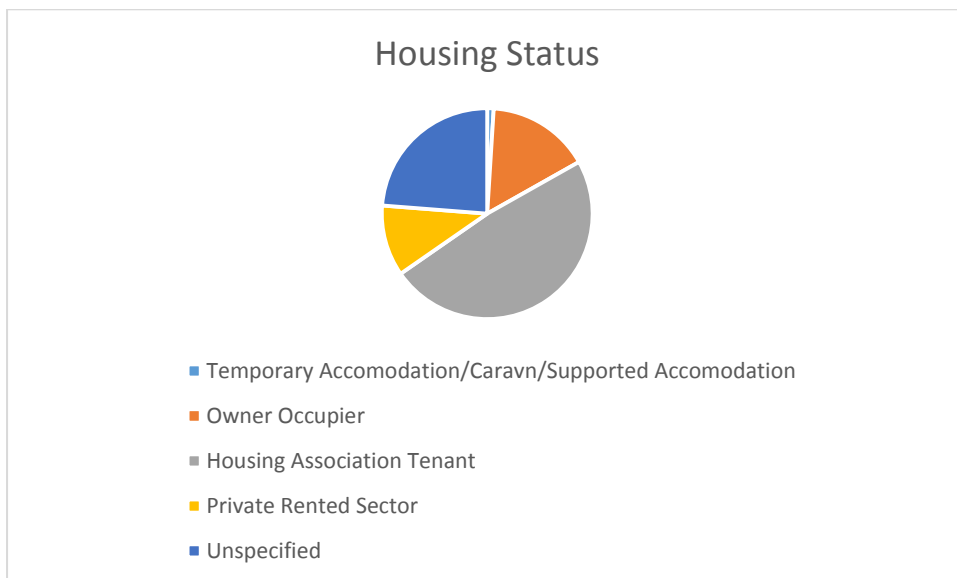
The following client demographics were reported against cases in 2020-21.



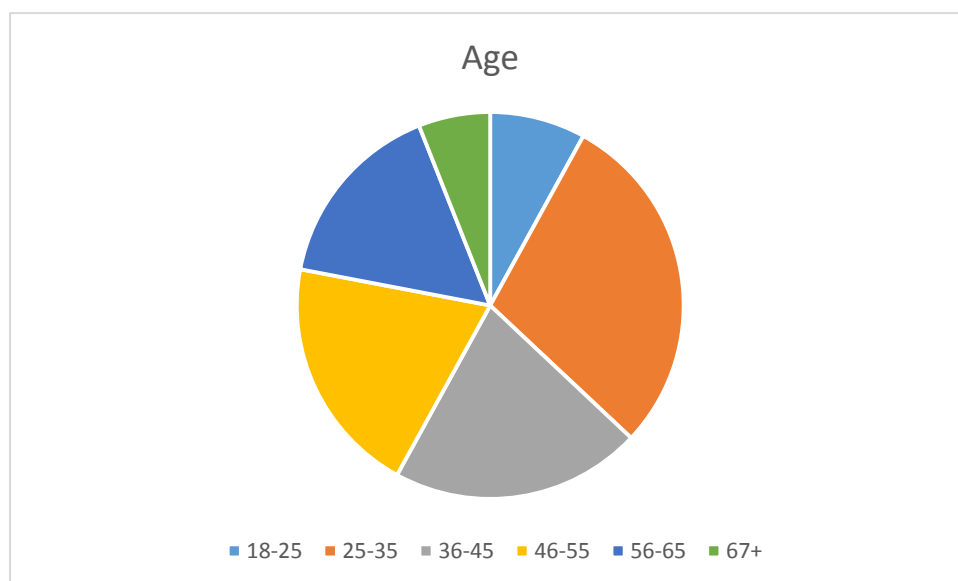
The gender split above shows a majority of clients were female, this can be attributed to the large number of single mothers accessing our service.



Where family status was recorded, 12% were couples with children and 23% were single parent families, showing over a third of our clients had children in the home.



Where housing status was recorded, 49% of clients were found to be in social housing.



The perceived image of fuel poverty is usually an elderly person sitting with a blanket by the fire but where age was recorded, it shows a large proportion of our client base was much younger and most likely families with children.

AlIenergy have been working with the Argyll & Bute Community Food Forum to deliver Argyll & Bute Council's Flexible Food Fund in partnership with the Council and Bute Advice Centre. The fund was launched in January 2020 and in the first four months of the project we have worked with 173 Flexible Food Fund applicants with an estimated client gain of £111,451.50.

AlIenergy's Affordable Warmth team made 42 applications on behalf of Flexible Food Fund clients with a total award of £26,423.66. This was £16,450.29 energy debt relief and £9,973.37 towards ongoing energy costs.

Our relationship with the Argyll & Bute Community Food Forum from the FFF project allowed us to distribute 160 Cosy Kits to 11 independent foodbanks across Argyll and Bute. These kits consisted of a hot water bottle, blanket, thermal socks, night light torch, cold alarm and advice leaflets. We hope this small gesture provided some warmth and comfort to people who are struggling to stay warm at home. We received excellent feedback from Foodbanks and their service users, with some suggesting the hot water and blankets were useful when meeting people outside under COVID regulations. Local sewing bee and crafting groups have also got involved making hot water bottle covers to help us maximise funds available for other items within the kit.

5. Home Start Winter Fund:

The Home Start Winter Fund distributed £4000 among fifteen local families who required additional support in keeping warm during the winter months. The fund went to purchasing items for families & children that included:

- new thicker duvet covers and bedding,
- winter coats and boots,
- assisting with fuel heating costs,

- helping to maintain warm home environments by reducing drafts and maintaining healthy moisture levels within the home environment, reducing damp.

Feedback was very positive, including a letter from a child saying thank you for a new duvet cover they received.

6. Food Forum:

On the 6th of February 2020 the Argyll and Bute Community Food Forum was launched. Bute Advice Service provides the coordination role, bringing the forum together as a collective of independent organisations. The Council supports the initiative which is a network through which existing independent food-banks, food waste and community food initiatives can share experience, advice and ideas.

It is also to be a forum for those who are considering setting up a food-bank or community food initiative including food waste projects or those who wish to volunteer. Today they have a wide membership covering the whole of Argyll and Bute including several islands.

Examples of some of achievements of Food Forum members during the Covid19 crisis include:

Foodbank	Days Allocations of Food from April 20-Mar21	No of families supported	Primary problems facing families with children	Has the lunch support from A & B Council over the holidays had an impact on families	Main issues facing the foodbank in the last year
Tarbert Pantry	60000 + daily allocations	190 individuals of which 95 are families	Low income, benefits, unemployed, single parents, fuel poverty, lack of access to supermarkets	Lunch support has helped a little.	Issues with delivery van
Hub Grub Hub (Dunoon)	17500 daily allocations	210	Fuel and rent	Yes	Food supplies, inability to buy in bulk and numbers of new families

Hope Kitchen (Oban)	20944 daily allocations	2992 individuals 664 families	Low income, benefits, unemployed, single parents, fuel poverty, children not able to attend school. Self-employed.	Yes we saw a reduction in demand when people were provided with cash into their bank accounts. We supported some to apply for Free School Meals.	People becoming very dependent on the food bank / other services not accessible / had to close our café / referrers not referring in same way as previously / more families and less single people / delivery service needed for those who could not collect. Some people have been reticent to access the food bank due to the stigma associated with Hope Kitchen.
MOMA Mid-Argyll	1092 daily allocations	63	Not Recorded	Not Recorded	No issues to report.
Tiree Trust	25 families; although others may use our confidential community cupboard food phone box.	25	Continued furlough (on minimum contracted hours), reduced employment, low paid.	Unaware of any recipients.	The main issues our food group has faced over the past year is reducing the stigma of asking for assistance in such a small close-knit community visitors to the island.
Islay Foodbank	200 daily allocations	10-15	Not Recorded	Not Recorded	Lack of uptake therefore a rebranding and a new website has helped this and ability to request support by text.
Bute Oasis (Bute)	Thousands (Final collating of stats still to be done)	Hundreds, at its peak 400 families were being supported weekly, this reduced when the A & BC food parcels became available.	Lack of income	Not much of an apparent impact	Dealing with the numbers presenting
Helensburgh Foodbanks	16128	537 families supporting 1032 children	Low income; High fuel costs; Single parent households	Numbers reduced to half over the school holidays this may be a result	Difficulty in ensuring all 4 foodbank sessions while ensuring safety of volunteers and

				of the extra support.	attendees. High costs of cleaning, materials.
Kintyre Foodbank	3152 bags	652 adults 214 children 114 families	Universal Credit advances needing to be paid back leaving families stretched, children at home, higher heating costs and food bills	Numbers dropped when support was offered	Keeping staff and recipients safe, losing volunteers who needed to shield as over 70 (great support from South Kintyre Development Trust)
Mull & Iona					The food collected would ordinarily be held in a community fridge for anyone in need to go and help themselves. Mull foodbank come under the auspices of Hope Kitchen and therefore the figures are included in the Oban Hope Kitchen stats.
Jeans Bothy Helensburgh	7000 daily allocations	20 families weekly over 50 weeks	Home schooling; poor mental health; lack of digital access	Not aware.	No issues, we have grown due to the circumstances.

In addition to the great work done by the Food Forum; members have also ensured that a total of 2,000 leaflets went out in food bags to service users, telling them about the Flexible Food Fund and how to apply. As well the CFF has developed a Worrying About Money leaflet, in conjunction with IFAN and this has also been distributed widely.

7. Period Poverty:

Prior to the covid19 pandemic period products were freely available in schools. There was a Lead Officer on this on behalf of Education, implementation and budget was managed by each head teacher. The Council's Commercial Manager was rolling out the community aspect, including provision to young people (and all others) out with schools. The aim was to help improve the reach of reusable products

Following the pandemic, the operation was moved online, with pupils and people in communities able to order their own supplies directly from Hey Girls using online form. The online order enables individuals to order standard supplies as well as reusable products to best suit their needs. In addition the website was updated to reflect these changes, and merged all of the information across both projects into one, for consistency:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sanitaryprovision>

Products remain available in schools. Provision of period products ensure that those people unable to afford such products are not disadvantaged and do not lose any School or social time as a result. A paper has been put forward to appoint a Project Officer post between community and education to take forward statutory actions that will be required with the implementation of the Period Poverty Act.

D. Helping Families in Other Ways:

1. Flexible Fund

The Scottish Government has made available £30 million to local authorities in Scotland to enable them to work with their key planning partners including the Health and Social Care Partnerships and the third sector, to support the needs of people in their communities who don't have support networks and are struggling with the new restrictions or guidance at protection level 4, particularly those most at risk through health or social inequalities.

Argyll and Bute will get £537,000 of funding for this purpose. A report will go to the Council on 24 June with a range of projects designed to support the most vulnerable people in our communities. This includes monies to provide training and raise awareness of poverty and how to reduce stigma and improve the ways in which people can be supported, monies to support school clothing grants and set up a new school clothing bank. There is schemes to support young carers and former care experienced youngsters with free gym memberships. It is also proposed that a series of Health, Wellbeing and Advice Service roadshows will be delivered this year to maximise the number of persons that get support across Argyll and Bute. There are plans for more than 20 projects to be delivered across the Council, the Health and Social Care Partnership and the voluntary sector supporting vulnerable people with a range of needs. The list of projects is subject to Council approval on 24 June. We will report on the outcomes of these projects next year.

2. School Counselling;

The counselling in schools service has been developed by NHS Highland in partnership with Argyll and Bute Educational Psychology service. The service is accessible to all children and young people ages 10 to 18 in Argyll and Bute. The service opened for referrals in February 2021 and works with children and young people across the authority. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the service has utilised virtual online platforms to meet and work with young people remotely.

What is it?

Counselling is a therapeutic intervention, which supports health and wellbeing. Counselling offers young people, a safe and supportive environment to talk over difficult issues in confidence. This involves listening to their views, experiences and feelings without judgement, within the context of a safe and trusting relationship characterised by empathy and respect.

Why is it needed?

Approximately 1 in 4 young people within the UK will struggle with their emotional and mental health. A majority of young people who develop mental illness in the UK are unknown to any service and often do not receive the support they need. Mental health services are under significant pressure, heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Argyll and Bute HSCP are committed to supporting young people to reach their potential. Counselling can support young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

School counselling is also able to support young people as we recover from the pandemic which has created uncertainty for young people across Scotland. The counselling in schools service aims to reduce pressures on all services by providing an early and accessible wellbeing intervention. This includes ensuring self-referrals enable young people to access support when they need it.

As face to face contact increases and schools return to in person teaching, this will create further pressures and challenges for young people through changes in daily routine, increased social contact and emerging problems that arose during lockdowns.

How do we see the service developing?

A range of quantitative outcome tools are embedded within service practice and are being used to measure young people's progression through counselling and the impact of counselling on wellbeing. At our 6 month review we will assess our service information, incorporating accessibility training to ensure fair, accessible and equitable counselling is provided.

We will gain further qualitative feedback by linking with stakeholders including education, mental health services, and social work to improve the pathway to access counselling. Most importantly, we will listen to young people who access the service to find out how we can improve directly from our service users. We hope the Counselling in Schools service can, as an effective early intervention, reduce and prevent the escalation of wellbeing concerns. This will also reduce pressure on other mental health services and improve outcomes for young people across Argyll and Bute.

For further information please contact: nhsh.counsellinginschools@nhs.scot

3. Infant & Perinatal Mental Health project:

There is a growing understanding of the primacy of relationship in shaping and informing how humans grow, develop and thrive across their lives with regard to both mental and physical health. This includes both the experience of pregnancy and becoming a parent for women (and partners) and how interactions with infants shape their emergent sense of self. This is an area of practice that requires discerning skills and knowledge to ensure opportunities for wellbeing are optimised while avoiding the shame and blame that can too readily undermine experiences of maternity care with regard to both parent: infant and parent: professional relationships.

The primary template for relationships is laid in the first 1001 days, pre-birth to toddlerhood, between infants and their parents/primary carers, even as subsequent life experiences will also have influence. Reflecting this, the infant and perinatal mental health work programme for NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute HSCP is underpinned by the following values;

- A relationship led approach with infants, mums and dads and by colleagues across services and teams
- Systemic thinking between infants, mums and dad professionals/practitioners/service systems
- A rights led approach with regard to the UNCRC and Equality Legislation
- Trauma informed and responsive: What happened to you? How did this impact on you? Then? Now? Who is helping you now?

Aims

- To better understand and respond to the mental health needs and vulnerabilities of pregnant women and their infants across a continuum of need and risk, informed by the Thrive Approach and Getting It Right For Every Child practice model/s.
- To ensure timely evidence based pathways to assessment and care that are informed and shaped by the experience of women and infants.
- To take an improvement approach to creating and building the skills, capabilities and the capacity of the workforce: maternity services, health visiting,
- To take an improvement approach to creating and building the skills, capabilities and the capacity of parents/carers in understanding and responding to the mental health needs of infants and toddlers.
- To use data that will inform and shape care alongside the experiences of care, as expressed by women and their partners.

Context

Population epidemiology indicates that:

- One in five women will experience mental health difficulties while pregnant and will benefit from the support of family, friends, and helping agencies.
- One on ten women will experience moderate to severe mental health difficulties and require access to psychological therapies available in primary care, care, maternity services and the third sector.
- One in twenty women, are at risk of severe and complex mental health problems requiring the assessment of specialist perinatal mental health services.
- Women with existing mental health, alcohol and substance misuse difficulties face additional challenges in accessing services and finding the support that will maximise their experience of care and the best outcomes for themselves and their infants/toddlers/children.
- The MMBRACE (2020) study indicates that suicide remains the principal cause of direct death for women one year after delivery of their infant.

COVID-19 Unintended Consequences

COVID-19 is recognised to have created challenges for women and their partners with regard to experiences of maternity care with changes to face to face care and limited partner involvement in key stages of antenatal pathway (routine care, ultra-sound scans, delivery). The Babies in Lockdown Report (2020) in an online survey found that for pregnant women:

- Almost 7 in 10 found their ability to cope with their pregnancy or baby had been impacted as a result of COVID-19.
- Nearly 7 in 10 felt the changes brought about by COVID-19 were affecting their unborn baby, baby or young child.
- Only one third expressed confidence in being able to access mental health support if required.
- Many families with lower incomes, from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and young parents have been hit harder by the COVID-19 pandemic and were less likely to receive the support they needed. This is likely to have widened existing inequalities.

Parents and primary carers have also experienced challenges in spending time with their new born infants where they have required hospital care in Special Care Baby Units (SCBU) and, or, Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU). Some of these difficulties are being perpetuated by interrupted care and by health visitors and wider early weeks and months support with related community restrictions on face to face care and support. Planning for the move out of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated progression out of Lockdown presents opportunities to offset disadvantage and the potential of harm to infants, toddlers and parents and where trauma informed and responsive practices will be of particular value.

A Framework for Improvement

The HSCP and associated children and young people's integrated planning partners will take respective responsibility for an improvement approach to developing infant and perinatal mental health operational services and related engagement with women and their partners in the North Highland and Argyll and Bute Partnerships.

In Argyll and Bute we will have an Advanced Nurse for Perinatal Mental Health working to support our most vulnerable families and work alongside link team members and the wider multi-disciplinary team in each locality and cross boundary to ensure an effective service. There will also be psychiatry and psychology input. Peer support in women with lived experience will be a central part of this service along with working with 3rd sector. A participation and engagement officer role will be key in scoping and developing this work. An initial benchmarking of staff training and knowledge of PNMH has been undertaken and we will use a quality approach to monitor areas of improvement. Staff training commencing locally in June 2021 will be rolled out to support prior learning modules and to identify "champions" in each team. Primary Care Mental Health team and Community Mental Health teams continue to work closely with Midwives and Health visitors and our families while new PNMH service is established and they will continue to have a key role .

Connecting Scotland Phase 2

20 devices with wifi were distributed to households with children in phase 2 of this project. Recipients were in Kintyre, Bute and Dunoon. Devices mainly went to families with more than one child. Many of the families only had smartphones in the household with limited data. Anecdotal evidence indicates that devices enabled parents & children to access remote hospital appointments using NearMe more easily and support home schooling and application for benefits etc. Also reduced parental isolation as able to join online classes such as Baby Massage

4. Youth Work Education Recovery Learning Programme:

The Community Learning Service has been listening to Young People and their concerns around returning to school and education during COVID 19 and the impact this is having on their health and well-being. We have successfully accessed some national funding to provide activities that will enable us to deliver activities that will address some of these issues and to support young people to return to, or remain engaged in their education and learning provision.

We are offering young people from across Argyll and Bute the opportunity to achieve accredited awards and the experience of quality outdoor learning opportunities whilst developing a range of personal and team skills. The programme will be delivered by Community Learning in partnership with Hebridean Pursuits Outdoor Learning, secondary schools and the Education Psychology Service.

All 10 of Argyll and Bute's secondary schools will be allocated up to 10 places on the programme. Each participant will take part in a personal development programme focused on individual and group health and wellbeing with an outdoor learning focus. Prior to, during, and in between the outdoor learning activity All young people taking part will explore their health and wellbeing through a variety of learning activities and will complete the SQA Health and Wellbeing module. Depending on the capabilities of the young people there may be further wider achievement opportunities such as John Muir awards, Saltire awards, Dynamic Youth awards or in some cases Youth Achievement awards.

Activities will be delivered to achieve core outcomes of increased confidence, self-esteem and resilience, building life-skills, encouraging self-respect, introducing coping mechanisms, improving mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and developing aspirations for the future.

Outcomes:

- Improve Health and Wellbeing.
- Increased engagement in learning
- Raising attainment through recognition of wider learning and achievement (e.g. Youth Awards and accredited certificated awards).

5. Argyll ACE's Hub; All Our Children:

At the start of the Covid19 pandemic in January 2020 the third sector group All Our Children, which brings together third sector agencies that work with children and families across Argyll and Bute, created a **Facebook page**. This is an open page which looks to bring a wide of information to people and offer support and advice. Some of its posts have reached as many as 3,000 people and areas covered include:

- School Meals changes and access;
- Parent Club and Cost of Living Advice;
- Best Start Grants;
- Online Safety;
- The Promise;
- Live Argyll;
- Test and Protect;
- Young People and Health Relationship;
- Online Workshops.

This eclectic mix has proven beneficial to many families and even managed to reunite a jacket and school bag with a child in Oban after posting that it had been handed into the Police Station.

6. Changing Lives Initiative:

Argyll and Bute has taken part in a 3 year pilot, along with areas in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, looking at improving the lives of children with symptoms of ADHD. The pilot, concluded and reported on in April 2021, saw advice and information, screening and Incredible Years Parenting Training courses offered to parents of children aged between 3 and 7 years who showed behaviours suggesting ADHD. Training in delivering Incredible Year Parenting Programmes was also given to some staff and awareness raising to a larger group. Analysis of the results showed this to be a very successful approach.

Monies have now come to an end but Argyll and Bute intend to look at how this approach can be carried forward, possibly in conjunction with the third sector. Whilst Argyll and Bute's participation in the partnership was disrupted by the covid pandemic, advice and parent training and support did continue online and was well received by recipients.

7. Use of Drone Technology:

In our last review we reported that with ferry transportation curtailed innovative solutions were piloted; for example the use of Drones to fly tests and drugs to the island of Mull Hospital; this taking only 15 minutes rather than the much longer time a ferry might have taken. The second stage of the Drone pilot continues. This development in Argyll & Bute gives the opportunity to test the capacity for further use of this technology.

Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) has begun carrying COVID test samples and other medical materials on drone delivery flights between medical facilities in the Argyll & Bute region. Following a proof-of-concept phase last year, the three-month initiative, which aims to help improve COVID-19 related logistics to and from remote locations, has now been expanded and is fully operational.

E. Partnership Working:

1. The Promise:

In 2021 the Scottish Government Independent Care Review reported and produced “The Promise”, a plan to improve care services across Scotland for children and young people. To deliver on The Promise the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership is taking the following actions.

- Set up a Working Group looking at models of practice supporting children remaining within their families; this will include more effective use of Alternative to Care Workers (ATC) and other resources, including working in partnership with the third sector.
- The Dunoon area has the highest level of adult substance misuse and mental health issues. Promise monies are to be used creatively to find multi-agency ways to prevent receptions into care.
- The Working Group will look at the feasibility of accessing social housing in order to create a family friendly space that can be used for family meetings and contact; a place where parental assessments can take place in a supportive environment. This centre would also be used by Health Visitors and other professionals working with children and families.
- A Care experienced Co-chair for the Corporate Parenting Board is to be recruited.
- A Working Group has been set up to look at language and terminology used in care settings and adjusting templates, reports and forms accordingly. For example: care experienced not looked after; brothers and sisters not siblings, meeting your family not contact.
- It has been pledged that in any case where siblings may be placed in care separately; this would have to be reviewed and approved by the Children and Families Head of Service.
- Actions are being taken to recruit more Foster Carers who can take family groups.

2. Trauma Informed Workforce:

Argyll and Bute continue to roll out trauma training across our workforce and are fast approach 75% of the children's workforce having undertaken trauma training. This continues to be delivered through online self-learning materials and the delivery of virtual training sessions, take up has been particularly strong with education colleagues; over 92% of teachers have undertaken the training.

Further training is scheduled through to 2022 to help embed and enhance workforce confidence in applying trauma informed approaches and a programme of trauma enhanced training is commencing in May 2022.

Workforce feedback has been very positive and there is a growing body of evidence of staff changing their approaches. In particular schools in particular are more systematically adopting trauma informed approaches to support the return of pupils to school and as a partnership work has commenced to more formally on evaluating the impact of the training across services which will be used to inform the next phase of roll out and embedding trauma informed approaches across our workforce and services.

3. Advice Services:

Financial and other related areas of advice are key to supporting children and families and helping to move forward in a positive manner. There is partnership working in order to reach as many people as possible and meet their needs; people are also linked to national sources of assistance through Council and Partner web sites, media posts and one to one / online advice meetings.

Council Advice Web Page

- Argyll and Bute Council provides free impartial, confidential advice on welfare rights, complex debt to particularly vulnerable clients, and homelessness. Debt Counselling is an area that is likely to increase and the Councils debt counselling service will work in conjunction with the Citizens Advice Bureau to support individuals and families.
- Independent advice agencies, including Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau and Bute Advice Centre;
- Argyll and Bute Advice Network (ABAN) is a directory of services, providing information and advice on a range of issues including benefits, housing, carers support, youth services and advice for older people;
- National helplines, including Citizens Advice Scotland; Money Advice Scotland and the National Debt line who provide on-line advice.
- Find a food bank in Argyll and Bute.
- Find out how we are working together to tackle poverty in Argyll and Bute.

This Council web pages have advice and links to:

- advice and support with welfare benefits
- Struggling with debt or money problems
- Find out about and apply for benefits
- Support for people affected by cancer
- If you are homeless or about to become homeless
- Advice about money, family, daily life or your rights
- Create your own personal budget plan here
- Free and confidential advice on debt problems
- Take control of your finances with our budgeting tool
- Directory of advice services in Argyll and Bute
- Looking for a low cost affordable loan

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/advice-services

4. Digital Inclusion Update:

More than ever, getting online is a necessity for people to access public services, connect with family and friends and contribute towards reducing social isolation and loneliness. In Argyll and Bute the focus of our response to digital needs has been through two projects Connecting Scotland and Digital Connections. Despite issuing a significant number of devices there still remains a steady flow of requests for support.

Connecting Scotland

The Connecting Scotland Programme aims to get 50,000 digitally excluded households across Scotland online by the end of 2021. As well as supplying the devices, “digital champions” have been trained to support people to use the internet confidently and safely.

The devices issued are a mixture of iPads and Chromebooks with MiFi connectivity packs that enable the user to connect via a mobile phone signal. The MiFi packs offer two years free internet access. Although connectivity has improved significantly in Argyll and Bute it continues to be an issue.

Community Learning staff distributed devices during Phase 1, provided set up support and follow up contact to identify problems and ensure that recipients were using the devices. In Phase 2 a range of partners carried out these tasks.

Phase 1 focused on people in the extremely high vulnerability group (‘shielding’) or the higher risk of severe illness group. Recipients also had to be on low income and without connectivity. Priority was given to those without any devices including mobile phones.

153 new devices and MiFi packs have been issued across Argyll and Bute in Phase 1.

Phase 2 was targeted at older people, disabled people, families with children and care leavers. Devices and support were allocated through a range in partners working directly with these groups including –

- Argyll and Bute Council
- HSCP Midwives
- Argyll and Bute Women’s Aid
- Cornerstone Community Care
- Crossroads Cowal and Bute
- Enable Scotland
- Help (Argyll and Bute) Ltd
- MS Centre Mid-Argyll
- West Highland Housing Association

207 new devices and MiFi packs have been issued across Argyll and Bute in Phase 2.

Supplementary Phase

A small number of people have been identified who met the criteria for Phase 1 or Phase 2 but for a number of reasons were not included or offered devices. An additional 19 new devices and MiFi packs have been awarded by Connecting Scotland to assist in addressing this and will be fully allocated by June 2021.

Education

A Scottish Government grant to support digital inclusion, which was allocated on the number of pupils entitled to free school meals, enabled the service to purchase and issue 1356 new devices (Chromebooks and iPads) along with 254 connectivity solutions with 12 months of unlimited data. The connectivity solutions were used to support learners who have poor or slow internet, are reliant on a parent’s mobile phone data for connectivity or experience a broadband outage (caused by changing providers or a network fault).

Schools also issued Council owned devices to learners who required a device.

Digital Connections

Digital Connections is an Argyll and Bute partnership project and was established at the start of the pandemic to respond quickly to digital needs. 220 refurbished devices have been purchased and distributed with over 150 devices donated by the local community and businesses. The Digital Connections project complimented the Connecting Scotland project perfectly and in many cases we were able to respond to individuals and families requiring support who did not meet the Connecting Scotland criteria.

What Next?

Refurbishing Scheme - there’s been a healthy response from the community and businesses to the appeal for devices that can be recycled and redistributed to families and individuals

requiring additional digital resources. Discussions are at a very early stage in exploring the viability of developing a project which will access and recycle end of use devices.

Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-24 – the latest version of the CLD Plan is due in September 2021 and is currently in production. It will focus on Covid recovery and it's highly likely that the plan will include digital provision as one of its key themes. Partners are currently engaged in a consultation exercise and will develop a collaborative response to identified need and priorities.

Feedback

As you would perhaps expect, feedback has been very positive with most people reporting that the devices and connectivity have opened up opportunities for them to communicate, learn, shop and stay informed.

We've responded to several families who although they had a device and connectivity, also had more than one child trying to learn on line causing issues with access. In some cases this was further exasperated if the parent was working from home. We also came across families attempting to provide online schooling via a mobile phone and were able to provide solutions.

A sample of some of the comments and feedback we've received regarding digital support through Connecting Scotland and Digital connections:-

"The laptop is a great help as I have been using a phone to access my online classes but haven't been able to download some of the documents on the phone. Many thanks" - S4 pupil.

"This will be such a huge help to the family!" - Parent

'I have completed both the courses that I was struggling to do on my mobile and I'm now looking at options for Self-Employment which is great news!!' – Young Person

F. Other Future, Planned Work:

1. Training:

Training for multi-agency staff in areas relating to child poverty is a focus for the Argyll and Bute CPAG. Money Counts training is being developed for roll out and will increase the awareness of a wide range of front line staff and equip them to ask the difficult money questions of service users whilst showing respect and understanding.

Localised presentations on benefit levels and what it really means for claimants in terms of hardship in our area are being looked at: myth busting and awareness raising.

In addition training is planned for covering the whole Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Plan is to ascertain delegate numbers so that a tendering process can take place for a

supplier to provide wide ranging overarching training on poverty and supporting people in poverty.

2. Engagement:

- Continue to engage with lived experience people and harder to reach groups via the agencies they connect with.
- Set up a reference group for future engagement.
- Support Council/NHS and partners to continue to consider poverty impacts when looking at policies and development. Ensure that EQIA's and CRWIA's are carried out.

3. Data Analysis:

In the coming year we will map out our key data set and use this to monitor changes in child poverty and related areas. We will also consider what further work on the local evaluation of child poverty and its causes, can be accomplished.