

EAST AYRSHIRE

**Health &
Social Care
Partnership**

**Equality Mainstreaming
Report 2021-2023**

September 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's ('the Partnership') Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021-23. The report outlines the commitment of the Partnership to promoting equality and provides an overview of our progress in mainstreaming equalities into our day to day business processes.

1.1 About Us

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership formed in April 2016, bringing together health and care services in East Ayrshire.

The Partnership includes the full range of community health and care services, children's health care and justice services and is also the Lead Partnership across Ayrshire and Arran for services commonly known as Primary Care Services. These services include general medical services, community pharmacy, optometry practices, dental practices, public dental service, and Ayrshire out-of-hours nursing service and Ayrshire out-of-hours social work response service.

Our partner organisations include: East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, The Third Sector Interface (TSI) East Ayrshire and the Independent Sector.

Our approach to leadership is based on shared values where individuals, families and carers are key partners in shaping and developing services focused on shifting the balance of power and creating equitable relationships.

1.2 Vision and Values

The Partnership is committed to tackling discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; and promoting good relations within our workforce and our communities. Mainstreaming equality, diversity and human rights is the process by which we will work towards achieving this as an organisation for all our residents, partners and our workforce. By considering and integrating equalities into the daily work and discharging of duties required by the Partnership, we will take equalities into account in the way we go about our business when acting as:

- a Policy maker;
- a Service provider;
- a Decision maker;
- a Buyer of goods and services;

We developed a vision for how we would operate as a partnership in consultation with stakeholders prior to the establishment of the Integration Joint Board and the Health and

Social Care Partnership. This has driven our activity over the last six years and will continue to do so. Our vision is one of:

Working together with all of our communities to improve and sustain wellbeing, care and promote equity.

Our Partnership values underpin our approach to how we engage with and support the people within our communities and encompass the values of our partners. These values are highlighted below.



1.3 Impact of COVID on Equalities

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented global impact and it would be no exaggeration to say that every community and individual in Scotland has been affected as a result of the pandemic. However, evidence has also clearly highlighted that COVID-19 has not affected all population groups equally, whether it is the virus itself or the restrictions set as a response to its spread. Instead, both national and local research has shown that additional layers of disadvantage have been experienced by equality groups during the pandemic, including;

- Research shows older age and being a member of an ethnic minority community, for example, are associated with a higher risk of catching the infection and higher rates of death.
- Bereavement, isolation, loss of income and fear are triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones. Many people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety.
- Rates of domestic abuse have increased during periods of lockdown and restricted measures. The joint statement issued by the Violence Against Women and Girls

(VAWG) services across the UK reports that perpetrators will use infection control measures as a tool of coercive and controlling behaviour

- Long-standing structural inequalities and discrimination that deaf and disabled people experience appear to be heightened. Nationally, the wide disparities are reflected in the data released by the Office for National Statistics, which shows Disabled people are about twice as likely to die from COVID-19.

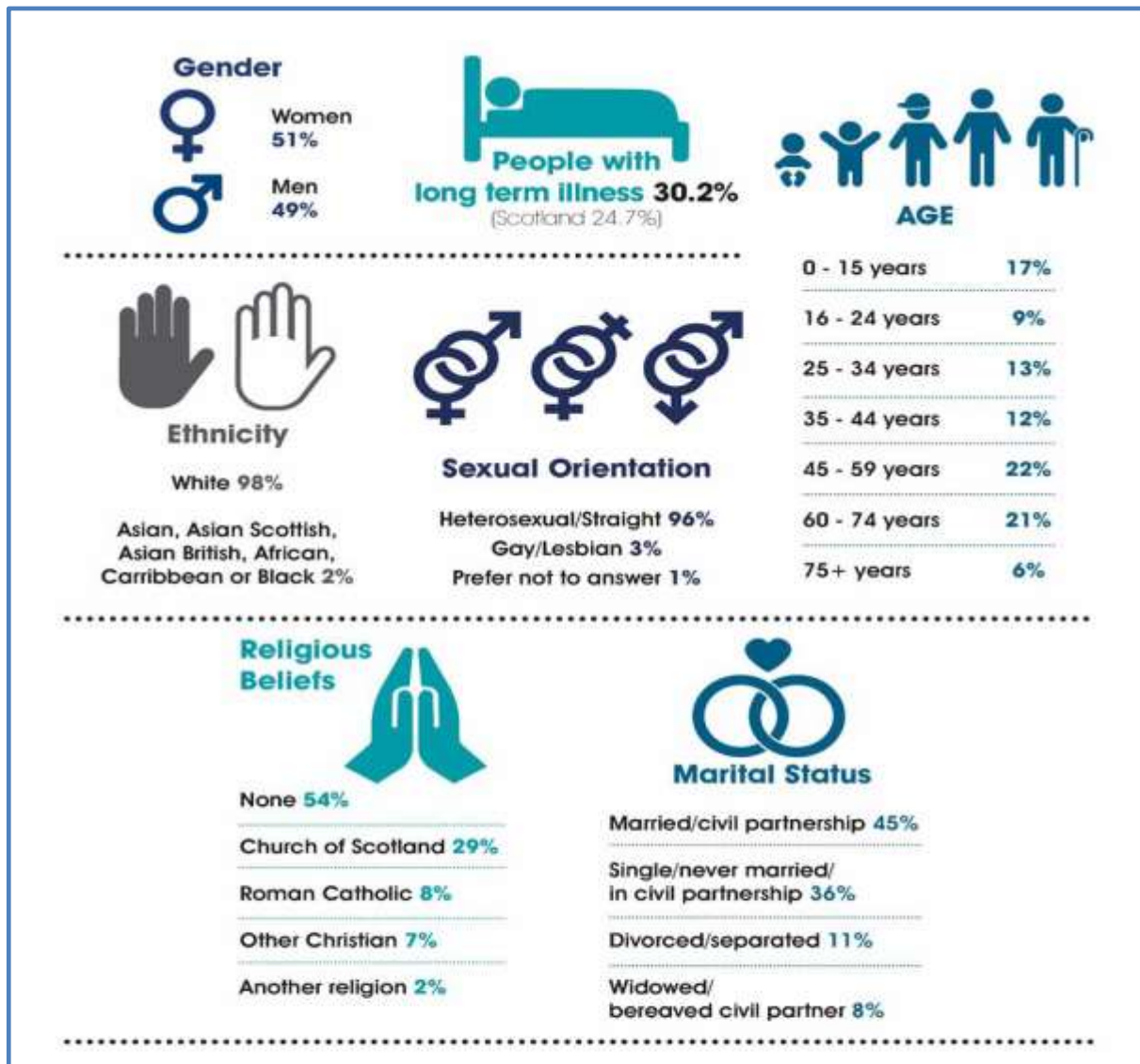
As part of the East Ayrshire response to the COVID-19 public health crisis the Partnership has provided vital front-line services and advocacy for equality and marginalised groups and communities. In doing so we have provided practical grass-roots support to meet the rights and needs of those people in our communities who were facing additional risks due to inequality, abuse and disadvantage.

Case Study: The East Ayrshire Violence against Women Partnership (EAVAWP) has continued to work to achieve the outcomes set out in the national Equally Safe strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. The EAVAWP responded to increasing need in 2020/21, associated with circumstances relating to social restrictions. Services quickly adapted to new landscapes and utilised different methods to support families. This included ensuring refuge and temporary homeless accommodation was available, securing PPE for staff, supporting staff to work from home and providing digital, safety, financial and wellbeing resources to families. The Violence Against Women Operational Oversight Group was formed in April 2020 to ensure multi-agency public protection activities retained a focus on violence against women and girls' issues during the pandemic. The group met regularly, bringing together operational members to provide service updates.

The Partnership continues to assess the impact of the pandemic on equality groups and as part of our recovery and renewal agenda we have sought to identify and implement specific improvements to enhance the life chances of disadvantaged and marginalised groups and to achieve practical improvements for all individuals in East Ayrshire who experience discrimination and disadvantage.

2. EAST AYRSHIRE EQUALITY PROFILE

East Ayrshire is a diverse area covering some 490 square miles with a population of 122,010 people spread over both urban and rural communities. East Ayrshire is not projected to see a significant change in its demographic characteristics over the next decade and the population is expected to remain relatively static. The equality profile from the Household Survey 2018 is shown below.



Also, we know that there has been a slight increase in our black and ethnic minority communities due to the Refugee Programme, however this is not expected to have a significant impact overall to our demographic profile. The two largest protected characteristic groupings in East Ayrshire still remain age and disability.

3. EQUALITY LEGISLATION AND OUR LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Equality Act 2010 became law on 1 October 2010 and replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplified the law into a single source and ensures that everyone who is protected under law from discrimination, harassment or victimisation is afforded the same level of protection.

The Equality Act introduced the concept of nine protected characteristics (PCs), namely:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation.
- Marriage and civil partnership

On 5 April 2011, the Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty (also known as the General Equality Duty) which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

On 27 May 2012, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 came into force. The purpose of the specific duties in Scotland is to help public bodies, such as the Council, in their performance of the general equality duty. The Specific Duties place a statutory duty on the Council to:

- Report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty;
- Publish equality outcomes and report progress;
- Assess and review policies and practices;

- Gather and use employment information;
- Publish gender pay gap information;
- Publish statements on equal pay;
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement; and
- Publish in a manner that is accessible.

The Ayrshire Shared Equality Outcomes Partnership, which is comprised of the East Ayrshire HSCP and other Ayrshire public sector organisations, published its second set of Shared Equality Outcomes in 2021.

These outcomes are that, in Ayrshire:

- People experience safe and inclusive communities
- People have equal opportunity to access and shape our public services
- People have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life
- Public bodies will be inclusive and diverse employers

In addition to sharing outcomes, the pan Ayrshire group has also developed a supporting action plan to outline the activities being undertaken by partners to advance and realise each of the shared Ayrshire equality outcomes.

As part of the public sector equality duty, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership is required to publish a report on its progress towards meeting its equality outcomes and mainstreaming equality every two years. Our previous report on progress towards meeting our Equality Outcomes was published in 2020 and the last report on mainstreaming equalities was published in 2021. This report will bring reporting on both mainstreaming and equality outcomes together and will align our reporting to the schedule set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 National Policy Context

The development of public policy on equalities issues has become a central plank on discussions about the shape of our society and the lives we lead. In the last 2 years the Scottish Parliament has shown decisive leadership in strengthening legislation in this area. Scotland has become the first country in the UK to adopt the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. This forward-looking rights-based approach will make it unlawful for public authorities to act

incompatibly with UNCRC requirements, and empower children young people and their representatives. The Scottish Parliament has also taken steps to further protect victims and communities targeted by hate crime by passing the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill.

In January 2021 the Scottish Renewal Advisory Board published their report 'If Not Now, When', which includes 'calls to action' on many aspects of life that have equality factors and considerations, including housing, food accessibility, the incorporation of human rights law into Scots law to ensure protection for those with protected characteristics, and realising disabled person's rights in full. As this work develops, we will ensure that this mainstreaming plan accounts for any measures being introduced to advance equalities issues.

As noted, tackling inequality is already central to the Scottish Government's wider policy agenda with many actions being taken forward or planned, including;

- The Race Equality Action Plan
- The Gender Pay Gap Action Plan
- A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People
- Employment Action Plan
- The British Sign Language Action Plan
- A Fairer Scotland for Older People
- A Connected Scotland (strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness)

4.2 Local Policy Context

East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-30

The East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-30 is the sovereign and overarching planning document for East Ayrshire, providing the local strategic policy framework for the delivery of public services by all partners. The vision set out in the Community Plan is that:

“East Ayrshire is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.”

Implementation of the Community Plan is through three thematic Delivery Plans, namely Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing. The Health and Social Care Partnership has a lead role in taking forward the strategic priorities under the Wellbeing theme of the Community Plan, which are:

- Children and young people, including those in early years and their carers, are supported to be active, healthy and to reach their potential at all life stages.
- All residents are given the opportunity to improve their wellbeing, to lead an active, healthy life and to make positive lifestyle choices.
- Older people and adults who require support and their carers are included and empowered to live the healthiest life possible.
- Communities are supported to address the impact that inequalities have on the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Tackling inequalities including health inequalities is a cross cutting priority for the Community Planning Partnership ('CPP') in East Ayrshire and is at the core of the Wellbeing Delivery Plan which the Partnership leads on behalf of the CPP. Working with our partners across third sector, Public Health, Education and Vibrant Communities supports the delivery of the Wellbeing Delivery Plan and how our activities contribute to mitigating, preventing and undoing the causes and effects of inequality.

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2021 - 2030

The East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2021 – 30 details how we can best meet the national outcomes and continue to improve outcomes for the people of East Ayrshire by delivering on our vision of:

Working together with all of our communities to improve and sustain wellbeing, care and promote equity

The Partnership strongly believes that reducing the impact that inequalities have on our communities is of paramount importance and the commitments we have made within the Strategic Plan 2021-30 are designed to engender a culture which promotes equality, values diversity, protects human rights and social justice and tackles discrimination experienced by our workforce and also our residents.

Annual Service Improvement Plans

Each of the Partnership service areas publish an annual Service Improvement Plan (SIP). From April 2021 these service areas include;

- Children's Health, Care and Justice Services.
- Primary Care and Out of Hours Community Response Services
- Wellbeing and Recovery Services
- Locality Services
- Allied Health Professionals

The SIPs are a key mechanism for setting out service level contributions to the delivery of the Health and Social Care Partnership's priorities and they contribute also to the Wellbeing theme of the Community Plan 2015-30.

5. EQUALITY AND OUR DECISION MAKING

Mainstreaming the equality duty is an organisational responsibility, and leadership and employee awareness is central to its success. The Integration Joint Board has worked closely with our corporate partners in East Ayrshire Council to develop a range of mechanisms and processes to ensure that consideration of equalities underpins everything we do and that there is effective leadership at all levels.

5.1 Corporate Equalities Strategy Group

The Integration Joint Board continues to support the work of East Ayrshire Council by linking into the Corporate Equalities Strategy Group, which enables the co-ordination of actions and responses related to East Ayrshire's Equality Outcomes; where appropriate. The Partnership is represented on East Ayrshire Council's Corporate Equalities Strategy Group (CESG), which is chaired by the Chief Executive and comprises representation at a chief officer level from all departments of the Council. The Group ensures a strategic approach to the equalities agenda across the Council; ensures effective monitoring in relation to equality issues; and maintains a consistency of approach to equality issues with particular emphasis on the continuation of mainstreaming equalities.

5.2 East Ayrshire Equalities Forum

The Partnership is represented on the East Ayrshire Council Equalities Forum, which is chaired by the Elected Member for Equality, Inclusion and Poverty. The Forum comprises individuals and members of groups, representing all of the protected characteristics; Elected Members; Council officers and partner representatives.

The Equalities Forum meets twice per year and, in addition, an annual equalities event is held, which reviews achievements in the previous year and identifies issues for consideration in the coming twelve months. Equalities Forum members have discussed and debated a wide range of issues, including communication, promoting citizenship, transport issues, Integrated Health and Social Care and the potential impact of Welfare Reform.

The Forum continues to grow in membership with the group widened to represent religious establishments, Tenant's Associations, and LGBTQ, a local group representing lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and people who are questioning their sexual orientation.

Equality Champions

5.3 Ayrshire Equality Partnership

The Partnership is represented on the Ayrshire Equality Partnership (AEP), which is made up of all three Ayrshire Local Authorities and H&SCPs, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Procurator Fiscal. The AEP takes forward the shared equalities agenda across Ayrshire.

6. MAINSTREAMING THE EQUALITY DUTY

Mainstreaming the equality duty simply means integrating equality into the day-to-day processes and activities of the Partnership. This means considering the impact of our actions on all the people who use our services, particularly those who have a protected characteristic.

Mainstreaming the equality duty has a number of benefits including:

- equality becomes part of our structures, behaviours and culture
- we can demonstrate how equality is built into everything we do

- contributing to continuous improvement and fairer and better performance

The work of the Partnership is focused on supporting vulnerable people and those who often face discrimination or unfair treatment and in doing so we ensure that for each need of the general equality duty we consider each of the protected characteristics.

The following sections highlight how the Partnership have mainstreamed equalities into our activities to date.

6.1 Mainstreaming Equalities in Service Provision

Mainstreaming the equality duty is an organisational responsibility, and leadership and employee awareness is central to its success. The Partnership utilises a range of mechanisms and processes to ensure that consideration of equalities underpins everything we do and that there is effective leadership at all levels.

As we have consistently demonstrated over the life of the Partnership, we have strived to not only to meet our duties under the equalities legislation but also to ensure that equality becomes part of everything we do, within our structures, behaviours and culture.

Embedding Equality Awareness

The Partnership provides induction training to all our new staff, which includes an overview of equalities legislation and how it applies to our work, our duties under the legislation and the importance of ensuring that all of our services are inclusive.

Equality Impact Assessments

We continue to undertake Equality Impact Assessments on any new policies or budget proposals that are likely to have an impact on local people, the workforce or other stakeholders.

Since the Partnership's inception, we have applied the same Equality Impact Assessment process to both Council and NHS budget proposals, which has enabled a greater level of consistency in equality impact assessments across our Integration Partners. This has been a useful mechanism to both embed equalities practise across the full portfolio of health and care services and further the process of integration.

Equality Monitoring

The Liquid Logic management information system utilised by the Partnership captures information on every service user's ethnicity, age, and gender, as well as their main

client group to determine any disability or disabilities. There is also optional information collected on first language and religion. This classification information is built into operational reports that will show service activity by client and their equality characteristics. In turn this allows the department to monitor uptake of service and service activity by these characteristics.

Informing our Communities

Accessible information remains a key element for all communities and this has been evident through all our efforts through COVID-19.

During the pandemic we have provided information on safety, national facts, sources of information and support in various languages and formats. Where possible, BSL information was also produced in a timely manner. The platforms we use to share this information included our website, our social media platforms, digital bulletins, partnership websites, mailing lists and through the support of 3rd sector and volunteers who were in direct contact with communities.

6.2 Mainstreaming Equalities in Stakeholder Engagement

Health and social care services are undergoing extensive transformational change to better meet the demands of changes in our population. To ensure consideration of equality is at the front and centre of our response to this transformational change, the Partnership has further developed our approaches to engagement and communication with our staff, members of the public, carers, and people who use our services.

The Partnership implemented a revised Communication Strategy in 2021 which sets out the approach to be taken by the Partnership to facilitate transformational change.

We have identified local people as key partners in improving the health wellbeing of the residents of East Ayrshire. We believe that engaging with local people and the people who use services, and actively involving them in decision making and in the development of services, is central to enabling health and care services become more responsive to meeting the needs and improving the quality of life of our residents.

We work closely with our communities, listening to their concerns, views and ideas, support them to optimise and make full use of their strengths, skills and assets and enable them to have their voice heard in decisions that affect them.

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

We support our staff to think differently when working with local people, to consider the natural supports available from family, friends and local organisations and groups in order to provide a more holistic, community based approach to health and care, that respects their rights as individuals

As a result of COVID lockdown and social distancing restrictions, the Partnership was required to look at different ways that would allow us to continue to remain connected and effectively communicate, engage and deliver services to our residents and communities. In responding to this challenge the Partnership established an engagement framework, which focused primarily on digital communication methods and digital platforms to remain connected. This approach has been very effective in reaching out across all of our communities and capturing the views of our residents and users of our services. An outline of the key communication methods utilised by the Partnership during the COVID pandemic are provided below.

- Online surveying of service users, residents and key stakeholders
- Conducting online focus groups
- Use of infographics and data visualisations to inform community debates
- Utilising online social media platforms for discussion
- Hosting online community conferences
- Holding webinars with partners and service

Case Study: The Connecting Scotland Programme was set up by the Scottish Government in response to the COVID pandemic with the aim of ensuring digitally excluded people were able to access online facilities. This was achieved by providing eligible people with a device, connectivity and dedicated support to help realise the

benefits of the internet, whilst also supporting them to develop their digital skills. The table below summarises East Ayrshire's allocation of the Programme to date, the number of devices issued and the targeted groups:

PROGRAMME	TARGETED GROUP(S)	AWARDED
Phase 1	People at risk of isolation as a result of Shielding	217
Phase 2	Families with children Care leavers	608
Winter Support Package	Older and/or disabled people	136
Care Homes	Older people	26
TOTAL		987

The Programme has transformed the lives of almost 1,000 people in East Ayrshire by supporting them to keep in touch with their family and friends and reduce the feeling of isolation. The case studies below demonstrate the life changing impact this programme is making.

In this period the Partnership has also gave consideration to those who are digitally excluded and provided opportunities to ensure that all our residents and service users have been made aware of ongoing developments and provided with the opportunity to contribute. We have done this through;

- Engaging with local media articles
- Conducting socially distanced outdoor engagement events
- Delivering hard copy surveys to households
- Conducting tele surveys
- Working with community groups, faith groups etc. to reach communities

Case Study: The East Ayrshire Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Pathfinder Programme progressed during 2020/21, with the aim of utilising TEC as a key enabler to transform support for people aged 65 and over and people with long term conditions living in the Irvine Valley. The programme adopted the Scottish Approach to Service Design to engage with those living and working in the Irvine Valley to gain an understanding of local issues and views on health, social care and wellbeing services, technology and TEC. The Pathfinder team have worked remotely since March 2020 and during this

period, community and stakeholder engagement has continued through socially distanced means, including online interviews, an online survey and paper questionnaires. The Programme has engaged with over 160 participants in the Irvine Valley. An analysis of all research and data collected to date was undertaken and a number of core insights were collated to inform the key learnings and outputs of the Pathfinder Programme.

6.3 Mainstreaming Equalities in Partnership Working

Partnership Culture

The Partnership is committed to listening and responding to all of our citizens and we understand East Ayrshire's challenges because participation of people who use health and social care services, their families and carers and our local communities and partners is central to the way we work. Our strategic priorities are based on what people and partners in localities told us during the Wellbeing Community Conversation. We strongly believe that reducing the impact that inequalities have on local people and communities is of paramount importance and the commitments we have made within our Strategic Plan are designed to engender a culture which; promotes equality; values diversity; protects human rights and social justice and tackles discrimination for both our workforce and also our residents.

We work in Localities with local people and public, third and independent sector organisations to improve health and wellbeing in their area. In each of our three localities our Locality Groups play an active part in planning and implementing these improvements, maximising the contributions of local assets and partners.

Case Study: Families and individuals that are being re-settled in East Ayrshire have been supported through the provision of warm, safe and secure homes and support staff have developed their skills in working with vulnerable people who are fleeing conflict or persecution. Support staff have also worked closely with other agencies to ensure those being re-settled are coached with the appropriate skills in: managing a tenancy, accessing health services, accessing education / English language classes and accessing community resources to facilitate integration within our local communities, in addition to being provided with emotional support to manage previous trauma

experience. This model connects families and young people to local services and assets that will help them thrive, grow and build a network of support that enables freestanding and sustainable independence.

East Ayrshire Violence against Women Partnership (EVAWP)

At local level, the EVAWP recognises that it is a multi-agency approach which will lead to success and the partnership will fully embrace the four priorities of Equally Safe, in conducting its work. EVAWP is a multi-agency partnership established with the aim of addressing violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse and gender based violence, within the strategic framework of the East Ayrshire Community Plan, which is the sovereign and overarching planning document for East Ayrshire. EVAWP contributes to the Safer Communities and Wellbeing themes of the Community Plan through its work to; reduce inequality and build a fairer and more inclusive East Ayrshire, protect vulnerable people and families, encourage responsible citizenship and support positive health and wellbeing outcomes across the lifespan. EVAWP is comprised of East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College, the Third Sector, HMP Kilmarnock and wider East Ayrshire Council services across Education, Housing, Corporate Equalities, Vibrant Communities, Early Years and Community Safety services.

The EVAWP Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024 outlines the key themes that EVAWP has identified to continue to implement Equally Safe in East Ayrshire and work towards preventing and eradicating all forms of VAWG in East Ayrshire. Using a co-ordinated approach, the partnership will achieve this by:

- Leadership and governance
- Promoting equality
- Support needs - Specialist Services
- Preventing violence - Early intervention
- Interventions with perpetrators and building an evidence base of unmet need
- Engaging with women and girls with lived experience
- Learning together by building up local evidence
- Learning and development
- Monitoring and evaluating our progress

The Plan sets out how the EAVAWP will tackle violence against women over the next 3 years, working in partnership to ensure women experiencing domestic abuse are supported.

During the 16 Days of Violence against Women Campaign in November 2020, the partnership organised a series of online seminars and conference to address issues particularly looking at the impact of Covid-19 and the increase in reported domestic violence incidents. These sessions were well received and well attended.

Case Study: In response to the increased risk of harm for vulnerable people during the COVID pandemic, the HSCP established a Multi-Agency Operational Oversight process for Public Protection in April 2021. The operational oversight groups identified risks emerging in real-time as a specific consequence of the pandemic and its impact on people and families at risk of harm. As a result of the multi-agency mitigation taking place during the course of the pandemic, new and effective responses were developed and delivered at speed to ensure that people were protected from harm. Examples include the development of local Safe Spaces for women experiencing violence and abuse, new referral pathways into mental health services, daily risk management meetings to identify and support vulnerable people, bespoke housing and support packages for people released early from prison, increased Call Blocker packages for people at risk of scams and fraud, targeted alcohol interventions & public messaging, the launch of Hoarding Guidance and training and an Ayrshire wide public awareness communication campaign 'Here to Help'.

6.4 Mainstreaming Equalities in Employee Development

Developing our Workforce

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership greatly values the contribution of all employees who work in the delivery of services to local communities and we are committed to equality and to treating all of our workforce with the dignity, respect and consideration they deserve and helping staff to reach their full potential at work. We also recognise that a diverse organisation with a range of abilities, experience and skills is more likely to be sensitive to the needs of the diverse community that we serve.

As outlined in our previous mainstreaming reports, the Partnership continues to provide opportunities for flexible working practices balancing both individual and organisational needs. An initiative to embed FACE qualities and behaviours across all East Ayrshire Council services, including those delivering Partnership services, commenced in December 2018. FACE represents the qualities and behaviours that residents of East Ayrshire feel we should all demonstrate, both now and into the future, namely Flexible, Approachable, Caring and Empowered.

The framework used to embed FACE is fully aligned with the equalities agenda in terms of inclusion and equal opportunity and has been incorporated into the Council's Workforce Plan and People Strategy to inform recruitment and development of the workforce. By embedding FACE in the workforce and communities the aim is to strengthen the relationships that will help us to transform and build a fairer, kinder and more connected East Ayrshire.

Case Study: During the pandemic the mental health of our workforce has continued to be adversely effected as they have experienced a range of feelings including fear about their own health, guilt, grief and exhaustion. To support our workforce in this difficult period we have invested in mental health and wellbeing support, offering a variety of support options to reach as much of the workforce as possible. The health and wellbeing of our workforce is a key priority and we are committed to providing timely and effective support where necessary. As we move forward with our recovery and renewal, it is only with a healthy, skilled and sustainable workforce that we will be able to progress our transformational change strategies.

The Partnership's approach to collaborative working with our stakeholders promotes equality, values diversity, protects human rights and tackles discrimination. We recognise that we do not deliver services in isolation and the contribution of partners from all sectors is essential to ensuring we have a workforce fit for the future and which is integrated and puts people at the heart of all we do. As we transform our services our focus is increasingly on working in partnership to identify positive outcomes for individuals rather than how we provide or deliver services and our workforce is the key to supporting engagement with people who use our services in the design and delivery of care and support.

Equality and Diversity training is provided for Elected Members and is mandatory for all employees. It is delivered through an online training course designed in Partnership with East Ayrshire Council Organisational Development Team and the Corporate Officer (Equality and Diversity). Face-to-face courses are also delivered for those employees who are unable to undertake the e-learning course.

We continue to provide all our staff with access to appropriate training to ensure that we build staff confidence, and professional assurance, to deliver high quality accessible services to the people of East Ayrshire and a range of e-learning courses are currently available to raise awareness of equality issues in the workplace and in relation to our Service delivery. These include:

- LGBT Training
- Respectful Relationships
- PREVENT
- Nil By Mouth

A wide range of other equalities based training and development opportunities are offered to Partnership staff by a host of different partner agencies, including Women's Aid, Vibrant Communities, Social Work Learning and Development Team, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Corporate Equalities Section and the Organisational Development Team. These cover guidance and awareness training for working with vulnerable people who may be covered by protected characteristics. Some of the training courses provided over the last number of years include:

- Awareness of the Adult Support and Protection Act 2007
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Autism Awareness/ Learning Disability/ Dementia / Parkinson's Awareness
- Understanding the Dynamics of Domestic Abuse
- Children & Young People's Experiences of Domestic Abuse
- Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Various Welfare rights and benefits courses (including awareness of benefits for older people)

6.5 Mainstreaming Equalities in Procurement

Procurement

Procurement is undertaken by East Ayrshire Council or NHS Ayrshire and Arran in line with their respective procurement strategies and policies.

The Equality Act 2010 (Public sector equality duty) or 'general duty' and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 is the legislative framework that underpins equality when procuring services.

The 'general duty' in procurement means that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct; advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic for all procurements undertaken. The 2012 Regulations specifically require an authority to consider its' equality duty when awarding contracts within its award criteria.

All procurement activity by East Ayrshire Council is required to meet basic principles of transparency, accountability, fairness and proportionality. The Council procurement documentation is regularly reviewed to meet the requirements of new legislation and case law and has been examined in the context of the Equality Act 2010 and supporting guidance.

The Council continues to ensure equality is mainstreamed into our procurement processes including:

- Carrying out public procurement, and mainstreaming the general equality duty, through use of the European Single Procurement Document by Scottish Government which is used as a template for the selection of suppliers including Equality and Diversity.
- Agreement that the degree to which equality and diversity requirements are specified and incorporated within procurement documentation would vary according to the goods, services or works being purchased and these are assessed on a case by case basis.