



East Ayrshire's **CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN** 2021 – 2024

EAST AYRSHIRE

Health & Social Care
Partnership

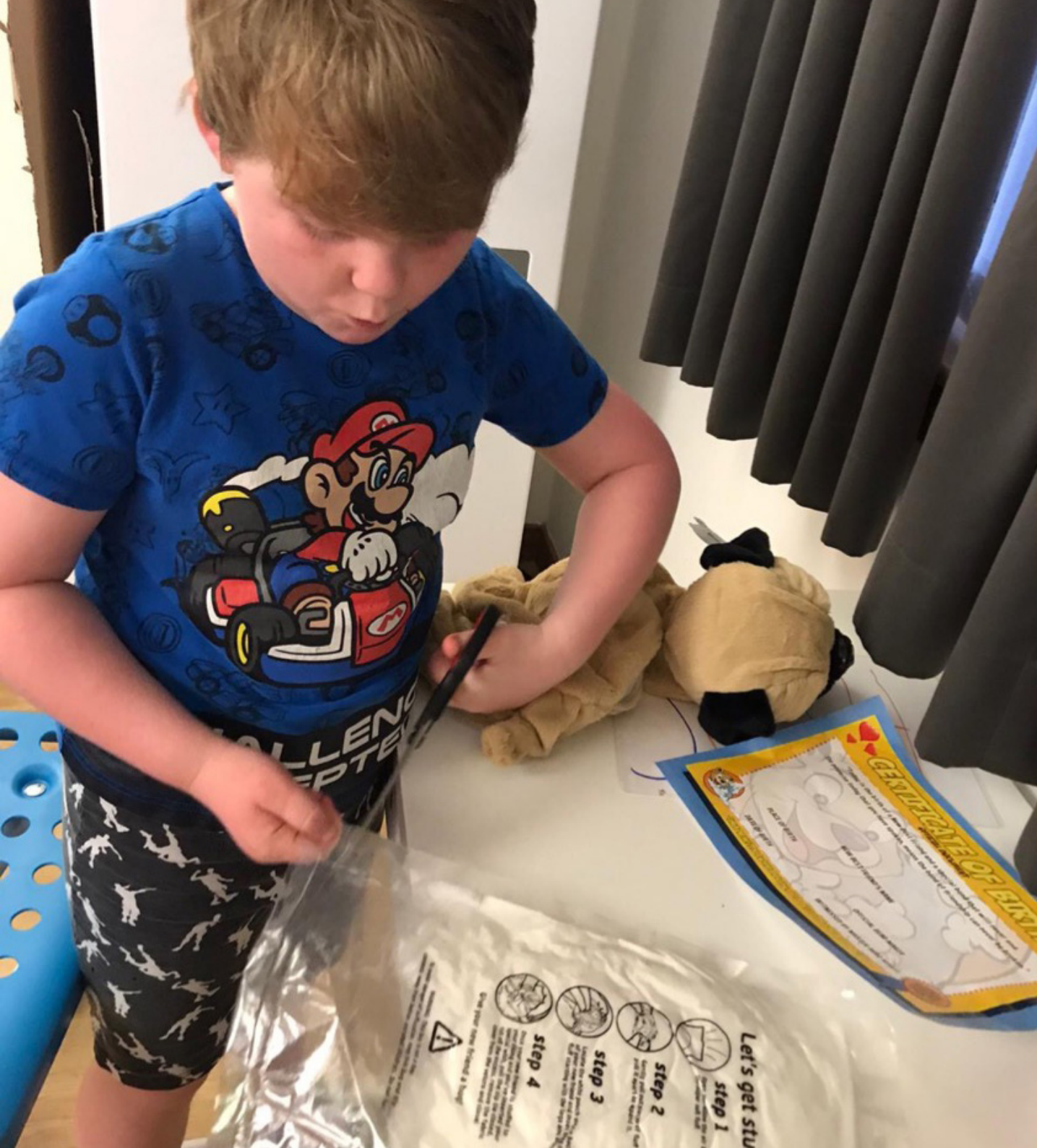


Our children and young people are amazing and they make an important contribution to our communities. We need to help them be the best they can be, despite any adversity they may face.

Community parenting is our approach to corporate parenting in East Ayrshire. This action plan describes how we will work together to support care experienced children and young people and make sure they are well, loved, safe and cared for. We have identified our priority areas of work that will allow us to achieve this, and how we aim to act while we deliver these.

Corporate parents are the public bodies that work together to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of looked after children, young people and care leavers.





Setting the scene

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 outlines duties as responsibilities on corporate parents. The act names a number of bodies who have a duty to fulfil the role of corporate parents. The full act can be found on the [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) website.

The act also places a responsibility on corporate parents to produce a corporate parenting action plan and report annually to Scottish Ministers on the progress they have made.

In February 2020 the Independent Care Review published The Promise. This is a significant review that provides very strong messages to Scotland on the need to be better parents for our care experienced young people. Our work on community parenting is also driven by our commitment to Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

Our collaboration and working together is strong in East Ayrshire. We have built this plan with our children, young people and community parents, and we will continue to work with you to make sure we can evolve this plan together as we find new and emerging themes.

Our Priorities

Staying Together

- Work relentlessly to keep families living together where it is safe to do so
- Make sure we do our best to keep brothers and sisters together and when this is not possible make sure they have contact as often as possible
- Where someone cannot continue to live with their family, we will strive to achieve a permanent place for them to live without delay
- We will support children and young people to develop and maintain relationships with the people that matter the most to them.

Participation and Involvement

- Involve children and young people in all decisions made about them by creating new ways of working that supports them to be able to do this in a way they want and need
- Listen to all young people's point of view, even if we don't agree
- Ensure we move on from consulting to truly designing services together with our care experienced young people through collaboration
- Support our care experienced young people to contribute to local and national forums about care experience and have a strong voice
- Be a rights defender and ensure children know their rights and how to exercise them

Achieving

- Make sure young people get the help that they need with education
- Give care experienced young people job opportunities, and understand that care experienced young people usually don't have mums and dads to help them get jobs
- Provide increased opportunities for our children, young people and young adults to achieve in the wider world in different ways
- Ensure we celebrate the efforts and achievements made by children and young people

Relationships and Community

- Support young people and children to travel to see family and friends to help rebuild relationships
- Commit to provide and undertake training on our community parenting responsibilities and more communication between community parents
- Help young people join in with their communities by providing and supporting community activity programmes
- Find creative ways for young people to keep in touch with their family, social worker and corporate parents

Health and Wellbeing

- Provide opportunities for our children, young people and young adults to experience the best physical health
- Support our young people to feel emotionally well and build their strength and resilience to recover from difficult experiences and trauma
- Provide specialist mental health support for our children, young people and young adults in an easy and accessible way at the point they decide they need help



How we will do this

Each of our priorities will be driven forward by a group of community parents with experience, skills and knowledge in the specific area. They will communicate regularly with each other and agree on how they will work collaboratively. The groups will work closely with our care experienced young people, our communities and other stakeholders to implement our plan and ensure it is making a difference.

The groups will all identify what outcomes they need to achieve to meet our priorities. They will decide what actions they need to take to get there, and how they will know when this has happened. Performance measures and indicators will tell the story of how well we are doing. These indicators will be our evidence to show when we have achieved success, but will also help us see where we need to do better.

These groups will use this information to provide progress updates to our community parenting strategic group which keeps an overview of how we are doing across all our priorities. To help them, we will develop a new performance reporting framework that will contain all the indicators, as well as a range of additional measures used across East Ayrshire and Scotland. Our community parenting strategic group will be co-chaired by care experienced young people who will be supported to undertake this role.



How we will act

As we introduce this plan, there are some key areas we would also like to focus on to further enhance the way we work. These will sit at the heart of our community parenting:

- Remove the stigma that exists of being care experienced through stronger working with our communities to be more caring, and challenging negative and unfair perceptions of our care experienced community.
- Ensure access to services is easy and normal. Every care experienced young person should be able to easily access services without having to worry about judgments or stigma. This should also apply to families and communities who we support at the earliest possible stage to help them stay together.
- Change the language we use to ensure it carries warmth, compassion and respect.



What have we achieved so far?

Shannon's Box is delivered to all young people entering care in East Ayrshire. The box was designed by care experienced young people and contains items that are designed to help a young person settle and know that they are not alone. Some of the children who were given Shannon's Box were invited to Bute House to meet the First Minister. They said how much they liked the box and it gave them comfort. An exciting and enjoyable trip to Edinburgh.

A number of care experienced young people participated in residential sailing voyages run by the Ocean Youth Trust to help young people develop social and life skills and build self-confidence.

Care Leavers Week 2020 was very different. We couldn't meet to cook and eat together so we had a virtual event, but the food was still very good! Some of our young people painted pebbles and had a physically distanced picnic to celebrate the week.

We have provided hundreds of devices to young people and care leavers through the Connecting Scotland Programme. We have supported them to be able to get the best use of these and the feedback has been tremendous. Particular themes our young people highlight are the ability to stay connected to family and friends and continue to achieve in further education.



We have maintained relationships with our children and young people throughout restrictions in creative ways, such as using Joe Wicks' online exercise sessions with children, young people and their families on Zoom, and also as part of virtual family contacts. To demonstrate the importance of social distancing to younger children, we've used hula-hoops as a creative and fun way of physically showing the two metre space required during the restrictions.

The Care Experienced Sports Club is a partnership between Active Schools, Ayrshire College and The Kris Boyd Charity. At the Care Leavers Celebration Event and the Corporate Parenting Football Festival young people told us there was a need for a sports club only for care experienced young people. Ayrshire College provided the venue for the sports club and their sports students to coach at this targeted sports club. Five young people from East Ayrshire attended the sports club on a weekly basis. Each young person received a free football kit to remove any stigma, and walking buses were provided from local primary schools if needed to make sure transport was not a barrier.

We have recently changed our structure and the way we meet to help progress our work around community parenting.

Our new way will help us:

- Work even stronger together across all community parents and priorities to promote one vision
- Ensure our priorities are informed by what our care experienced young people tell us is most important to them
- Achieve our ambitions and be able to demonstrate what we have done and how we succeeded
- Continue to change and evolve as we learn from what has worked well and what hasn't

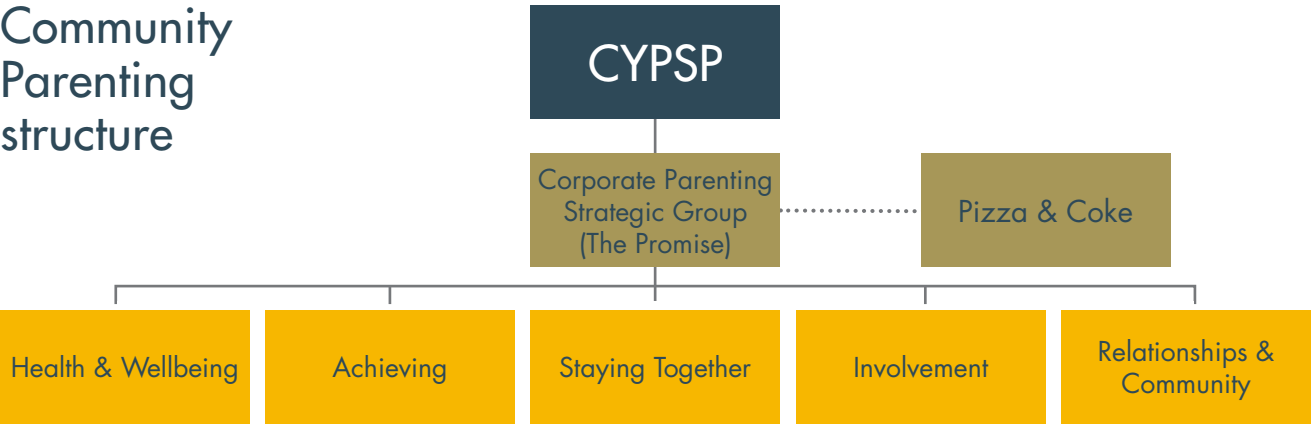
Pizza and Coke is the way our care experienced young people and our elected members come together to share stories, make requests and discuss what we need to do better and what we are doing well.

Connecting Voices is our approach to ensure our young people have a voice and inform what we do. In 2019 our care experienced young people produced their own 'ask' of us as community parents. This resulted in our East Ayrshire Promise that made a commitment to our care experienced young people.

Following consultation and network events involving a range of community parents and young people we agreed our new East Ayrshire Community Parenting Action Plan 2021-24 would be based upon our East Ayrshire Promise and linked closely to our new East Ayrshire Children and Young People Plan 2020-23: East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-23.

This Community Parenting plan also embeds the messages from the Independent Care Review (The Promise) which aligns very well with our East Ayrshire Promise, as well as our East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Wellbeing Delivery Plan and East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan.

Community Parenting structure



East Ayrshire Promise

Our Corporate Parents will:

Make sure we do our best to keep brothers and sisters together and when this is not possible make sure they have contact as often as possible.

Involve children and young people in all decisions made about them.

Listen to all young people's point of view even if we don't agree.

Make sure young people get the help that they need with education.

Take a chance by giving care experienced young people jobs but also understand that care experienced young people usually don't have mums and dads to help them get jobs.

Promote young care leavers in the correct way by celebrating their achievements.

Support young people and children to travel to see family and friends to help rebuild relationships

Commit to undertake training on our corporate parenting responsibilities and more communication between them.

Help young people to fit into their communities by providing and supporting community activity programmes.

Find creative ways i.e. social media for young people to keep in touch with their family, social worker and corporate parents.



Children and Young People in East Ayrshire

Taking care of children and young people in East Ayrshire is incredibly important to us, and to support them to lead bright and positive futures. We listen and we have a good understanding of their hopes and the challenges they face. Our Community Parenting Plan will help us to keep the promise we have committed to. It will make sure that we look at what's important, keep aiming to make things better, and help make East Ayrshire a great place to live and grow up in.

Children Looked After

347 children and young people at March 2020



Children in Poverty

decreased from 28% to 26%

Home Link Worker Support

656 vulnerable families supported, 67% cases with a positive outcome



Looked After Young People in Positive Destinations

56% in East Ayrshire compared to 71% in Scotland

Unemployment (16-24 age)

decreased from 23.2% to 11.5%

Young Carers



1,332 young carers registered with East Ayrshire Carers Centre at March 2020

Covid-19

We commenced our new action plan at the early stages of Covid-19 which has had a significant impact in how all of us live and work to achieve our ambitions. This has had an impact on how we have been able to progress this plan, in particular our hope around wider consultation with our young people. However we have still managed to do this through alternative means such as Pizza & Coke, direct engagement with our care experienced community and others.

Given Covid-19 restrictions continue to impact on the way our care experienced young people live, our priorities and outcome measures will consider this to ensure we deliver an action plan that both takes account for current circumstances as well as planning for the future.

As community parents, we
will work hard every day
to #KeepThePromise for
children and young people
in East Ayrshire.

