

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

15 November 2021

LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT

**Report by Depute Director (Communities) and Child Poverty Lead, Perth & Kinross Council
(Report No. 21/210)**

This report presents the 3rd Perth & Kinross Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) November 2020 – May 2021, to be submitted to the Scottish Government. It provides a brief update following the previous report which covered the period May 2019 – November 2020.

The Update Report has also been approved by NHS Tayside and considered by the Community Planning Partnership on 22 October 2021.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This last year has been particularly difficult – and the challenge facing us has dramatically increased, bringing into even greater focus a need for an effective partnership response to tackling child poverty in our area. Child poverty was already increasing prior to the pandemic however early indicators are that the impact of Covid-19 on people living in poverty will be severe.
- 1.2 The latest Child Poverty figures for Perth and Kinross show that Child Poverty increased by 2.7% between 2015 and 2020 increasing the numbers of children living in poverty from 4,869 to 5,515 (22.6%). These are pre- covid19 figures and are likely to underestimate the number of children living in poverty across Perth & Kinross.
- 1.3 Whilst no single service or agency has the power to end child poverty, there is much that we can do to make the lives and life chances of those living in poverty better and brighter. We have considerable influence as a local authority. We can:
 - create and persuade others to create good jobs that pay fair wages.
 - strive to close the educational attainment gap to ensure the next generation of children don't live in poverty.
 - help to put more money in the pockets of families in poverty through affordable rents, energy efficiency and welfare rights.
 - work with and within our communities to ensure no child ever goes hungry.
 - ensure that every child gets the chance to live life well and to fully engage in their own development.
- 1.4 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2019 received royal assent in December 2017. The act sets out ambitious targets to tackle and eradicate child poverty by 2030 with interim targets set for 2023.

- 1.5 The Scottish Government produced their report “Every child, every chance” in March 2018. However, the act also placed a duty on local authorities to work with health partners to develop and produce their own Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPAR) and Action Plan. Progress updates on the plan are required to be published annually.
- 1.6 The key messages within “Every child, every chance” are: -
- a recognition that poverty is fundamentally about a lack of income and sets out the three main drivers of child poverty.
 - the LCPAR actions must prevent children and young people in poverty now becoming poor parents by 2030.
 - targets can only be achieved through partnership working.
 - meeting the targets requires a radical change.
 - a need to place a focus on families who are most at risk of poverty.
- 1.7 The Scottish Government agreed that year 2 reports could cover a longer timeframe to enable local authorities to focus on the Covid response. Feedback from the Improvement Service in relation to last year’s report -[All in- To End Child Poverty, Perth & Kinross Child Poverty Action Report 2020](#) was very positive, indicating that it was a strong and clear report, with many strengths and was reflective of strong partnership working. They were complimentary about our approach to understanding the lived experiences of child poverty and to understanding data and context to inform actions.
- 1.8 This year the Scottish Government have requested only short year 3 update reports, to capture progress made since the last report and enable all local authorities and health boards to re-set the reporting timetable following the pandemic. This third report therefore covers the period November 2020 to May 2021, it has been developed in collaboration with a range of partners.
- 1.9 The report and actions support the Community Planning Partnerships 5 new strategic priorities that will form the basis of the new Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:
- poverty
 - mental and physical wellbeing
 - digital participation
 - skills, learning and development
 - employability
- 1.10 The Perth and Kinross LCPAR (Appendix A) provides an overview of our understanding of the key drivers of child poverty here in Perth and Kinross, some of this is not new and many of the drivers are not unique to our area. However, we do have specific challenges, with the root causes of poverty appearing to be structural and related to local labour markets (low wage economy and incidence of precarious employment); the existence of a poverty premium exacerbated by higher costs of housing, childcare, transport, food and fuel in rural areas and digital exclusion due to poor connectivity, lack of

skills or inability to afford data packages or devices. The findings from research in Blairgowrie and the Glens highlight some of the specific challenges faced by people living in more remote and rural communities.

1.11 Although it will be some time before we fully understand the impacts of the Covid pandemic on our communities many families across Perth and Kinross are experiencing significant financial stress because of Covid19. The report highlights that some groups were and continue to be particularly vulnerable and provides an overview of Covid-19 impacts, highlighting the importance of the significant work that is underway to support households.

1.12 The Child Poverty Programme is cross cutting and involves a number of Council Services and Community Planning Partners. It is currently organised around 4 workstreams – each with its own delivery plan and targets. The workstreams are:

- Maximising Income from Employment
- Reducing the Cost of Living
- Maximising Income from Social Security and Benefits in Kind
- Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Governance is provided by a multi-agency Child Poverty Working Group involving officers from the Council and NHS Tayside.

1.13 The LCPAR summarises some of the many positive actions that all partners are progressing to mitigate the impacts of child poverty. It also sets out a number of initiatives underway or that we intend to move forward to further improve our approach to tackling child poverty in Perth and Kinross. In summary these are: -

- The co-production of a **Children's Scorecard** with the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit and parents from Priority Families. The Children's Scorecard will help to measure the reach and effectiveness of the Perth and Kinross Offer for children and families affected by poverty.
- A **Child Poverty Training Programme** for frontline workers and service managers which will help inform those who deliver and plan services about the particular challenges facing children and families living in poverty and equip them with the skills and confidence to embark on co-production and multi-agency collaborative working on innovative new approaches to alleviating child poverty.
- A **Social Needs Screening Project** will test the impact of Social Needs Screening and whether it results in better delivery and engagement with families affected by poverty.
- A **Good Food Network and Strategy** which aims to bring a broad range of stakeholders from the public, private and third sector to tackle food poverty and insecurity, to support food for health and wellbeing and sustainable food across Perth and Kinross.
- **Feeling the Pinch – a public awareness campaign** aimed at informing families who are struggling with the increased costs of winter on where to

get help accessing welfare rights, housing, heating and mental health support.

- The development of **child poverty programmes established initially in 2 pilot areas** to test people and place-based approaches. The focus of the pilot will be social needs screening, social prescribing, community capacity building, co-production with local communities to deliver new services or ways of working aimed at the mitigation of poverty and the broadening of opportunity for children and families affected by poverty.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 As the Community Plan is the strategic context within which our LCPAR is set, progress will be reported to the Community Planning Partnership Board, Perth and Kinross Council's Council meeting and the Public Health Child Poverty Working Group. This will ensure a consistent message and approach around tackling the drivers of child poverty.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 We know that over 5,500 children across Perth and Kinross are living in poverty. The negative impacts of poverty on each child cannot be underestimated, both in the short and longer term. This report sets out Perth and Kinross Councils commitment to tackling child poverty in the area. It demonstrates our understanding of child poverty in Perth and Kinross, the key areas of focus and the actions that we will continue to progress with our partners to ensure that child poverty is minimised and that all of our children are supported to live well.

- 3.2 It is recommended that Council:

- Notes the Local Child Poverty Action Report
- Notes the next steps and actions outlined within the Local Child Poverty Action Report
- Notes that feedback and further updates on the Local Child Poverty Action Report will be brought back to the Community Planning Partnership and then to Council.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	No
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	No
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan

- 1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement Perth and Kinross Council Corporate plan have five concurrent outcomes which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. All five outcomes are relevant to this report:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Proposals contained on this report support the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life.
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens.
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any future financial implications will be reported to the appropriate committee.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- a reduction in the number of children in Perth and Kinross living in poverty
 - fair and equitable access to services and support with a greater focus on prevention
 - greater awareness among communities about poverty and reduction in stigmatisation

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 The proposals recommended in this paper have been considered under the act and the pre-screening has identified that the proposals will have no environmental effects, it is therefore exempt. The reasons for concluding this is that the recommendations will have no environmental effects.

Sustainability

- 3.5 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change

(Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:

- in the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programmes.
- in a way that it considers most sustainable.

3.6 No steps are required to be undertaken in this area.

Legal and Governance

3.7 Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted and there are no direct legal implications of this report.

Risk

3.8 Any risks associated with this report will be mitigated by the monitoring and reporting procedures which have been established.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 This report and action plan has been developed with representation from across all services within the Council. All relevant Senior Management Teams have been consulted along with the Executive Officer Team.

External

4.2 This report and action plan has been developed in partnership with NHS Tayside and with representation from third sector organisations and approval by the Community Planning Partnership.

5. Communication

5.1 A communications plan will be developed to deliver key messages relating to child poverty to a wide range of audiences and communities.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2.1 Background papers referred to in the preparation of this report are referred to within the report.

3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1: Perth and Kinross Child Poverty Action Report 2020