

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Social Wellbeing Committee Meeting

29 November 2023

5TH LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT

Report by Director Strategy, People and Resources
(Report No. 23/339)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires Perth & Kinross Council and NHS Tayside to publish a Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) each year. This is the 5th report, and it presents an update on actions taken during 2022/23; the Child Poverty Action Plan for 23/24 and an update on progress with the Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2022 - 2026.
- 1.2 The LCPAR was circulated to and approved by the Community Planning Partnership on *5th October 2023* and was considered and endorsed by NHS Tayside on *10th October 2023*.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Housing & Social Wellbeing Committee:
 - I. Note the report.
 - II. Confirm their continued commitment to the strategic aims set out in the child poverty strategy:
 - a. To raise awareness about the causes and consequences of child poverty
 - b. To foster social cohesion and reduce stigma surrounding poverty for children and families
 - c. To reduce the negative effects of living in poverty for children and families
 - d. To enable children and families to prepare themselves for a life free from poverty
 - III. Re-affirm their commitment to the objectives of the Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 to work with NHS Tayside and the Community Planning Partners to:
 - Provide opportunities and support to enter, sustain and progress in work (employability and skills, housing and economic opportunity, connectivity and childcare)
 - Maximise the support available to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs (person-centred support, social security and income maximisation).
 - Supporting the next generation to survive and thrive

- Deliver a one council, whole family, whole community approach to connecting children and families to the help and support they need to mitigate and move beyond poverty

3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:

- Introduction and context
- Spotlight on Innovation
- Programme areas for action in 23/24
- Appendices

4. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

4.1 The most recent estimates for child poverty in Perth and Kinross assess that **5914** children (21.9%) are living in relative poverty. This suggests that mitigation measures taken during the Covid Pandemic had a significant effect as poverty rates remained fairly stable between 2017 and 2022. We do not however know what impact the cost-of-living crisis has had on children as this data has not yet been gathered.

4.2 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 the **5914** children living in poverty, here in Perth and Kinross brighter and better. We have considerable influence as a local authority and individual and collective responsibility to use our influence to make a real and lasting difference.

4.3 The structure and content of the LCPAR is different this year as the Scottish Government refreshed their Guidance Notes. The Guidance Notes reminded local authorities of their statutory duty to report on measures taken and measures proposed to contribute to child poverty targets, maximise income for pregnant women and families with children and to report on measures taken for families whose income/expenditure is adversely affected because of a family member's protected characteristic. This last requirement is new and did not appear in the previous guidance notes and, like most local authorities and Health Boards, we are not yet in a position to provide this information as our data is not disaggregated on that basis.

4.4 The LCPAR links to other work currently being undertaken to develop a wider anti-poverty strategy for Perth and Kinross with our partners and to locate the governance function for the wider strategy with the Anti-Poverty Task Force.

4.5 The guidance notes requested that the LCPAR's should have a clear strategic focus and should be evidence based. There was a strong steer towards reporting on innovation, learning, improvement and change. The need for better co-ordination of efforts across housing, transport, childcare, physical and mental health and development was also identified as being of importance. The Guidance also called for the use of case studies which highlighted the effectiveness of actions taken, and for linkages with GIRFEC and Whole Family Wellbeing, the Promise and UNCRC.

- 4.6 Perth and Kinross Council has an established Child Poverty Working Group (CPWG) involving officers from Perth and Kinross Council and NHS Tayside. The CPWG oversees the progress and delivery of actions within the LCPAR. The establishment of the Anti-Poverty Task Force has strengthened collaborative working with key partners and will provide independent oversight of the work of the CPWG going forward.
- 4.7 The latest iteration of the Children's Scorecard referenced in the report, measures our progress in tackling issues relating to child poverty and our delivery on those areas which mattered to parents and families affected by poverty.
- 4.8 One of the key issues surfaced by the Lived experience of child poverty report was the need for a systems design approach to be taken to deliver a One Council, Whole Family, Whole Community approach to addressing child poverty and connecting families to the help and support they need and want.
- 4.9 This has led to the establishment of a Locality Multi-disciplinary team in Highland Perthshire with the specific intention of mitigating rural poverty and cost of living pressures. This approach (supported by the Improvement Service) is also being followed in Letham and Coupar Angus.
- 4.10 The Corporate Plan highlights tackling poverty as a strategic priority of the Council. This contributes to delivering strategic outcomes:
- children and young people grow safe, respected, well-educated, and confident in their ability to realise their full potential
 - people and businesses thrive in an inclusive and sustainable local economy across Perth and Kinross.
- 4.11 These strategic outcomes will be achieved by:
1. reducing the number of children living in poverty in Perth and Kinross
 2. reducing the cost-of-living pressures for households in and at risk of poverty
 3. maximising income from benefit entitlement and concessions for households
 4. promoting and encouraging local employers to follow the principles of the Scottish Government's Fair Work Action Plan, including the real Living Wage and Scottish Business Pledge
- 4.12 The Corporate Delivery Improvement Plan (CDIP) commits Perth and Kinross Council to work with partners to develop a wider anti-poverty strategy, once this is done, the LCPAR and strategic outcomes outlined above will become a subsidiary document to the wider strategy.
- 4.13 The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) has identified reducing poverty as a strategic priority and is seeking to deliver the following local outcomes:

- levels of poverty in Perth and Kinross will remain below the national average
- action on food insecurity is better co-ordinated across Perth and Kinross
- action on fuel poverty is better co-ordinated across Perth and Kinross
- increasing numbers of premises are offering free period products across Perth and Kinross

4.14 The LCPAR reports on the many positive actions have been taken in the last year to tackle child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis they include:

- £6.3M committed to supporting struggling families through the cost-of-living crisis an increase of over £1M on previous year
- £420,000 allocated to support a cost-of-living strategy which supported the opening of warm spaces within the community, distribution of warm home packs, additional support for community food and other measures.
- 78 parents are being supported to find work and 30 who are currently in work are being supported to sustain employment or progress to better paid/more skilled employment
- 86 jobs were created via Employer Recruitment Incentives (over the last 2 years)
- A new HGV/LGV training academy was established, and 39 participants have now passed their HGV license with 36 gaining full time employment
- Both NHS Tayside and Perth and Kinross Council now have community benefit gateways established to enable suppliers to add value to their contracts by supporting the social economy.
- 279 referrals were made to the Welfare Rights Team from the Family Nurse Partnership, Health Visiting and Maternity Services. The average financial gain for these referrals was £1,175.
- 926 tenants experiencing financial difficulties benefitted from income maximisation delivered through the Financial Inclusion Project by Perth CAB.
- The Housing Think Yes Fund of £30,000 enabled frontline workers to respond quickly and effectively to support 167 tenants experiencing financial difficulties.
- The Welfare Rights Team achieved a Client Financial Gain of £6.5million in social security benefits. They administered PKCs Financial Insecurity Fund which amounted to £520,000.
- The Community Planning Partnership have developed a Town Centre Action Plan for Coupar Angus with local residents. The Plan has a strong focus on tackling poverty, removing the barriers to employment and supporting mental health and wellbeing.
- 7,700 school meals are provided each day take up for free school meals now stands at 65% for Primary Schools and 45% for Secondary Schools.
- 258 children accessed support or services funded by the Community Mental Health Fund between July and December 2022.

4.15 The report spotlights examples of innovation providing information and case studies on:

- The establishment of an Anti-Poverty Task Force for Perth and Kinross
- Community Wealth building work delivered by NHS Tayside
- The development of the children's scorecard
- Love Letham – giving young people a voice
- Cash First and the use of Paypoint
- Crisis prevention
- Cost of Living crisis response

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 This report details work undertaken in 2022/23 in fulfilment of the 2022/23 Local Child Poverty Action Plan and sets out the Action Plan for 2023/24.
- 5.2 The Local Child Poverty Action Plan for 2023/24 comprises workplans for each of the 3 workstreams:

Workstream 1 - Providing opportunities and support needed to enter, sustain, and progress in work (employability and skills, housing, connectivity and childcare, economic opportunity)

Workstream 2 - Maximising the support available to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs (person-centred support, social security, and income maximisation)

Workstream 3 - Supporting the next generation to survive and thrive (next generation).

- 5.3 This work will be subject to independent scrutiny by the Anti-Poverty Task Force who will provide additional expertise from across Perth and Kinross which will inform the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Child Poverty Delivery Plan and the development of annual Local Child Poverty Action Plans.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 We know that over **5914** children across Perth and Kinross are living in poverty. The negative impacts of poverty cannot be underestimated, both in the short and the longer term. This report sets out the Councils continued 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.
- 6.2 The LCPAR has been presented to NHS Tayside for their approval. The Child Poverty Working Group will continue to oversee and monitor progress towards delivery on commitments in the Child Poverty Action Plan 2023/2024 and will report on the same to Perth and Kinross Council in the next LCPAR report in September 2024. The Anti-Poverty Task Force will continue to provide independent scrutiny of the implementation of the Local Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022- 2026 and each annual Child Poverty Action Plan.

Author

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Approved

| Name | Designation | Date |
|--------------|--|------------------------|
| Clare Mailer | Director – Strategy, People and Resources | 6 November 2023 |

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 -5th Local Child Poverty Action Plan 23/24

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You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

| Strategic Implications | Yes / None |
|---|-------------------|
| Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement | Yes |
| Corporate Plan | Yes |
| Resource Implications | |
| Financial | None |
| Workforce | None |
| Asset Management (land, property, IST) | None |
| Assessments | |
| Equality Impact Assessment | None |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | None |
| Sustainability (community, economic, environmental) | None |
| Legal and Governance | None |
| Risk | Yes |
| Consultation | |
| Internal | Yes |
| External | Yes |
| Communication | |
| Communications Plan | None |

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 Mitigating Child Poverty will address the following outcomes identified in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan by the Community Planning Partnership
Levels of poverty in Perth and Kinross will remain below the national average.
Action on food insecurity will be better co-ordinated in Perth and Kinross
increase numbers of premises will offer free period products across Perth and Kinross.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Mitigating Child Poverty will:

- address the following priorities in Perth and Kinross Council's Corporate Plan
- Tackling Poverty
- Children and young people grow up safe, respected, well-educated and confident in their ability to realise their full potential
- People and businesses are increasingly able to prosper in a local economy which supports low carbon ambitions and offers opportunities for all.

This will be achieved by:

- Preventing and mitigating the impact of poverty for children living in Perth and Kinross
- Mitigating the cost of living pressures for households experiencing or at risk of poverty
- Maximising income from benefit entitlement and concessions for households
- Promoting and encouraging local employers to follow the principles of the Scottish Government Fair Work Action Plan including the Real Living Wage and Scottish Business Pledge.

2. Resource Implications

2.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Proposals that have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) are assessed as **not relevant** for EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 Proposals have been considered under the Act, and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

3.3 Not applicable.

Legal and Governance

3.4 Not applicable.

Risk

3.5 Tackling Poverty is an organisational priority and as such mitigating actions are also monitored through the Council's risk profile.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 All relevant heads of service have been involved in the development of this report.

External

- 4.2 Priority Families were involved via the research project undertaken by the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit. NHS Tayside was involved in the development of this report and the Community Planning Partnership will also sign off on it.

5. Communication

- 5.1 None.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 None.