



## **PERTH AND KINROSS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP**

**9 September 2022**

### **CASH FIRST PARTNERSHIP**

(Report No G/22/119)

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to provide background information on the Cash First Partnership approach and seek CPP Board agreement to lead a bid to Scottish Government to pilot a CFP in Perth and Kinross.

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 For many frontline organisations, providing a referral to a food bank is often the simplest and quickest route to supporting someone who is experiencing financial hardship. However, where emergency food providers are the first or only port of call opportunities to strengthen income and prevent future hardship are often missed. Cash First Partnerships (CFPs) provide an opportunity to change this situation and provide aligned support services for those in the greatest need.
- 1.2 Where financial hardship does occur, partnership working between sectors and services can deliver a robust pathway that prioritises access to emergency financial assistance, integrates money advice, and supports a household's whole needs. Such a pathway helps to reduce the need for emergency food provision and prevents future hardship.
- 1.3 During the pandemic, different sectors quickly adapted their services and worked collaboratively to meet a range of local needs. This was underpinned by Scottish Government guidance on tackling food and financial insecurity that promoted cash-first responses and multi-sectoral partnership working.
- 1.4 Investing in, and providing practical support to, local partnerships was a recommendation of the national Social Renewal Advisory Board. Supporting partnerships to prioritise financial assistance alongside holistic support services will contribute to the shared ambition to end the need for emergency food provision and is expected to be a key action within the forthcoming

*National plan to end the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity.*

- 1.5 A range of partnership approaches are already in place across Scotland, often linked to anti-poverty forums, local child poverty plans, and community planning partnerships. These vary from providing opportunities for information exchange through to agreed shared actions and pathways. Considerable learning also exists regarding these approaches, such as the Menu for Change project.
- 1.6 In Perth and Kinross there are a number of existing initiatives and supports in place to support those who are struggling. A variety of voluntary support groups have been established to offer support and direct people towards advisors. The Council has amended its approach to the Scottish Welfare Fund, committed an additional £600k for the Financial Insecurity Fund and identified a further £104,000 for food insecurity. There will be a further verbal update at CPP Board regarding a paper being taken to the Council's Finance & Resources Committee on 7 September.
- 1.7 As part of the background work in developing this proposal, there have been two discussion events involving partners and there is an existing Poverty Taskforce focusing on community and voluntary sector responses, chaired by PKAVS. All discussions to date have been positive and have focused on what a Cash First Partnership can achieve, and how we can work collectively to get there.

## **2. CASH FIRST PARTNERSHIP (CFP)**

- 2.1 The general focus of a CFP is to bring stakeholders together in order to move away from a model in which food banks are often the first referral, to a model which focuses on income maximisation. This does not mean that referral to other supports like food banks would not take place, that would still be available if needed, however the ambition would be to help individuals and households maximise their income and ultimately give them the dignity of choice.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government is inviting bids to pilot this approach and will provide investment and practical support to around 10 CFPs over a 2 year period, supported by an external national learning partner commissioned by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government have indicated there will be a dedicated fund to support local multi-sectoral partnership working that prioritises cash-first responses to financial hardship, with the aim of reducing the need for food banks and other emergency food provision. It is expected that proposals for partnership activities up to the value of £200,000 over a 2 year period will be invited in Autumn 2022, and that staff/co-ordinator costs will be eligible for funding.

2.3 CFPs will be expected to:

- a) agree a shared ambition for what the CFP will achieve. Preliminary discussions amongst key partners in P&K have identified a number of potential themes of interest:
  - developing an overarching approach to poverty reduction and awareness in schools
  - identifying and tackling specific issues as a result of rurality
  - reviewing the journey of a service user to see where improvements could be made
  - embedding a participatory approach to identify improvements to service provision, based on lived experience
- b) set out short, medium and long-term actions (such as pilots, test-and-learn activities and frontline training) to reduce the need for food banks and prevent future hardship.
- c) have a particular focus on strengthening hardship response pathways so that they routinely prioritise access to emergency financial assistance, integrate money advice, and support a household's whole needs.
- d) Ensure that people with direct experience of poverty are involved throughout the work of the partnership, including at the planning stages.

2.4 Supported through the cash-first learning partner, CFPs should expect to put in place robust monitoring and evaluation plans which include data on food bank referrals and qualitative insights from frontline services and people with direct experience of using services. It is expected that a key learning question that frames the work of the partnership will be identified.

### **3. PROPOSAL**

3.1 It is proposed that an application be submitted to Scottish Government to establish a pilot Cash First Partnership in Perth and Kinross. Given the focus on Poverty and Cost of Living within the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the broad focus of the Community Planning Partnership, it is further proposed that the CPP agree to be the lead body for this application.

3.2 In order to develop the best possible application, it is proposed that CPP Board agree to establish a Working Group to develop and submit the application. Board is also asked to consider and agree a lead officer to coordinate this piece of work. The initial focus of this work will be to develop a bid based on the key points laid out in paragraph 2.3

### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 Cash First Partnerships bring support services together to help service users maximise their income and protect their dignity through giving them a choice. There is an opportunity to submit a bid for a pilot CFP in Perth and Kinross.

4.2 CPP Board is asked to:

- i. **Agree** to be the lead body for an application to establish a Cash First Partnership in Perth and Kinross
- ii. **Agree** the establishment of a Working Group of partners and services who will develop and submit the bid
- iii. **Appoint** a lead officer to coordinate the submission, with support from key partners
- iv. **Agree** that the lead officer will provide updates to CPP Board and Executive Officer Group as appropriate.