

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Perth & Kinross Council Meeting

9 November 2022

4TH LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT

Report by Executive Lead, Strategic Planning & Transformation
(Report No. 22/271)

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 4th report, and it presents an update on actions taken during 2021/22; the Child Poverty Action Plan for 22/23 and a Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2022 - 2026.
- 1.2 The LCPAR was circulated to and approved by the Community Planning Partnership on 25 October 2022 and has been considered and endorsed by NHS Tayside on 1 November 2022

2. RECOMMENDATION	
2.1	<p>I. It is recommended that Perth & Kinross Council:</p> <p>II. Approve the report.</p> <p>III. Re -affirm their commitment to the strategic aims set out in the child poverty strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. To raise awareness about the causes and consequences of child povertyb. To foster social cohesion and reduce stigma surrounding poverty for children and familiesc. To reduce the negative effects of living in poverty for children and familiesd. To enable children and families to prepare themselves for a life free from poverty <p>IV. Approve the objectives of the Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 to work with NHS Tayside and the Community Planning Partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:

- Section 4: Background/Main Issues
- Section 5: Proposals
- Section 6: Conclusion
- Appendices

4. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

4.1 The latest reliable 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 5,155** (22.6% of all children in Perth and Kinross). These are pre-covid19 figures and are likely to underestimate the number of children living in poverty across Perth & Kinross.¹

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 **5155** 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 Perth and Kinross Council has an established Child Poverty Working Group (CPWG) involving officers from Perth and Kinross Council and NHS Tayside. The group is currently being expanded to include wider representation from the third sector and community planning partners.

4.4 The recent report to Council - [Tackling Poverty and The Cost of Living](#), set out the context of poverty in Perth and Kinross, the impacts that it can have on people and households and the range of work that is underway to mitigate the impact on people who are most affected.

4.5 The establishment of the Anti-Poverty Task Force will strengthen collaborative working with key partners and provide independent oversight of the work of the CPWG.

¹ The End Child Poverty Data for 2021 was heavily reliant on the Households Below Average Income figures. Fieldwork operations for the Family Resources Survey which gathered this data, was impacted by the Covid-19 virus and lockdown period and consequently the Scottish Government have advised that the 2021 figures are not reliable.

- 4.6 The CPWG has invested significant time and resources identifying the causes and consequences of child poverty within our communities. This has included:
- lived experience of child poverty in Perth and Kinross research undertaken by the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit at Glasgow Caledonian University. Parents from Priority Families² participated in the qualitative research which enabled them to provide feedback on how they experienced poverty, how they experienced our Council services and what they wanted to change.
 - the Measuring Child Poverty project identified 26 indicators which measure the causes and consequences of Child Poverty in Perth and Kinross. These have been used to measure the depth and impact of poverty on children and families across the area.
- 4.7 The findings from these two studies were brought together in the Children's Scorecard which will measure our progress in tackling issues relating to child poverty and our delivery on those areas which mattered to parents and families affected by poverty. It sets out a base line to enable future monitoring of progress towards delivering the changes or service improvements sought by parents experiencing poverty.
- 4.8 The data and feedback received from parents in these reports confirmed:
- stigma associated with poverty was getting in the way of people seeking help
 - the need for action to promote the Living Wage and tackle in-work poverty
 - the challenges faced around maintaining mental health and wellbeing and being able to access support
 - the need for key worker and a one council, whole family, whole community approach to connect people to the help and support they need and to build inclusive resilient communities.
- 4.9 Parents asked for access to crisis support when they needed it and affordable housing, childcare and transport to enable them to take up sustainable livelihoods.
- 4.10 This feedback informed the development of the Perth and Kinross "Offer" for children and families affected by poverty. The Offer will develop over time as we listen and engage with young people, parents, communities, and businesses. No single service or agency has the power to end child poverty. The delivery of the offer will require collaborative working across all stakeholders to achieve these aspirational aims.
- No Child goes hungry, ever
 - Every child in a warm, dry, secure home
 - Every child's learning is supported
 - Every parent has access to Fair Work and a good job.

² (Lone Parents, Families with a disabled family member, Minority Ethnic Families, Large Families, Families with a Young Mother and Families with a child under 1 year of age)

- Parents and children have a say in the services they use.

4.11 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. This was the subject of a well-attended Conference in June 2022 (Delivering a one council, whole family, whole community approach to tackling child poverty). The conference deliberated on how to:

- support more parents into employment which pays the Living Wage
- close the gender employment and pay gaps
- address the rural poverty premium for children and families

4.12 It also ran 3 localities workshops with officers from Perth and Kinross Council, and the Community Planning partnership to identify how best to connect families affected by poverty to the help and support they need and want.

4.13 In March 2022, the Scottish Government published “Best Start, Bright Futures”- the second child poverty delivery plan. It restated the Scottish Government’s commitment for the child poverty targets, strengthened the focus on Priority Families at greatest risk of poverty and focused actions on tackling the drivers of poverty to improve lives and outcomes for families. It has 3 elements:

- providing opportunities and support needed to enter, sustain and progress in work
- maximise the support available to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs
- supporting the next generation to survive and thrive.

4.14 The draft Corporate Plan has highlighted 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.

4.15 These strategic outcomes will be achieved by:

- reducing the number of children living in poverty in Perth and Kinross
- reducing the cost-of-living pressures for households in and 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’s Fair Work Action Plan, including the real Living Wage and Scottish Business Pledge.

- 4.16 The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 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
- 4.17 The LCPAR aligns with the objectives of Best Start, Bright Futures, Perth and Kinross Council's draft Corporate Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. It identifies key challenges for Perth and Kinross in relation to tackling child poverty:
- we have a low paid economy with a significant and widening pay gap with the rest of Scotland 16.5% of our workforce earn less than the Living Wage of £9.50 an hour and 24,000 are in low paid work
 - the pay gap with the rest of Scotland widened to £47.10 a week – from £11.90 in 2019 and £24 in 2020.
 - we have a significant gender pay gap at £228.50 a week for all workers and £140 a week for fulltime workers
 - we top the league table for the employment rate gap between men and women
 - fewer households have access to social housing and 1 in 3 private tenants experience extreme fuel poverty – twice the rate of those in social housing.
- 4.18 The LCPAR reports on what actions have been taken in the last year to tackle child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis they include:
- £5.2 M committed to supporting struggling families through the cost-of-living crisis
 - 241 young people accessed vocational training, 39 young people accessed further/higher education training, 46 attended skills academies and 76 were able to secure employment
 - 60 employers were supported with wage incentives and for additional training opportunities.
 - 8 parents secured employment with help from the Parental Employment Support Fund
 - curricular costs in secondary schools have been removed for all young people and the cost of the school day has been kept under review.
 - a new subsidised bus route was provided in West Kinross-shire and improved transport links from Crieff to Perth College UHI were delivered
 - £100,000 was invested in a 2-year Financial Inclusion project to provide welfare rights support to Council tenants.
 - a Food Network has been established involving organisations across Perth and Kinross involved in the delivery of emergency and community food. £65,000 funding was provided to establish a food hub in Perth to support food share schemes.

- the Welfare Rights team contacted over 2000 families to offer a comprehensive benefits check. 1,100 families accessed this support.
- 283 referrals from healthcare practitioners resulted in £146,000 in client financial gain.

4.19 The report spotlights examples of good practice providing information and case studies on:

- a homework hub supported by library staff, primary and secondary teachers, and pupils at St John's Academy
- a "one pot surprise" project run by the Family Focus Team which provides equipment and support to families on making low-cost nutritious meals
- the Welfare Rights team offered advice to all households with school meals debt and found that almost all such households qualified for free school meals
- Perth Welfare Society who provided 2189 people from ethnic minority communities with signposting and referral to other agencies for support, a befriending service and help with applying for benefits/housing and health and social care services.

5. PROPOSALS

5.1 This report sets out a Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2022 – 2026 with the following strategic aims and objectives:

Aims

- to raise awareness about the causes and consequences of child poverty
- to foster social cohesion and reduce the stigma surrounding poverty for children and families
- to reduce the negative effects of living in poverty for children and families
- to enable children and families to prepare themselves for a life free from poverty

Objectives

1. provide opportunities and support needed to enter, sustain, and progress in work (employability and skills, housing and economic opportunity, connectivity, and childcare)
2. maximise the support available to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs (person-centred support, social security, and income maximisation).
3. supporting the next generation to survive and thrive (next generation)
4. 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.

5.2 It reports on work undertaken in 2021/22 in fulfilment of the 2021/22 Local Child Poverty Action Plan and sets out the Action Plan for 2022/23.

- 5.3 The Local Child Poverty Action Plan for 2022/23 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).

- 5.4 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 5155 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 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 our children are supported to live well.
- 6.2 The LCPAR will be presented to NHS Tayside for their approval and pending this will be forwarded to the Scottish Government. The Child Poverty Working Group will monitor progress towards delivery on commitments in the Child Poverty Action Plan 2022/2023 and will report on the same to Perth and Kinross Council in the next LCPAR report in September 2023. The Anti-Poverty Task Force which is currently being established will 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	Executive Lead, Strategic Planning & Transformation	13 October 2022

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - 4th Local Child Poverty Action Report containing - Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 with Child Poverty Action Report 2021/2022 and Child Poverty Action Plan 2022/23

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

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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	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 Mitigating child poverty will address (1) Giving every child the best start in life. The Child Poverty Delivery Plan and Action Plans are focussed on enabling parents to enter, sustain and progress in work which pays the Living Wage or more; and actions which enable children to live dignified lives and have their basic needs met and the mitigation of poverty and the impact that it has on children's current and future opportunities and chances in life.

- (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 Mitigating Child Poverty will address (1) Giving every child the best start in life. Mitigating child poverty will address (1) Giving every child the best start in life. The Child Poverty Delivery Plan and Action Plans are focussed on enabling parents to enter, sustain and progress in work which pays the Living Wage or more; and actions which enable children to live dignified lives and

have their basic needs met and the mitigation of poverty and the impact that it has on children's current and future opportunities and chances in life.

- (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; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

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 Not applicable.

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.