



Perth & Kinross Fairer Futures

Tackling Child Poverty



Action Report



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FOREWORD

“ In Scotland, close to one in four children – almost a quarter of a million – are in poverty with their families facing impossible decisions such as whether to pay their rent, heat their home or put food on the table.”

“Over the past 20 years, child poverty in Scotland has seen many changes. Since 2010, child poverty has been increasing. There are many issues that are increasing the pressures on low-income families, including low pay and limited working hours, rising prices and lower employment rates for some groups. Most children in poverty are in working families, but some parents, including those with young children and parents with health conditions and/or disabilities, can face large barriers to work.” Poverty in Scotland Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Here, in Perth and Kinross, we know that around one in five of **our children** – around four thousand – are in poverty. On a daily basis, our staff witness parents who are making very real decisions about heating or eating.

Following the introduction of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act, the Scottish Government developed their delivery plan for tackling child poverty “Every child, every chance” which emphasises:

- ▶ that actions need to prevent children and young people in poverty now becoming poor parents in 2030
- ▶ targets can only be met by working in partnership
- ▶ meeting the targets will require radical change

The Act and the “Every child, every chance” report places a requirement on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to develop Local Child Poverty Action Reports, setting out activity being undertaken to reduce child poverty and plans to tackle the key drivers which lead to child poverty.

Our vision “Creating a confident, ambitious and fairer Perth and Kinross, for all who live and work here” and our five strategic objectives in our Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) 2017-2027 and Corporate Plan (2018-2022) provide a robust strategic planning approach which underpins the objectives of the Children Poverty Act.

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

The Perth & Kinross Fairness Commission – Fairer Futures recognised that whilst Perth & Kinross has a rich and diverse cultural heritage below the surface, poverty and inequality were underpinned by

structural factors in the labour market, housing market, social security systems, public services and the way individuals and families are supported. There are clear commonalities with these findings and the drivers of child poverty detailed within “Every child, every chance”.

This is our first Local Child Poverty Action report. It has been developed in collaboration with a range of Council Services, NHS Public Health and our wider partners, and provides our starting point to further develop our approach to tackling the impacting factors which lead to child poverty. The report provides an overview of our vision and strategic direction, setting out what we know about child poverty in our area and outlining how we will work in partnership with all stakeholders, including local communities in the development of the **Perth and Kinross Offer** to tackle child poverty. This will provide a sound basis to address the key issues and help us to achieve the ambitious Scottish Government targets.

INTRODUCTION

Scotland has seen the slowest growth in life expectancy since the late 1970s and death rates are now rising for people in our poorest communities. This, along with other national research, evidenced a continued widening of the health divide between rich and poor. We know that poverty and deprivation are a major influence on health and wellbeing and driving health inequalities.

The Child Poverty Act was introduced to take forward the Scottish Government’s Fairer Scotland vision. It is recognised that child poverty can not only undermine health and wellbeing, but also the educational attainment and life chances of children who have lived experience as well as having a wider cost to society as a whole. Some headline statistics:-

- ▶ 1 million people in Scotland live in poverty
- ▶ 230,000 children in Scotland live in poverty (with 2/3rd living in household with at least one adult in work)
- ▶ 2013 data shows no local authority without at least one ward with 1 in 10 in poverty

Child Poverty Targets

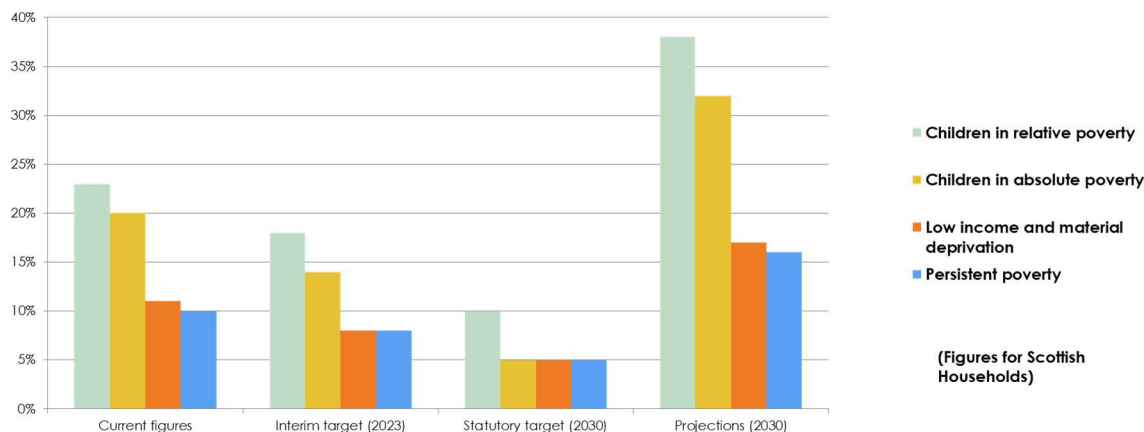
The Scottish Government has set ambitious targets to be achieved by 2030. It is important to recognise that these will often be difficult to measure as success will be the cumulative effect of a range of mitigating actions. The statutory indicators* are:-

| Current Figures | Interim Targets to be achieved by 2023 | Statutory Targets to be achieved by 2030 |
|---|--|--|
| 23% of children are in relative poverty | Less than 18% of children are in relative poverty | Less than 10% of children are in relative poverty |
| 20% of children are in absolute poverty | Less than 14% of children in absolute poverty | Less than 5% of children in absolute poverty |
| 11% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation | Less than 8% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation | Less than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 10% of children are in persistent poverty | Less than 8% of children are in persistent poverty | Less than 5% of children are in persistent poverty |
|---|--|--|

*Appendix A details the definitions of the poverty indicators

The table below illustrates the “do nothing” scenario, projecting what will happen if we take no action. The projections take into account tax and benefit changes.



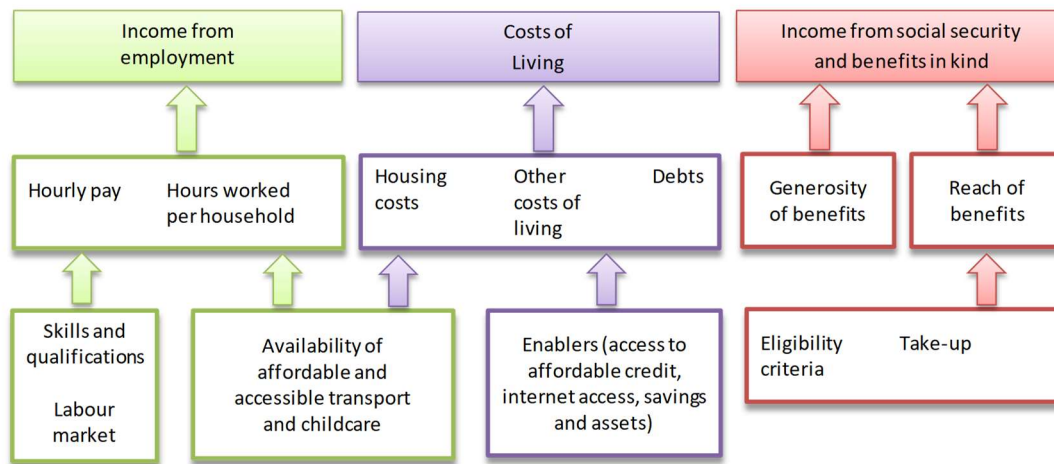
Child Poverty Priority Groups

Evidence demonstrates overlaps between child poverty and equality, with strong age, gender, ethnicity and disability dimensions. We also need to consider the wider impact of adverse childhood experiences which cut across all social groups. The Act and the development of Action Reports are, therefore, to target activity to support **priority groups** who are at a higher risk of child poverty. The national statistics tell us:-

- ▶ lone parent families, the majority of which are headed by women – 35% of children in relative poverty
- ▶ families that include a disabled adult or child – 30% of children in relative poverty
- ▶ families with 3+ children – 30% of children in relative poverty
- ▶ minority Ethnic families – 37% of children in relative poverty
- ▶ families where the youngest child is aged less than 1yr – 32% of children in relative poverty
- ▶ families where the mothers is aged under 25 years – 44% of children in relative poverty

Key Drivers of Child Poverty

Poverty is fundamentally about a lack of income. The targets within the Act primarily focus on income measures and, in particular, what we are doing, or are planning to do, to increase family income and reduce household costs. The “Every child, every chance” report, provides an overview of the different factors which significantly impact on each of the key drivers of poverty.



Nationally set policies will help to address these drivers of child poverty. However, they need to be supported by local actions and a collaborative approach involving all strategic planning partners, the private business sector, third party organisations, charities and our local communities.

PERTH & KINROSS CONTEXT

Fairer Futures

The Perth & Kinross Fairness Commission's Fairer Futures Report was prepared by an independent commission of 11 individuals, with a broad range of experience, expertise and influence at both national and local levels. The commissioners spent a lot of time listening to people, communities and professionals to understand their experiences, views and observations about what needs to be different. The following themes emerged from this and the Fairer Futures report and recommendations are structured around these:

- ▶ **A Fairer Perth and Kinross: People, Place and Equality**
- ▶ **A Strong Start: An Equal Footing for Life- Chances, Choices and Confidence**
- ▶ **Fairer Working Lives: Opportunities, Security and Respect**
- ▶ **A Thriving Third Age: Living Well, Belonging and Contributing**
- ▶ **Better Connected: Services, Transport and Digital Lives**

A Fairer Perth and Kinross: People, Place and Equality

What We Heard

Perth and Kinross is generally thought of as an affluent area, and is described as such by many statistics which can hide the detail. However, on closer examination, there are more indicators of deprivation than these statistics may suggest. The area is characterised by much greater levels of rurality than much of central Scotland and faces distinct challenges as a result. Particularly within these types of settings, people may find it more difficult to access services (due to availability, digital problems, transport and distance) and in some cases may even be unaware of what they are entitled to or what is available. We learned that loneliness and isolation is a recurring theme for people, whether due to geography, circumstance or both.

A Strong Start: An Equal Footing for Life Chances, Choices and Confidence

Poverty is unfair. It impacts on children, families and communities, and feeds the conditions which lead to deprivation and disadvantage. This increases a person's vulnerability to circumstances, which reduces their ability to make the best of the life chances available. Poverty is not inevitable, but being born and raised in poverty can have a big impact on a child's future; potentially affecting their perspective on life, chances of gaining qualifications, building positive relationships, remaining in good health, or gaining employment in later life.

The Fairer Futures report offers clear direction for public organisations, employers and communities across Perth & Kinross to collectively address the challenges, and in doing so, transform people's lives. The commission made 9 high level recommendations to the Community Planning Partnership to address the issues they had identified:

- ▶ Identify Lead Officers
- ▶ A Planned Programme of awareness raising
- ▶ Socio Economic Duty – focus on promoting fairness and equality
- ▶ Identify the most powerful interventions to achieving the requirements of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

- ▶ Efficient and Equitable access to support with a focus on prevention
- ▶ A prioritised focus on working with communities
- ▶ Prioritise support for activities focussed on tackling inequalities
- ▶ Define and promote fair work
- ▶ Maximise opportunities of inclusive economic growth initiatives address

These recommendations have been grouped into themes, mirroring the key child poverty drivers:



The Community Plan and our Fairer Futures work are the strategic context within which our Child Poverty Action Report will sit. The two are not mutually exclusive and the Fairer Futures work will support the more specific activity we will progress to address and reduce child poverty through this plan.

We have established a Child Poverty Working Group and identified workstream leads for each of the main areas of activity. The working group will report on progress via the Fairer Futures arrangements and annual Child Poverty reports will be submitted to the Community Planning Partnership, Perth and Kinross Council’s Council meeting and through the Public Health Child Poverty Working Group. The wider strategic context (National, Regional and at local level), together with the monitoring and evaluation approach, are outlined later in this report.

Representatives from Perth & Kinross attended the Tayside summit on child poverty and a Fairer Futures Event has recently taken place with representation from a wide range of public services and organisations:-

- ▶ Perth & Kinross Council – representatives for all service areas
- ▶ Elected members
- ▶ Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- ▶ Police Scotland
- ▶ NHS Tayside
- ▶ Perth & Kinross Health & Social Care Partnership
- ▶ Scottish Enterprise
- ▶ Skills Development Scotland
- ▶ Department of Work and Pensions
- ▶ Third Sector
- ▶ Tactran
- ▶ University of the Highland & Islands

The purpose of these sessions was to bring partners together to share information, identify challenges and agree key actions to mitigate and prevent child poverty.

Child Poverty in Perth and Kinross

The Fairer Futures work dispelled many myths about Perth and Kinross. Our headline data may shout healthy, prosperous and well educated. Closer examination paints a very different picture:



The Child Poverty Action/Centre for Research in Social Policy estimated that after housing costs, 17% of children in Perth and Kinross experience poverty. The estimates across Perth and Kinross are detailed in the table below:

| Locality | Ward | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------|------|------|
| Eastern Perthshire | Carse of Gowrie | 13% | 14% | 11% |
| | Strathmore | 18% | 20% | 17% |
| | Blairstown and Glens | 17% | 22% | 19% |
| Highland and Strathtay | Highland | 17% | 17% | 17% |
| | Strathtay | 13% | 15% | 12% |
| Strathearn and Strathallan | Strathearn | 13% | 17% | 20% |
| | Strathallan | 14% | 12% | 13% |
| Kinross-shire, Almond & Earn | Kinross-shire | 13% | 15% | 12% |
| | Almond & Earn | 15% | 17% | 18% |
| Perth City | Perth City South | 10% | 9% | 10% |
| | Perth City North | 24% | 27% | 24% |
| | Perth City Centre | 23% | 25% | 25% |

The overall picture shows differing levels of child poverty across the 12 ward areas. Other data (such as ACORN) helps us understand, at a very detailed geographical level, the income inequalities that exist across all communities. More recent estimates show a similar variation with Perth City and wards in the northern half of the area, indicating high levels of child poverty. Although levels of child poverty vary across Perth and Kinross, it is clear that child poverty is an issue affecting all of our communities.

- ▶ 27% of all household members have a long-term physical or mental health condition (22% for Scotland)
- ▶ 6% of households are large families compared to 5% in Scotland (families with two adults and three or more children, or three or more adults and one or more children)
- ▶ 25% of households had income of £15,000 or less (25% for Scotland)

Source – Scottish Household Survey 2017

OUR CHALLENGES

We recognise that we face significant challenges within Perth and Kinross, partly due to the diversity of our landscape. The majority of the area is rural, with 12 towns and over 100 smaller settlements of differing sizes. Within these settings, people can find it difficult to access services, due to availability, digital problems, transport and distance, and in some cases are unaware of what they are entitled to or what is available.

People in poverty tell us one of the biggest challenges they face is the stigma associated with it. Although people do not choose to be in hardship, many worry that they will be judged as a person, parent or potential employee. This is also the case for children who fear they will be judged, excluded and bullied.

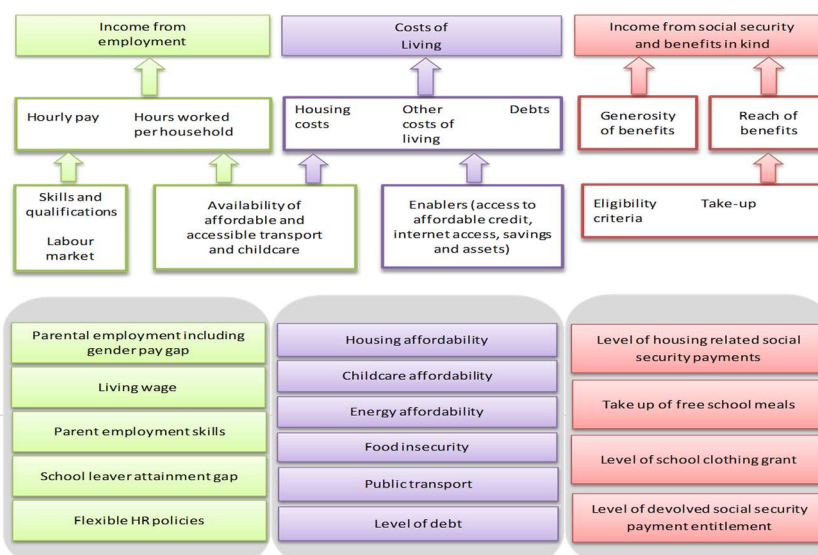


The Fairer Futures Commissioners found that many people from more affluent backgrounds found it difficult to relate to the problems faced by households in poverty. Without an understanding, people are less likely to be supportive of actions targeted at tackling poverty.

We face specific challenges which negatively impact on household income and directly relate to the key drivers of poverty, including:

- ▶ lower wage jobs – issues around zero hours contracts, seasonal work, high living costs.
- ▶ availability of affordable housing and the rising costs of private sector housing.
- ▶ the availability and cost of transport particularly in rural areas.
- ▶ the negative impact of Welfare Reform and universal credit leading to high levels of rent arrears and increased risk of homelessness for many households.

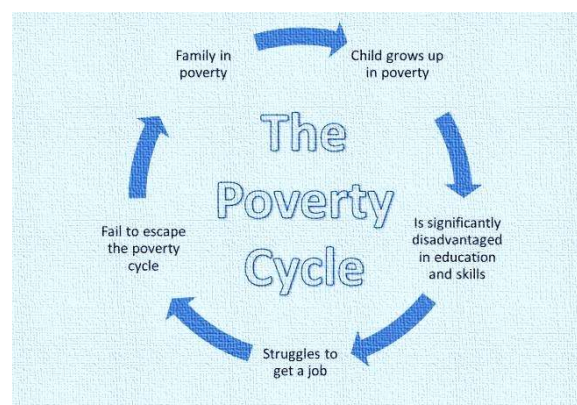
In order to identify and evaluate existing action and plans that aim to reduce or mitigate child poverty in the area, we held workshops with key stakeholders and undertaken a mapping exercise. This has enabled us to identify gaps and prioritise future work and highlight areas that require greater focus.



However, we also need to recognise that there are wider societal and cultural factors which require to be addressed if we are to change the cycle of poverty.

“This is an opportunity for us to think again. Let’s use it to encourage different voices, new ideas, and new solutions; let’s use it to look beyond our own lives, and create a shared vision for the society we want to be part of. Together we can build fairer, brighter futures in Perth and Kinross.”

Source: Fairer Futures



Source: *Understanding and Tackling Poverty Locally*
Professor John H McKendrick

WHAT WE WILL DO

Our assessment to date has evidenced that we are delivering a wide range of programmes and services that maximise households’ income, mitigate the impact of child poverty and improve outcomes for children living in poverty.

We do, however, recognise that this assessment has been relatively high level. Within some of our communities where child poverty appears to be relatively low, there are individual households who may be living in persistent poverty. We, therefore, intend to:

- ▶ undertake a more detailed quantitative and qualitative assessment and analysis of child poverty across Perth and Kinross to gain a better understanding of our local child poverty position and the specific needs of our different communities. This assessment will involve parents and children with lived experience of poverty.
- ▶ undertake a more detailed assessment to better identify priority groups where children are at a greater risk of poverty. This will enable us to ensure that the actions we take are targeted towards priority groups to have the greatest impact.
- ▶ create and develop a monitoring framework to enable us to measure levels of child poverty and outcomes.
- ▶ Explore the relationship between poverty and statutory intervention (compulsory measures of care or child protection) and the need for a strategic framework for tackling the effects of poverty in these circumstances.

To tackle the drivers of child poverty, we need to examine the wider picture and how societal factors can interact and cause “the perfect storm”. These wider societal issues need to be addressed if we are to be successful, and this will require a greater understanding of their interdependencies to enable us to identify the step change needed to properly tackle child poverty.

We need to gain a greater understanding of whether the work we are undertaking: tackles the drivers to reduce poverty in the future; mitigates the consequences to reduce poverty now; reduces the negative consequences of poverty on a child’s outcomes. We therefore intend to:

- ▶ undertake a more comprehensive evaluation of our current activities to determine their impact on reducing and preventing child poverty and in particular the impact on the groups who are

most likely to experience poverty. This will enable us to identify the most powerful interventions and identify gaps.

We hope that this evaluation will enable us to support the aspirations of the Fairer Futures work to:

- ▶ ensure a greater focus on collaboration with organisations and services making more effective connections for the people they serve.
- ▶ ensure a more preventative and proactive approach to delivering better outcomes for those experiencing challenges in their lives.

The Socio Economic Duty requires us to promote fairness and equality with a particular focus on groups who are at a higher risk of experiencing poverty. We intend to:

- ▶ maximise opportunities for inclusive economic growth.
- ▶ ensure tackling child poverty is a key feature across all our partners strategic planning processes.
- ▶ develop a comprehensive communications and engagement plan and consult, engage and raise awareness of the impacting factors on child poverty by working with all stakeholders, communities and influencers.

Tackling child poverty in Perth and Kinross will require action, ownership, commitment and culture change by all stakeholders including our communities. We understand that one of the biggest challenges is addressing stigmas associated with child poverty while helping everyone to understand the issues faced by people in poverty. ***The Perth and Kinross Offer*** is driven by the need to change the way we do things, co-creating a more equal partnership between the Council, our citizens, partners and our communities. It is ultimately about redefining these relationships to continue to make a real difference to people's lives.

As we develop the Perth and Kinross Offer with our communities we will:

- ▶ undertake a planned programme of child poverty awareness raising - consult, engage and raise awareness of the impacting factors on child poverty by working with all stakeholders, communities and influencers.
- ▶ capture lived experiences and learn from these experiences by increasing our focus to work with communities.
- ▶ support our communities and Local Action Partnerships to play an equal and active role in addressing child poverty in their localities.
- ▶ use the Place Standard and placed based approaches to better understand and address the needs in specific localities to tackle poverty and enhance local opportunities for economic development.

Within **Appendix B** of this report we have outlined some potential areas for further action and this will be taken forward as part of the evaluation process.

INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT

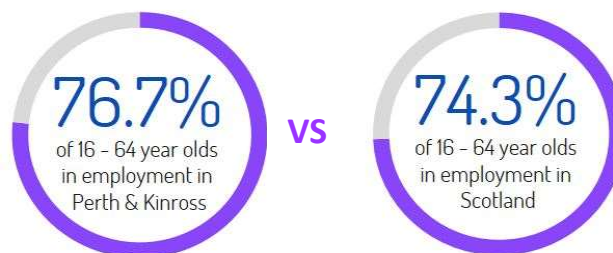
Although employment is the best route out of poverty the majority of families in poverty include someone in work. For employment to be the longer term solution, this will require a culture of Fair Work, enabling parents to access high quality jobs with a decent rate of pay, good training and support, opportunities to progress, a flexible work environment and enough hours in work to meet basic family needs.

Within Perth and Kinross:

- ▶ 46% of employees in the area work in small businesses, 10% higher than Scotland. This is likely to contribute to lower pay and is common with other mainly rural authorities.
- ▶ we face specific challenges in relation to seasonal work, zero hours contracts and lower wage jobs.
- ▶ 1 in 9 working households rely on some form of benefit.
- ▶ fewer people in Perth and Kinross have no qualifications with more people degree- qualified compared to the rest of Scotland.
- ▶ we have an improving picture in terms of children achieving their developmental milestones, in school attendance, literacy, numeracy and educational attainment, however these still remain lower for children living in our most deprived areas.
- ▶ significantly fewer pupils from the most deprived areas stay on to S5 compared to those in more affluent areas who are have an increased likelihood of more positive destinations on leaving school.

Employment

Unemployment across Perth and Kinross remains low (3.1%); however there are still many workless households, or households where income levels are too low. This is a key area of focus for Perth and Kinross Council and the Community Planning Partnerships as we promote a prosperous, sustainable and inclusive economy.



Resident Earnings 2008-2018

Median earnings in Perth and Kinross are above the national average and we have an improving picture in relation to the percent of employees earning less than the living wage. The percent of households managing well financially has also improved slightly over the last 18 years.



National strategies such as “No One Left Behind” have set a course for employability services across all local authorities. In Perth & Kinross, employability services are mainly focussed on supporting people with barriers to employment, many of these are recognised drivers of Child Poverty. All programmes recognise child poverty action planning and target priority groups.

- ▶ Improving adult literacy is recognised as key to accessing employment. In setting the budgets over the next two financial years the Council committed £70k to address adult literacy.

Delivery of skills academies, funded in part by the European Social Fund, aim to upskill and develop talents, raise standards of qualifications - accreditations for people experiencing inequalities of opportunity.

Employer Recruitment Incentives support creation of new employment opportunities for young people with barriers to employment such as disabilities, mental health issues, and migrant ethnic backgrounds. Additional payments made to businesses who commit to paying the Accredited Living Wage ensure a sufficient income from employment for participants on the scheme.

Case Study

P and L attended the Employability Hub which offers support and advice on all aspects of employability skills in Perth. It also engages with and supports local businesses in recruiting and retaining staff to aid business growth. P and L attended the Hub to seek advice on moving back towards employment. P had custody of his young son who lived with them both in their jobless household. L presented with learning difficulties and P had a history of mild to moderate mental health issues.

Both received advice and guidance in employability, appropriate referrals about benefits and childcare issues/responsibilities and actions plans were established. After a matter of weeks L found part-time employment in Childcare with hours that suited them for childcare. P soon afterwards found part-time work and is presently still in the job.

It is important that we harness our investment to ensure that those most in need of employment are not excluded. There are several examples which support this through the use of Community Benefit Clauses in our tendering and procurement processes. An example of this was the development of the A85/A9 road development which delivered a range of social benefits including:-

- ▶ 7 week long work experience placements to young people
- ▶ engagement with over 2,000 school pupils and students across the area
- ▶ 16 apprentices, graduate or trainees employed through the scheme
- ▶ £8,00 raised for local charities

Through partnership activity 407 people were assisted into work through the Employment Connections Hub. In 2018/19, the new Employability project was delivered across the Tayside region focussing on individuals with specific employment barriers, delivering 59 job outcomes across the programme.

We have undertaken a series of events and publications to engage employers and highlight good practice as well as encouraging payment of the Scottish Living Wage. This has clear links with the Tay Cities Deal and work has taken place at a Tayside-wide level to take forward Fair Work as part of the Delivery Plan. A Regional Skills Investment Plan for Tayside is being produced which has a specific focus on Fair Work as a priority.

Our strategic approach to increasing attainment levels for children from our most deprived areas should increase their opportunities to access well paid employment as adults. We have an improving picture in terms of children achieving their pre-school development milestones with significant improvements between 2016 and 2018 for children from our most deprived areas. Improvements are also evident in the number of pupils achieving expected educational levels, again particularly for children from our most deprived areas. We do however recognise that fewer pupils from the most deprived areas stay on at school from S5 and those from more affluent areas are likely to have more positive destinations on leaving school.

The Educational Psychology service has supported Head teachers to undertake thorough needs analysis, using their data to identify gaps for intervention, and identify and implement sustainable, evidence-based and bespoke interventions. A range of initiatives and activities are underway through utilisation of the Pupil Equity Fund to continue progress made to date in closing the poverty related attainment gap targeting interventions at children and young people who are most disadvantaged.

The following information summarises the range of other activities currently underway across Perth and Kinross to maximise household incomes through access to employment and fair pay.

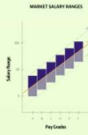
| What have we done? | What difference has this made? | What measures and evidence do we have? |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Delivery of an Integrated Employability programme throughout Tayside. EmployabilityTAY is a regional employability programme, part funded by Scottish Government Innovation and Integration Fund</p> | <p>Assisting 'harder to help' participants into employment has a compounded impact on the economy. This reduces pressure on several public services simultaneously.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 36 job outcomes. ▪ 21 further sustained employment outcomes. ▪ 68% outcome rate across the programme – this is far above the national standard for employability interventions of circa 55%. |
| <p>Delivery of skills academies funded, in part, by European Social Fund</p> | <p>This is to the benefit of local residents with at least 2 barriers to employment, many of whom were deemed far from job market.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 academies delivered in Construction industry with links to A9/A85 developments. ▪ 1 academy in Hospitality linking in with rural hotels to combat labour shortages and retention issues |
| <p>Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI) has supported local small and medium sized enterprises</p> | <p>The creation of 18 new employment opportunities for young people with barriers to employment such as disabilities, mental health issues, migrant ethnic backgrounds. Business receives up to £4,500 in funding throughout a 52 week period.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported in the creation of opportunities ▪ Total investment in local businesses £81,000. ▪ 100% job sustainment record at 13 weeks employment. |
| <p>The Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Employability and Career Ready Programmes encourage and support schools and local employers to work in partnership</p> | <p>Increased numbers of employers delivering in school, pupils going to work experience and placements, pupils undertaking foundation apprenticeships, vocational courses and moving to Modern Apprenticeships</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through attendance of the Peep Plus family learning programme, parents are provided with the opportunity to complete SQA level 4 modules that qualify them to access college courses and other routes to employment. ▪ Transport Scotland Regional Transport Partnership has delivered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 7 week long work experience placements to young people ○ 21 longer duration placements ○ 16 apprenticeships, Graduates or Trainee employed completing over 3,000 days of work ○ 26 NVQ starts or completions | | |



- The Council’s gender pay gap is 0.7% in favour of males. Annual Equal Pay Audits give insight to areas of occupational segregation which helps to identify actions which will remove barriers to women’s employment and earning potential.



- PKC is a Living Wage employer, having ensured its employees have earned at least the Living Wage since 2012. We influence payment of the living wage through the supply chain and with employers who provide services on our behalf on our land and in buildings. This means the potential positive impact on household incomes for employees of the Council as the largest employer in Perth and Kinross is significant.



- Council redesign of the pay grade to be effective on a phased basis from April 2020 and April 2021 will raise income levels for those on low pay and ensure sustainability of the Council’s pay and grading structure for future low wage increases.



- Council employment offers access to a high quality pension fund with employer and employee contributions. There is also the opportunity to use Additional Voluntary Contributions to supplement pension on retirement – staff in the LGPS can access a Shared Cost AVC Scheme which offers National Insurance savings for employees.



- The Council enhanced maternity pay and leave for LGE/CO/Craft employees – pay rates go above the nationally agreed terms and conditions. This measure benefits all female employees who take maternity leave, not just those on low pay. It also facilitates employees taking time off work to be with babies at such a key stage of development.



- The Council operates a highly successful Modern Apprenticeship Programme which offers good quality training and wage rates above the statutory minimum for apprentices. Apprenticeships are offered in a diverse range of occupational areas, with many targeted at job areas with hard to fill posts or areas of growth which in turn maximises opportunities for sustained employment on completion of the apprenticeship. This “Earn while you learn” approach helps young people acquire skills which prepares them for good quality jobs with prospects.



- NHS Tayside’s vocational rehabilitation “Working Health Services” offers free and confidential access to specialist health professionals for employees of small businesses (less than 50 staff) supporting people to retain employment or meaningful activity ensuring families have financial stability where health problems could threaten employment. In 2018/19 154 individuals in Perth & Kinross accessed the support on offer.

If growth in employment fails to include households in poverty, the impacts on poverty rates will be limited. We are undertaking a range of activities which are having a positive impact in supporting households facing poverty into employment. We do, however, recognise that we need to gain a better understanding of the cumulative impact of our work in supporting parents to access and sustain high quality jobs with a decent rate of pay. We also need to better understand if our activity is fully focussed on supporting households in the priority groups outlined on page 5.

In order to maximise income from employment for priority groups we will:

- ▶ undertake a more detailed evaluation of our existing actions and plans to establish their effectiveness and identify the most powerful interventions that will deliver the biggest impacts.

We will also:

- ▶ step up our activities to engage with employers in the area to promote the Living Wage accreditation and the development of “Living Wage Places” through the Perth and Kinross Offer
- ▶ encourage employers in the area, through the Perth and Kinross Offer to agree to pledges, promote a culture of fair work and raise awareness of child poverty

COST OF LIVING

The “cost of living” refers to prices of goods and services considered essential for day-to-day living. These include housing; household goods and services; transport; food and drink; clothing; personal goods and services; social and cultural participation and childcare. Increased prices for these essentials can significantly impact on low income households.

In Perth and Kinross:

- ▶ 30% of households are classed as fuel poor, where more than 10% of income is spent on fuel.
- ▶ we face specific rural challenges in relation to access to services, housing and employment
- ▶ the use of foodbanks continues to increase
- ▶ the impacts of Universal Credit are escalating and we have experienced significant increases in rent arrears
- ▶ just over 1 in 5 households have no access to a car
- ▶ 17% of people have to travel longer than 20 minutes by public transport to reach their GP
- ▶ participation in extra-curricular activities is lower for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds

Childcare

Childcare can be a significant cost for households with children, a lack of affordable and flexible childcare often impacts on a household's ability to access employment. Perth & Kinross Council has a number of Strong Start 2 places offering Early Learning and Childcare to children who are 2 years old. At end of 2017/18 there were 176 strong start 2's across 28 different nursery settings within Perth & Kinross. As at April 2019, around 10% of 3 to 5 years olds benefited from additional hours. Implementation throughout session 2019-2020 will deliver increased access for eligible two year olds, with all 3 to 5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds being offered 1140 hours of ELC by August 2020.

Kinship Care – Since 2016 the Council's policy is to provide children cared for by formal kinship carers financial allowances which are on a par with foster carers which has allowed children and young people to achieve better outcomes and improved wellbeing which is evidenced through

school attendance, educational attainment, improved attention to their health needs as well as providing nurturing care with their own families and communities.

Housing and Fuel poverty

Poorer households in Scotland spend a higher proportion of their income on housing. As the strategic housing enabler and the main provider of social housing in the area, it is important that the Council ensures its rent levels remain affordable. By using local income information, our rent affordability model assesses the impact of rents and identifies the % of residents who would be able to afford our rents without any assistance with their housing costs. The approved 1.5% rent increase for 2-19/20 means that 83% of residents are able to afford our rent levels without additional assistance. Our Council rents remain the most affordable in the area and are around the 6th lowest Local Authority rent in Scotland. Many of our tenancies have children within the household by maintaining our rents at a low level we are minimising the housing costs to these households.

A proactive approach to early intervention and prevention through a range of measures including our integrated schools programme, family mediation, our hospital and prison discharge protocols and personalised budgets has led to a reduction of 6.1% in the overall number of households presenting as homeless. Positively, the number of families presenting as homeless over the last 12 months has reduced by 24% from 306 to 232 demonstrating our continued commitment to minimising the impact of homelessness on children.

We have continued the successful delivery of Home First which has a considerable impact on outcomes for homeless people and has been widely recognised as sector leading, with the Scottish Government commenting that “the outcomes of Home First have been very impressive to date”. Through our Home First rapid rehousing approach we are minimising the duration, stigma and cost of homelessness to many households by offering settled accommodation immediately.

A personalised budget initiative was introduced in 2018/19 to focus on homelessness prevention. Through this:

- ▶ a front-line worker was able to support a family with 4 children to engage with the landlord to address a small arrears balance that accrued due to a change in the family’s financial circumstances.
- ▶ the budget can also be used for basic goods and furnishing as well as energy “top ups” to allow households to move into their accommodation.

We have continued to focus our approach to increase the supply of affordable housing in the area. During last year, 191 new build properties were delivered, 25 homes brought back into use and 26 properties purchased through the buyback scheme with a further 30 new build shared equity completions.

The Council has a strong focus on minimising the impacts of fuel poverty in the area, progressing a wide range of measures such as investment in energy efficiency improvements and awareness raising to help to lower energy bills and increase the energy performance of the housing stock. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) offers opportunities for vulnerable and fuel poor households to get free heating and insulation measures installed in their home. We continue to promote this and other schemes, such as the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS) through our Energy Advice Project and our Home Energy Guide which is produced annually.

- ▶ In its 2019/20 budget, the Council committed £30,000 to SCARF (Save Cash and Reduce Fuel) for the delivery of energy advice

Case Study

Following completion of the Warm Homes Scheme survey, it was confirmed that the household was eligible for a new condensing gas boiler; room thermostat; loft insulation; smoke alarms; central heat pipe enclosure; hot water tank jackets; and a carbon monoxide detector.

The measures were installed in July 2018 and the resident was delighted with the outcome. By contacting the HEAT service, the household saved £5,625 on the cost of the energy efficiency equipment and a potential lifetime fuel bill saving estimated at £14k.

Transport

Transport enables people to access services, work, childcare and affordable shops. Low income households do not travel as far or as frequently as those with high incomes and rely more on walking or public transport. Limited frequency and high cost public transport can limit opportunities and place additional costs on low income households. Accessibility and cost of public transport was recognised as a key area within the Fairer Futures work.

We invest £2.1 million in public sector bus travel to support people to access affordable travel, participate in communities and access services and employment. There are a range of ticket offers and group fares accessible to people on low incomes and our Community Transport Forum is working with our Local Action Partnerships to provide a local service within communities.

One of our secondary schools has negotiated reduced fares from one of our main transport providers and is utilising Pupil Equity Funding to provide free transport to pupils in poverty, enabling them to attend after school clubs.

Our investment in public transport represents a £4.28 subsidy for each passenger journey. Despite this significant commitment, we recognise that for some households the cost of transport can be high. A parent in Letham (an estate on the outskirts of Perth) with 3 children between 6 and 11, wishing to travel to and from the city centre for a day to enjoy the free activities of the parks, museums, libraries and any events – would need to pay £10.80 in bus fares.

Our local Action Partnerships also recognise these issues and are currently considering ways to achieve reduced bus fares for young people travelling to work. For households earning the minimum wage costs of transport from our rural towns into the City Centre can be high. To support this, discussions are underway with our local bus operators and we are considering opportunities to enhance and maximise the use and benefits from a Young Scot Card.

Foodbanks and Food Insecurity

In 2018/19, Perth & Kinross Foodbank processed 2,776 vouchers, feeding 5,190 people including 1,432 children. This represents an overall increase of 4.5% from the previous year and a 17.4% increase in the number of children receiving food. The foodbank processed an average of 53 vouchers per week, feeding 100 people. The most common reason given for needing a food parcel is

low income (33% of service users), followed by benefit delays (28%) and benefit changes (15%). 22,638 people have been fed in total since Perth & Kinross Foodbank was established in Sept 2013, including 6,081 children.

The Perth Foodbank have been supporting pupils in a Perth Primary School for almost 2 years with regular donations throughout the school terms. It has also provided food for the Holiday Hunger programme which ran during the summer holidays last year.

In 2019/20, the Council committed:

- ▶ to supporting Perth Foodbank by providing £60K funding over the next three years.
- ▶ £50,000 to tackle food insecurity during school holidays

Money Advice

The Citizen's Advice Bureau provide a valuable service in the provision of advice, information and guidance on a wide range of topics including guidance on benefits, debt, money work and housing etc. Perth & Kinross Council has contributed on an ongoing basis to the provision of the service so that the service can respond to increasing enquiries from households struggling to meet basic living costs. In addition to the ongoing contribution of £100k, an additional £36k was committed for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22.

The Credit Union also plays a key and increasing role by encouraging a collective community approach to supporting the most financially vulnerable people in our communities across Perth and Kinross. Through Budget Accounts and Engage Cards, the Credit Union help local people manage their budgets and support early intervention with people transferring to Universal Credit to become more financially aware and less susceptible to payday/online/high interest loans. The Engage card is a prepaid card that can be used like normal bank cards but people can only spend what they have loaded onto the card. They are aimed at the most financially vulnerable people in our community and support those with little capacity to manage their financial affairs. This scheme currently has approximately 362 people supported through the use of this card.

In its 2019/20 budget the Council committed an additional funding of:

- ▶ £32,000 to fund the cost of an additional 300 budget cards

The following information summarises the range of other activities currently underway across Perth and Kinross to maximise household incomes through reducing their costs of living.

| What have we done? | What difference has this made? | What measures and evidence do we have? |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Introduced a Sustaining Tenancies Fund to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform. It provides financial assistance to support tenants in rent arrears who are experiencing financial hardship and are at risk of losing their home.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better outcomes for council tenants and their families whose financial hardship has been reduced or limited ▪ Improvement in the health and wellbeing of tenants suffering from debt by reducing the burden of rental debt | <p>A third of the payments were made to households with children. (46 households/103 children under 16years of age)</p> |
| <p>A Rent Affordability Assessment Model introduced to calculate rent affordability based on local income information.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximising household incomes through ensuring housing costs are minimised ▪ Ensuring households have access to good quality affordable housing ▪ Most affordable housing option in Perth & Kinross | <p>83% of residents in Perth and Kinross can afford Council rent without the need for assistance</p> |
| <p>Home First was fully implemented in April 2017 and has transformed the way we assist households straight into permanent accommodation.</p> | <p>It has had a positive impact on the outcomes for many households with children by reducing the stigma, duration and experience of homelessness.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homeless households waiting for settled accommodation reduced from 550 to 63 ▪ Average time in temporary accommodation reduced from 131 days in 2015/16 to 81 days in 2017/18 ▪ Reduced homeless case duration from 52.97 weeks to 20.77 weeks |
| <p>Strong Start 2 : Perth & Kinross Council has a number of places offering Early Learning and Childcare to children who are 2 years of age. These are available to 2 year olds who meet the eligibility criteria as set down by the Scottish Government</p> | <p>Improve outcomes for all children, especially those who are more vulnerable or disadvantaged, and help to close the attainment gap. ELC will also support parents to work, train or study, especially those who need help with finding sustainable employment</p> | <p>At end of 2017/18 there were 176 strong start 2's across 28 different nursery settings within Perth & Kinross</p> |
| <p>The Scottish Government's expansion in funding ELC from 600 to 1,140 hours a year by August 2020, for all three and four year olds and eligible two-year olds. This will be a phased approach targeting areas experiencing deprivation.</p> | <p>Provides high quality, flexible early learning and childcare that is accessible and affordable for all families. ELC will support parents to work, train or study, especially those who need help with finding sustainable employment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As at April 2019, around 10% of 3 to 5 years olds benefited from additional hours. ▪ Implementation throughout session 2019-2020 will deliver increased access for eligible two year olds, with all 3 to 5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds being offered 1,140 hours of ELC by August 2020 |

ADVICE



- Housing Options / Housing Advice and Assistance - We continue to work with our partners to provide people with advice and assistance about the range of housing options available to them, including information on budgeting and a financial assessment.
- Integrated Schools Programme – Since 2012 the Housing service has delivered a housing and homelessness education programme to S1 to S3 pupils in all secondary schools
- Young People – Support Officers are assigned to work specifically with young people at risk of homelessness with the aim of preventing it occurring wherever possible. This engagement takes place in a number of settings including youth clubs.
- Family Mediation – All Support Officers are trained in family mediation to provide support where a young person has been asked to leave the family home.
- Strengthening Families – Support Officers participate in the delivery of the strengthening families project to provide additional support to vulnerable families to prevent them from losing their home and provide support to assist with relationship breakdowns
- Private Rented Sector - Through the range of initiatives delivered by the private sector team and close working with the private landlord registration team, we continue to drive up conditions, standard and security within the sector. The difference this is making is that private sector housing is now considered to be a viable housing option for many households in housing need.
- We worked in partnership with SCARF to deliver our Home Energy Advice Team (Heat) Service, providing free and impartial energy efficiency advice to households helping families to reduce fuel consumption and save on energy costs.
- Low cost contents insurance offered by PKC and Registered Social Landlords
- In collaboration with the Credit Union established Engage Cards to help people better manage their money
- NHS Tayside’s Public Health Smoking Cessation Service not only highlights the health implications from smoking but also the impact this has on household costs. A total of 3,228 smokers in Perth & Kinross have benefited from participation cessation incentive schemes. Of 1,164 quit attempts in Perth and Kinross during 2018/19 41.7% were from the 40% most deprived data zones.
- Wheels to go – Pilot project which enables parents who are unable to afford to purchase a balance bike to borrow one whilst the child is learning.
- Home safety equipment scheme – enables families affected by local income to be provided with safety equipment such as stair gates, electrical socket covers and fittings to secure

Our plan to evaluate the impact of activities relating to the cost of living will inform how we prioritise future actions in this area. We will also:

- ▶ enhance the functionality of our rent affordability modelling tool to assess the affordability of private sector rents and predict the rent affordability of all tenures over 5 years.
- ▶ continue to progress our new build programme through the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.
- ▶ undertake a benefit realisation exercise to more fully understand the impacts of our fuel poverty measures.
- ▶ evaluate our transport activities to identify where we can reduce the cost of travel for priority groups.

INCOME FROM SOCIAL SECURITY AND BENEFITS IN KIND

Social security payments have a direct impact on poverty by providing or supplementing a household's income. The system aims to assist people who are out of work or on low incomes, sick or disabled people, families with children and older people, as well as people in certain circumstances, for example new mothers or bereaved people. Delays to new claims, late payments or overpayments can lead to financial crisis for families.

In Perth and Kinross:

- ▶ 1 in 9 working age households rely on some form of benefit
- ▶ during 2018/19 the Welfare Rights Team received 4798 contacts and managed 2,622 cases, generated over £6 million additional income to the residents of Perth and Kinross and to the local economy.
- ▶ we have under registration of free school meals.
- ▶ 11.1 % of all children living in families are in receipt of child tax credit, whose reported income is less than 60% of the median income. (For Scotland this figure is 16%)
- ▶ 901 of our tenants are in receipt of universal credit, the average increase in arrears levels for tenants moving to universal credit is £257.86
- ▶ the projected increase in overall arrears for Council tenants is over £290,000 by June 2019.

Universal credit full service was rolled out across Perth and Kinross in June 2019 replacing 6 other benefits. For many households and services, universal credit has presented a range of difficulties and added financial hardship due to monthly payments, rent no longer going directly to the landlord and a requirement to apply on-line.

Costs arising from children's attendance at school – including the cost of school uniforms, transport costs, eating at school, learning resources, school trips, events and clubs place pressure on family budgets and can lead to unequal access to opportunities and stigma for children.

Cost of the School Day

Costs associated with school such as meals, uniform and after school activities can place real pressure on households in poverty.

In Perth and Kinross:

- ▶ around 1 in 10 P4 - P7 pupils are registered for free school meals
- ▶ around 1 in 14 secondary pupils are registered for free school meals
- ▶ £1.67 million Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) awarded to schools
- ▶ 1,124 school clothing grants were issued in the academic year 2017/18

Although the number of pupils registering for free school meals has risen slightly over the last year, under registration, due to stigmatisation, is recognised as an issue especially in smaller rural schools. Pupil Equity Funding is allocated for pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible for free school meals and used to support children who experience barriers to learning and who might be falling behind or not getting the same chances in their education because their family is experiencing poverty or other financial difficulties.

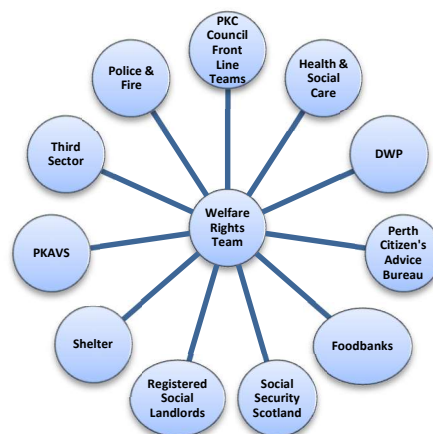
In its 2019/20 budget the Council committed additional funding for:

- ▶ £77,000 for school clothing and an additional £30k for school uniform grants
- ▶ £25,000 to expand opportunities for children
- ▶ £35,000 towards instrumental music service
- ▶ £48,000 towards the provision of sanitary products in schools and £43,000 for the provision of sanitary products in public places.
- ▶ £139,000 over the three years to promote access to the Instrumental Music Service

Welfare Rights Activity

The Council takes a proactive approach to income maximisation through investing in financial inclusion and promoting money advice across frontline service delivery. Our Welfare Rights Team is fully accredited to the highest level at Type III to the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers for all aspects of Social Security law. This enables them to represent people for the purposes of benefits at court and tribunal. In 2018/19 the team had a success rate of 75% compared to the national average of 64%. The delivery of awareness sessions to frontline workers (across a range of partners) means that staff are highly knowledgeable on welfare benefits enabling them to support residents and communities across Perth & Kinross. Some examples of this include:-

- ▶ Children & Families Services - kinship care, care leavers, early years services
- ▶ delivery of a range of outreach surgeries to community hubs, Minority Community Hub, local hospital and MacMillan centre.



- ▶ working in partnership with Midwifery Services and the Family Nurse Partnership to ensure that pregnant women across Perth City have seamless access to benefits advice and assistance at the earliest opportunity.
- ▶ **Positive Futures** - The European Social Fund provides matched funding to the Welfare Rights Team and the Citizen's Advice Bureau to provide wraparound, enhanced welfare rights and money advice services to families living in the five Council wards areas with the highest concentration of children living in poverty.

Perth and Kinross Council provides financial support through the provision of allowances to Kinship Carers. Partnership working between the Family Based Care Team and the Welfare Rights Team has assisted Kinship Carers to draw upon alternative sources of income, including welfare benefits to meet the basic needs of the children living with them. This is having positive outcomes in raising kinship care families out of poverty and whilst the impacts are difficult to measure our assessment is that children and young people in Kinship Care are experiencing improved outcomes and life chances as a result of:

- ▶ improved attendance at health appointments
- ▶ improved school attendance
- ▶ stability of care giver
- ▶ long term financial support to lift kinship families out of poverty
- ▶ finance and support to remain in their kinship family until 21 years

Case Study

A Carer contacted Welfare Rights seeking advice about her debt. A benefit check established that the carer had a Residence Order for her grandchild. She had not heard of the term Kinship Carer and was unaware of Kith-n-Kin (support group for kinship carers), despite having looked after her granddaughter (Child A) since birth.

A referral to the Kinship Care Team resulted in an award of Kinship Care Assistance Payments and instigated further referrals to other agencies for support. In addition to the Kinship Care Assistance Payments the carer's income has increased by around £190 per week and she has received back-dated payments of around £2,500.

In addition across Tayside there are a number of activities providing money and benefit advice:-

- ▶ a multi-agency welfare advice facility at Ninewells Hospital facilitates access to money advice for patients, visitors and staff. As well as providing advice in relation to benefits, money, debt, fuel poverty, energy efficiency the service now includes the provision of emergency hospital packs (clothing, toiletries and books for children). Since January 2017, 7% of users of the service were from Perth & Kinross.
- ▶ "Money worries? Find the right help in crisis" is a mobile app developed by NHS Tayside to enable frontline staff to support patients/clients in financial crisis .
- ▶ promotion of Best Start Grant and Baby Box Scheme - All pregnant women and families with young children eligible to claim are encouraged to do so.
- ▶ financial inclusion referral pathways have been developed from NHS to money advice services ensuring the socio-economic needs of patients are fully considered in their treatment, care and recovery.

Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments

The Scottish Welfare Fund provides a safety net in an emergency where there is a threat to health, safety or to enable continued independent living. This, together with Discretionary Housing Payments, made to people who are not receiving enough to cover their rent and also assist with one-off costs associated with moves into a new home, provide valuable financial assistance to those who need it most.

Since the roll out of Universal Credit we have seen a growing demand on the Scottish Welfare Fund and in October to January 2019 alone 100 more applications were made compared to the same quarter the previous year. In that quarter 1,260 applications were made:-

- ▶ 33% of the total applications were made from households with children (25% of these were lone parents)

In Perth and Kinross there are between 30-40 households affected by the Benefit Cap at any time (the majority are families with 3 or more children). Some households lost their entitlement for assistance with rent amounting to between £70 and £155 per week and in 2018/19. Through the Discretionary Housing Payments we enabled 35 households to remain in their home.

Case Study *A lone parent (EEA National) had fled domestic abuse and was subsequently refused Universal Credit for not meeting residence requirements (despite living in Scotland for more than three years). The family were provided with temporary accommodation. The Welfare Fund, Social Work and Homeless Support Teams worked together to sustain the family while the mother secured sufficient hours of employment to access UC. She had been paid several Crisis Grants and two Section 22 payments, however no further payments were able to be made. She needed one final payment to tide her over until she was paid and applied to the Welfare Trust, a combination of small charitable funds administered by the Welfare Fund Team. A payment was made to her and her child for food and fuel. She is now living in a permanent home and working 16 hours per week and receiving Child Benefit and UC.*

The following information summarises the range of other activities currently underway across Perth and Kinross to maximise income from social security and benefits in kind.

| What have we done? | What difference has this made? | What measures and evidence do we have? |
|--|---|--|
| <p>The Council invests in an in-house Welfare Rights service which provides free, confidential and impartial benefits advice and appeals representation service to the residents of Perth & Kinross.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased household incomes and reduced expenditure ▪ Poverty aware staff are able to refer/direct households in need to the benefits and advice they need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4,794 people provided with advice and/or appeals representation in 2018/19 ▪ Assisted with 341 appeals with a 75% success rate in 2018/19 ▪ Generated £6 million in benefit gains in 2018/19 |
| <p>Free School Meals are provided to all P1-P3 pupils and to older children where Scottish Government eligibility criteria are met</p> | <p>More pupils are able to have a nutritious meal during the school day, whilst maximising family income by reducing expenditure on food</p> | <p>The 2019 Healthy Living survey indicated 4,388 P1-P3 pupils registered for universal free school meals, 619 P4-P7 pupils and 548 secondary pupils. The proportion of P4-P& pupils has risen this year to 10.1% (8.9% in 2016)</p> |
| <p>Families Affected by Poverty are established as a priority group in the PKC Parenting strategy. Delivery is via family learning, group activities, one-to-one support and specific parenting programmes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivered family budgeting sessions and family cooking sessions. ▪ Organisations continue to work together to support parents with form filling, accredited learning and employability. ▪ Promoted Healthy Start Scheme | |
| <p>Clothing and Footwear Grants (one per academic year) are available for school pupils P1 and older, based on specific P&K eligibility criteria which has recently been expanded.</p> | <p>Assists with maximising family income by reducing expenditure on school clothing</p> | <p>There were 1,124 clothing grants awarded in academic year 2017/2018 and 1,358 in session 18/19 to date.</p> |



- The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is additional money allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap. It aims to interrupt the cycle of poverty by tackling the poverty-related attainment gap
- ECS have had a working group looking at School Excursions and produced a draft- Closing the poverty related attainment gap: Guidance for Secondary School Trips. This draws upon and links to Cost of School Day – information from Child Poverty Action Group.
- The Welfare Rights Team Facebook page has 1,486 followers and have delivered over 60 talks, training and attendance at events including parents evenings at schools
- Lone parents - European Social Fund Positive Futures! project – This project ran from November 2016 until December 2018 and provided an enhanced Welfare Rights Service to lone parents/parents with disabilities/carers to those residing in the 5 Council wards with highest levels of child poverty as at 2013 figures.

We are supporting a wide range of activities to maximise people’s incomes from benefits. We face particular challenges due to the rural nature of Perth and Kinross, our training and awareness raising ensures all frontline staff are highly knowledgeable and able to support people in their localities.

We need to better understand the impact of our activities in reducing child poverty and ensure it is fully accessible to those people who need it the most.

In order to maximise income from social security and benefits in kind we will:

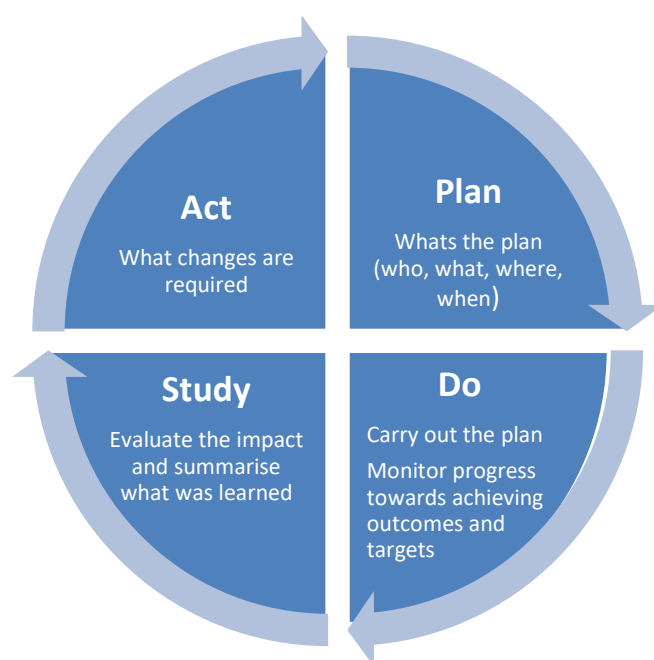
- ▶ seek feedback from people who use and need our services to identify any improvements that may be required in terms of accessibility and support.
- ▶ undertake an evaluation of our investment in specialist Welfare Rights services to establish if capacity meets the needs of our communities.
- ▶ as part of the wider evaluation look to see how we can further reduce the cost of the school day and continue to maximise the opportunities offered through the Pupil Equity Fund.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Community Plan and our Fairer Futures work are the strategic context within which our Child Poverty Action Report will sit. Reporting to the Community Planning Partnership Board, six Outcome Delivery Groups are tasked with delivering their respective part of the community Plan.

This will ensure a streamlined approach by linking in with existing arrangements but also embed a consistent message and approach around tackling the drivers of child poverty.

Our well established reporting and evaluation mechanisms build on all aspects of planning and improvement and follow the plan, do, study, act methodology. It is our intention to create a more comprehensive monitoring framework to enable us to better measure levels of child poverty and evaluate the impact and outcomes of our actions.



CONCLUSION

One in five of our children, around four thousand, are living in poverty. Our first Child Poverty Action report has provided an overview of child poverty in the area; the key factors that are negatively impacting on child poverty and a summary of some of the many positive actions all partners are progressing to mitigate the impacts of child poverty.

We recognise that to mitigate the consequences and reduce child poverty now and to tackle the key drivers to reduce poverty in the future will require step change. We remain committed to supporting our children to realise a better future and to have the hope and expectation of what this will mean to them.

Through the high level actions detailed within this plan, a strong partnership approach and by working with and within our communities as we develop the Perth and Kinross Offer we will deliver the actions required to support the Scottish Governments ambitious targets.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

NATIONAL

- ▶ [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#)
- ▶ [Fairer Scotland Duty](#)
- ▶ [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)
- ▶ [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)
- ▶ [Education \(Scotland Act\) 2016](#)
- ▶ [“Every child, every chance” – National Delivery Plan 2018-22](#)
- ▶ [Developing a Local Child Poverty Action Report: Guidance](#)
- ▶ [Mitigating the Impact of Welfare Reform on Health and NHS Services](#)

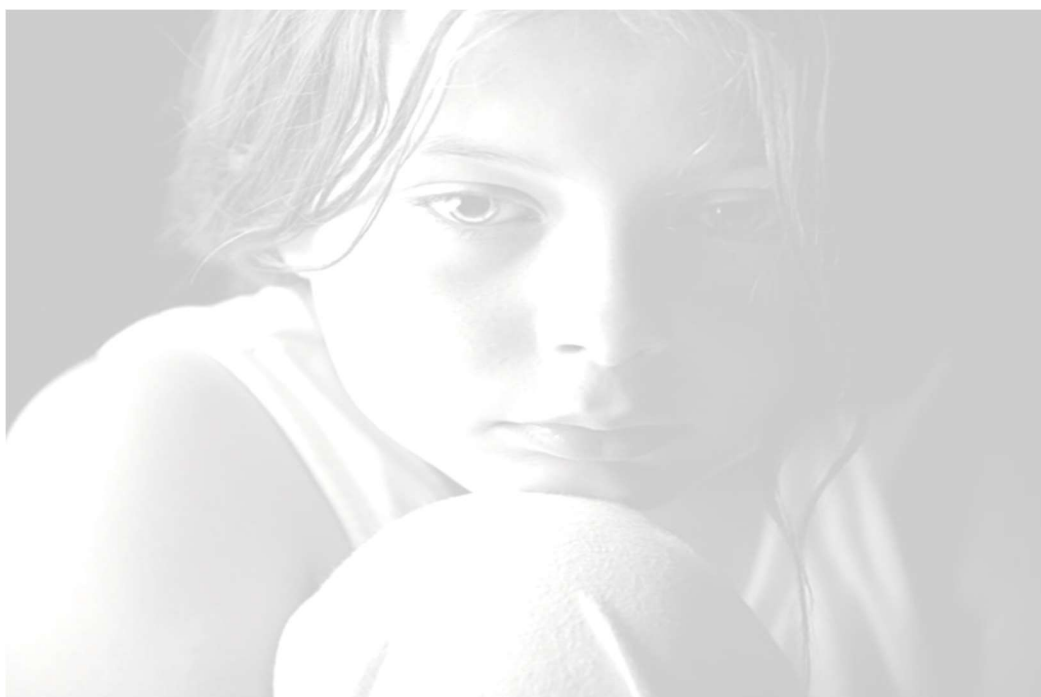
REGIONAL

- ▶ [NHS Tayside Health Equity Strategy 2010 “Communities in Control”](#)
- ▶ [The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2017 – 2020](#)

- ▶ [Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families – One Year Report 2017 -2018](#)
- ▶ [Mitigating the Health Impact of Welfare Reform – Action Plan – NHS Tayside](#)

LOCAL

- ▶ [Perth and Kinross Fairness Commission – Fairer Futures](#)
- ▶ [Perth and Kinross Community Plan \(Local Outcomes Improvement Plan\) 2017-2027](#)
- ▶ [Perth and Kinross Corporate Plan 2018-2022](#)
- ▶ [Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021](#)
- ▶ [Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy – Progress Report 2018/19](#)
- ▶ [Perth and Kinross Council – Best Value Self-Evaluation – 2019](#)



Poverty Indicators Definitions

A child is considered to be growing up in poverty if they are living in a household where the income is below 60% of the median income. For 2017/18 this equated to the following levels of income (after taxes and including cash benefits from the state).

| Family Profile | Income | Income after housing costs |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Lone parent with one child under 14 | £264pw or £13,800pa | £204pw or £10,700pa |
| Couple with one child under 14 | £365pw or £19,000pa | £314pw or £16,400pa |
| For each additional child under 14 - add | £60.80pw or £3,200pa | £52pw or £2,700pa |
| For each additional child over 14 - add | £100pw or £5,200pa | £110pw or £5,700pa |

Less than 10% of children are in relative poverty

- **Description of measure:** Relative poverty measures the proportion of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median (middle) UK income in the current year.
- **Rationale for the target:** This measure of poverty recognises that individual and household needs are relative to societal standards of living and measures whether the incomes of the poorest households are keeping up with growth in average (middle) incomes in the current year.
- **Data source:** The data used to measure this comes from the Family Resources Survey (FRS) and associated Households Below Average Income (HBAI) dataset. These provide the best source of household income data at a Scotland (and UK) level.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-resources-survey--2>

Less than 5% of children are in absolute poverty

- **Description of measure:** The number of children living in households below 60% of the median UK income in 2010/11, adjusted for inflation.
- **Rationale for the target:** Assessment of whether living standards at the bottom of the income distribution are rising or falling (keeping pace with inflation) irrespective of those elsewhere in the income distribution.
- **Data source:** As for the relative poverty measure, the data used to measure this comes from the Family Resources Survey (FRS) and associated Households Below Average Income (HBAI) dataset. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/familyresources-survey--2>

Less than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation

- **Description of measure:** The number of children living in households with incomes below 70% of the median UK income AND going without certain basic goods and services (such as a warm winter coat, a holiday away from home, money to replace worn out furniture etc.)
- **Rationale for the target:** Enables an assessment of a household's ability to use resources to buy essentials as well as of the income coming into the household.
- **Data source:** The data used to measure this comes from the Family Resources Survey (FRS) and associated Households Below Average Income (HBAI) dataset.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-resources-survey--2>

Less than 5% of children are in persistent poverty

- **Description of measure:** The number of children who have lived in relative poverty in 3 or more of the last 4 years.
- **Rationale for the target:** Living in poverty for a significant period of time is more damaging than brief periods spent with a low income.
- **Data source:** The data used to measure this comes from Understanding Society which is a longitudinal survey meaning that it tracks the same individuals over time – necessary for measuring persistent poverty. <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/>

Source: Developing a Local Child Poverty Action Report: Guidance – Scottish Government

Appendix B – Action Plans

| Lead | Action | Target group |
|----------------------------|--|--------------|
| Overarching actions | | |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a more detailed quantitative and qualitative assessment and analysis of child poverty across Perth and Kinross to gain a better understanding of our local child poverty position and the specific needs of our different communities. This assessment will involve parents and children with lived experience of poverty. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a more detailed assessment to better identify priority groups where children are at a greater risk of poverty. This will enable us to ensure that the actions we take are targeted towards priority groups to have the greatest impact. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and develop a monitoring framework to enable us to measure levels of child poverty and outcomes. For example sharing of data and qualitative information , sharing of good practice, learned experience etc. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a more comprehensive evaluation of our current activities to determine their impact on reducing and preventing child poverty and in particular the impact on the groups who are most likely to experience poverty. This will enable us to identify most powerful interventions and identify gaps. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a planned programme of child poverty awareness - consult, engage and raise awareness of the impacting factors on child poverty by working with all stakeholders, communities and influencers. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture lived experiences and learn from these experiences by increasing our focus to work with communities. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support our communities and Local Action Partnerships to play an equal and active role in addressing child poverty in their localities. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Place Standard and place based approaches to better understand and address the needs in specific localities to tackle poverty and enhance local opportunities for economic development. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a comprehensive engagement and communication plan which will also include specific actions around the three key drivers. | All |
| Child Poverty Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the benefits of a shared collaborative approach across all partners within Perth & Kinross and across Tayside e.g. data collection, platform for good practice, welfare/money advice etc. | All |

| Lead | Action | Target group |
|--|---|--|
| Poverty Driver : Income from Employment | | |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take forward the elements of the wider Engagement and Communication plan as they relate to income from employment. | |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a more detailed evaluation of our existing actions and plans to establish their effectiveness and identify the most powerful interventions that will deliver the biggest impacts. | |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step up our activities to engage with employers in the area to promote the Living Wage accreditation and the development of “Living Wage Places” through the Perth and Kinross Offer | |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage employers in the area, through the Perth and Kinross Offer to agree to pledges, promote a culture of fair work and raise awareness of child poverty | |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tay Cities - Development of skills and enterprise stream | Various, but reducing child poverty will be core |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <p>Employability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities/Colleges/Schools Linking with employability hubs and bringing in gaps (e.g. lack of social care workers and childminders – shortfalls) | All |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage employers in the area to develop flexible working policies which will support families develop skills and to take up or maintain employment | All |
| Lead for Income from Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the use of social benefit clauses within procurement contracts with a focus on employment and skills development. | All |

| Lead | Action | Target group |
|---|--|--------------|
| Poverty Driver : Costs of Living | | |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take forward the elements of the wider Engagement and Communication plan. | All |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate the impact of activities relating to the cost of living will inform how we prioritise future actions in this area | All |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance the use of our rent affordability modelling tool to assess the affordability of private sector rents. | All |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate our transport activities to identify where we can reduce the cost of travel for priority groups including the use of Community Transport. ▪ Further develop the use of the Young Scot Card to maximise the benefits to reduce transport costs for children. | All |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the impact on families around accessing community activities particular around school holidays e.g. after school clubs, out-of-term events etc. | All |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We will include provision in our published Statement of Intent for the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility mechanism of ECO, which will specifically help households receiving Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit, to participate in the scheme. We will promote this and other schemes, such as the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS) through our Energy Advice Project and our Home Energy Guide which is produced annually. | All |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We will promote our Home Energy Advice Service and HEAT in public health settings and incorporate child poverty information and actions into our fuel poverty awareness sessions. | All |
| Lead for Costs of Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake a mapping exercise to determine activities within the area with a focus on money advice, budgeting, cooking within a budget etc. | All |

| Lead | Action | Target group |
|---|--|--------------|
| Poverty Driver: Income from Social Security & Benefits in Kind | | |
| Lead for Social Security & Benefits in Kind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to take forward the elements of the wider Engagement and Communication plan. | All |
| Lead for Social Security & Benefits in Kind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek feedback from people who use and need our services to identify any improvements that may be required in terms of accessibility and support. | All |
| Lead for Social Security & Benefits in Kind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate our investment in specialist Welfare Rights services to establish if capacity meets the needs of our communities. Perhaps by looking at referral pathways across Tayside. | All |
| Lead for Social Security & Benefits in Kind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the wider evaluation look to see how we can assist with the cost of the school day and maximise the opportunities offered through the Pupil Equity Fund. | All |
| Lead for Social Security & Benefits in Kind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing practices to ensure we are targeting resources in the best way to enable the maximisation and uptake of benefits. | All |
| Lead for Social Security & Benefits in Kind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a mapping exercise to determine the opportunities for accessing benefits in kind. | All |