Perth and Kinross community planning partnership logo

Local Child Poverty Action Report   
2023/24 and   
Local Child Poverty Action Plan 2024/25

6th Edition

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Introduction

**Since the introduction of the Child Poverty Targets in 2017 significant resources have been devoted to tackling child poverty. The Scottish Government has spent around £1.25 billion – and yet there has been little movement on the number and percentage of children living below the poverty line.**

**Perth and Kinross reflects this national trend – poverty rates flat line despite significant resources being devoted to tackling child poverty. As in 2017, in 2024 22% of children are living in poverty.**

**That poverty rates have not increased in the wake of a global pandemic and lockdown, followed by a Cost-of-Living crisis is claimed by some as evidence of impact.**

**It maybe that in the years leading up to 2030, the statistics impacted on by the outlier years of 2019 – 2023 re-calibrate as the and a different picture emerges. However, it is a matter of some regret that few now have a serious expectation that the poverty targets set out in 2017 will be achieved by 2030.**

**It is not just that we need to redouble our efforts, we also need to re-examine our approach to tackling poverty and invest in those areas where gains are more likely to be made.**

**We are currently collaborating with the Fraser of Allander Institute and the Improvement Service to more rigorously evaluate our efforts and to generate a body of evidence around what works when it comes to poverty alleviation.**

**We have been fortunate in securing just over £1.3 million to invest in the SPAN programme – Supporting People – Addressing Needs which provides a platform for the integration of services across income maximisation, employability and wellbeing. It will deliver a tailored offer to each family affected by poverty – and we will assess this integrated and holistic approach to measure how successful it is in moving families from crisis and emergency to sustainable livelihoods.**

**Poverty is the biggest equality issue in Scotland today – with 1 in 5 of our children having their opportunities and life chances constrained by the financial circumstances into which they were born.**

**Thomas Glen**  
Chief Executive, Perth and Kinross Council

**Nicky Connor**

Chief Executive, NHS Tayside

This report has been jointly produced by Perth and Kinross Council and NHS Tayside, it reflects the wider collaboration with our Community Planning Partners and a deepening engagement with our key stakeholder groups.

It is our sixth Child Poverty Action Report and includes actions taken to implement our [Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026](#_Appendix_1_–).

The Child Poverty Delivery Plan aligns with [Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan](https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/) of the Scottish Government which covers the same period. It connects to and will deliver a rights-based approach as set out in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf) with reference to those articles which relate to child poverty:

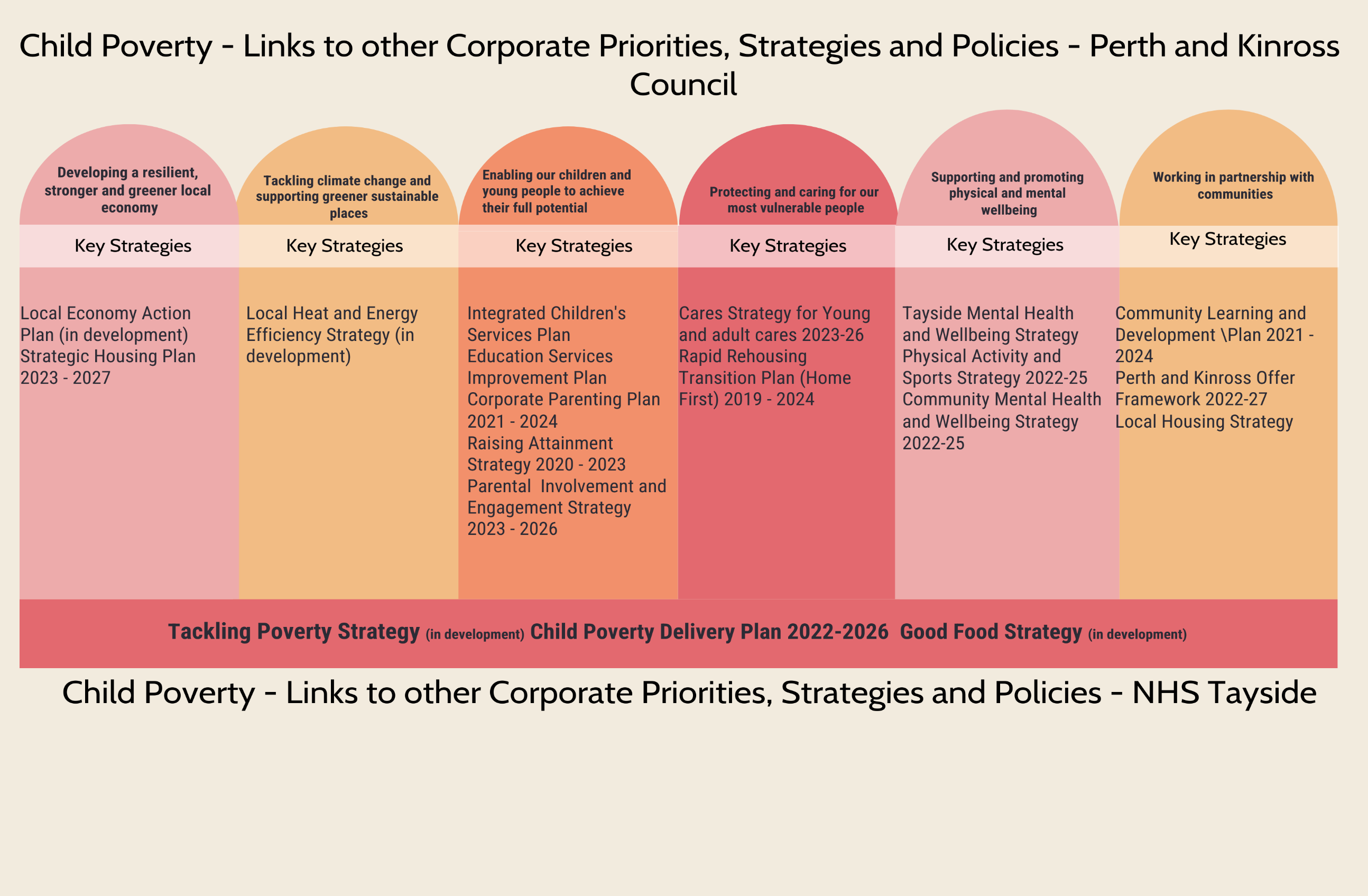
* Article 3 (best interests of the child)
* Article 6 (life, survival and development)
* Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)
* Article 26 (social security)
* Article 27 (adequate standard of living).

It is underpinned by [GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child)](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/) the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by offering the right help at the right time. It supports children and their parents to work in partnership with the services that can help them. The GIRFEC approach is child-focussed and uses the [SHANARRI](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/wellbeing-indicators-shanarri/) wellbeing indicators, to identify need and measure progress.

It also aligns with the Scottish Government’s No One Left Behind approach to employability support. In particular, the growing emphasis on supporting parents into work, and to increase their earnings in work.

It will contribute to the delivery of [Scotland's Promise to care experienced children and young people](https://thepromise.scot/what-is-the-promise/) that they will grow up loved, safe and respected and relates to the delivery of [Plan 21-24](https://thepromise.scot/resources/2021/plan-21-24.pdf) which requires organisations to demonstrate how they are ensuring that they play a part in mitigating the impacts of poverty.

It flows from the [Perth and Kinross Corporate Plan 2022/23 - 2027/28](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/23059/Corporate-Plan-Priority-Tackling-poverty) which has Tackling Poverty as a corporate priority and the [Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2022-2032](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/40553/Community-Plan-Local-Outcomes-Improvement-Plan-2022-2032/pdf/LOIP_2022-2032.pdf?m=638049792076130000) adopted by our Community Planning Partners which sets Reducing Poverty as a strategic priority.



Context

In 2019/2020 Perth and Kinross Council agreed 26 indicators to measure the extent and impact of child poverty across Perth and Kinross. These indicators were

* general
* income from employment
* the essential cost of living
* social security and benefits in kind
* breaking the cycle of poverty

A screenshot of a blue and white document

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Post-covid a number of the statistics previously used to measure progress in these areas have been discontinued and the Scottish Government have developed their own dashboard of stats to measure progress towards attainment of the child poverty targets. Perth and Kinross Council have also revamped their own performance indicators.

The Children’s Scorecard and Measuring Child Poverty project have been updated accordingly to align with the Scottish Government dashboard, the available data around income from employment and benefits and cost of living and PKCs performance data.

It is available on [our website](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/53541/Children-s-Scorecard-2024-3rd-edition/doc/Childrens_Scorecard_2024_3rd_edition.docx?m=1733221873457).

This year the Children’s Scorecard reveals that child poverty rates and numbers have remained relatively stable with 5750 children living in poverty. (21.7%). This reflects the stubbornly static nature of child poverty in Scotland as a whole.

It included the findings of the Early Learning and Childcare bi-annual survey which included for the first time a section on parents from Priority Groups and social needs screening. The response rate was between 460 and 484 for these questions and therefore we have a statistically significant sample to draw upon.

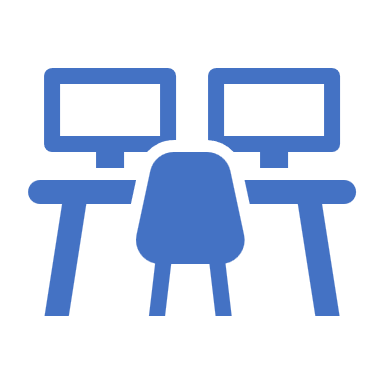
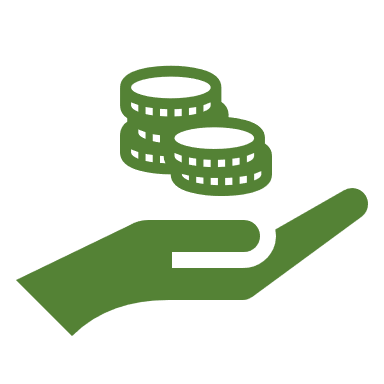
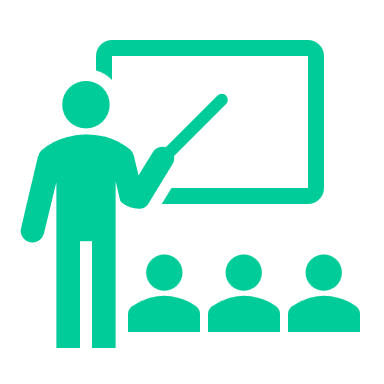
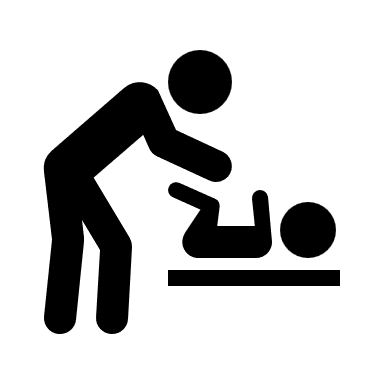
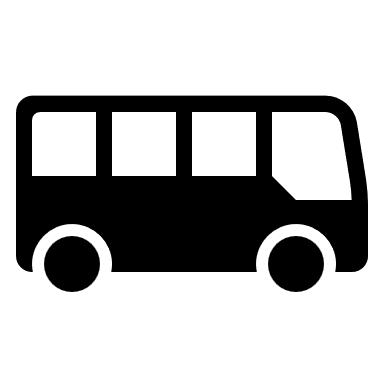
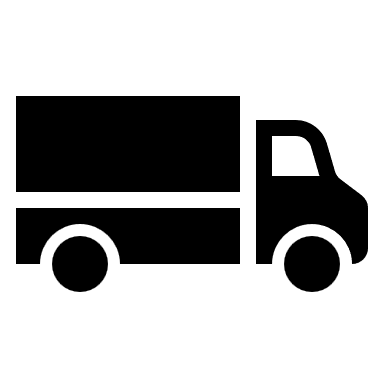
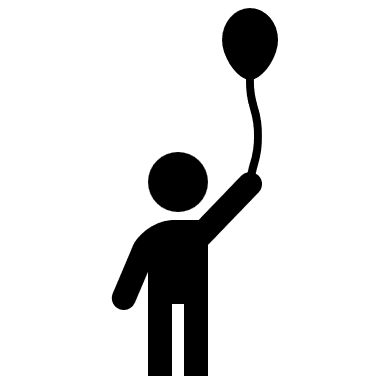
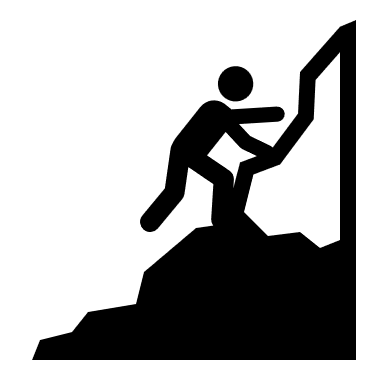
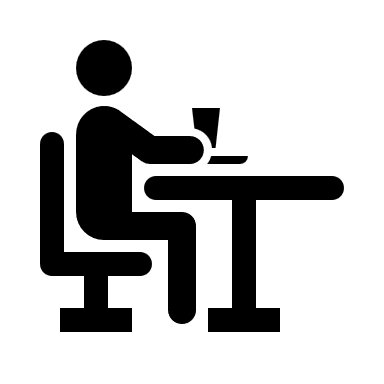
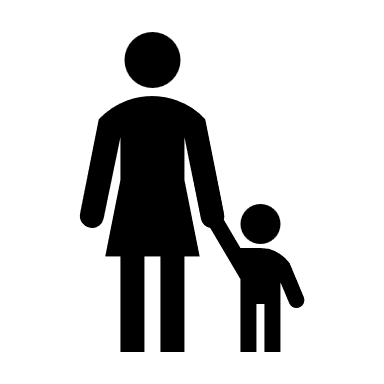
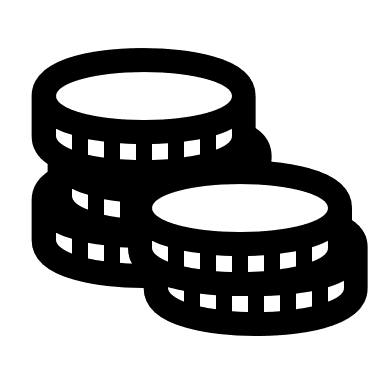
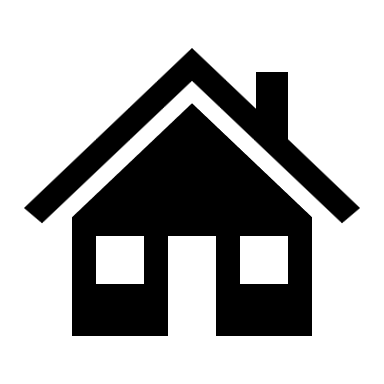
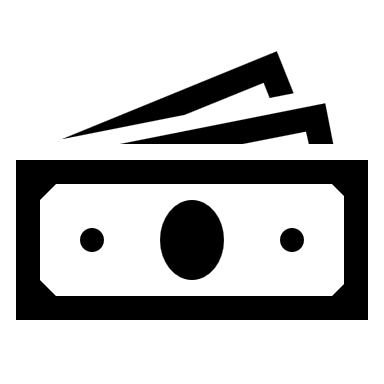
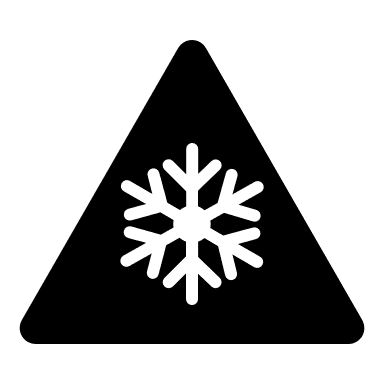
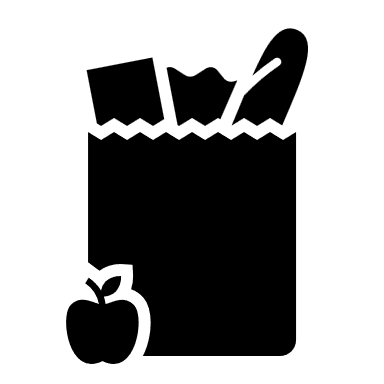
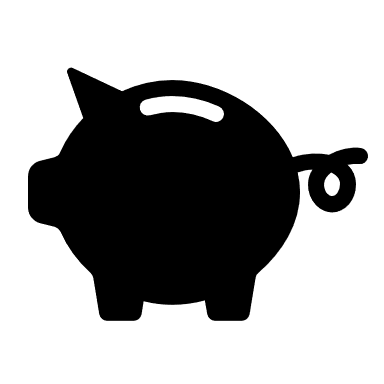
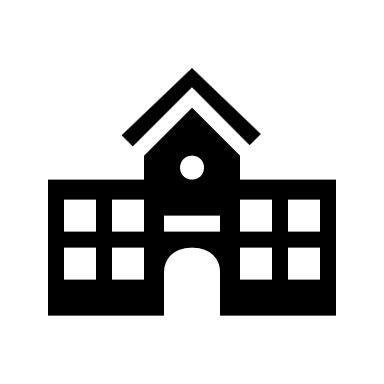
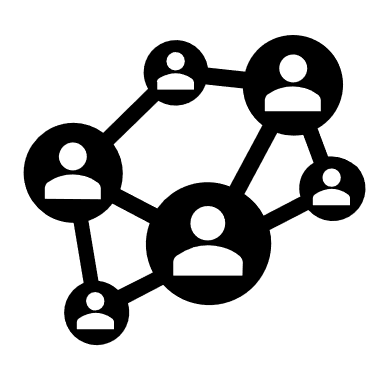
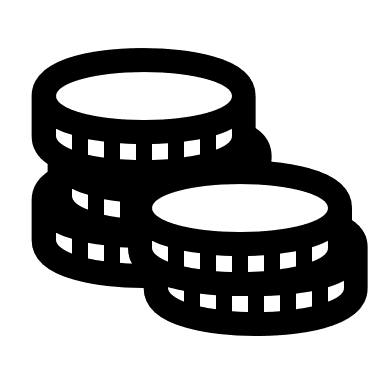
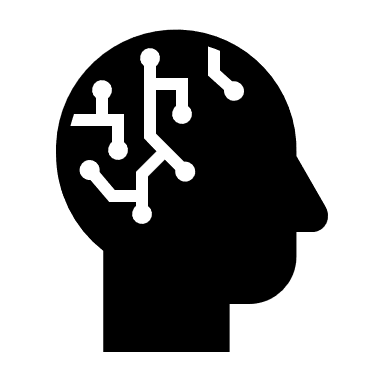
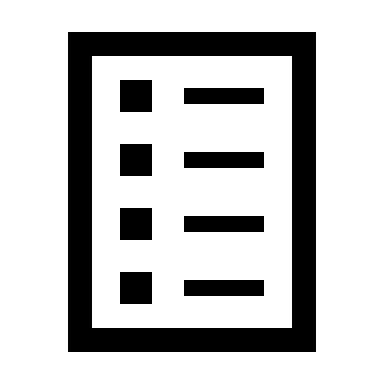
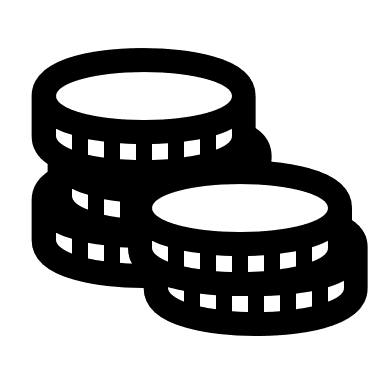
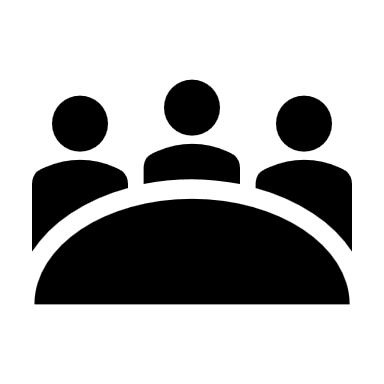
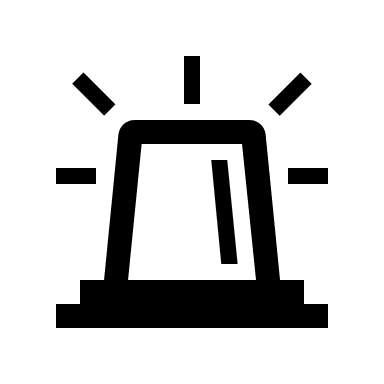
* 44% of parents belonged to a Priority Family group
* 10% were lone parents
* 2% were from a minority ethnic group
* 1% were mothers under 25
* 3% had a disabled family member
* 20% had more than 2 children
* 6% had a child under 1.

The Social Needs Screening questions reinforced the findings from the research undertaken by the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Unit in “Lived experience of child poverty in Perth and Kinross” that “ **Intense poverty exists**. *There is evidence of abject poverty in Perth and Kinross. Sometimes, such poverty has is a passing intensity, which may be triggered by unforeseen circumstance (e.g., breakdown of a household appliance; loss of employment; change in family arrangements)*.”

The survey found that

* 43% of parents with children in early years education sometimes or always have difficulty making ends meet in the days/week before payday.
* Someone went hungry in 9% of households with children in early years education in the last year because there was not enough money for food
* 12% of households with children in early years education lack access to the internet/devices to support learning from home for all of their children
* 25% of parents with children in early years education struggle to heat their homes
* 5% of parents with children in early years education consider themselves at some risk of becoming homeless
* 11% of parents with children in early years education have missed a medical or other appointment, work or getting things for daily living because they lack access to transport.

**What we did to tackle child poverty in 2023/24**



**What we did to tackle child poverty in 2023/24**

Anti-Poverty Task Force commissioned Perth and Kinross Tacking Poverty Strategy and third sectors

**2**

Projects were funded to provide Gypsy Travellers with cost-of-living support over the last 2 winters

**94%**

Of pupil equity funding spent within planned timescales

**100%**

Of PKCs schools are engaged with the Mental Health Ambassadors Programme

**2662**

Children accessed support or services funded via Community Mental Health Plan

**£521,076**

Funding to support positive mental wellbeing in children and young people

**13**

Schools joined phase 4 of the Nurturing Relationships whole school programme

**55**

Parents supported into flexible employment and **7** into self-employment

**53**

Families issued with digital hardware devices

**42**

Moved into jobs after completing HGV/LGV skills academy

**25**

Rural jobs for young people created using employment incentives

**181**

New families engaged in the Future for Families project

**292**

People supported into employment

**4135**

Successful applications made for Scottish Welfare fund crisis grants

Closing the Gap tool was used to help 17,254 pupils overcome barriers to attainment.

Survive & Thrive

Dignified Living

**2205**

Households benefitted from energy advice and measures to reduce bills

**2,556**

Applications received for the Council’s Financial Insecurity fund of £664,000

**£807,000**

Was provided in community care grants to 1042 applicants

**£8.5 million**

Generated in verified benefit gains by the Welfare Rights Team.

**£270,813**

Was provided for summer food and activities (fuelled for fun)

**£250,000**

Was provided to 94 community organisations for warm spaces, food and warm home packs

**10%**

Lower rent than neighbouring local authorities

**566** Tenants in financial crisis supported through Tenancy Sustainment fund

**173**

Affordable homes were delivered

Work

**72%**

of under 22s now have free bus passes bus service

**300**

Funded strong start 2 places funded

**3413**

childcare places provided across public and third sector

A group of children running on grass

Description automatically generated

* Identify and promote best practice on delivering the real Living Wage, championing the benefits to local employers.
* NHS Tayside will use its strategic influence to tackle poverty and health inequalities
* Update Perth and Kinross Economic Wellbeing Strategy to ensure investment is used in areas of disadvantage and actions included to tackle child poverty
* Extend childcare to support parental employment through wraparound care, community childminding and strong start2
* Work with the Local Employability Partnership to improve access to employment and representation in the NHS workforce amongst priority groups
* Support parents who want to become self-employed childcare providers to gain qualifications
* Support parental employment through the Futures for Families project to support partners into skills and employment outcomes that will increase their earning potential
* Meaningfully engage with business community under the Futures for All Incentive project to create new, flexible and sustainable jobs for priority parents and people with employment barriers.

**What are we going to do to tackle child poverty in 2023/24?**

* Develop and implement a refreshed Raising Attainment Strategy for 2023 - 2026
* Work in partnership with local community organisations to deliver Fuelled for Fun programmes to provide activities and food to school age children during school holidays
* Work with Tayside Contracts to increase the uptake of free school meals
* Work with Gypsy Traveller families to support their child’s development, expanding on the provision of starter sacks.
* Implement the Perth and Kinross Corporate Parenting Plan 21-24
* Work with partner organisations to put in place robust referral pathways around health and wellbeing support for parents and their children
* Work to maximise the impact of Pupil equity funding on children experiencing educational disadvantage because of poverty
* Ensure there is continued promotion of evidence-based interventions to target aspects of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
* Embed the use of the Closing the Gap tool to create a holistic planning and impact measurement tool
* Report regularly, analysing progress, to the Raising Attainment Board
* Develop a joined-up approach to crisis intervention which is underpinned by Cash First including a new referral management system
* NHS Tayside will increase the number of health-placed income maximisation referrals to welfare/energy advice services. This will include new work where children are severely disabled or have complex needs
* Accelerate delivery of 1050 affordable homes over 5 years
* Buy back 40 former council houses
* Provide support to community-led housing initiatives
* Invest £4 million to upgrade Gypsy Traveller site with new energy efficient accommodation
* Analyse data relating to the uptake of Council concessions and plot unmet need to local school catchment areas
* Target income maximisation, employability offers and social prescribing to schools with the greatest levels of unmet need
* Develop locality based, multi-disciplinary teams to support and connect parents and families to services
* NHS Tayside will promote the Warmth Matters app and website to enable frontline workers to signpost people to a range of services and support
* Work in partnership with Perth and Glenochil Prisons to provide an accelerated welfare rights service to people on release from prison

Survive and Thrive

Dignified Living – support to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs

Work - providing opportunities and support needed to enter, sustain and progress in work

Spotlight on Innovation and Good Practice

Spotlight on Innovation and Good Practice

## Supporting People – Addressing Need Programme

The Programme partners and elements are:-

* Perth CAB – Money Talk Service (enables clients to manage and improve their financial circumstances) and Cash First Partnership
* Tackling Poverty Unit, Perth and Kinross Council – Social Needs Screening Tool (to identify unmet need) , Support and Connect (to empower frontline workers to connect families to help and support) and Building Resilient Families (to empower priority parents)
* Children’s Services Planning Partnership – Universal Whole Family Support Service.

The programme elements were determined following feedback from parents from Priority family groups. The parents expressed

* A strong preference for cash-first approaches,
* A strong preference for a one-stop access point to a range of services and support for families experiencing financial challenge

Parents made

* A clear link between poverty, stress and mental health and wellbeing challenges for both parents and children and
* Identified access to affordable childcare and transport as barriers to employment.

The SPAN programme has leveraged £1.3m for poverty mitigation measures which integrate income maximisation, employability and wellbeing.

A diagram of a diagram of a program

Description automatically generated

## Area based Needs Analysis

A series of data maps have been developed which use public data (Children in Low Income Families), household income data with council data which was then mapped to the catchment areas of local primary schools to identify those areas where people were experiencing significant financial challenges and map that to the uptake of council concessions.

The data will be contextualised at a meeting with Primary Head Teachers and from this a targeted list of primary schools will be identified for action by the emerging locality based multi-disciplinary teams. The information generated will enable Perth and Kinross Council to target areas where there is significant financial hardship and lower than anticipated uptake of council concessions for take-up campaigns.

A screenshot of a computer

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## Aberlour - Tayside Hardship Project

Perth and Kinross Welfare Rights Team established a partnership with [Aberlour](https://www.aberlour.org.uk/)and our Tayside counterparts to provide a comprehensive and enhanced welfare rights service to vulnerable families with dependent children.

Last year, through our formal referral agreement with Aberlour 11 families with children on the "edge of care" were referred to us for comprehensive benefits advice and assistance.

We made payments to the value of £3k from the Financial Insecurity Fund to these families and they benefited from almost £3k in additional income with an average household benefit gain of £272.

In addition, we are now delivering a programme of training sessions around Reducing Council Tax Liability in partnership with our colleagues in Aberlour to frontline agencies across Perth and Kinross. We kicked the programme off in March 2024 and these will continue throughout 2024/25.

Testimonial from Aberlour

"PKC Welfare Rights have demonstrated exceptional expertise and passion in raising awareness of financial strategies aimed at alleviating the burden of debt and financial hardship on the families we support.

Their commitment to empowering individuals and families with practical knowledge on maximizing income and accessing available resources has been instrumental in our shared mission of providing holistic support. PKC Welfare Rights collaborative approach, coupled with their deep understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable families, has undoubtedly made a significant impact on the lives of those we serve."

## The Big Hoose

A cartoon house with grass and clouds

Description automatically generatedThe Big Hoose was founded in 2021 by the Cottage Family Centre and Amazon UK to distribute surplus everyday household essential products from Amazon and around 30 other local and multi-national businesses to families who need them most. The project originated in Fife but has, with financial support and premises from Perth and Kinross Council expanded to create a hub service Perth and Kinross. The project is hosted by PKAVS Carers.

So far, 52067 items have been distributed to families with 2662 children. The next steps are to make the project available across rural Perthshire by creating local access points in 5 or more locations. The group wants to increase the number of referring partners and to continue building good relationships with local businesses who donate goods to the Big Hoose inventory.

**Letham Hub**

The Letham Hub is the result of a unique and productive collaboration between the local community and Perth and Kinross Council. Working together over the last 6 years this partnership has resulted in a community facility, which has been returned to community ownership.

The drive for this project came from the local community to address local inequalities and improve health and wellbeing. Now opened , The Hub is run and owned for the community by Letham4All SCIO, and it offers a wealth of opportunities for partner agencies to deliver range of services in the locality, use the hotdesking and confidential meeting spaces and benefit by engaging with local people who attend the many community-based activities for the young and the old, delivered by Letham4All staff, volunteers and partners.

The building offers so many free and very low-cost activities for local people. The Hub is open 7 days a week, offering access to the Community Fridge and Community Café making good food accessible with choice and dignity and at a very low cost. The affordable Community Gym has opened, and this is being complemented by Fitness Activity Co-ordinator to deliver a range sessions which are usually beyond the budgets of many people in the community.

There is a diary of local activity groups from Keep Fit, Sewing classes, Youth Work, Cycling Projects and Digital Skills, as well as local access to employability support , financial well being services and much needed community space for local groups to access , including the sports hall. All of this activity enables a sense of anonymity when people enter the building to see more confidential services for guidance and support. Letham4All now employs a team of 20 full and part time staff, providing valuable local employment and they are a Real Living Wage employer.

A person pointing at a sign

Description automatically generatedLetham4All are looking forward to co-designing and producing new services with partners and the community, exploring new ways of working and delivering locally.

**Perth CAB -** Pathways to Advice and Cash/Cash First Partnership

Last year Perth CAB achieved a client financial gain of £5,049,000 – of this they estimate over £2M went into the pockets of 1800 families with children. 7113 people were supported by Perth Cab in 2023/24.

Led by Perth CAB, the project has secured funding from the Trussell Trust, the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund and more to ensure that support is getting to priority families and children in need. Lived experience data gathered identified that people find it difficult to know where to go to when in times of need.

The project plans to offer easy access to holistic support to improve outcomes for individuals and families through a shared referral system, which will incorporate partners working in local authority and third sector settings across Perth & Kinross. The system will allow for easy access and a ‘no-wrong-door' entry to advice, support (including cash first approaches) and information for individuals/families in need, utilising local organisations who have established relationships with clients.

Current partners include Letham4All, P&K Central Arrears Housing Team, P&K Access Team, The Heat Project, PKAVS Carers, Buttons and Bows Baby bank, Broke Not Broken, Turning Point and more. The web-based tool includes directory pages for partners and links to the Whole Family Wellbeing directory and TSI Service Navigator for practitioner info.

The project will continue to grow the system with partners in targeted areas of employability support, criminal justice, youth services, wellbeing and more. The project hopes to extend the project by creating a shared CRM database so that we are able to track client progress in a more in-depth way.

A blue and yellow graphic with text

Description automatically generated

The partnership aims to capture the expertise and vast knowledge of organisations in order to help families and children in hardship as we recognise that we cannot tackle poverty alone.

The PACS project aligns closely with other strands that CAB is already running or plan to develop in 2025 – including the support provided through Money Talk Plus; education and peer support through Building Resilient Families and Communities; and in-depth support provided to priority parents and families through No-one Left Behind identified through the incoming FORT referrals to the service. Families with complex needs will also be triaged through the Universal Whole Family Support service with whom we will be working closely.

# Appendix 1 – Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026

## Strategic Aims

* To raise awareness about the causes and consequences of child poverty.
* To foster social cohesion and reduce 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

**Work**

Provide opportunities and support needed to enter, sustain and progress in work   
(Employability and skills, housing and economic opportunity, connectivity and childcare)

**Sharpening Focus**

* Supporting parents into work that pays the Real Living Wage or more.
* Taking action to close the gender employment and pay gaps.
* Addressing the challenges presented by rurality.

**Dignified Living**

Maximise the support available to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs.  
(Person-centred support, social security and income maximisation)

**Sharpening Focus**

* Addressing the rural poverty premium.
* Addressing the needs of the Gypsy Traveller community and other minority ethnic communities.
* Addressing stigma which prevents parents and families from seeking help and support.

**Survive and Thrive**

Supporting the next generation to survive and thrive.  
(Education and Children’s Services, Health and Social Care)

**Sharpening Focus**

* Closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
* Addressing the challenges faced by disabled young people entering further and higher education and the jobs market.
* Addressing mental health and wellbeing issues for parents and children affected by poverty.

## Our Approach

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.

**Sharpening Focus**

* Changing the way we work to use data-driven approaches to identify and connect with families affected by poverty.
* Offer no wrong door approaches to connecting families to the help and support they need and want.
* Developing multidisciplinary, cross-organisational working in teams at locality level to build inclusive communities which strengthen the web of support on offer to families and children affected by poverty.