

## **‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ and local action**

[‘Best Start, Bright Futures’](#) was published in March 2022. New actions and funds set out in the plan will be reflected in Local Child Poverty Action Reports years 5 to 8.

The new delivery plan builds on the progress made through ‘Every Child, Every Chance’ and continues to focus on the three drivers of poverty. So, we can see clear links between local actions reported in existing LCPARs and the goals of ‘Best Start, Bright Futures’. This file highlights those links.

Note, the examples given here are not intended as models to copy rather, as illustrations of the many ways local actions contribute to national policy areas.

**Effective LCPAR reporting** may include,

- ✓ Clear rationale and support from data/theory
- ✓ Attention to priority families
- ✓ Focus on tackling child poverty and the three drivers
- ✓ Input from people with lived experience of poverty
- ✓ Clear evaluation of an action’s effectiveness
- ✓ Details of partnership working

### **Offer 1 - Our offer to parents: Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work.**

#### **1.1 Employability & Skills (*Driver: income from employment*)**

##### [North Ayrshire](#)

Our priorities for 2020/21 – Income from employment

1. We will continue to use procurement powers and increased quick quote thresholds to help more local suppliers win contracts. Our activities aim to stimulate the local economy, by securing jobs or generating community benefits.
2. Our Employability Support Services will continue to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.
3. Develop employability skills through adult and community learning opportunities.

In addition to these priorities, our work will continue in:

- Inward Investment Strategy
- The Ayrshire Growth Deal
- Living Wage
- In-Work Support Programmes
- Employment Support
- Employability Hubs

- Disability Employment Support
- Early Years and Childcare: Delivery of 1140 hours, 2-year old nursery provision

How we will monitor our progress – Income from employment

Measures:

- Number of jobs created by businesses in North Ayrshire supported by Business Development
- Percentage of people in North Ayrshire earning less than the living wage
- Percentage of working age population in employment
- Employment Rate – percentage women age
- Employment rate – percentage aged 16-64 EA core or work limiting disability
- Youth Employment Rate (16-24)
- Women’s Median Gross Weekly Pay
- Gross weekly earning of full-time employees in North Ayrshire (Median)
- Cumulative number of unemployed disabled residents supported into employment
- Number of employed modern apprentices recruited to North Ayrshire Council
- Number of Modern Apprentices recruited by North Ayrshire Council, who are care experienced or disabled
- No of weeks employment through using Community Benefit clauses
- Percentage of learning disability service users accessing employment support activities
- Percentage Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council operated/funded Employability Programmes

(See p33 of the report for North Ayrshires statistics against these measures for 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21)

## **1.2 Economic Opportunities (*Driver: income from employment*)**

### Angus

The Tay Cities Deal was signed off on 17th December 2020 where UK Government Minister Iain Stewart joined partners for an online ceremony to ratify the implementation and financial arrangements for £700 million investment in the region. The deal is an agreement between the UK and Scottish governments along with Angus, Dundee City, Fife and Perth & Kinross councils as well as partners in the business and higher and further education sectors. The UK and Scottish Governments is each investing £150 million, which will help to leverage a further £400 million of investment from public and private partners. This will be transformative for the region, driving investment, boosting the economy and creating more than 6,000 jobs. The Angus Fund Outline Business Case (OBC) was approved by the Tay Cities Deal Joint Committee as further details and timings were revealed of the £26.5m investment from UK Government. The Angus Fund purpose is to increase productivity through clean growth, protecting places for future generations to live, work, and visit and plays a significant role in the Child Poverty work across

the region. Elements of the deal are included within the action plan specifically around employability, job creation and tourism. Alongside the funding, Tay Cities region is working to create a Community Wealth Building approach across the 3 Local Authorities. This is a response to the growing challenges of austerity, financialisation and automation. It seeks to provide resilience where there is risk and local economic security around the following five key principles: Plural ownership of the economy. Making financial power work for local places. Fair employment and just labour markets. Progressive procurement of goods and services. Socially productive use of land and property.

### **1.3 Childcare (Driver: Reducing household costs, Income from employment)**

#### Aberdeen City

##### **Expansion of Early Years**

Considerable work has been undertaken in preparation for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare including the development of a new ELC admissions process and preparations for the universal roll out of PEEP in all ELC settings following the successful completion of the PEEP Learning Together Programme by staff in all ELC settings. The programme is evidence-based and helps parents and carers to support their young children's development by valuing and building on the play and learning opportunities in everyday life <https://www.peeple.org.uk/ltp>

The Educational Psychology team have developed and offered Emotional Literacy for Support Assistants (ELSA). ELSA provides knowledge, practice and coaching on an incremental learning model for PSAs and mid-year evaluations are positive. In preparation for the expansion to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare, the team have developed an invaluable Ready, Steady, Two resource to support staff to work with eligible 2s and those who have not met developmental milestones.

From August 2021 all eligible families have been able to access 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare. As of June 2017 only 7% of 2 year olds, 82% of 3 year olds and 91% of 4 year olds accessed ELC provision in Aberdeen City. The expansion focussed in part on making provision more accessible and the accessibility of services and broader range of delivery models have helped realise a significant rise in uptake. At the current time, 9% of 2 year olds (33.03% of eligible 2 year olds) are attending, 90.7% of 3 year olds and over 98% of 4 year olds are accessing their offer of Early Learning and Childcare

Most parents and carers who responded to a recent survey could identify clear improvements to their child's development as a result of the expansion.

- The majority of respondents, at almost 65%, identified an improvement in their child's social skills with over half of the respondents seeing an improvement in their child's communication skills.
- Almost half of all respondents recognised an improvement to their child's emotional development, creativity, listening skills and numeracy.
- Over a third of respondents highlighted improvements within literacy, fine motor skills, and physical development.

- A third of respondents had also seen an improvement in their child's problem solving and attention span.

We asked parents and carers what impact the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (from 600 hours to 1140 hours) has had on them and your family.

- 51.2% of respondents stated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare.
- 38.7% of respondents indicated that they had more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family.
- 28.5% are now considering a return to work or study.
- 26.1% stated improved wellbeing /respite as a positive impact from the expansion of ELC, with 24.3% of respondents finding they now have more time to themselves.

Work has been undertaken to improve knowledge of the impact of poverty on families. The introduction of ELC Excellence and Equity practitioners has had a positive impact on supporting children and their families in our priority areas. In partnership with community groups The Excellence and Equity Practitioners have been involved in initiatives such as 'Healthy Family Fun Day' which showcases a variety of services across the community that are available to support and advise families. Through the delivery of PEEP groups, outdoor learning sessions and Book Bug sessions they have supported the positive engagement of families in their children's learning. Early engagement with families through links with toddler groups has supported the building of relationships and smooth transitions into the ELC setting.

A full evaluation of the expansion is available here.

<https://committees.aberdeency.gov.uk/documents/s124690/CUS.21.212%20Education%20Improvement%20Journey%20and%20NIF%20Cover%20Report.pdf>

## **1.4 Transport (*Driver: Reducing household costs*)**

### Edinburgh

Throughout the pandemic, people in Edinburgh found greater value and strength from within their communities. From countless examples of neighbourhoods working with and helping each other to the vast numbers of volunteers giving up their time for those most in need, there has been no shortage of evidence of the power of community in this city.

To build on this experience, new programmes of work in Edinburgh began during 2021 to learn from and to ensure that the linkages established in response to the Covid crisis are strengthened.

The Council's commitment to establishing 20 minute neighbourhoods is one such example, and a direct response to the call to action from the Edinburgh Poverty Commission to "put the 20-minute walking (or 'pram pushing') distance principle at the heart of designing all neighbourhoods in Edinburgh".

The 20-Minute Neighbourhood model aims to support development of:

- sustainable, safe and resilient neighbourhoods where residents have equal access to most of their daily needs
- changes in ways of working to ensure citizens can build trusted relationships with the services they rely on in the places they live
- support for local economies and businesses who can not only provide for the daily needs of their communities but also create employment opportunities
- enhanced voluntary sector facilities, services and networks, which bind our communities together and enhance social capital through voluntary sector hubs
- high quality placemaking in our town and local centres, where accessible green and/or open spaces are provided
- sustainable onward travel so that services out with a 20-Minute Neighbourhood can be easily accessed, and
- Digital connectivity and skills that provide everyone with access to services online or a '5-second neighbourhood' where they need it.

In support of this approach to placemaking, a new City Mobility Plan was approved in February 2021 after a period of extensive consultation. The plan addresses the challenge of reducing carbon emissions and how people, goods and services move into and around the city. It also addresses air quality, congestion, accessibility and inclusion, cost of travel and convenience of payment, safety and how to create space for people.

During this year, options for sustainable ways to travel have been explored. Options include public transport, shared mobility and demand responsive transport (DRT) for areas with no regular bus service. Funding and partnerships are being explored and the Council's Public Transport Team has been preparing for the introduction of the Scottish Government's new concession for free bus travel for people aged under 22.

## **1.5 Connectivity** (*Driver: Enhanced life chances*)

### [Falkirk](#)

#### **Tackling digital exclusion**

The covid-19 pandemic magnified and exacerbated a number of longstanding issues in our communities. One such issue is digital exclusion.

Pre-pandemic, digital exclusion was a significant issue. According to the Citizens Advice Scotland, cost is the single biggest barrier when it comes to digital access. As such, those living in low-income households are far more likely to be digitally excluded.

Community organisations and public sector organisations referred digitally excluded individuals to the Fairer Falkirk team and the team were then able to contact these individuals to arrange a £25 payment to help go towards their digital costs.

One individual spoke of their increasing inability to pay for broadband. The £25 top-up payment would go towards paying her monthly broadband package which totalled £34.95. Whilst cheaper broadband packages are available, those cheaper packages

are from companies that aren't well connected in her area. She said for her it's a choice between slightly more affordable broadband with an unreliable connection or more costly broadband but with a reliable connection that enables her children to participate in home learning.

Another individual was quite emotional about the payment and what it would mean to him. He said that his phone regularly runs out of money which means he is unable to keep in touch with his daughters as often as he'd like. Whilst he said his daughters are quite good at phoning him when he has no credit in his phone, he felt that simply not having the choice to contact them himself whenever he wanted was upsetting. He said he didn't want to tell his daughters that he couldn't afford to top-up his phone on a regular basis, but at the same time didn't want them to think he doesn't care enough to keep in contact with them.

One individual was delighted to receive the payment because he said not having credit on his phone can often leave him feeling isolated. He said that his family don't have much money left once they've paid all the other monthly bills, and because his wife is a carer any money they do have left is usually used to top up his wife's phone.

## **Offer 2 - Our offer to families: Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs**

### **2.1 People and Place (*Driver: all*)**

#### Shetland

##### **Anchor: early help team**

The Anchor Project provides practical and emotional support to improve outcomes for families. It uses a strengthbased model to empower the family to bring about sustainable change. Many of the families supported aren't in receipt of benefits they are eligible for nor accessing support, such as counselling, advocacy, employability services, that would benefit them. Many don't have a close support network and have often had bad experiences with existing services. Year 2 of the Project began just after the first lockdown. The team and project were redeployed in an attempt to support all families and schools, across Shetland, from Term 1 of the 2020/21 academic year. The team was augmented with staff from other Council services, with varied experience and expertise. Awareness was raised through school staff who could signpost and encouraged individuals to come forward through their schools. One family supported by Early Help Team was signposted from the school and didn't know where to turn. On the first visit, Mum was at her wits end and spoke for over an hour about all the issues going on in her life; her child's behaviour, the volatile relationship she has with her partner and their financial worries. We helped Mum to seek help from Citizens Advice for her debt and spoke about her mental health and problem with alcohol. We suggested local services that would be available to her. Most of all, the Early Help Team provided a safe space and a listening ear for someone that didn't have anyone to share their burdens with; "Early Help Team is a really good thing. I found out about it through Sound School, got in touch with them and just offloaded everything. They helped me with applying for grants and we get food parcels every second week. I do have money but not much and they are really



good at helping me. I've already told a couple of people about the service who I know are struggling. Don't be scared to ask for help – I did and it's helped me a lot." A friendly, informal approach has worked really well to engage these families. Having a team with wide-ranging experience has also been useful in order to provide holistic support to families and peer-support to colleagues. Small change is still change. We have learned not to underestimate how one conversation with a family or professional may set the ball rolling for greater outcomes; this will take time. With learning we are encouraging families to have a greater focus on their own support networks and really unpick who might be 'in their bubble' of emotional support even when that support doesn't live close by.

## Renfrewshire

### **Families First**

The Families First service continues in Renfrewshire. This free service, which was described in last year's report supports families with children aged 0-8 years old. It provides help, support and advice in a family focussed way using a 'walking together with families' approach, covering everything from promoting wellbeing and positive relationships, through to energy and employment advice and establishing good family routines. This year the service had to adapt to online working. Closed schools also had an affect on the service which has been based in within primary schools.

## West Lothian

### **Royal Hospital for Children and Young People Welfare Advice Service**

In Lothian, the Scottish Government Healthier Wealthier Children Fund has been used to establish a hospital-based welfare advice service at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) in Edinburgh. The service benefits families experiencing poverty across the four local authority areas within Lothian and complements the existing welfare advice provision within the adult hospitals. Having a hospital-based service promotes access for those families who may struggle to engage with community-based services and/or who may find they are experiencing financial difficulties because of their child's illness or hospital stay. The service offers free, independent, confidential, and non-judgemental advice across the hospital (inpatient and outpatients) and includes support on issues such as income maximisation, benefit entitlement, debt, employment, and housing. This not only supports vulnerable families at a time when they may be experiencing additional stress with a child in hospital, but also supports the work of clinical teams. NHS Lothian is working in partnership with the Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI) to provide this service. The intention had been for the welfare advice service to be fully embedded within the RHCYP and for the project worker to have a physical presence in the hospital. Unfortunately given the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions from March 2020, the welfare adviser has not been able to work from the hospital and has been operating remotely offering telephone-based support. This has impacted CHAI's ability to fully develop the project, but every effort has been made to raise awareness of the service and encourage referrals. Thirty-two families across Lothian have received advice and support from the project and to date financial gains of £46,369 have been recorded (this will increase over time as further financial gains for this period accumulate). During this period, 160 appointments were offered to families across Lothian and various types of followup work completed. Non-financial gains for the period included

suitable alternative housing being attained for one family whilst others received clothing and school uniforms. The adviser has provided support and advice on a range of issues including supporting a family with welfare advice issues relating to bereavement. The project worker continues to promote the service and build referral pathways and contacts across the hospital. The adviser now attends regular multiagency meetings with RHCYP clinicians and as a result, more hospital departments are becoming aware of the service and referrals are gradually increasing.

## **2.2 Income Maximisation (*Driver: Reducing household costs*)**

### Glasgow

#### **Financial Inclusion Support Officer (FISO)**

The FISO pilot is a programme of work aimed at taking full financial advice to parents, families and young people in a school setting. Currently nine FISO officers have been recruited to work citywide as directed by Education Services. This will provide coverage for all Glasgow Secondary Schools over a 12-month period.

The outcomes up to 31 March 2021 are:

Number of schools: 13 secondary schools, 2 primary schools, 1 ASL school  
964 families engages with the service  
365 families now in a better financial position  
£844,141 recorded financial gains  
£2,785 average per family, benefits unclaimed: 71% welfare benefits, 18% education benefits, 6% disability benefits, 5% others  
80% of families supported were from BAME communities  
£50,687 debt managed

Given the success of this pilot, the roll out of the FISO to all Glasgow's secondary schools as well as several ASL primary schools is planned for 2021 and beyond. Dedicated financial inclusion service A dedicated financial inclusion service was also set up for parents affected by self-isolation or are struggling financially due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were 168 families supported with financial gains of over £110,000 and almost £41,000 debt managed.

## **2.3 Housing (*Driver: Reducing household costs*)**

### West Dunbartonshire

#### **Housing and Support**

The cost of housing has a significant bearing on levels of poverty as such activity around housing provision and management and associated services are important weapons for reducing poverty. The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners plan to address the housing and housing related opportunities and challenges over the five year period from 2017/18 to 2021/2022.

The Local Housing Strategy not only represents West Dunbartonshire's approach to housing, homelessness; housing support services and fuel poverty, it also contains



an action plan which outlines the projects/activities to be implemented to achieve the aims of the Local Housing Strategy for the period 2017 - 2022.

The Local Housing Strategy has a 10-point success plan. Some of which have a direct impact on the drivers of poverty. These include, for example:

- Maximise the delivery of new affordable housing through the 'More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire' initiative;
- Reduce the impacts of climate change and fuel poverty by supporting energy efficiency measures across all housing sectors;
- Introduce a Housing Options approach to prevent homelessness;
- Work with partners to reduce repeat homelessness and increase tenancy sustainment in the social rented sector;
- Adopt a more holistic joined up approach to improving standards in the Private Rented Sector;
- Improve education, training and job opportunities for West Dunbartonshire residents by building on existing strong links through Working 4U.

Within the context of promoting good quality housing, West Dunbartonshire has introduced a Scheme of Assistance to help home owners with information and advice and practical assistance about improving, repairing and maintaining their homes. This wills families to reduce the associated cost of property maintenance.

In addition, the Housing team has facilitated the feasibility assessment to develop district heating schemes in some or all of the 19 multi-storey blocks in West Dunbartonshire. The aim is to provide alternative heating options that will, among other outcomes, reduce heating costs for tenants and owners.

The Housing Team at West Dunbartonshire Council along with partners from the social rented housing sector have established a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Rapid Rehousing is about taking a housing led approach for people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, Rapid Rehousing means:

- A settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;
- Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better; and
- When temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.

The aim is to stabilise family life and circumstances at a particularly traumatic time. This will improve children's life chances in ways not about current income or reducing cost of living – potentially relevant to future child poverty and address the threat of persistent poverty.

This is part of the general approach to 'Housing Options' that will minimise homelessness through prevention and early intervention. The aims and objectives are clear and include proactive action to address local issues, including for example:

- Strengthen partnerships with West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership and employability services (maximise income from work);

- Mitigate the potential negative effect emerging from welfare reform (maximise benefit entitlement);
- Increase the number of people who use the housing deposit scheme in the private sector (reducing costs);
- Develop in partnership an education package that can be rolled out across the local authority (other help to prevent poverty in future years); and
- Work in partnership to ensure children are not adversely affected by homelessness (targeted interventions).

In addition West Dunbartonshire's Leaving Care Housing Protocol was approved by the Housing Improvement Board in October 2017 and was implemented from January 2018. The protocol promotes the principle that care leavers will be provided with the securest form of tenancy available to them and will not routinely be provided with homeless accommodation.

In June 2019, as a further commitment to strengthen existing services as corporate parents, the Housing Improvement Board approved a pilot Young Care Leavers Rental Exemption Scheme. This scheme supports those care leavers who wish to attend full time education by covering the rental payments of those eligible. This enables these students to fully focus on their studies and not have financial worries during this time. It also encourages more young Care Leavers to aim to further their education by undertaking further or higher studies at college or university.

As a result:

- 13 Young Care Leavers have been housed through the protocol, all of which remain in their tenancies, apart from 1 who terminated to move away from the area;
- No Young Care Leaver, put forward via the protocol, has been forced into homelessness in order to access appropriate accommodation;
- 2 have made use of the protocol and have been housed in housing association properties through existing nomination agreements;
- 4 young Care Leavers are currently housed in Catch properties, preparing for independent living;
- During 2019/20, 11 Young Care Leavers benefitted from the pilot Rental Exemption Scheme.

In addition, NHSGGC public health team participated in a working group on housing, poverty, child poverty and health. The main approach implemented was 'Housing First', in aim to prevent homelessness. The work is being taken up by a national group.

## **Offer 3 - Supporting the next generation to thrive**

### **3.1 Enhanced Life Chances** (*Driver: Enhanced life chances*)

[South Lanarkshire](#)

**Youth Employability Support**

We have continued to deliver a wider range of employability support to young people during the last year, adapted to reflect the need for social distancing and lockdown restrictions.

Our work with young people to progress into a positive destination post school provides individualised support for employability, skills development and health and wellbeing. The main provider of this initiative is the Aspire Programme, which supported 338 young people over the last year.

In addition, we have provided a range of Modern Apprenticeships, however the number of starts (670) continues to be lower than previous years (1926 in 2019/20) as employers have understandably focused on challenges of COVID-19 rather than recruitment or up-skilling of staff.

Skills Development Scotland has worked to be creative in enhancing existing delivery and have provided several new initiatives to support young people and employers, include: Adopt an Apprentice, Apprenticeship Transition Plans, Pathways Apprenticeships, Transition Training Fund and Apprenticeship Employer Grants. Skills Development Scotland and partners developed implemented a new national helpline and digital resources, with 29 employers and 895 young people benefiting by December 2020.

### **Scottish Youth Guarantee**

We are committed to implementing the Scottish Government's Youth Guarantee, making sure that every young person aged between 16 and 24 will be guaranteed either the opportunity to study at university or college, to take part in an apprenticeship programme, take up a job or work experience, or participate in a formal volunteering or training programme according to their own personal circumstances.

Our local employability partnerships are committed to protecting the diverse range of existing provision and ensuring that the right support is put into place for those who rely on these services. The support helps to address inequalities within the labour market and improve young people's quality of employment, pay and progression. Priorities for the Youth Guarantee resources include employer recruitment, volunteering, key worker support, and supported employment for young people with additional support needs.

### **School Leaver Destinations**

We have worked hard to support school leavers through a wide range of amended activity and while the positive destination rate for South Lanarkshire fell slightly to 94.8% from 95.7% the previous year, we maintained the target to be above the national rate (93.3%).

The Care Experienced Employability Focus Group has continued to meet to track the destinations of care experienced young people and while the positive destination rate for care experienced young people fell slightly to 85.4%, it still remained above the national average (81.4%). A new SCQF level 4/5 Foundation Apprenticeship programme in construction was established and 200 young people started on the programme in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire College, New College Lanarkshire, and First Steps Future Training. The number included 30 young people who took part in a winter leaver's pilot programme and 40 summer leavers.