

Developing A Local Child Poverty Action Report: Guidance

*Under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, Local Authorities and Health Boards are required to jointly prepare and publish annual **Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPARs)** which report on: measures taken and measures proposed to contribute to child poverty targets; income maximisation measures for pregnant people and families with children; and measures for families whose income/expenditure is adversely affected because of a member's protected characteristics. Beyond these requirements, the process and content of reporting is at local leads' discretion. This document provides guidance on meeting the Act's statutory requirements and supports Local Child Poverty Leads with recommendations and resources for effective reporting, with a focus on the drivers of poverty and the priority family groups. This guidance is a living document and will be updated as we learn more about what works to tackle child poverty.*

[‘Best Start, Bright Futures’](#) – Scotland’s second tackling child poverty delivery plan – was published in March 2022. It is a plan for all of Scotland and commits to partnership working across public, private and third sectors, and with communities, to take forward our national mission. To coordinate efforts towards the national child poverty targets, local partners are encouraged to align their actions with the delivery plan (see [‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ and local action](#)).



Contents

CONTEXT	2
NATIONAL PARTNER SUPPORT	3
LCPAR STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	4
PURPOSE OF LCPARs	5
PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING LCPARs	5
GUIDANCE ON REPORT CONTENTS	9
GUIDANCE ON THE REPORTING PROCESS	12
GUIDANCE ON PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION	18
ACTIONS IN ‘BEST START, BRIGHT FUTURES’	25

CONTEXT

Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

To set a clear agenda for tackling, reporting on and measuring child poverty, the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act:

- Sets out four statutory income based targets for 2030/31.
- Sets out four interim targets for 2023/24.
- Places a duty on Scottish Ministers to publish child poverty delivery plans in 2018, 2022, and 2026, and to report on those plans annually.
- Places a duty on local authorities and health boards to report annually on activity they are taking, and will take, to reduce child poverty.
- Established a statutory [Poverty and Inequality Commission](#) with functions related to the child poverty targets.

CHILD POVERTY TARGETS

The Act sets out four statutory, income-based interim and final targets. These are national targets. Local authorities and health boards are not obliged to meet these targets locally. Rather, LCPARs are to describe ongoing and future activity which will contribute to a reduction in child poverty and therefore increase the likelihood of these targets being met at national level.

Measure	Interim Target 2023 (% of children)	Final Targets 2030 (% of children)
Relative Poverty	<18%	<10%
Absolute Poverty	<14%	<5%
Low income & material deprivation	<8%	<5%
Persistent poverty	<8%	<5%

PROGRESS AND PROJECTIONS

Our first tackling child poverty delivery plan – [‘Every Child, Every Chance’](#) [2018-22] – set out [the three key drivers](#) of child poverty reduction – focusing on work and earnings, social security and household costs. It also set out the need to focus efforts on the six priority family types at greatest risk of poverty. Under the first delivery plan, the Scottish Government established its devolved social security system and delivered 12 benefits, including our new Scottish Child Payment. Together with local partners, we delivered employability services with our No One Left Behind approach and almost doubled funded childcare hours. We also delivered over 9,757 affordable homes and introduced free bus travel for under 22s.

Priority Family Types

- lone parent families
- minority ethnic families
- families with a disabled adult or child
- families with a younger mother (under 25)
- families with a child under 1
- larger families (3+ children)

The second tackling child poverty delivery plan – [‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ 2022 \[2022-26\]](#) – was launched in March 2022 and sets out a range of actions to drive progress towards the ambitious child poverty targets. The plan continues to direct action to the six priority families and three drivers of poverty. The plan’s offer to parents includes delivering a new employability offer with holistic support from a dedicated key worker, linked to support for more accessible and affordable childcare and transport. Other key actions include more than doubling the Scottish Child Payment and increasing the value of a further eight Scottish Social Security Benefits by 6%; mitigating the benefit cap as fully as possible within devolved competence and improving access to warm, affordable homes. We also commit to innovating whole system change through place based ‘Pathfinders’. Foundational to ‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ - and underpinned by our Whole Family Wellbeing Funding – is our goal to transform our ways of working so that we deliver holistic, person-centred support to families where and when they need it.

For more detail on the content of the delivery plan and how it connects to local action to tackle child poverty, see [‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ and local action’](#).

Alongside ‘Best Start, Bright Futures’, we published a [cumulative impact assessment](#) which showed projected progress towards the national relative and absolute targets, in light of the plan’s key actions.

NATIONAL PARTNER SUPPORT

All published LCPARs will be made available on the [Improvement Service’s website](#). They are also published on the Tackling Child Poverty Knowledge Hub where members can comment and offer constructive feedback.

The IS website also provides information on the range of support available to local partners from the National Partners (IS, COSLA, Poverty Alliance, the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), Scottish Government, Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU), PHS). This includes intensive improvement support, feedback and advice, peer support and knowledge exchange and access to a range of tools and materials.



National Partners also offer direct feedback for each local authority and health board.

The Poverty and Inequality Commission (PIC) offered [feedback on the Year 1 reports](#). Key points highlighted by PIC included: involving those with lived experience of poverty in developing local action plans; demonstrating leadership at all levels of an organisation; taking actions we know work and explaining evaluation of actions.

LCPAR STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Act requires Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a LCPAR, “as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year” (i.e. after 31 March).

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires that Local Child Poverty Action Reports **must** include the following:

Measures taken

- describe any measures taken in the area of the local authority during the reporting year by the local authority and health board for the purpose of contributing to meeting the child poverty targets

Proposed measures

- describe any measures that the local authority/health board proposes to take for the purpose of contributing to meeting the targets

Income maximisation

- describe any income maximisation measures taken in the area of the local authority during the reporting year to provide pregnant women and families with children with information/advice/assistance about eligibility for financial support and assistance to apply for financial support

Protected characteristics

- describe any measures taken during the reporting year, or which are proposed to be taken, in the area in relation to children living in households whose income is adversely affected, or whose expenditure is increased, because a member of the household has one or more protected characteristics

Beyond the statutory requirements set out above, the content, process and structure of local child poverty action reporting are at the discretion of local authorities and health boards.

PURPOSE OF LCPARs

Aims and objectives of LCPARs include:

- To provide evidence of local progress on child poverty
- To identify and share good practice
- To identify potential areas for development/improvement
- To inform development of future work/priorities at local and national level
- To promote partnership working and awareness of child poverty strategy at local level

PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING LCPARs

In writing LCPARs, local partners are encouraged to consider these principles:

Balancing long term planning and annual reporting

Tackling child poverty requires short, medium and long term action, and action across all areas of local authority and health board activity. LCPARs should aim to set out clear, strategic aims and describe how local partners plan to track their progress. Reports should aim to clearly set out annual progress alongside any updates to the strategy.

We have heard local leads' feedback on the challenges of balancing annual reporting with longer term, strategic planning. If preferred, local leads are free to publish a more strategic report every three or four years - with deeper analytical focus and longer term, strategic direction - alongside annual progress reports documenting progress and specific actions planned for the coming year. i.e. the same depth of contextual analysis and detailed strategising need not be repeated annually – rather, annual progress reports could clearly refer back to a multi-year, strategic report. This reporting pattern might involve more intensive engagement and sign-off from various partners for the strategic report and a more streamlined governance process for annual progress reports. Local leads are invited to align their LCPARs with the four year cycle of the national delivery plans and to be aware of other relevant reporting cycles - see pp15-17.

NB. If opting for a multi-year strategy, annual reporting is still required under the Act.

Focussed reporting

Tackling child poverty is complex and covers a wide range of actions. It is not expected that LCPARs report equally on every action taken/proposed that might impact families experiencing poverty. To produce focussed reports, local partners are encouraged to consider:

- A local needs assessment – What most needs to change in your area?
- Based on evidence, what actions are likely to impact on priority areas identified from that needs assessment?
- Based on evidence, what local actions are likely to have the largest impact on the drivers of child poverty?

- How have priority groups been considered in the actions? How will you ensure priority families are being reached?
- How will actions – and their impacts on priority groups - be monitored and evaluated?
- What additional value are partnerships adding to the strategic aims set out in their LCPAR?
- Reflecting on actions taken, what are the key points for learning, improvement and change? What actions are working/not working and why?

Authors of LCPARs might consider where information – for example, governance structure – has already been set out in another report and whether the LCPAR could link back to an existing publication rather than restating.

Making connections

An effective approach to tackling child poverty will require local areas to identify and utilise all the policy levers at their disposal, with particular consideration given to the specific impact on families with children, especially those in the priority groups. LCPARs should therefore provide an opportunity to better coordinate efforts across, for example, housing, transport, childcare, education, physical and mental health care, and economic development, in order to deliver the most holistic and effective support possible for families. This involves analysing broader policy decisions and spending from a child poverty perspective; applying a child poverty lens to local systems.

‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ is a plan for all of Scotland and highlights the need for national, regional and local efforts to be joined up in order to see progress toward the child poverty targets. Local leads are encouraged, where possible, to show how actions/policies are integrating: e.g. How are national, regional and local actions on transport and employability interconnecting? (See [‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ and local action](#))

Your reports might reflect on how local work to tackle child poverty connects with:

- **Whole Family Wellbeing and GIRFEC**
 - The [GIRFEC approach](#) and [Whole Family Wellbeing Funding](#) promote holistic, whole family support which is in line with the goals of ‘Best Start, Bright Futures’.
- **Keeping the Promise** to care experienced children.
 - Note the intensive offer Local Authorities are required to give to care experienced young people in Health and Education Settings. For more on the connections between anti-poverty work and the Promise, see [The Promise Poverty Briefing published in Autumn 2020](#).
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**
 - You might consider completing a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact assessment like the [impact assessment](#) published alongside ‘Best Start, Bright Futures’.

Effective use of information

In LCPARs, try to avoid listing actions without explaining the reasons for taking such action and describing how effective actions have been in tackling (and/or creating the conditions for tackling) child poverty.

For local actions to tackle child poverty to be most effective, they should be based on effective use of information throughout the planning process:

1. Using information to **identify local needs** and select priorities
2. Using information on what works (and doesn't work) to **inform actions** to address local priorities
3. Using information to **monitor and evaluate the impact** of evidence-based actions on the areas they are targeting
4. Capturing new information from what's learned through new innovative actions to **add to the evidence base** of what works/doesn't work.

The types of information that can be used to help local areas in each of the stages include:

- **Quantitative data**
- **What works evidence** (from research and case studies)
- **Qualitative data** (including from those with direct experience of poverty and those who work to support them)

Pages 18-19 of this guidance offers further detail on effective use of information throughout the planning process and the different types of information available, as well as links to data sources.

Monitoring progress and measuring impact

Planning local actions to reduce child poverty and evaluating their impact in a complex landscape is a challenge. Given this complexity, a focus on data-driven, theory-based actions are key. This allows a clear line of sight, or 'golden thread' which links each activity undertaken to address local child poverty to: 1) evidence that the issues being addressed are local priorities and 2) evidence that the activity will be effective against the priority identified.

The complexity of tackling child poverty also means that there is no 'one-size fits all' approach to monitoring and evaluation. Rather, there are different types that are relevant and valid depending on the local approach. LCPARs might include:

1. **Routine monitoring** (If actions have an existing evidence base)
2. **Bespoke evaluation / capturing learning** (If actions do not have an existing evidence base)
3. **Evaluating the plan as a whole** (Stepping back to assess at a system level)

See p19 for more detail on these types of monitoring and evaluation.

Note that it is important to report honestly on actions which are not working and on the challenges impeding local anti-poverty work. Clarity on these points allows better targeting of resources and support

A 'golden thread' linking high-level strategic priorities with specific objectives for services, teams and individuals, aligns activities to desired outcomes, and reflects the contributions of multiple stakeholders. In reports, it is helpful to have clarity on who is accountable for delivering agreed actions, how they are being resourced, when they will be delivered and when a measurable impact is expected.

SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE

Consider, does your LCPAR contain the following?

- ✓ Alignment with 'Best Start, Bright Futures'
- ✓ Focus on the three drivers of child poverty
- ✓ Special consideration of priority families
- ✓ Partnership working with public and third sector partners
- ✓ Voices of people with direct experience of poverty
- ✓ Actions rooted in good understanding of local poverty
- ✓ Plans based on good use of information
- ✓ A holistic, person-centred approach to supporting families
- ✓ Case studies highlighting effective actions taken
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluating actions using relevant indicators
- ✓ Clear connections with related plans / strategies

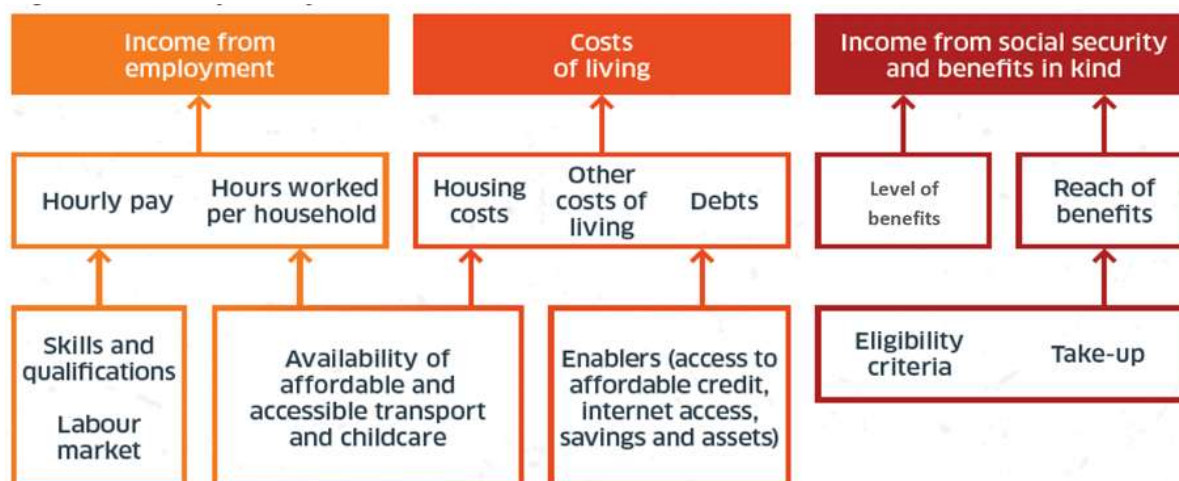
GUIDANCE ON REPORT CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTING TO THE TARGETS: MEASURES¹ TAKEN AND PROPOSED

The Act requires descriptions of measures taken and measures proposed to contribute to meeting the child poverty targets.

It is up to local partners to identify how best to tackle child poverty in their local area and the actions that are most sensible, relevant and practical.

Evidence tells us that the [three drivers of poverty](#) are income from employment, cost of living, and income from social security and benefits in kind. We know that impacting these drivers will impact levels of child poverty and so a focus on them is strongly encouraged. Local partners may wish to make clear in their reports which driver(s) each activity aims to address and how their contribution might be assessed. As set out in 'Best Start, Bright Futures', supporting families calls for a holistic approach so, often an action will influence more than one driver.



As well as documenting actions contributing directly to the targets, local partners might consider how their actions will:

- Reduce poverty between now and 2030
- Have potentially longer term preventative outcomes (See Part C of 'Best Start, Bright Futures' on supporting the next generation to thrive.)
- Improve the wellbeing of families experiencing poverty
- Deliver on ambitions of related plans, e.g. local Children's Services Plan
- Support care experienced communities and Keeping the Promise

¹ The Act uses "measure" to refer to policy/action. Unless quoting the Act, this guidance uses "action" in its place to avoid confusion with "measure" as in measuring impact.

INCOME MAXIMISATION

The Act requires that local authorities and NHS boards must report on income maximisation measures including providing advice about eligibility for financial support and assisting applications for financial support for pregnant women and families with children.

Note that an important part of action to maximise income is marketing these services, so local leads might include reporting on how they ensure priority families are aware of and accessing the support available.

See [‘Reporting on income maximisation: examples’](#) for examples of Local Child Poverty Action Reporting on income maximisation.

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The Act requires LCPARs to describe measures (taken and proposed) relating to children in households whose income or expenditure is adversely affected because a member of the household has one or more protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics, as set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#):

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Note that, under [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#), public authorities are required to assess the impact of applying a proposed new or revised policy on those with protected characteristics. By example, see the [Equality Impact Assessment](#) produced alongside ‘Best Start, Bright Futures’ which details how different sectors of the population are likely to be affected by the plan’s actions, in relation to the above characteristics. Whilst a full Equality Impact Assessment will be required for new and revised policy contained within the LCPAR, rather than for the LCPAR itself, it may be useful to link to these assessments and provide a summary assessment for the LCPAR as a whole.

PRIORITY FAMILIES

Several of these protected characteristics are also reflected in the six priority family groups, which evidence tells us are at highest risk of experiencing child poverty. 90% of children in poverty live in these priority groups so a focus on these families in anti-poverty strategies is strongly encouraged. [‘Best Start, Bright Futures’](#) targets its actions toward the priority family groups and local leads are encouraged to give particular consideration to these groups in their practice and reporting on tackling child poverty.

This [evidence pack](#) highlights key issues for each of the priority family types. The pack explains that there is a need for a person-centred, holistic approach, within a framework of understanding structural barriers, in order to avoid perpetuating stereotyping and stigma.

The priority family types are listed below alongside links to information about the group and the targeted support they need:

Lone parents

- [Lone parents – SG focus report](#)
- [PHS reports on child poverty in lone-parent families](#)
- [OPFS report 'Living Without a Lifeline: Single parenting and the cost of living crisis'](#)
- [Single Parent Discrimination Research & Lobbying — Single Parent Rights](#)
- [Participatory Single Parent Proofing Toolkit \(opfs.org.uk\)](#)
- [Freeing low-income single parents from in-work poverty's grip - One Parent Families Scotland \(opfs.org.uk\)](#)

Families where a member of the household is disabled

- [Families with a disabled adult or child – SG focus report](#)
- JRF report on [Poverty in Scotland 2022](#) outlines the disproportionate impact of poverty and the cost of living crisis on disabled people -

Families with 3 or more children

- [PHS report on families with 3 or more children](#)

Minority ethnic families

- [Minority ethnic families – SG focus report](#)
- [CRER detailed analysis of barriers facing minority ethnic families](#)
- [CRER report on attention to ME families in LCPARs](#)
- [JRF report on Ethnicity, Poverty and Data](#)

Families where the youngest child is under 1

- [Families with babies – SG focus report](#)

Mothers aged under 25

- [Families with young mothers – SG focus report](#)

***N.B.** Local organisations composed of/representing the interests of priority families may be able to offer good insight into barriers/challenges facing each group. They may also be able to assist in developing engagement particular communities or be connected with trusted intermediaries who could help with this.*

Giving special consideration to priority groups involves understanding the unique barriers and needs associated with each group and tailoring support accordingly, as well as recognising the intersectional effects of belonging to more than one priority family type. Key to 'Best Start, Bright Futures' is a focus on transforming how we deliver for families, ensuring support is holistic and person-centred. Local partners are essential to achieving this objective and uniquely placed to report on its

progress. This should be reflected in LCPARs, highlighting how actions taken/proposed address priority families' needs in a tailored, integrated way.

Examples of local reporting on priority families in LCPARs can be found in ['Reporting on priority families: examples'](#).

CARE EXPERIENCED

Although 'care experienced' is not presently a protected group, our shared commitment to Keep The Promise by 2030 provides opportunity to consider how our approach to families who are on the edge of care as a result of poverty are best supported to help them stay together where it is safe to do so.

Local Joint Need Assessments identify groups of children, young people and families who may be in need of extra support or particular consideration, including e.g. those impacted by involvement of a young person or parent/carer in the justice system, and those subject to child protection measures.

GUIDANCE ON THE REPORTING PROCESS

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The Act requires that LCPARs are prepared and published *jointly* by Local Authorities and Health Boards.

Local Leads are also encouraged to engage with third sector partners and with experts by experience in creating their reports. This is in keeping with wider duties on local authorities and their planning partners to ensure they are involving local communities in decision making (Community Empowerment Act, Equalities Act, Best Value, Children's Services Planning).

PARTNERSHIP: EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE

LCPARs should be developed with the involvement of people with direct experience of poverty. As the Poverty & Inequality Commission has stated:

"We know that people with lived experience are experts because of their experience and bring knowledge and ideas that are needed to successfully tackle poverty. Scotland needs their expertise at the centre of work to reduce poverty."

Advice on engaging people with direct experience of poverty in designing and implementing anti-poverty action has been produced through ['Get Heard Scotland'](#).

Note that the priority family groups have varying experiences of poverty and so it is important to consult with multiple priority groups in designing local approaches to tackling poverty.

ENGAGING WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE – CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY: Perth & Kinross Scorecard

Perth & Kinross teamed up with parents from priority families to co-produce a Children's Scorecard to measure the reach and effectiveness of the Perth and Kinross Offer to families and children affected by poverty.

CASE STUDY: Midlothian & Get Heard Scotland

In 2019, supported by Poverty Alliance, Midlothian held conversations with 41 people who had been affected by poverty. Their feedback on what was going well in the area and what change was needed was included in the Year 2 LCPAR and is intended to inform a 2022-25 Child Poverty Action Plan for Midlothian.

CASE STUDY: End Poverty Edinburgh

End Poverty Edinburgh is an independent group of citizens formed in 2020 to raise awareness of poverty in Edinburgh, influence decision-making and hold the city to account. Supported by the Poverty Alliance, group members have worked together over the last year to build their knowledge and capacity. Group members were involved in the process of preparing the LCPAR, by meeting with officers to discuss progress and sharing their views on progress and priority next steps

CASE STUDY: West Lothian Young People's Anti-Poverty Consultation

The council's Community Learning and Development (CLD) Youth Services Team worked with a group of 18 teenagers to find out more about young people's lived experience of poverty. The findings of the consultation were presented in a video followed by opportunities for the young people to become Anti-Poverty Champions and form a steering group.

The effectiveness of case studies in communicating local action on child poverty can also be seen in this [selection from PHS](#).

PARTNERSHIP: LOCAL PARTNERS

LCPARs are intended to support a strategic and joined up approach to policy and practice across the wide range of services and policy areas. Existing partnerships might facilitate collaborative creation of LCPARs.

The Policy memorandum to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act highlights that **Community Planning Partnerships** may be helpful vehicles in co-ordinating Local Child Poverty Action Reporting.

Local leads may also consider engaging the following groups in their work to develop and deliver their LCPAR:

- Integration Joint Board
- Local Employability Partnership
- Regional Economic Partnership

- Equality Councils
- Local organisations representing the priority family groups

Children's Services Planning Partnership:

In line with local authority, health board and 'other service providers' duties under [Part 3 \(Children's Services Planning\) of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), action to tackle child poverty should clearly align with the local realisation of Children's Services Planning duties to safeguard, support and promote wellbeing. This includes making sure delivery of local support to children, young people and families at a strategic, operational, and frontline practice level, is experienced in a joined-up way.

It is helpful for LCPARs to clearly reflect the range of partners involved in action at local level to tackle child poverty, including information on:

- the range of organisations who were involved in delivering the activity set out in the reports
- how local authorities and health boards have engaged with partners on a strategic basis across key areas such as education (including further and higher), economic development, money advice services, childcare, housing, transport, physical and mental health care, and children's services.
- the role played by each organisation in both planning and delivery of the activity outlined
- how local partnership working is enabling more holistic support for families

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

It is up to local authorities and health boards to decide on an appropriate approval process for LCPARs. As noted on p4, the nature of that approval process may differ depending on whether the LCPAR is a multi-year strategic report, an annual update, or a document combining other reporting duties.

A key function of the LCPAR process is building connections at local level. Reports can inform and bring together local stakeholders and officials to unite efforts on tackling child poverty. The Poverty & Inequality Commission's review of year one LCPARs highlighted the importance of leadership at all levels to effectively delivery on the tackling child poverty agenda. To ensure shared focus and prioritisation of tackling child poverty, it is suggested that chief executives from each Local Authority and Health Board sign off on their LCPAR.

WHEN SHOULD LCPARs BE PUBLISHED?

The Act says: "*as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year*"

Beyond this requirement, there is no set deadline for publishing LCPARs - local areas are to schedule annual reporting as they see fit.

The Scottish Government's [annual progress reports](#) on the delivery plan are required to be submitted by the end of June. Local partners may wish to align with this timescale. It is also advisable to take into account the meeting schedules of relevant committees and boards when scheduling the LCPARs approval process.

Local authorities and health boards should ensure their report is published on their organisation’s website and relevant partnership websites. Where possible, local leads should also make national partners aware of the publication of their report via the contact details on the Improvement Service (IS) website including where this has been incorporated with other aligned planning and reporting duties.

LINKS WITH OTHER LOCAL REPORTING DUTIES

Being aware of other local reporting duties may highlight sources of relevant information, help to avoid duplication of efforts, and inform the scheduling of LCPARs in light of the demands on local officials. It is helpful if links to other reporting/strategies are made clear in the LCPAR. If appropriate, LCPARs can be produced in conjunction with a related local plan/strategy.

The table below summarises some of the local reporting duties relevant to tackling child poverty.

Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 3)	Joint duty on Local Authorities and Health Boards, with role of ‘other service providers’	Children’s Services Plans*	Every 3 years, with annual reports	Statutory Guidance on Part 3: Children's Services Planning (2nd edition 2020) CYP (S) Act 2014
		Children’s rights reporting	Every 3 years	Statutory guidance – Part 1 CYP Act
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015	CPPs	Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)	Annual progress reports	LOIP and locality plans - statutory guidance
		Locality plans, at a more local level for areas experiencing particular disadvantage	Annual progress reports	
Education (Scotland) Act 2016	Education Authorities	Steps taken and steps planned to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socioeconomic disadvantage	Annual	Guidance on local authority reporting

Tackling child poverty overlaps with the **Fairer Scotland Duty** which requires various public bodies to demonstrate due regard for reducing socioeconomic inequalities when decision-making. Guidance on this duty for public bodies is [here](#).

Island Local Authorities and Health Board should also note that the **Islands (Scotland) Act 2018** sets out the requirement to complete an Island Communities Impact Assessments in relation to any policy, strategy or service which is likely to effect an island community differently to other communities (including other island communities) - [Guidance and toolkit](#).

***CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN**

Each local authority and relevant health board are also required to ensure relevant national outcomes and objectives are reflected within their **Children's Services Plan**. This includes the national commitment to reducing child poverty, and it therefore may be beneficial to align with this annual reporting. The third cycle of Children's Services Plans 3-year plans runs from 2023-26.

Part 3 statutory guidance on Children's Services Planning recommends that actions and indicators on child poverty recorded in the Children's Services Plan also form a key element of the annual LCPAR, and that each report should cross-refer to the other.

Information on child poverty, should inform the evidence-based joint strategic needs assessment required as part of developing each area's Children's Services Plan, to ensure this is robust and explicitly set out needs of the current local population of children, young people and families.

LINKING REPORTS

As highlighted previously, local leads may choose to amalgamate LCPARs with other reporting duties, e.g. Children's Services Plans. The Care Inspectorate's ['10 steps to successful Children's Services Planning'](#) highlights opportunities to reduce the number of separate and sometimes disconnected local planning forums, through including related agendas - e.g. children's rights, child protection, child poverty - as a discreet section of the Children's Services Plan.

As with LCPARs, Children's Services Plans and Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Annual reports call for local needs assessments, connecting with local partners, and development of local indicators and outcomes. Combining efforts on these activities for the benefit of more than one report and/or providing links between reports can prevent duplication.

If combining LCPARs with another plan/report/strategy, it is vital that the statutory requirements for LCPARs and the principles of good reporting set out in this guidance remain clear.

GUIDANCE ON PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

EFFECTIVE USE OF INFORMATION

For local actions to tackle child poverty to be most effective, they should be based on effective use of information throughout the planning process. The different ways information can be used to the greatest effect are described below.

1. Using information to identify local needs and select priorities

This involves using a wide range of local, national and lived experience information to tell the most detailed local story and identify what the biggest issues are, or where the biggest potential for impact is. This exercise, pulling on a large quantity and range of information, is not something that has to be done on an annual basis, rather it may be most effectively done at the start and review points of longer-term strategic planning cycles.

2. Using information on what works (and doesn't work) to inform actions to address local priorities

Once priority areas have been identified, actions need to be developed and delivered that will make a positive impact on these areas. Where possible, evidence-based recommendations should be used to select actions which will be impactful in your priority area(s).

3. Using information to monitor and evaluate the impact of evidence-based actions on the areas they are targeting

Having selected evidence-based actions targeted towards priorities based on an in-depth understanding of the local child poverty situation, ongoing monitoring and evaluation can be streamlined by using information that specifically tells you about your priority area(s) so that you can regularly monitor changes in routinely collected data and to the experience of those living or working in the area.

4. Capturing new information from what's learned through new innovative actions to add to the evidence base of what works/doesn't work.

Where new, innovative actions have been identified for priority areas, there may not be a strong evidence base. In these cases, it is helpful to ensure learning is captured, using a variety of information types, to showcase how the action was implemented, who it was intended to reach, who it did reach and what changes it resulted in. This can be done through a mix of developing data recording systems, writing up case studies and capturing lived experience of those delivering the actions and those it was intended to reach. The effectiveness of case studies can be seen in this [selection from Public Health Scotland](#).

TYPES OF INFORMATION

There are various types of information that can be used to help local areas in each of the stages above:

➤ **Quantitative data:**

Collected through surveys, through service delivery, routine data from health, education, local council audits. Different types will be available nationally and locally. Some examples are provided in the 'Data Sources' section.

➤ **What works evidence:**

Evidence, from research and case studies, on what works (and does not work) to make positive changes to the priorities you have identified. See for example these evidence reviews on action to tackle child poverty from [What Works Scotland](#) and [Scottish Government](#).

➤ **Qualitative data:**

Lived experience of those facing, or who have faced, the challenges you are trying to tackle -

Data can come in the form of listening to the voices of those who have, or have had, experiences of the challenges you are trying to address. How they became at risk, what helped them, what did not help them, what made things worse. How the system works or doesn't work to support them. What changes they would like to see to make life better for them.

Policy should be developed in collaboration with those with direct experience of poverty, (see page 12) and give particular consideration to the experiences and barriers faced by priority family groups who we know to be at highest risk of experiencing child poverty (see '[Reporting on priority families: examples](#)').

The [Prioritising Child Poverty](#) approach from PHS developed pen portraits, based on lived experience of families at risk of and experiencing poverty, to support local areas to develop holistic support for families. The resources include [pen portraits](#) and guidance on how to use them with local services, planners and residents to use lived experience throughout the planning process.

Lived experience of those working to tackle and mitigate the challenge -

Often those working in local areas, in councils and partner organisations directly delivering support and services, have a vast amount of knowledge of their local area, their population, the history of what's happened before and how successful or not it was. This information is often overlooked when we think of 'data' but it is a useful and valid piece of the jigsaw to help build up a complete picture of the local situation.

TYPES OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Routine monitoring (If actions have an existing evidence base)

Development of a monitoring framework, where each priority has actions identified, linked to indicators that will capture who it is intended to target, who it is reaching and what difference this is making.

It is difficult to measure the impact that local actions are having on rates of child poverty, partly because child poverty rates are influenced by a wide range of socio-economic factors. Furthermore, data showing annual progress in relation to the four headline targets is not always reliably available at local level. It may be useful for local partners to identify appropriate shorter-term outcomes that directly relate to the drivers of child poverty, which can be influenced at local level and against which progress can be understood. Some local areas have developed/are developing local measurement frameworks: see e.g. [East Renfrewshire](#), [Perth & Kinross](#).

[Public Health Scotland's Outcome Based Planning tool](#) provides a useful starting point for identifying suitable outcomes and indicators and monitoring progress towards them.

2. Bespoke evaluation / capturing learning (If actions do not have an existing evidence base)

With innovative actions where there is no, or limited, evidence base that they will be effective against the chosen priority, we encourage local areas to articulate what they hope to achieve (who they want to reach and what difference they want to make to those reached), alongside their plan to record this through developing data collection tools and capturing lived experience. Case studies, as well as plans to embed data collection, are particularly useful for innovative actions. If there is no planned evaluation activity for local innovative activities, possibly due to lack of funding or capacity, it is useful to flag this in the reporting.

3. Evaluating the plan as a whole (Stepping back to assess at a system level)

Each of the points above relate to assessing the impact of individual actions on their intended short-/medium-term outcomes. Because child poverty is a complex system, it can be helpful to periodically (for example, every 3 or 4 years if areas are taking the strategic approach suggested in this guidance) step back and look at the collective impact of all actions within the plan on the longer-term outcomes. Here, we would suggest local partners return to assessing wide and varied types of information (not just specifically related to the identified priorities) to complete another needs assessment (step one in the 'effective use of information' section) to see how things have changed. Are your priority areas still the same, or are other areas emerging? Here is the chance to put into the mix the external influences that may be limiting local actions (e.g. Cost of Living crisis etc.) so that you can assess your plan's success across the system, rather than assess the impact of each individual action.

If actions within the plan have not been derived from a data-driven needs assessment and/or aligned with priorities, then the types of monitoring and evaluation above are still relevant, however there is less confidence that impacts of

the activities will lead to longer term reduction in child poverty as they may not be targeting the biggest local need.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Improvement Service

The [Improvement Service website](#) signposts a variety of support, including planning tools and examples of policy and practice. The connected Khub page hosts announcements, resources and a forum for connecting with others.

What Works Scotland

Resources from [What Works Scotland](#) includes a range of support on approaches to generating and using evidence and guidance on evaluation. For example,

- [Making data meaningful: Evidence use in a community planning partnership in Scotland | What Works Scotland](#)
- [Evidence to Action: what works for public service reform | What Works Scotland](#)

This page, dedicated to [tackling poverty locally](#) includes evidence reviews and case studies of local anti-poverty action.

Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC)

[Children and Young People improvement collaborative](#) supports use of Quality Improvement methodology, outlined in a [three step change framework](#). Quality Improvement (QI) is a way to test, measure, evaluate and implement new and more effective ways of working.

PHS

PHS's ['Prioritising Child Poverty: A data and systems approach'](#) takes a public health needs assessment approach to understand the local child poverty system and shape local child poverty priorities. A child poverty data source was developed to use in combination with the child poverty dashboard and local data and intelligence to provide indicators against the three drivers of Poverty.

PHS are currently developing a comprehensive toolkit with practical guidance to support each of the steps described in the 'Effective Use of Information' section of this guidance. We will update this guidance with the latest resources as they are developed. This toolkit will incorporate, refine, and expand on the resources currently offered in their ['Prioritising Child Poverty'](#) and ['Outcomes Planning tool'](#). Local areas should still find these resources useful and relevant while the toolkit is being developed.

[PHS Outcomes planning tool for LCPARs](#)

An outcomes-focused approach emphasises the difference that an organisation or programme makes rather than what it delivers, in terms of outputs and processes.

The overarching outcomes for tackling child poverty (reflecting [the three drivers](#)) are: cost of living is reduced, income from employment is maximised, income from social

security and benefits in kind is maximised. This PHS guide identifies contributing outcomes and suggests potential local actions to affect these outcomes.

Note that, alongside 'Best Start, Bright Futures' the Scottish Government published an updated measurement framework to monitor the drivers of poverty. This includes a breakdown of the three key drivers of child poverty alongside their indicators and the relevant data sources for measuring them.

This guidance is a living document and will be updated to include the latest learning and resources. For example,

- The Scottish Government is undertaking Pathfinder work in Glasgow and Dundee. Measurement and evaluation are key to these projects and learning will be shared as they progress.
- The Scottish Poverty & Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) has been awarded funds from the Abdn Financial Fairness Trust to compile and curate a Directory of Practice in Tackling Child Poverty Locally. Work on the project will start in September 2022. The first outputs will be available at a launch in April 2023.

DATA SOURCES

National resources

Statistics, research and analysis on child poverty:

Data source	Details
Child Poverty Analysis (Scot Gov)	Statistics, research and analysis relating to child poverty in Scotland.
Scottish Government open data publishing platform	Explore, visualise and download over 250 datasets from a range of producers.
Scottish Household Survey	A summary of the key findings from the Scottish Household Survey 2020 telephone survey.
Scottish Public Health Observatory	Data covering several important influential aspects of life circumstances including deprivation, housing and education.
Improvement Service Community Planning Outcomes Profiles	A data and benchmarking tool to help community planning partnerships assess if the lives of people in their communities are improving.
PHS Prioritising Child Poverty Data Source	Data source from joint PHS and Inverclyde Council project – includes links and guidance on accessing relevant data sources.
Scottish Health Survey - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)	A collection of documents relating to the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) which provide a detailed picture of the health of the Scottish population in private households

Local child poverty data sources

Scottish Government [dashboard of local data](#) relevant to child poverty

Improvement Service [data-zone level](#) map showing Children in Low Income Households

Data source	Details
HMRC Child and working tax credits statistics	Number of children in receipt of tax credits, by local authority
Children with families with limited resources across Scotland 2017-2019	Estimates of the proportion of children who live in families with limited resources by local authority area, health board and household characteristics
End Child Poverty local poverty estimates 2015-2021	Estimates of child poverty, after housing costs, in each constituency, local authority and ward
DWP/HMRC Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014-21	Annual statistics on the number and proportion of children living in low income families, before housing costs
Local level household income estimates	Local level household income estimates and income distribution data

Local data on drivers of child poverty

Driver	Data Source
Take-up of benefits	Healthy Living Survey – Uptake of free school meals Pupil census - Statistics on school pupil characteristics, including registration for free school meals
Hourly pay	Annual survey of hours and earnings – Employees paid less than the living wage
Hours worked per household	Annual population survey – Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity rates, reasons for inactivity, willingness to work, work pattern (part-time/full-time), underemployment, temporary contract
Skills and qualifications	Annual population survey – Qualifications and occupational skill level of working age adults School attainment and school leaver destinations
Availability of affordable, accessible transport and childcare	Summary statistics for schools in Scotland – Uptake of funded early learning and childcare entitlement Availability and frequency of bus service (by data zone) Mode of transport people use to get to work Scottish Household Survey – Satisfaction with public transport
Housing costs	Registers of Scotland House Price Statistics Affordable Housing Supply Programme Statistics
Other costs of living	Scottish Household Condition Survey – fuel poverty

ACTIONS IN 'BEST START, BRIGHT FUTURES'

Part 1: Our offer to parents: Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work.		
Area	Driver	Actions
Employability & Skills	Income from employment	Enhancing employability support
Economic opportunities	Income from employment	Ensuring fair work
Childcare	Reducing household costs	Improving access and availability of childcare
	Income from employment	
Transport	Reducing household costs	Enhancing access and affordability of public transport
	Income from employment	
Connectivity	Enhanced life chances	Access to devices and internet connection
Part 2: Our offer to families: Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs		
Area	Driver	Actions
People and Place	All	Providing holistic and whole family support
		Improving access to mental health support and services
		Working in partnership with the third sector and community organisations
Income maximisation	Reducing household costs	Providing support to overcome barriers to accessing services
		Improving quality and availability of advice services
Housing	Reducing household costs	Supporting access to affordable, warm homes
Part 3: Supporting the next generation to thrive		
Area	Driver	Actions
Enhanced life chances	Enhanced life chances	Addressing children's health inequalities Scottish Attainment Challenge Support for school leavers