

## Reporting on priority families: examples

Evidence tells us that the **six priority family groups** at highest risk experiencing child poverty are:

- 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)

For more detail on the priority families, click [here](#).

'[Best Start, Bright Futures](#)' directs its actions toward these families and local partners are encouraged to align with this focus.

**Effective reporting** on priority families might include,

- ✓ Awareness of the presence of priority groups in your local area
- ✓ Understanding of the unique barriers and needs associated with each priority group
- ✓ Attention to intersectionality, i.e. the compounded effects of belonging to more than one priority group
- ✓ Description of how priority groups specifically are supported by an action/service
- ✓ Input from people belonging to the priority groups
- ✓ Data – quotes, figures etc. – as evidence of a measure's effectiveness

The following cases are included for awareness and to inspire your reporting on support for priority families – they are not intended as models to be replicated.

## Aberdeenshire

“Combating digital exclusion has also been central to Housing’s pandemic response with successful bids to all three phases of Connecting Scotland’s funding, allowing distribution of equipment to families with children. We have also provided free internet access at two of our Gypsy/Traveller sites at Aikey Brae and Banff.”

### **Case Study**

The 6 families whom I referred to the Wellbeing Fund for Marginalised Groups in March 2021 were so happy that someone rang them back and took their information without the need for means testing, complicated forms, etc. nor judgement. They felt that they were dealt with, with dignity and respect in the circumstances in which they found themselves at the time. All of them hoped that something like this may continue to help marginalised communities such as themselves. For Gypsy/travellers with literacy issues it empowered them to speak to the fund advisors directly without the need of someone else being involved to complete forms, etc. It also meant that they could get help with a variety of things such as money for rent, food, clothing, fuel, travel, bedding, beds, white goods, etc. from the one place rather than applying to different funds. This was a positive experience for all involved.

### **Case Study**

In May 2021 a homeless family affected by domestic abuse came to stay at the Aikey Brae Gypsy/Traveller Site. The family comprised of 1 adult and 5 children. 4 of the children attended the local primary school. Unfortunately, due to being homeless and having travelled from Ireland and all around the United Kingdom, their mother had not been able to apply for child benefit or other benefits which the family was entitled to. Whilst 2 of the 4 children qualified for free school meals due to their ages the older 2 children did not. With assistance from the school involved and the Council Resilience Fund the money for the school meals was progressed quickly so this family could be assisted when they needed the assistance most. The children thoroughly enjoyed their meals. Again, this was a positive experience for the family and only possible due to the school and the Resilience Fund working in partnership for the good of the children. The welfare of the children was paramount so they did not suffer having to wait for bureaucratic systems to kick in but were helped immediately.

## Clackmannanshire

### **Young Parent Project**

**Deliver the Young Parents Project** supporting young mothers to remain in education; higher education and/or employment. The Young Parents Programme links young parents with support for housing, accessing learning and employment grants, money advice and sourcing childcare. The Young Parents project works closely with the Family Nurse Partnership and with Forth Valley College; Stirling University and Skills Development Scotland.

Led by: Clackmannanshire Council NHS Forth Valley Family Nurse Partnership, Forth Valley College Skills Development Scotland Stirling University

Target groups: All child poverty groups: Mothers with a baby under age one; Families where the mother is under 25 years. One parent families Families in which someone is disabled

This project won a COSLA award: [Young Parents Project Wins CoSLA Award \(clacks.gov.uk\)](https://www.clacks.gov.uk)

**Implementation of Thrive Programme in Clackmannanshire.** 16 week programme supporting parents in deprived areas to improve mental health & well being and life circumstances. 1 programme for 9 women completed in 2018. 3 programmes planned in 2019, further 3-4 programmes each year thereafter.

Led by: NHS Forth Valley in partnership with Clacks Council, CTSI, SFRS, Forth Valley College, DWP, DWP (UK Government) Supported by UK Government funding as part of the Stirling and Clacks City Region Deal.

Target groups: All child poverty groups, with focus on one parent families (CRD funding)

In 2019 the THRIVE programme engaged with 10 parents with low self esteem and living in areas of deprivation. This programme enabled parents/ carers to address and cope with their own health and wellbeing concerns thus enabling them to support their child's learning. In 2020, 25 participants enrolled in THRIVE groups pre-lockdown. All remained engaged on WhatsApp groups until June. Since then, we have offered 5 week Wellbeing programme and 10 week Prepare to THRIVE (both online via Google Classroom and Meet). 17 participants are still in contact. Plan for 2021 is to continue to support participants virtually and to start THRIVE groups in Aug 2021 circumstances permitting.

**Thrive Plus Project** in conjunction with the Skills & Inclusion programme within CRD. Target 50 lone parents in Alloa S&E. Scoping & development to take place in 2019, with pilot for 2020.

Led by: NHS Forth Valley in partnership with Clacks Council, DWP (UK Government). Supported by UK Government funding as part of the Stirling and Clacks City Region Deal.

Target groups: All child poverty groups, with a focus on lone parents (CRD)

This programme has not progressed, however resourcing plans will be developed for 2021/22

## Inverclyde

### **Case study - Affordable Holiday Hubs**

Inverclyde Council received an allocation of funding from Scottish Government to provide a pilot programme to support working families on low incomes. Grants were awarded to fifteen services across the country to establish models of out of school care which were more accessible and affordable for low income families particularly the six identified families groups most at risk from living in poverty.

In Inverclyde the holiday childcare service was delivered during the school holiday period October 2020, and Easter, Summer and October 2021. Parents who accessed the service told us they were looking for an affordable integrated childcare provision during school holidays to enable them to continue with work or learning. The majority of people who accessed the service earned less than £20,000, were lone parent families and predominately women.

Lone parent families (62%) were the highest demographic who received a place followed by families with a disability. In addition 18% of the families who engaged in the service advised that they experience a number of intersecting inequalities that impact on their household income and outcomes. For example not only were the families on low income and lone parents but they also have a either a disabled member of the household, more than 3 children in the household, English as a second language or the parent is under 25 years.

Parents advised that getting childcare and then getting themselves to work was often challenging during the holiday period, especially for lone parent families. The majority of parents, who used the affordable holiday hubs advised that they were relieved and grateful that their child had received a free place for their child as this alleviated the stress associated with school holidays, child care and working arrangements, especially during the summer.

Comments from parents include:

“The hub has saved me a fortune throughout the holidays and so has my mum who is the only person I can ask as I am a single parent”

“It has helped me be at work and has given my child a chance to socialise with other children”.

“It helped me with work and also helped as I have two babies at home- it took some strain off me”.

“Having support from the hub allowed both our work life to be uninterrupted and less family stress”

“It enabled me to work more hours throughout the summer holidays”.

This initiative allowed families to access free childcare so they could work or undertake educational opportunities, built children’s resilience and gave them opportunities they missed out on due to Covid19 restrictions. It also provided

learning on the most effective models of childcare provision for future implementation.

## Perth & Kinross

### **Case Study – Lone Parent with a Disabled Child**

A lone parent and her 3 children under 8 were living in private rented accommodation. The client was subject to the Benefits Cap and was in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payments to help cover her rent of £650 pcm. Her eldest son suffers from behavioural and sensory issues and had been referred to CAMHS but was awaiting assessment. She was advised not to claim Disability Living Allowance for her son until he had received a diagnosis. The Welfare Rights Team encouraged her to challenge this and to make the claim and helped her to complete the Disability Living Allowance Form. 6 weeks later the client was awarded the Middle Rate of Care for her son which was backdated. She received a payment of £420 in respect of arrears with £240 paid every 4 weeks in Disability Living Allowance. Her Child Tax Credit increased by £66 per week and the Team helped her to claim Carer's Allowance which was also backdated - as a result her weekly income increased by a further £37. She will also receive the Scottish Carer's Supplement which amounts to £462.00 each year. As she has now been awarded Disability Living Allowance for her son, the Benefits Cap has been lifted and she will have her full rent covered by Housing Benefit. The Client Financial Gain over a 12-month period was assessed as £9,620.

## Dumfries and Galloway

### **Case Study 2 – Family Nurse Partnership**

When S arrived in Dumfries from Europe, aged 17 and pregnant, and not speaking English, it was uncertain how far on in her pregnancy she was. At her first appointment with a midwife, S was referred to the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme due to her vulnerability. Permission was sought from the Scottish Government to offer S the FNP programme as though she was out with the criteria for the service due to being so far on in her pregnancy, it was clear that the programme would benefit her and her baby. The Family Nurse arranged to visit S having organised an interpreter to enable them both to communicate fully about her pregnancy and the FNP programme and S opted to participate. It was identified that S's partner and his mother were the only supports available to her and she had no route into accessing financial support. With S's consent, the Family Nurse made a referral to Dumfries and Galloway's Citizen's Advice Service and the family received a phone call from a Money Advisor. S was supported through the process of applying for financial support and a claim made for the family. The Family Nurse has also arranged English lessons for S and is helping her to prepare for her baby's imminent arrival by linking her with local organisations that can provide baby clothing and equipment. The support of her Family Nurse, the interpreter and the Money Advisor have been invaluable in assisting S to access information, services and support for herself, her baby and her family. This has improved her financial situation as well as reducing isolation for her and her family.

## Fife

## **Making it Work for Lone Parents**

A partnership between Fife Gingerbread and CARF offering holistic support to lone parents to secure and sustain employment. The worker supports lone parents in matters relating to income maximisation, debt, benefits and money management. In 2020-21, a financial gain of over £70k was achieved on behalf of 44 individuals referred to the service, all of whom reported improved money management skills following engagement with the CARF worker.

## **Renfrewshire**

A joint project was launched in partnership with SAY Women which includes a focus on providing time limited tenancy sustainment advice and assistance for young women aged 16-25 years who are identified as survivors of child sexual abuse and/or survivors of other forms of sexual violence

## **Edinburgh**

Employment support for parents: 9 new projects started in 2021 focussing on parents' specific employment needs and most include welfare rights. They range from the Datakirk programme, supporting parents from an ethnic minority to achieve careers in data to WorkSpace, working with parents in South-West Edinburgh to achieve their employment goals.

[N.B. Coalition for Racial Equality & Rights highlighted this as an example of good practice.]

Additional funding was received from Scottish Government to extend the programme to parents who are disabled, who are under 25, and those who have children in nursery. Early feedback shows that some parents who speak English as a second language struggle with words used in applications and interviews. As a result, the local authority and Edinburgh College are developing an English for Employability Course.

## **North Lanarkshire**

### **Hope's Case Study**

Hope was previously self-employed as a hairdresser and lived with her partner when she fell pregnant. As their child grew older Hope had no choice but to flee the family home with her child, due to domestic violence and abuse, now homeless, Hope took her child to live with her Aunt.

There were challenges with her Aunt's alcohol issues, which came to a head not long after Hope had enrolled her child at the local primary school. Hope found herself having to make further difficult decisions to help keep her child and herself safe; she left her Aunts with her daughter and moved in with a friend some miles away, but still within the North Lanarkshire Local Authority Area. Hope knew that this would be a temporary situation, as it wasn't convenient for her friend to have Hope and her child staying there long-term and it was proving expensive for her to get her child to school.

Hope was experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety, her hair had started falling out which resulted in her being diagnosed with alopecia, which as a hairdresser she found particularly difficult to come to terms with. Her child was displaying challenging behaviour and finding school life difficult. Hope requested support from the school to establish whether her child was experiencing life with Asperger's, she felt that professional help from her child's school would help her to better understand and meet her child's needs.

On referral from the Braidhurst Education Cluster Lead, Hope engaged with One Parent Family Support Services (OPFS).

The issues and challenges this young single parent family faced included:

- Homelessness
- Transportation
- Concerns about child's challenging behaviour
- Living in Circumstances of Poverty
- Heightened levels of stress, anxiety & feelings of insecurity
- Isolation & Loneliness
- Digital Exclusion
- Unemployment

Through discussion and agreement OPFS supported Hope to address her complex needs and multiple barriers through the provision of our integrated package of holistic support which included the following interventions, which were provided and co-ordinated by OPFS through a blend of one to one support meetings and groupwork sessions:

- Welfare Rights and Money & Debt Advice Services
- Crisis Support
- NLC Hardship Payment
- Housing Support
- Digital Equipment & Connectivity
- Peer Support
- Well-being Hub
- Linking with School
- Solihull Approach
- My Life & Me; online training
- Skills Boost Sessions
- Employability Referral

Hope now lives with her child in their new home, which they are very happy in. Relationships with the school feel much healthier for Hope. She is claiming all benefit entitlements and able to better manage her family budget. New friendships continue to build with other single parents facing similar challenges and Hope is now considering returning to work.

Taking control of her life and being able to provide a good standard of living for her and her child has become her main focus. Life for this young family feels more stable and there is a sense of optimism for the future.

[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 engaged 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. 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.