

Second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026

Annex 10: Islands Impact Assessment

March 2022

ISLAND COMMUNITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Please ensure this template is completed in conjunction with the Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) Guidance on the [Scot Gov Website](#)

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| Name of Policy, Strategy or Service | Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan |
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STEP ONE – DEVELOP A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR OBJECTIVES

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?• What are the intended impacts/ outcomes and how do these potentially differ across the islands? | <p>The aim of Best Start, Bright Futures, the second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, is to reduce child poverty in Scotland and meet the 4 statutory child poverty targets as set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The interim targets are for 2023 and actions contained within the delivery plan will also set us on course to meeting the final targets in 2030.</p> <p>The delivery plan will set out the combination of policy interventions to be implemented during 2022-2026 which will contribute towards the interim and final targets, and how these will be measured over the 4 year period of the delivery plan.</p> <p>Intended impacts – reduced relative, absolute and persistent poverty and combined low income and material deprivation, through outcomes of increased income from work and earnings, reducing household costs and maximising incomes from social security and benefits in kind.</p> <p>Intended impacts and outcomes are the same for island and mainland communities, however, the context and therefore the policy interventions needed to achieve these outcomes and impact may vary significantly, particularly in relation to household cost and increasing income from work and earnings.</p> |
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STEP TWO – GATHER YOUR DATA AND IDENTIFY YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data is available about the current situation in the islands? • Who are your key stakeholders? • How does any existing data differ between islands? • Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place? | <p>Ongoing research¹ funded by the rural and islands team to establish an up to date picture of poverty in rural and island communities (not exclusive to islands), local estimates of child poverty, although noting data limitations reduces the quality of data as we move to smaller areas (for example, from national to local authority (LA), and within local authorities). Data availability also varies between different policy areas contributing to tackling child poverty: for example, transport, childcare, availability of labour market opportunities etc. More information on data will be set out in the full assessment.</p> <p>Population and child poverty rates</p> <p>From the 2011 Census, there are 93 inhabited islands with a total population of just over 100,000, or about 2% of Scotland’s population. These islands are in 6 LAs² – 3 island LAs – Orkney, Shetland and Na h-Eileanan Siar and 3 LAs with a mix of mainland and island settlements – Argyll and Bute, Highland, and North Ayrshire.</p> <p>Statistical data show that child poverty rates are lower in rural areas, but stakeholders have raised concerns that this data does not suitably capture the reality of/experiences of rural poverty. Whilst poverty rates vary between islands, we recognise that this can hide higher costs that also may vary between islands, and that these may be more difficult to shift given structural differences.</p> <p>In general poverty rates are lower in both island LAs and LAs with islands. Estimates of children living in relative poverty, below 60% median income After Housing Costs (AHC), by Scottish local authority show all island LAs with lower poverty rates than the Scottish average and 1 LA with an island above average. The one local authority containing island communities that is above the Scottish average of 24% is North Ayrshire, with a relative child poverty rate of 27.9%, but it is important to note that the majority of the population there are not island</p> |
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¹ ‘Improving our understanding of child poverty in rural and island Scotland’, SRUC, forthcoming

² Not including a small number of islands that are connected with the mainland

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| | <p>communities. Other relevant LAs were slightly below the national rate (Highland 23.6%, Argyll and Bute, 23.3%, Orkney 22.7%) or more than 3 percentage points below (Na h-Eileanan Siar 20.7%, Shetland 15.8%), again with Argyll and Bute and Highland the majority of the population are not an island community. In contrast, Glasgow has a relative poverty rate of 32.2%.</p> <p>Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work</p> <p>Worklessness levels are generally lower in island communities³, the percentage of workless households on Argyll and Bute (2.8%), Highland (1.3%), Orkney (<0.5%) and Shetland (<0.5%)⁴ are all significantly below the Scottish average of 11.1%. The percentage of workless households on Na h-Eileanan Siar 11.3% is roughly the same as the Scottish average, at 11.3%. North Ayrshire has much higher levels of worklessness, at 16.5%, although again it should be noted that given the larger proportion of mainland communities this is not necessarily evidence of higher island worklessness.</p> <p>Less frequent and more expensive public transport options, combined with greater distances to childcare, education and employment opportunities can be a barrier to accessing employment. However, the lower rates of worklessness noted above, should be considered alongside the existing rural and island specific employment opportunities.</p> <p>In terms of transport, in particular stakeholders noted the cost of ferry services, with policies such as free bus travel for under 22s being of less use to young island communities who may not have access to a regular bus service.</p> <p>Island authorities have highlighted recruitment of staff, infrastructure and supply and demand as particularly challenging for implementing the 1140 Early Learning</p> |
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³ ONS, published October 2021, data January – December 2019, [Children by the combined economic activity status of household members by local authority](#)

⁴ Note ONS data for Shetland and Orkney states that sample sizes are too small to provide an estimate, but percentages of working households and mixed households (where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment and at least one other is either unemployed or inactive, combine to 100%)

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| | <p>and Childcare (ELC) commitment⁵. This included some island communities having a more limited pool of potential candidates, a lack of affordable housing where job opportunities arose, commuting options being uneconomic and infrequent, and fluctuations in demand, particularly on very small island communities. Challenges in accessing high quality and affordable childcare can act as a barrier for parents, particularly women, taking up employment or training opportunities.</p> <p>Digital connectivity can also provide an additional barrier to island communities, both in terms of accessing services and accessing learning and employment opportunities.</p> <p>We have heard from the ongoing rural and island research project (Improving our understanding of child poverty in rural and island Scotland) that knowledge gaps include data on the update/provision of ELC and unpacking the combined contribution of UK, Scotland and local employability programmes.</p> <p>Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs</p> <p>Research highlights the ‘hidden’ nature of rural poverty, and low income indicators can overlook variation in rural living costs. We have also heard from stakeholders of concerns around limited data and/or limited capacity to analyse data at sub-local authority level, and this could be a particular concern from some island areas, especially in those local authorities that contain both island and mainland areas.</p> <p>Rural areas have relatively high and increasing housing costs, with lower levels of local authority owned housing and higher levels of second home ownership. They also experience higher levels of fuel poverty. Reduced choice and higher fuel and transport costs can also lead to higher costs for food and other essential items, however, island communities report lower levels of food insecurity compared to the population average, though coping mechanisms and wider barriers to access may vary in island communities.</p> |
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⁵ [Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Reinstatement of 1140 statutory duty – Island Communities Impact Assessment](#)

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| | <p>We have also heard from the ongoing rural and island research project that knowledge gaps include localised information on benefits uptake and reliable data on fuel poverty.</p> <p>Supporting the next generation to thrive</p> <p>‘Improving our understanding of child poverty in rural and island Scotland’ noted that research has revealed that schools in rural areas are less likely to include a specific focus on pupils affected by disadvantage, indicating a lower level of understanding in rural schools of the challenges faced by pupils affected by poverty.</p> <p>Research by Children’s Neighbourhood Scotland⁶ found that children in rural areas may feel more powerless, and that young people’s transition into employment can be hampered if they are not able to leave the local labour market, where they may be more reliant on low-qualified, low-paid and part time or seasonal work. However, they also found that rural children and young people are less likely to experience adverse childhood experiences than their urban counterparts.</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Our key stakeholders are island local authorities, third sector organisations working in islands, the SRUC research team and the Scottish Islands Federation.</p> <p>The child poverty delivery plan will contain a broad range of policy interventions, some with design features and mitigations built in or being explored. For example, we have commissioned research into the ‘Shetland Anchor Project’, which will develop our understanding of a project that was designed to meet the distinct and specific needs of island communities. Learning from good practice and the impact that bespoke provision can deliver for islands is valuable in evidencing this might be applied in other island locations.</p> <p>In some instances mitigations may not yet be in place, as some policy is in early stage development and has</p> |
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⁶ Glass, J., Bynner, C. and Chapman, C. (2020) Children and young people and rural poverty and social exclusion: A review of evidence

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| | not undergone its own impact assessment process (i.e. policy in pre-delivery). |
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STEP THREE - CONSULTATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there information already gathered through previous engagements? • How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales? Public meetings/local authorities/key stakeholders • What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities? • Separate consultation events for island communities/local authorities? | <p>Consultation on the plan took place between September – December 2021, given Covid-19 restrictions this took place by email and virtual consultation. This included feedback from island representatives through both consultation with local authorities and with local authority child poverty leads. This delivery plan builds on policy from across government, and is therefore also building on existing impact assessments. This includes drawing on existing ICIA's to understand where a combination of policies may have both positive or unintended negative impact for island communities. As noted above, some of the policies in the delivery plan are at an early stage of development, and will be accompanied by policy specific impact assessments, including ICIA's where relevant, as those policies are further developed.</p> <p>This impact assessment has also greatly benefited from research conducted on rural and islands child poverty, and this included stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Additional meetings with local authority leads and island community representatives to further inform implementation, particularly in relation to pathfinder work, will be useful to support ongoing policy development and implementation. Given the multiple different policies incorporated into the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, and early stage of planning in relation to delivery through a pathfinder approach, it has not been possible to consult widely in advance of the delivery date, but this does not preclude more wide ranging and meaningful consultation following publication, given the nature of commitments within the plan.</p> |
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STEP FOUR - ASSESSMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities? (Further detail in the Guidance): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Demographic – Economic – Gaelic – Social • Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts? • Are there mitigations already in place for these impacts raised? | <p>The underlying assessment identifies that, whilst child poverty is not a unique island phenomenon, and on the income based measures of child poverty that will be used to determine the success or otherwise of this delivery plan, it may be less of a concern in island communities. There are additional factors such as cost of living, distance from employment opportunities and key services, that may pose additional island specific barriers.</p> <p>Assessment of the policies that contribute to the tackling child poverty delivery plan identifies varying levels of differential impact on islands. For example, transport impacts vary substantially between island and mainland communities, particularly urban mainland communities, whereas social security benefits have less of a differential impact. The detail of these assessments are contained in the full ICIA.</p> <p>Underpinning the key policies of the delivery plan is a focus on person centred, holistic support to support parents to enter, sustain and progress in employment and person centred/place based wider family support. Both of these are likely to have unique impacts on the islands due to economic and spatial characteristics.</p> <p>For some policies, mitigation is already in place, for others, particularly those in very early development or those where enhancements or modifications are proposed, further analysis of appropriate mitigation is mixed, depending on the policy under consideration. For newly proposed policies, further mitigation may be needed, and will be identified through policy specific ICIA's.</p> |
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Is a full Island Communities Impact Assessment required?

You should now determine whether, in your opinion, your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities). To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there mitigations in place for the impacts identified and noted above from stakeholders and community consultations? (If further ICIA action is not required, complete the section below and publish).• Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)?• Are these different effects likely?• Are these effects significantly different?• Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the mainland or between island groups?• If your answer is 'no' to the above questions, please complete the box below.• If the answer is 'yes', an ICIA must be prepared and you should proceed to Step 5. | <p>Yes, a full ICIA is required.</p> <p>Whilst some policies contained within the delivery plan already have a completed ICIA, this is not the case for all policies, in particular those still under development, and is not the case for changes proposed to methods of delivery that may have a different impact on island communities.</p> <p>The evidence suggests that, in general, levels of child poverty are lower on islands. However, additional research and consultation has shown that this masks the reality of higher costs of living in many islands, and also does not take into consideration that many of the policy proposals to tackle child poverty may require modification to maximise operational outcomes in an island context.</p> <p>Given this assessment, without further analysis the delivery plan may lead to a disadvantage for island communities, and therefore a full assessment should be completed.</p> |
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A full Island Communities Impact Assessment IS required

STEP FIVE – PREPARING YOUR ICIA

In Step Five, you should describe in the box below, the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it. • Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required. • Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities. • Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island Communities. | <p>This section sets out how the policies outlined within the delivery plan currently impact differently on island communities, where alternative delivery mechanisms are already or could be deployed, and where existing or proposed mitigations are in place. This assessment will not replace the need for new policies proposed in the delivery plan to undergo policy specific ICIAAs.</p> <p>The overall aim of the delivery plan is to reduce child poverty, adopting a person-centred, locally led approach as articulated in the Covid Recovery strategy. As such, all elements of the delivery plan should be able to be delivered in a manner best suited to improve outcomes for island communities.</p> <p>New approach to delivery</p> <p>The approach set out in this section of the delivery plan is assessed as having the potential to deliver significant positive impact on island communities, if specifically developed in partnership with island communities.</p> <p>The plan sets out the intention to work differently, through a new phased approach to whole system, person-centred support. This will involve working with a small number of pathfinder areas to refine, test, adapt and scale approaches that will increase the effectiveness of existing funding through identifying and removing barriers that prevent families, particularly families from the priority groups, receiving the advice, support and services that they need to exit poverty.</p> <p>This is not a new policy or strategy, but rather a new approach to delivery that will focus on place based solutions to tackling child poverty that will focus on generating better data and evidence to inform future scale up of interventions.</p> <p>Given the unique island context, and additional barriers noted above, this pathfinder policy could improve outcomes for island communities should it be deployed in partnership with a local authority containing island communities. Further consultation would be required to understand whether there is interest and capacity to take this forward in partnership with key island partners. Existing resources and networks have been identified to support work to bolster local data and support partnership working on child poverty, and through this initial investment future pathfinder work could be explored, and</p> |
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this could identify additional resource requirements to take a more in-depth island pathfinder approach.

Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work

The policies set out in this section of the delivery plan are assessed as having a positive impact on island communities, with some mitigation in place or in design, however, for new policies identified in the delivery plan further consultation with island stakeholders is recommended to ensure appropriate actions or mitigations are identified to maximise positive island impact.

Enhanced support for parents to enter, sustain and progress in work will build on the existing Parental Employability Support Fund and No One Left Behind approach, including the Young Person's Guarantee. This approach is focused on placing people at the centre of employability service design and delivery, working through Local Employability Partnerships, taking a place based approach and identifying local requirements to meet individual and labour market needs. The ICIA for these existing policies identified no negative impact on island communities, in part due to the locally led nature of the approach. The enhanced policy should build on this, and therefore have a positive impact on island communities with no additional mitigation measures are required.

New policy interventions are proposed, including a challenge fund and parental transition fund. Whilst these policies are pre-delivery, there is strong potential for them to support island communities and the potential to maximise this impact will be further assessed as those policies are refined and impact assessed.

Additional barriers to implementing the 1140 ELC commitment were identified in the policy's ICIA, with specific mitigation identified – working with island communities to support ELC expansion, and with a specific focus on workforce planning, staffing and recruitment, and establishing a peer support network. We have since also included a rurality component in ELC funding distributions. The proposed phased approach to developing the school age childcare offer will take a place based approach, understanding barriers and opportunities to delivering a wraparound childcare service in different contexts. A full set of impact assessments will

be developed for that policy, including the identification of any specific mitigations or delivery processes to enhance outcomes and mitigate any risks for island communities.

Like other rural and less well-connected places, bus services on islands are often less commercially viable. Depending on how it is allocated, the Community Bus Fund referenced in the delivery plan could have particular benefits in island communities. This investment could allow island local authorities to trial different forms of service provision, for example Demand Responsive Transport, enabling local tailoring to overcome any island specific barriers.

Wider transport provisions, for example free bus travel for under-22s, are less likely to have a positive impact on island communities given the reduced frequency of bus travel and greater reliance on ferries. However, as part of the pathfinder approach outlined in the policy, additional travel related barriers will be identified to inform future policy interventions. This activity should specifically include monitoring of island barriers to feed into future transport policy.

Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs
The policies set out in this section of the delivery plan are assessed as having a positive impact on island communities, with appropriate mitigation in place or in design.

Many of the policies set out in this section of the delivery plan are taking, or intend to take, a universal approach with a focus on locally led implementation. Whole Family Wellbeing Funding will underpin a lot of action in relation to ensuring families are able to access the right support at the right time. Whilst a full ICIA is being undertaken for this policy, the funding will support local services to deliver transformational change that responds to the needs of their own communities, it is therefore expected to have a positive impact on island communities. Other policies related to wellbeing have identified island specific commitments or mitigations, for example, the commitment to expand mental health and wellbeing in primary care services includes a minimum floor set to ensure sufficient funding to island communities.

A key driver of child poverty reduction is increasing income from social security, and the policies set out in the delivery plan are likely to have a positive impact on all

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| | <p>eligible families, including in island communities, although the impact is not expected to be different between islands and mainland communities. For example, Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance will help to address a number of issues such as the higher cost of living in remote and island communities and challenges faced in relation to connectivity and accessibility.</p> <p>Social Security Scotland operate a multi-channel approach and can take applications online, by phone or by post. Clients can also interact with the agency by webchat. This helps address both connectivity and access challenges.</p> <p>The Best Start Food card can be used in a wide range of locations, including online, and retailers no longer have to register for the scheme which increased choice and accessibility.</p> <p>We recognise that there is a danger of stigma hindering applications for benefits, particularly in more rural communities. To mitigate this, the application form for the benefits has been made as straightforward as possible, with a single form used to apply for Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant, and Best Start Foods, to encourage those who experience stigma to take up their entitlement. Additional steps to overcome stigma are contained within the benefit take-up strategy, and will be considered as a further mitigating action in communications and engagement strategies.</p> <p>Across these policies, a cash first approach will help address some of the issues specific to island communities including the additional expense of transport costs for children accessing hobbies and other activities; the higher cost of living in rural areas, or addressing island specific needs such as climate appropriate clothing.</p> <p>Beyond social security, policies planned to maximise the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs are further assessed as having a positive impact on island communities. Health visitors are providing a service in all areas of Scotland, including health boards with islands, and enhancing their ability to deliver financial wellbeing advice will lead to positive island impacts. The existing approach to tackling food insecurity is noted as having a positive impact on island communities, reducing the need for food banks is</p> |
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anticipated to have an equally positive impact and a full impact assessment is in development.

Of the 110,000 affordable homes to be delivered through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme by 2032, 10% will be delivered in remote, rural and island communities.

Supporting the next generation to thrive

Whilst this section sets out a vision for all children to thrive, we recognise that islands may have limited services available when compared to mainland Scotland and, as such, additional mitigation and delivery choices may be needed to realise the intended positive impacts for island communities.

Key policy commitments include the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, where funding will become available across Scotland to all 32 local authorities. An Island Communities template which addresses key issues faced will likely be published on 30th March ahead of the Refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge event.

Understanding the different context and opportunities for children and young people in island communities will be key to addressing any potential negative impact. Policies required to meet the commitments contained in the tackling child poverty delivery plan are likely to deliver on this through targeted intervention pilots. For example, within the Scottish Mentoring and Leadership programme one partner is active in island communities, providing mentoring support to care experienced and disadvantaged young people, and within the pilot projects for free bikes for school aged children who cannot afford them pilots have been set up to test feasibility with island communities. Learning from these pilots will inform future roll out.

Across the policy interventions proposed for inclusion in the tackling child poverty delivery plan, intended impact on island communities is generally positive, with a mix of universal and targeted interventions that will address some of the barriers identified in the data. However, particularly for universal policies, it will be important to ensure implementation does in fact benefit island communities as planned, and any necessary design modifications are adequately resources. Our vision is to increasingly improve and better understand the

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| | <p>specific contextual difficulties for tackling child poverty in rural and island areas, and to ensure that this understanding is embedded in the child poverty policies that are being developed and delivered across the Scottish Government. A number of policy specific ICIA's are underway for new policies, and these will form the basis of any island-specific mitigations.</p> |
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STEP SIX – MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO YOUR WORK

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different island communities? • Do you need to return to the consultation participants in respect of mechanisms or mitigations? • Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process? • Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring? • How will outcomes be measured on the islands? • How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities? • How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy | <p>As noted above, the overall assessment is the interventions proposed in the tackling child poverty delivery plan are relevant to island communities and should result in positive outcomes for children and their families. However, given that each unique island community context has specific needs and requirements, and the delivery plan contains a breadth of different policy areas across Government, some mitigations may need to be put in place over the lifetime on the plan. The adjustments below relate to the delivery plan as a whole, recognising that individual policies within the plan will identify and adjust policy specific interventions.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data and networks – data limitations hamper the ability to fully understand the different aspects of child poverty in island communities, particularly in relationship to priority family types. There is an inherent limitation to the use of quantitative data when population sizes are often small, but to mitigate this factor and strengthen policy design and implementation the child poverty delivery plan should support efforts to strengthen island local authorities capacity to analyse and use quantitative and qualitative data, particularly strengthening partnerships with local networks to deliver on child poverty actions; • Working with island local authorities – this impact assessment has been informed by initial consultation feedback from some island |
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| <p>making and service delivery?</p> | <p>authorities, but further interrogation of island communities in light of the published delivery plan would help to refine policy commitments. This should be explored as part of a follow on to the SRUC research, and in line with existing work such as the child poverty leads peer support network;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pathfinder approach – this approach to delivery offers specific opportunities to understand how national policy can and should be tailored to island communities specific needs and circumstances, and following the publication of the delivery plan, options for island pathfinders should be further explored and factored into the overall evaluation and learning strategy for pathfinder delivery; and,• Updating the ICIA – recognising that the delivery plan sets out many early stage policy proposals that require further development and implementation over the next 4 years, the Scottish Government should revisit this ICIA as part of its governance processes and/or progress reporting to understand if policies are having a significantly different effect on island communities over the lifetime of the plan. |
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STEP SEVEN – PUBLISHING YOUR ICIA

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your ICIA need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language? • Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it? • Confirm appropriate level of sign off? | <p>No, this is currently limited evidence of demand for this. The executive summary of the delivery plan will, however, be presented in Gaelic.</p> <p>This will be published alongside the delivery plan and publically available to all stakeholders. As noted in the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment, we will work with the Young Islanders Network to disseminate the plan, and as part of that will disseminate this ICIA.</p> <p>Deputy Director</p> |
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| ICIA completed by (name) | Clare McCrum |
| Position | Tackling Child Poverty Team Leader |
| Signature and date | 13 March 2021 |
| ICIA authorised by (we recommend DD level) | Julie Humphreys |
| Position | Deputy Director, Social Justice and Regeneration |
| Signature and date | <i>Julie Humphreys, 13 March 2021</i> |



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

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