



Dumfries and Galloway

Local Child Poverty Action Report

2023-2024



Dumfries &

Galloway

Together is
Better

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1. Foreword

Welcome to the sixth edition of Dumfries and Galloway's Local Child Poverty Action Report. This report has been jointly prepared by Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway, with contributions from partner organisations.

Across Dumfries and Galloway, local partners continue to be committed to and united in our determination to improve the lives of children and families living in or at risk of poverty. Shared strategic approaches shape our work which is underpinned by an ambition to tackle inequalities and the creation of a fairer and more equal society where no one lives in poverty.

The stark reality is that child poverty is still increasing in Dumfries and Galloway. We know that too many children and families face poverty issues and difficult choices on how to make available resources go as far as possible. This often limits opportunities in many aspects of life, e.g. health, education and learning, involvement in our communities, pursuing hobbies and interests, or making time for holidays as a family. Our aspiration for families and children continues to be that they experience the best start and aspire for the best possible future outcomes.

For those living in low-income households, and experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, the cost of living continues to compound their existing disadvantage. It has placed them at greater risk of poverty or pushed them deeper into poverty. The demand for advice and crisis support has increased further. As with any emergency, those in most need who have no financial cushion always suffer the greatest impacts to their already challenging lives.

Within Dumfries and Galloway one of the 12 LOIP Outcomes is 'Work together as partners to eliminate child poverty' and one of the six key areas within our Children's Services Plan relates to child poverty, underlining the importance of this area within our Community Planning Partnership.

We recognise that strong partnership working, and a collaborative approach is key to the achievement of the outcomes we plan for our children, young people and families in Dumfries and Galloway. We would like to thank all our partners for their valuable contributions.

Gillian Brydson
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Dumfries and Galloway Council

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Director of Public Health

NHS Dumfries and Galloway

2. Key Local Supporting Activities

Dumfries and Galloway Council Poverty and Inequalities Policy Development Funding 2023-2024

Dumfries and Galloway Council have continued to recognise the huge impact which the Cost of Living has had on all residents within our Region and in particular the devastating effects which this has on families and children and the resulting increases in child poverty. The Council identified that helping local people with the increased costs of living was a priority for Elected Members and the development of proposals to help local people and families was important for consideration as part of the development of budget proposals. Given Cost of Living increases impact on the six priority groups most at risk of experiencing child poverty identified by the Scottish Government a proposal was developed to help mitigate the impact and to support people in 2023-24 to address the pressures on their income. The projects developed seek to help people and households experiencing poverty and inequalities and underpin commissioned third sector partners and Council services providing direct help to people, businesses and social enterprises.

During Budget Setting for April 2023 – March 2024, the Council allocated £1,997,000 which resulted in the following results being achieved:

Project	Policy Development Funding Allocated	Outcomes Achieved
Tackling Poverty Reference Group (TPRG)	£10,000	The work that has been carried out over the last year has increased the knowledge, confidence and capability of our TPRG volunteers and provided a number of Council Services and Partner Organisations with feedback on their work from a lived experience of poverty point of view
Additional Funding for School Clothing Grants	£45,000	2,215 Primary children have been awarded a clothing grant during the 2023/24 financial year
Welfare & Housing Options Support Team	£165,000	348 clients were supported by the Welfare and Housing Options team during 2023/24. These clients were supported to obtain financial assistance to the value of £220K. For 95 out of the 348 clients assisted there was an imminent threat of eviction that was saved due to the intervention of the team. Potentially those 95 would have been additional presentations to Homeless services which on average costs the Local Authority £12K per presentation saving a total of £1,14 million

Direct Support for Vulnerable People through Social Work	£64,000	With over 1,135 families benefiting from activities / projects together with staff from council services and our third sector providers, This included managing income and preventing escalation of debt, grants for Broadband, mobile phone charges & travel, young people participation in the Bairns House Project, Family Nights & Craft Groups and 1 to 1 Groups and Activities.
Direct Payment to Vulnerable Young People	£40,000	918 payments have been distributed to young people who have been experiencing financial hardship during the 2023/24 financial year.
Fareshare Memberships	£56,000	219.42 Tonnes of Food received which is the equivalent of 522,448 meals, equivalent food costs of £816,670 with 211 tonnes of food diverted from landfill.
Free Period Products	£20,000	Expansion of our Free Period Dignity Products to 66 Collection Points within our Region.
Taxi-Cards Transport Scheme	£130,000	In 2023/24, 2,297 individuals registered on the Taxicard Scheme and were provided up to £100 of travel.
Emergency Energy Payment Assistance Scheme	£100,000	In total, 1,918 Vouchers have been issued to individuals and families who are struggling with Fuel Poverty within our Region. 421 of these have been issued to Private Rented Sector Tenants 427 of these have been issued to Loreburn Housing Association Tenants 1,070 of these have been issued to a combination of Wheatley Group Tenants, Cunningham Housing Association Tenants, Home Housing and Irving Housing Association Tenants throughout our Region Lemon Aid Fuel Poverty Project Total No. of people given advice & support to = 4,275 No. of people reconnected after Self Disconnection = 347 No. of people with complex issues/restricted meters assisted = 1,768 No. Of Fuel Vouchers / Energy Top Up's provided = 1,539 (please note that the Lemon Aid Fuel Poverty Project can also access energy vouchers from other sources) Amount of Financial Gain / Debt Reduction Achieved = £284,572

		<p>Home Advice Visits Completed = 149 Outreach Sessions / Events Attended = 91 Referrals from Partner Agencies = 596 No. of People Referred to Partners / Support Agencies from Lemon Aid Fuel Poverty Project = 306 The Hub Warm Winter Fuel Project 155 Households Supported with fuel.</p>
Community Transport	£53,000	<p>The Community Transport Project delivered the Volunteer Car Scheme for transporting patients to health appointments, both within Dumfries and Galloway and out with Dumfries and Galloway to appointments in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ayrshire. This service is operated by Annandale Community Transport Service and Galloway Community Transport</p> <p>The key statistics for the period of 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Registered Patients = 682 • Total New Registered Patients in 23/24 = 123 • Journeys = 1,012 • Volunteer Driver Hours = 2,765 • Travelling to out of region (30%) and in region (70%) health appointments • 75% of patients over 65 with 65% of the over 65 are aged 75+
Additional Top Up Funding for the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)	£390,000	<p>Total SWF spend in 2023/24 was £1,381,946 with 5,496 Crisis Grants paid with a value of £419K and 2,335 Community Care Grants paid with a value of £963K.</p> <p>This Top Up Funding ensured that the overall total above was achieved for those most in need.</p> <p>The priority level for SWF had been increased to high from April 2023, however even with this increased priority only funding essential items in Community Care grant the additional funding enabled the service to meet continued high demand for these grants.</p> <p>Crisis Grants assist those with immediate payments for food and fuel when needed and are paid out on average within 1 working day.</p>

		Community Care grants are paid to assist those maintain their current home or settle into a new home. The main provision through this is white goods / furniture and floor coverings.
Holiday Food Fund Payments	£220,000	During financial year 2023/24 (Summer 2023, October 2023, Winter 2023, February 2024, and Spring 2024) holiday food payments were issued to 3,645 primary and secondary children. This funding was used as a Top Up to the funding received from the Scottish Government.
Holiday Food Fund for Early Years and Nurseries	£90,000	450 children received these payments with a daily value of £2.50 per child for the holiday periods.
Summer of Play Programme	£264,000	This funding was combined with £135,492 of Scottish Government Funding and resulted in 35 Third Sector organisations and 6 Council Services were supported to provide activities and programmes throughout the summer holidays in order to give children and young people valuable and fun activities 10,069 unique children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway took part in at least one of the activities on offer
Top Up Funding for Commissioned Services	£130,000	This funding was used to ensure existing advice and information commissions were able to cover the increased core running costs of their services.
Grassroots Projects	£40,000	During the last year financial year in total over 5,150 items of school uniform were donated, cleaned and redistributed throughout our region with over 650 pupils assisted through this Project both through our 5 Free Back to School Uniform Events We received over 3,500 items of donated Warm Winter Clothes throughout October 2023 which were then distributed and given away at our 7 Events across the Region.
Area Committee Grant Funding	£180,000	43 Grant Awards were made to community organisations to tackle poverty and inequalities through a variety of local projects.

Dumfries and Galloway Council Advice and Information Services Commission

Dumfries & Galloway Council continues to work in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service (DAGCAS) through an annual Advice and Information Services Commission throughout our Region. This Commission of £906,500.00 per annum delivers a detailed range of dedicated financial services including Income Maximisation to all residents within Dumfries and Galloway under the age of 60. This Commission has a positive impact, helping to reduce child poverty and deprivation and all of its devastating impacts. During 2023-24, the results for Income Maximisation achieved by DAGCAS are detailed below:

Commission Project	Result	Commission Target	Overall % Achieved
Income Maximisation – No of Clients Supported	3,348	1,395	240%
Income Maximisation – Amount of Additional Income	£9,519,299.45	£7,000,000.00	136%

Through Young Eyes

The Council's Youth Work Team supported a group of young people in Dumfries and Galloway to produce a short film, 'Through Young Eyes', that explores how young people in our region perceive poverty, and their own lived experiences of poverty. Key messages from local young people detailing how poverty affects them, as depicted in "Through Young Eyes," was shared with Officers prior the official launch of the video during Challenge Poverty Week in October 2024, and this helped to shape the development of future actions and will continue to do so. A summary of the key messages is detailed below:

1. Limited Opportunities: Poverty restricts access to education, extracurricular activities, and career opportunities, limiting young people's potential and future prospects. This can be through transport, access to kit/equipment and costs for participating in activities.

2. Mental Health: The stress and anxiety caused by financial instability contribute to mental health challenges, including depression, low self-esteem, and a sense of hopelessness. This was an issue for young people

themselves, but young people were also indirectly affected by mental health challenges experienced by parents / carers / siblings.

3. Social Stigma and Isolation: Young people often feel stigmatised and isolated because of their economic status, leading to feelings of shame and exclusion from social groups, including school trips.

4. Impact on Education: Poverty affects academic performance due to factors like lack of resources, poor home & study environments, and the need to balance school with responsibilities like part-time work or caring for family members.

5. Insecurity and Instability: Constant financial insecurity creates an unstable environment, leading to frequent housing changes, food insecurity, domestic violence and uncertainty about the future.

6. Barriers to Basic Needs: Access to essentials like nutritious food, healthcare, and safe living conditions is often compromised, affecting overall well-being and development.

7. Resilience and Strength: Despite these challenges, young people demonstrate remarkable resilience, finding ways to cope and support each other.

8. Call for Action: The film was never intended to be a call for action or to identify solutions, but hoped to urge decision makers, support workers and communities to continue to address the systemic issues that perpetuate poverty and to provide better support for young people in need in Dumfries and Galloway.

Through Young Eyes is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xkp0IAp7eQ>

3. Local Child Poverty Action Report

This report provides a status update on our Child Poverty Action Plan for 2022-26.






There is recognition that a significant amount of work is being undertaken by partners which either directly or in-directly contributes to tackling child poverty. This work is embedded in other action plans and is subject to separate reporting.

For this reason and to refocus our Child Poverty Action Plan as we move forward, several of the current actions will be removed (where they have been completed) or redefined (where they are no longer relevant or have been superseded) within a new action plan, covering the period 2024-26.

The new Action Plan has been developed through a partnership approach involving the Child Poverty Sub-Group of the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership, Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service, while taking account of the views of children and young people shared as part of the 'Big Question', 'Through Young Eyes' and other local and national engagement activity.

The following key has been used to update the status of the 57 Actions detailed within the Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-26.


Key: Status for the 57 actions

	Complete
	In progress, on schedule
	In progress, not on schedule
	Not started
	Superseded

A summary of the status of the 57 actions is presented below:



Complete – 51 actions
In progress, on schedule – 2 actions
In progress, not on schedule – 1 action
Not started – 0 actions
Superseded – 3 actions


4. Income from Employment





Driver of Child Poverty Reduction - Income from employment					
Actions for Sub-Group 4		Status	Lead Service(s)	Due Date	Latest Note
1	Build upon opportunities in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing designed to close the poverty related attainment gap therefore maximising the future income of children e.g. Closing the Literacy Gap, Closing the Numeracy Gap, EmotionWorks		Education	March 2024	<p>The principal purpose of all schools in Dumfries and Galloway is to raise attainment and improve outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors; and</i> • <i>ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.</i> <p>The education improvement plan and annual report for 2023/24 was agreed by the Council in August 2024 and reported to Scottish Ministers as is required. Available:</p> <p>https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s61065/Education%20Annual%20Report%202023-24</p>



				<p>0Report%202023%202024%20Appendix.pdf</p> <p>The Excellence & Equity Literacy Group and Excellence & Equity Numeracy Group continue to analyse local authority, cluster and school data to support raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. Attainment data per SIMD quintile, to identify the percentage attainment gap between the most and least deprived has also been analysed.</p> <p>In relation to literacy, between August 2023 and June 2024, 39 Developing Balanced (DBL) Literacy CLPL inputs have been facilitated including Words Together, Pre TLQ, Eiklan, Building Strong Leaders, The Power of Morphology, DBL to NQTs, Literacy Ladders, Outdoor Literacy and CYPIC National Improving Writing Programme. These sessions were delivered by members of the Excellence & Equity Literacy Group. Over these 39 CLPL sessions 950 staff attended; 209 Early Years, 662 Primary, 37 Secondary and 42 Learning Assistants equating to 2346.5 cumulative hours. A professional learning calendar had been delivered to support the Developing Balanced Literacy approach as a universal offer and on the evidence-based interventions (Closing the Literacy Gap, Fastlane Reading, Literacy Ladders),</p>
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				<p>designed to accelerate progress in Literacy and close the attainment gap.</p> <p>In relation to numeracy, between August 2023 and June 2024, 92 CLPL sessions have been facilitated. These sessions were delivered by members of the Excellence & Equity Numeracy Group, SWEIC Maths Group, DG OWL, Education Scotland's Maths & Numeracy Team and SUMDOG. Over these 92 CLPL sessions 592 staff registered from early years (80), primary (322), secondary (90), Additional Support for Learning (13), University of Glasgow students (62) and parents (25), equating to 2162 cumulative hours.</p> <p>Within schools Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) evaluation, they are also required to report on the impact of their PEF spending in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How rigorous is the school's approach to providing robust evidence of closing the attainment gap? • How well are you removing barriers to learning and ensuring equity for all? • How much progress have you made in reducing the poverty related attainment gap? What are the lessons learned?
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2	<p>PRIORITY ACTION - Capacity building sessions are offered to Early Learning Centre and school staff to enable them to effectively identify and signpost parents from low-income families for whom employability support would be appropriate</p>		<p>Education, Early Learning Centre partners, Local Employability and Skills Partnership</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Sharing practice events for staff have been held in Dumfries, Stranraer and Lockerbie involving over 700 Early Learning, Schools and partner staff. These sessions have provided staff with opportunities to learn about the support and services that are available for children and parents, including employability support. These events for staff will continue to be delivered on an ongoing basis with the next event scheduled for 4 November 2024 at Castle Douglas High School.</p> <p>A new Child Poverty Employability Team is in place and will explore how this action could be supplemented in the future, working with a 'Lived Experience Panel'. The Panel was recruited in early 2024 with initial meetings taking place in April and May. The group have already undertaken service design training and have been involved in funding and small grants initiatives.</p>
3	<p>PRIORITY ACTION - Develop an effective means of sharing accessible information on opportunities with Early Learning Centre/ school staff to enable them to pass on to parents they know may benefit</p>		<p>Local Employability and Skills Partnership</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Early Learning staff routinely share paper-based and electronically local partner information to all parents and carers.</p> <p>Cost of Living Website which provides details of available supports was promoted to parents and carers as part of Challenge Poverty Week 2023.</p> <p>A new Child Poverty Employability Team is in place and will explore how this action could be supplemented in the future, working with a 'Lived Experience Panel'.</p>



					The Panel was recruited in early 2024 with initial meetings taking place in April and May. The group have already undertaken service design training and have been involved in funding and small grants initiatives.
4	PRIORITY ACTION - Routinely share accessible information on opportunities and offer capacity building sessions for Welfare and Benefits staff to enable them to effectively identify and signpost parents from low-income families accessing their service for whom employability support would be appropriate		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	March 2024	<p>Local Employability and Skills Partnership Website and Cost of Living Website are trusted sources of information regarding local employability support which can be accessed by any staff member across the partnership and used to signpost parents. Cost of Living Website which provides details of available supports was promoted to staff as part of Challenge Poverty Week 2023.</p> <p>Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service, and other local partners such as Enable, actively identify and signpost parents to local employability support.</p> <p>Sharing practice events for staff held in Dumfries, Stranraer and Lockerbie were open to all staff working with children and families and included attendance from Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service. The sessions provided staff with opportunities to learn about the support and services that are available for children and parents, including employability support. These events for staff and partners will continue to be delivered on an ongoing</p>


					basis with the next event scheduled for 4 November 2024 at Castle Douglas High School.
5	PRIORITY ACTION - Build capacity of organisations providing employability support to use 'Better Off in Work' Calculations to help families understand the potential difference to family income by being in employment/ better employment		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	March 2024	Enable Scotland have been commissioned to undertake 'Better off in work' calculations. This is being applied to all individuals engaging with the Employability and Skills Service.
6	PRIORITY ACTION - Develop a tailored offering for parents using No One Left Behind (NOLB) support to increase disposable income by enabling parents to enter, sustain and progress in Fair Work and reducing the number of children living in poverty		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	March 2023	Parental Employability Support Funding has been used to support local parents as part of the local No One Left Behind approach. 93 parents were supported in 2023-24.
7	PRIORITY ACTION - Provide a group of parents who have faced barriers to employment the opportunity to undertake paid work experience to develop a model of family support using the Scottish Approach to Service Design		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	March 2024	Scottish Approach to Service Design and Place Planning approaches applied to project in Stranraer. Learning from Stranraer project is being applied to Service Design and Place Planning project in Kelloholm and Kirkconnel.
8	PRIORITY ACTION - Support employers to be more inclusive and flexible increasing the number of employers adopting the principles of Fair Work		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	March 2023	All employers receiving Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI) completed a Fair Work Assessment of their business. Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service work closely with local referral agents to ensure a fair spread of people and employers can access funding across

					different sectors focusing on those facing skills shortages.
9	PRIORITY ACTION - Develop local pathways for parents to train, learn and equip themselves with the accreditation, skills and facilities needed to increase the number of childcare providers in our rural areas, building on partnership working with the Scottish Child-Minding Association as part of the Scottish Rural Childminding Partnership Project		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	March 2023	<p>Work was progressed with the Scottish Child Minding Association in 2022-23 to help identify and register local individuals for the growing Rural Childcare Programme in Dumfries and Galloway.</p> <p>On an ongoing basis the Lifelong Learning Service and partners provide opportunities for parents to develop relevant skills through programmes such as Peep which provide opportunities for parents to learn about child development and achieve accreditation for learning.</p>
10	PRIORITY ACTION - Commission a tailored offering for disabled parents using No One Left Behind support to increase the number of disabled parents able to access and sustain Fair Work		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	March 2024	The commissioning is complete and the service has commenced delivery as at October 2024 as part of a wider disability employment support package. This is a key action within the Local Employability Partnership being progressed in 2024-2025 and is also included in the Thriving Communities Service Plan 2024-2025.



5. Cost of Living Support


Driver of Child Poverty Reduction - Costs of living Housing Heating Food, Education, Debt, Medication, Availability of affordable and accessible childcare, Availability of affordable and accessible transport, Access to affordable credit, Internet access, Savings and assets, Costs of hospital visiting					
Actions	Status	Lead Service(s)	Due Date	Latest Note	
11 Explore with the Strategic Housing Partnership opportunities to develop new actions to ensure that young people and families with children have high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and that meet their needs		Housing	March 2024	<p>The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) makes a significant contribution to tackling child poverty through the provision of affordable housing. Providing high quality, affordable housing in connected and safe communities can help lift families out of poverty and provide a nurturing environment to support positive life opportunities in childhood. The SHIP supports, and directly refers to the Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan, which recognises the role housing can play as a driver of child poverty reduction. It aims to ensure that young people and families with children have high quality sustainable homes that meet their needs.</p> <p>Over the last 5 years, a total of 846 affordable homes have been created via the SHIP, and 166 affordable homes are projected for completion during 2024/25, with a number of these being larger family properties aimed at meeting growing demand.</p>	




12	Schools and Early Learning Centre settings continue the discretionary purchasing of uniform items and PE kits for low-income families using Pupil Equity Funding and to enhance provision of uniform swap services in partnership with Parent Councils		Education	March 2026	<p>All Schools and Early Learning settings can provide discretionary support to low-income families using Pupil Equity Funding, and other sources of funding.</p> <p>Eight School Uniform Donation and Collection Banks have been established across Dumfries and Galloway providing access to free uniform on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Four pop-up Back to School One Stop Shop Events were also delivered before the end of the 2023 Summer Holidays in additional locations across the region where families could collect free new and pre-loved School Uniforms, Stationery and lunch, with hairdressers offering hair-cuts also.</p>
13	Continue the roll out of free school meals from all Early Learning Centre and primary aged school children P1 to P5 to P6 and P7 pupils, and increase the uptake of Free School Meals in secondary schools		Education, School Meals Service, Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits team	March 2026	<p>Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) is now fully implemented for P1 to P5, aligning with the Scottish Government commitment.</p> <p>In line with the Scottish Government position, the phased expansion of free school meals to those in receipt of Scottish Child Payment in Primary 6 and 7 will commence from February 2025. A report detailing this was received at Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 29 August 2024, available via the following link: https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s60728/Extension%20of%20Free%20School%20Meals.pdf</p> <p>Information received from the 2023 Healthy Living Survey data reported an</p>




					<p>83.3% uptake relating to Dumfries and Galloway Free School Meals (FSM), a 1% increase on last year's figures.</p> <p>Primary 6 and 7 pupils who are eligible through means testing can receive FSM's. Information received from the Healthy Living Data reported an 82.6% uptake relating to means tested uptake of FSM.</p> <p>Secondary pupils who are eligible through means testing can receive FSM's. The information received regarding the census data shows 61.7% uptake in secondary FSMs which is a slight increase from last year's figure of 59.9%. A report providing a School Meals operational and performance update was received at Education and Learning Committee on 30 November 2023, available via the following link: https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s54412/School%20Meals.pdf</p>
14	Schools build on existing action which identifies the need for and distributes free IT equipment and enables internet access for low-income families		Education/ CFSW extended connectivity	March 2026	During COVID-19, Scottish Government funded a Digital Inclusion Programme, to provide a digital device to those pupils that did not have access to one at home, to enable them to participate in online learning. A total of 3,080 devices were distributed to pupils from P1-S6 who met the Free School Meals criteria. The devices were a mix of laptops and ipads which were not 'managed' devices, so pupils could use them at home for their own use as well as learning. The Council also distributed 161 sim cards to


				<p>those families that did not have access to WiFi at home. Again, these were funded for 1 year by Scottish Government and Education and Learning Directorate funded a further year. These contracts were ceased in 2022.</p> <p>Running alongside this programme, Social Work sourced devices via the Connecting Scotland programme led by Scottish Government for young people known to them who had no access to a digital device during lockdown and therefore a risk to their wellbeing. Within this reporting period, following on from the Connecting Scotland Programme, a small number of hand-held devices were available across all Local Authorities from Scottish Government on previously returned devices and connectivity. Children and Families Social Work were able to supply our care leavers that did not have current access with mobile phones and unlimited connectivity. There is currently no further Scottish Government funding to support this work.</p> <p>Education and Learning Committee requested that a programme of work be completed to ensure that every school in the region has a minimum device ratio in line with the number of pupils at that time (Census figures from 2022). This work is complete, with schools being asked to endeavour to maintain these numbers of</p>
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					<p>devices by investing each year from their own DSM budgets.</p> <p>In the Health and Wellbeing Census 2021-22, young people were asked 'Do you have access to the internet at home, on a phone, or another device?' 98.3% of young people responding in Dumfries and Galloway answered yes to this question.</p> <p>Schools now address family's needs for devices on an individual basis.</p>
15	<p>Low level mental health support continues to be available to young people in school settings and communities</p>		<p>CSSaPP Mental Health Priority Group, Education, Youth Work Services, Third Sector partners</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	<p>Low level mental health supports are available in all secondary schools in Dumfries and Galloway through the Youth Information Workers in Schools Team which is part of Youth Enquiry Service. In 2022-23 academic year 463 referrals for 1:1 support were received and 3,607 1:1 sessions were delivered. In addition to this each school cluster also has an assigned School Nurse who can be available to provide emotional health and wellbeing support and each school has an allocated Educational Psychologist who can work directly with children and young people.</p>
16	<p>PRIORITY ACTION - Explore further opportunities that ensure children and young people in low-income families have access to food through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast clubs in Early Learning Centre settings, schools and other community settings • Holiday food provision (cash payments) 		<p>CSSaPP, Education, Youth Work Services, Active Schools, Third Sector. Poverty and Inequalities Team</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Individual settings have used the 'Food in Schools' policy to consider food provision including breakfast clubs. There is variation across schools based on their own context/need and Pupil Equity Fund plans.</p> <p>Hot and cold food and drink options are now available to all young people attending a secondary school in Dumfries and Galloway</p>


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekend food provision (cash payments) • Active Schools activities • FareShare Membership and Provision 				<p>before the start of the school day, at morning break and at lunch time. Children in receipt of free school meals can use their £2.10 entitlement at any of these times.</p> <p>When any child is registered for the Free School Meal, the Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Service also administer additional grant funding from both our Local Authority and the Scottish Government. This includes School Clothing Grants and Holiday Food Payments.</p> <p>12 community-based food banks provide further access to free food across the region and throughout the year.</p> <p>Appendix 1 details Free School Meals and Payment data for details of numbers of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and Holiday food payments.</p>
17	Promote free sanitary products in primary and secondary schools and some community settings, including provision over school holidays		Education, Poverty and Inequalities Team	March 2026	Free Period Poverty Products continue to be available in all Secondary Schools and Council Leisure Facilities within Dumfries and Galloway. The Council's Free Period Dignity Project offers a range of Free Period Products at 56 Collection Points throughout our region – for more details, please click on the following link: Access to free period products - Dumfries and Galloway Council (dumgal.gov.uk) Products can also be posted to residents who cannot easily access a Collection Point. This provision is

					<p>promoted within settings and through the Cost of Living Website.</p> <p>The requirements of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 do not apply to NHS Boards. However, Health Scotland and the British Medical Association have stipulated that NHS Boards should provide free sanitary products. Free sanitary products are available at all NHS Dumfries and Galloway sites including upon request on clinical wards.</p>
18	All Midwives, Family Nurses and Health Visitors actively promote Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods to all pregnant women and families		Women, Children and Sexual Health Directorate (WC&SH)	March 2023	Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods information is routinely shared via universal services through various means including direct engagement, Grow Well App, electronic records, and leaflets. Referral processes are in place where additional support may be required.
19	Explore opportunities to further increase the number of Credit Union Schools Savings Projects in schools (currently 10)		Credit Unions, Education, Poverty and Inequalities Team	March 2024	The Stranraer Credit Union have increased the number of Schools Savings Projects by 3 in the last year taking their total to 8. This takes our overall regional total to 13. The Solway Credit Union are currently in the process of amalgamating with the Thistle Credit Union which will be completed by the 31st of October 2024. The Thistle Credit Union are planning to set up additional Schools Savings Projects from January 2025 onwards.
20	To reduce the costs of the school day, all curriculum activities including practical subjects and Active Schools activities continue to be free at the point of access		Education	March 2026	Additional finance continues to be provided to schools via cost of the school day funding to ensure all education and activities are free at the point of access.



					All Active Schools activities continue to be free at the point of access also.
21	Pupil Equity Funding continues to be used discretionally to fund school excursions for eligible families		Education	March 2026	All schools can provide discretionary support to low-income families using Pupil Equity Funding, and other sources of funding, based on local context/need.
22	PRIORITY ACTION - Further develop School Uniform Banks and winter clothing projects exploring opportunities to expand these in schools and other community settings		Education, D&G Parent Council Forum, Poverty and Inequalities Team Third Sector and Community Organisations	March 2024	<p>Eight Permanent Free School Uniform Stores are now open at all times across Dumfries and Galloway to offer Free New and Pre-Loved Uniforms throughout our region. Plans are in place to increase this number during 2024-2025 through Community Organisations. All details are available on the links below: Free School Uniforms - Dumfries and Galloway Council (dumgal.gov.uk)</p> <p>There are also Winter Warm Clothes Events and Back to School Uniform events that take place throughout the region each year.</p>
23	Repeat the Cost of the School Day research from 2015 and establish new actions		Education	March 2024	<p>At the end of November into early December 2020, The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) and Cost of the School Day project at the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland (CPAG Scotland) undertook a national survey with parents particularly about costs and money. Dumfries and Galloway had a return of 167 across Primary and Secondary sectors.</p> <p>Child Poverty Action Group published 'The Cost of the School Day Big Question' report and film in June 2024, featuring insights from 5,394 children and young people from across Scotland who give their views on school</p>



					<p>costs and their ideas about what should change, in their own words.</p> <p>The Council's Youth Work Team has supported a group of young people in Dumfries and Galloway to produce a short film 'Through Young Eyes', that explores how young people in our region perceive poverty, and their own lived experiences of poverty. The film will be launched during Challenge Poverty Week in October 2024, with key messages shared with Officers in advance.</p> <p>Both the 'Big Question' and 'Through Young Eyes' have informed the refreshed Action Plan for 2024-26 and will inform future activity.</p> <p>Local partners agreed not to undertake further local research in respect of the Cost of the School Day within this reporting period due to the other work progressed locally and nationally as detailed above.</p>
24	<p>PRIORITY ACTION - Explore opportunities to develop additional actions that aim to increase the uptake of School Clothing Grants, Free School Meals, Holiday Food Payments and Council Tax Reduction by low-income families.</p>		<p>Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team, Education</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>As part of normal practice, the Revenues and Benefits Service now operate a single claim for multiple forms of support. When customers apply for any of welfare supports such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Benefit • Council Tax Reduction • Discretionary Housing Payments • Free School Meals/Clothing Grants/Holiday food Payments • Scottish Welfare Fund




				<p>Action is taken to award all the support the customer is entitled too.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the Council website has been revamped to improve the customer experience and provide clearer information on the welfare supports available.</p> <p>Customers are also directed to welfare supports available from the Social Security Scotland, particularly the Scottish Child Payment.</p> <p>Appendix 1 details Free School Meals and Payment data for details of numbers of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, School clothing grants and Holiday food payments.</p> <p>The Council regularly campaigns and promotes a variety of local and national schemes and offers to assist those who need it, promoting free school meals predominantly through our Gov Delivery newsletter system, where school meals has it's own topic and parents and carers can sign up to receive free alerts and news. We have over 4,500 signed up to receive these alerts and encourage further sign up by signposting via our X and Facebook pages as well as in our fortnightly issued Community Bulletin.</p> <p>The Council also play an active role in community swap shops for school uniform before each new academic year begins in</p>
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					<p>August. A month-long campaign on our social media pages signposts followers to locations where they can both take and collect school uniform items, free of charge. These are especially popular with those transitioning from P7 to S1, where quite often a whole new 'school wardrobe' is required. Our X feed has over 11k followers and we have over 32k followers on Facebook. This campaign is also supported via school community social media pages and our Youth Work team, who share our messaging to reach the appropriate audiences.</p> <p>Via our Council News topic through Gov Delivery and our social media channels we also encourage traffic to the benefits section of our website, where there is a wealth of information around benefit support, council tax reduction, crisis grant application support, and other supports.</p>
25	Explore opportunities to offer discretionary funded childcare / Early Learning Centre places for children who do not meet the eligibility criteria i.e. child < 2 years (including Family Nurse Partnership families and low-income families with children under 2 years) where young parent <18 wishes to return to education or training		CSSaPP, Education, Social Work, Third Sector partners, private childcare sector, Childminders	March 2024	There are various opportunities for young parents under 18 to access support with childcare costs. Dumfries and Galloway Council Social Work Services provides support to enable vulnerable families to access affordable childcare in times of crisis or to be included in the child's plan to ensure that their needs are being met via the Childcare Brokerage model for children aged 2 and under. Childcare Brokerage is time limited to an initial period of 12 weeks. Extensions can be considered on an individual basis but will not exceed 6 months continuous service. The Childcare Brokerage

				<p>model enables parents and Carers to access childcare from any setting, commissioned by the Council – in the public, private or third sector, including from a childminder – who meets the applicable National Standards, has a place available and is willing to enter into a contract with the local authority.</p> <p>Eligibility to access the Childcare Brokerage model include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children must have Social Work involvement and have been assessed as in need of Social Work assistance. • All children must be referred for Brokerage hours by D&G Social Work Services. • All children must be resident in Dumfries and Galloway <p>In 2023/24 6 children accessed Brokerage.</p> <p>Dumfries and Galloway College students may apply for assistance with childcare costs whether studying on a full-time or part-time basis up to a maximum of £250 per week. Various other local education providers including higher education institutions also offer discretionary childcare funding.</p> <p>The Family Nurse Partnership is a person-centred, preventative intervention programme offered to young first-time parents aged 19 or under, and eligible 20 to 24 year-olds and their children. The programme is person-centred and has a core aim around tackling child poverty. Family</p>
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					<p>Nurses help build pathways into community support and resources to address social and economic factors, such as welfare, education, employment and money advice. There are no known young people being supported by a Family Nurse in Dumfries and Galloway where childcare costs have been a barrier to a young person returning to education or training.</p> <p>Given there is no additional or specific Scottish Government funding to support this action, and there has been no identified need locally, no further action will be taken at this time. Partners will continue to monitor feedback from young parents through the Family Nurse Partnership and other engagement opportunities.</p>
26	<p>PRIORITY ACTION - Implement the Government's expectations on wrap-around and holiday childcare once funding model is agreed with COSLA, using consultation from January 2022 as baseline</p>		<p>CSSaPP, Education, Third Sector partners, Private childcare sector</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	<p>Dumfries and Galloway Council have continued to coordinate a 'Summer of Play' programme and other school holiday activities involving community partners.</p> <p>Scottish Government plan to develop a more detailed delivery plan in 2025-26 setting out what a targeted school age childcare offer will look like for families within communities and providing a clear timescale for delivery.</p>
27	<p>Explore opportunities with SWestrans to develop actions that will improve the availability and affordability of transport for low-income families</p>		<p>SWestrans, D&G Council Transportation Team</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Through the Transport Scotland funded People and Place Active Travel Behaviour Change Programme SWestrans are funding a number of programmes through schools and the wider community that support access to bikes for children and adults in low income</p>




					families and those with disabilities. Future shared mobility opportunities are also being explored.
28	Increase the uptake of free transport to children and young people under 22 exploring opportunities for schools / youth work settings / Customer Service Centres to support families in the application process		D&G Council Transportation Team, Education, Youth Work Services	March 2024	<p>A range of promotional activity has been co-produced with young people from the Youth Work Service to help promote the scheme and increase uptake.</p> <p>In order to increase uptake, the Education colleagues work with schools to run a bulk application process for Young Scot National Entitlement Cards at the Primary 7 transition period with all Primary schools in Dumfries and Galloway. At the start of term 3, communications are sent to the school offices to begin the school application process. Cards are then delivered to the school offices to be distributed to pupils.</p> <p>The Council can also support families with individual applications at any time if an applicant contacts the Customer Services team by phone or visits a Customer Service Centre to book an NEC appointment, which takes place face to face.</p>
29	Promote to families with a disabled member, the National Entitlement Card (NEC) which gives people with a disability plus a companion free bus travel and also the Taxi-Card scheme for those unable to access transport		D&G Council Transportation Team, All partners	March 2024	Dumfries and Galloway Council promote free bus travel with an NEC if you are disabled, via the Council website. DG Customer Services facilities across Dumfries and Galloway promote access to the NEC and can facilitate the application process. Both the NEC Card and Taxi-Card scheme are promoted to disabled customers and their



					<p>Carers as part of engagements with associated front-line staff.</p> <p>Transport Scotland indicated that next year's People and Place funding programme will expand its remit to include Active and Sustainable Travel Behaviour Change therefore we will explore ways to include promotion of this in next years programme.</p>
30	Promote the expansion of the Young Patients Family Fund to all parents/carers and siblings who visit an inpatient baby, child or young person up to 18 years to enable them to claim expenses for travel, subsistence and accommodation costs in respect of hospital visits		WC&SH	March 2023	<p>This is currently publicised via the Grow Well App, Pregnancy App (Badger.Net) and Children and Young Persons Health App. Posters are displayed in clinical areas and all parents in Neo Natal Unit are given information packs.</p> <p>Following a review of the process for the Young Patients Family Fund by NHS Internal Audit service a full review of local procedures associated with the fund is being undertaken and this will include how the fund is promoted. This will be concluded by the end December 2024</p>
31	All professionals working with children and families promote Tax-Free Childcare, with key messages and materials to be developed and shared with partners		NHS/HSCP, Education, Social Work, Third Sector Organisations	March 2024	<p>Information has been added to the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership's Cost of Living Website and shared with all partners. Families and Young People - Cost of Living DG (dumgal.gov.uk)</p>
32	Promote Pharmacy First across the Partnership to reduce costs of medicines for minor illness or complaints		WC&SH, Pharmacies, Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team,	March 2024	<p>Pharmacy First has been promoted through a variety of methods including social media, posters, leaflets and direct contact.</p>

			All Partners		
33	Promote baby boxes which provide essential items for new parents, increasing the uptake		WC&SH, All Partners	March 2023	Baby boxes are now promoted as a standard practice within the pregnancy pathway.
34	Explore opportunities to promote healthy affordable food choices for families of children with complex needs e.g. diabetes		WC&SH	March 2023	The Grow Well App has information on affordable recipes and videos, and this is promoted to families by front-line staff. This is also an ongoing core action as part of pregnancy pathway.
35	Explore opportunities to build upon Connecting Scotland's work to provide children from low-income families with digital devices and internet connectivity		Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	March 2024	As per the update to action 14, 3080 devices were previously distributed to pupils from P1-S6, as well as a small number of devices to care leavers. Schools now pick up family's needs for devices on an individual basis. This action also ties in with actions of Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 1.
36	Promote the free online Period Dignity Partnership Project which delivers monthly orders of sanitary products to all individuals across the region		Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	March 2026	Our Free Period Dignity Project has now been redeveloped into a Collection Project with 32 Collection Points across our region. For individuals who cannot access the Collection Points postal option is available, Access to free period products - Dumfries and Galloway Council (dumgal.gov.uk) .
37	PRIORITY ACTION - Complete a mapping of all Breakfast, Mid-Morning & Snack Clubs / Projects which are delivered in primary and secondary schools		Poverty and Inequalities Team, Youth Work Services, Education	March 2024	There is no existing duty for local authorities or other bodies to provide breakfast clubs. While it is known that in practice local authorities, schools, charities, and the private sector provide services, there is no centrally held information that maps the availability of this provision across Scotland. To address this, the Improvement Service conducted an information gathering exercise in May 2024





				<p>to improve the understanding of what breakfast club provision exists in schools across Scotland. The objective of this information gathering exercise was to better understand how many schools currently offer breakfast provision to children, and the features of that provision.</p> <p>Collection of information was to be limited to primary schools and schools with a registered special department. The Improvement Service provided Dumfries and Galloway Council an online survey which was then distributed to schools.</p> <p>The response rate in Dumfries & Galloway was 88% (86 survey returns from 98 primary schools). From the 86 responses received from Dumfries & Galloway, 32 schools responded to say that they provided breakfast. This equates 33% of the 98 primary and special schools in Dumfries & Galloway and 37% of the 86 active responses received. Of these 32 schools with breakfast provision, 28 noted that breakfasts were available to all children, with 4 noting that breakfasts were available, but only for some children.</p> <p>When asked whether breakfast was provided as part of childcare before the start of the school day, or part of a 'grab and go', 69% of schools responding said that breakfast provision is part of childcare before the start of the school day, with the remaining 31%</p>
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					<p>being provided as a 'grab and go' provision, or as part of the school day.</p> <p>Hot and cold food and drink options are available to all young people attending a secondary school in Dumfries and Galloway before the start of the school day, at morning break and at lunch time. Children in receipt of free school meals can use their £2.10 entitlement at any of these times.</p>
38	Consult with users and parents of all Food Based Projects within primary and secondary schools to provide evidence of the outcomes and increases in wellbeing of these services along with the costs involved in delivery		Poverty and Inequalities Team, Education	March 2024	<p>Catering Services carry out a survey annually to both parents (primary school) and pupils (secondary school). This year's secondary survey ran from January to May 2024 and 387 responses were received. The survey included two questions around cost. Pupils were asked: how much they spend on average each day in the school canteen; and If you are in receipt of Free School Meals, do you use your £2.00 credit daily? Did you know that this credit can be used daily from 8:30am and can be used to purchase any item?</p> <p>Responses to the survey are being considered by the catering team and results and feedback will be provided to parents.</p> <p>Further consideration will be given to how further questions on cost and wellbeing could be factored into next year's surveys.</p>
39	Consult with all Youth Services to provide feedback on all Youth Projects which provide food and the outcomes of all young people who attend.		Poverty and Inequalities Team,	March 2024	<p>This mapping was completed and information is promoted on the Youth Work website.</p>

			Youth Work Services		
40	Increase awareness to all families of the additional support available through Home Energy Scotland Programmes and Emergency Funding including highlighting in School Newsletters, Online Forums and through Parent Councils & Parent Council Networks.		Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	March 2024	<p>All available supports are promoted through the Cost of Living website and associated promotional campaigns.</p> <p>A new fuel poverty/energy advice action will be developed in partnership with Energy Advice Providers in 2024-2025</p>
41	Increase awareness to all families of The Hub Help for Heating Scheme		Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	March 2024	<p>The Hub ceased trading in January 2024. All available supports are promoted through Cost of Living website and associated promotional campaigns.</p> <p>A new fuel poverty/energy advice action will be developed in partnership with Energy Advice Providers in 2024-2025.</p> <p>The Hub Help for Heating Scheme is being replaced by a new Winter Warmth Project which will be delivered by one of our community partners from November 2024.</p>
42	Promote the support currently available through Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) within Dumfries & Galloway who provide emergency payments to their Tenants in times of crisis.		Poverty and Inequalities Team, RSLs	March 2024	<p>RSLs promote support available direct to tenants via Housing Officers and other staff, and through social media and RSL websites.</p> <p>A new online leaflet which highlights the support available from each RSL and all other agencies is in development, linking with Sub-Group 3 of Poverty and Inequalities Partnership.</p> <p>10,238 Wheatley Group tenants and 2,430 Loreburn tenants have also received details</p>




					of the Stranraer Credit Union and Solway Credit Union.
43	Highlight any new Energy Support Schemes which may be being developed through Third Sector Organisations to combat the cost of living crisis to families		Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	March 2026	Details of all projects and support schemes which are developed are highlighted to all Partners and are added to the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnerships Cost of Living Website and associated promotional campaigns: Help for Households - Cost of Living DG (dumgal.gov.uk)
44	Enhance promotion of free or low-cost activities and days out for children, young people and families such as museums, parks and Amazing Summer funded activities		Poverty and Inequalities Team, Education, Youth Services, All partners	March 2026	The Council allocated £264,000 in 2023-24 to fund Summer of Play Activities for children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway. This was provided by a range of third sector partners and Council Services. All activities and programmes are shared and promoted through social media, e-mails, schools and through our Cost-of-Living Website.



6. Income from Benefits



Driver of Child Poverty Reduction - Income from social security and benefits Generosity of benefits, Reach of benefits, Eligibility criteria for benefits, Take up of benefits					
	Actions for Sub-Group 4	Status	Lead Service(s)	Due Date	Latest Note
45	Train all public health nurses to raise awareness of the benefits available for low-income families at pathway visits, including the new Child Payment, and make direct referrals to DAGCAS / Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team when appropriate		WC&SH, DAGCAS Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team	March 2024	All public health nurses have been trained in poverty awareness and referral pathways.
46	PRIORITY ACTION - The above action is expanded to Midwives and Community Children's Nurses to increase awareness of available benefits and promotion to families		WC&SH, DAGCAS Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team	March 2024	Training has been delivered to Midwifery and Community Nursing Teams. All partners can access and complete the 5 online training modules offered by the Child Poverty Learning Hub.
47	The Grow Well in D&G App is expanded to include information about welfare and benefits including Young Patients Family Fund		WC&SH	March 2023	The Grow Well app now has expanded content to support all age and stages of children and young people (adding 5-12 and 12-18 content), therefore a greater reach to families across Dumfries and Galloway .
48	Increase the awareness of social work staff to embed income maximisation advice, benefits checks and charitable funding applications into social work		CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority	March 2024	Sharing practice events for staff held in Dumfries, Stranraer and Lockerbie were open to all staff working with children and families and included


	practice for all families with social work involvement including Kinship Carers		Group, Social Work, DAGCAS, Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team		attendance from Social Work and Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service staff. The sessions provided staff with opportunities to learn about the support and services that are available for children and parents, including benefits and income maximisation advice. These events for staff and partners will continue to be delivered on an ongoing basis with the next event scheduled for 4 November 2024 at Castle Douglas High School.
49	Expand the support available to Care Experienced young people and Homeless young people to maximise their income from social security and benefits		Social Work, Housing	March 2024	All staff working with Care Experienced young people promote local supports and services which can help to maximise income from social security and benefits, supporting young people with referrals where appropriate.

7. Other actions

Other actions not covered by the three drivers of child poverty reduction					
Actions for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)		Status	Lead Service(s)	Due Date	Latest Note
50	Financial Education is delivered in all primary and secondary schools through the Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing curriculums that is current in relation to financial risks of online gaming/gambling, cryptocurrency, pay day loans etc.		Education	March 2024	The delivery of this action is progressed at an individual school level through either the Health and Wellbeing Curriculum, Numeracy Curriculum, or combination of both.
51	Poverty impact assessments are embedded into decision making by all Public and Third Sector partners		All partners	March 2026	Poverty and Inequalities are considered within existing Impact Assessment processes. NHS Dumfries and Galloway and Dumfries and Galloway Council complete Impact Assessments for Strategies, Policies and new programmes of work on an ongoing basis.
52	Explore through the CSSaPP Whole Family Support Group and Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, opportunities to ensure low-income families know how to access help and support when they need it, taking a no wrong door approach		CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority Group	March 2024	Sharing practice events for staff held in Dumfries, Stranraer and Lockerbie have provided staff with opportunities to learn about the support and services that are available for children and parents, and they have then been able to pass this information on the families. These events for staff and partners will continue to be delivered on an

					<p>ongoing basis with the next event scheduled for 4 November 2024 at Castle Douglas High School.</p> <p>A website which details the supports and services available for children and parents is currently in development and is due to launch in November 2024. This will compliment existing web platforms.</p> <p>Local supports are also promoted by frontline staff and through individual school and early years settings using both paper-based and digital means.</p>
53	Participation in Improvement Service child poverty data in rural areas project utilising data and intelligence to assist the partnership to develop a better understanding of our priority groups		NHS/HSCP, Council	March 2024	<p>The Improvement Service Child Poverty data in rural areas project is now complete.</p> <p>Public Health Scotland facilitated two workshops with Sub-Group 4 of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership where the most up-to-date data in relation to Dumfries and Galloway was considered in order to inform future activity and plans.</p>
54	Develop a map of our local family support system from the perspectives of the families navigating child poverty supports to assist the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership and Children's Services Planning Partnership to identify barriers, gaps and challenges		NHS/HSCP, Council, CSSaPP, Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	March 2023	<p>A map of the local family support system was completed through the multi-agency Family Support Group and was used to support planning and development of associated services. This also provided a basis of who should be invited to</p>

	and develop solutions to overcome these				participate in the Sharing Practice festivals.
55	Develop additional opportunities to engage with people with lived experience of child poverty to ensure that their experiences shape future activity to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts		Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	March 2026	<p>A 'Lived Experience Panel' was recruited by Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service in early 2024, with initial meetings taking place in April and May. The group have already undertaken service design training and have been involved in funding and small grants initiatives.</p> <p>The Council's Youth Work Team has supported a group of young people in Dumfries and Galloway to produce a short film 'Through Young Eyes', that explores how young people in our region perceive poverty, and their own lived experiences of poverty. The film will be launched during Challenge Poverty Week in October 2024, with key messages shared with Officers in advance.</p>
56	Working in conjunction with the Share Fund, we will support all 16–19-year-olds to access their Child Trust Funds to ensure that they receive the funding which they may not know that they have (there are currently approximately 1,475 unclaimed Child Trust Funds within Dumfries and Galloway)		The Share Trust, Poverty and Inequalities Team, Education Services, Youth Work Services	March 2024	<p>The Share Fund delivered a presentation to the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 2 in September 2023.</p> <p>This presentation has been shared with all Child Poverty Sub-Group members.</p> <p>There has been a slight delay to this Project due to finalising the Legal Agreement with The Share</p>

					<p>Foundation. This Project will be launched during 2024.</p> <p>Actions to support 16-19 year-olds to enable them to access their Child Trust Funds will be developed by Sub-Group 2 in conjunction with the Child Poverty Sub-Group</p>
57	<p>Carrying out 10,000 voices V2 to gain the views of young people on their experience of living within Dumfries and Galloway. This will ask the same questions as the 2018 research in order to allow for comparison over time, and will aim to engage with around 50% of all children and young people aged 12-25 in Dumfries and Galloway</p>		Youth Work Service	March 2023	<p>Complete and reported in 2023.</p> <p>10,000 Voices - YouthWork - Dumfries and Galloway Council (dumgal.gov.uk)</p>

8. Case Studies

Case Studies highlight the impact of our work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts. They demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that the voice of those with lived experience is heard in planning, delivering and evaluating our work. All Case Studies are shared with the permission of the individuals/families involved.

Case Study 1 – Energy Advice Provider

“With winter coming in I am having to put so much more money in my gas and electric my wages have started to run really low. I work full time hours but with the cost of living and the prices of essentials in the shop I am spending so much for on food, gas and electric. My gas is currently paying off a bill so each time I put money in it takes extra off.”

Spoke to client who was really concerned about how she was going to support herself and daughter through the winter and was starting to have to look at difficult budgeting decisions as to how to allocate her limited funds. With either energy or childcare costs being in jeopardy of not being paid. This would have negative impact on her daughter with the potential for social exclusion and in the extreme her mother having to leave her employ due to not being able to cover childcare which would lead to even more potential negative impacts on the family.

On speaking to her supplier Scottish Power, it was identified that there was an issue with the electric meter in the household not being registered at the address. This is an unusual and quite complicated issue which would be difficult for a member of the public to resolve who has no experience in the energy sector as when the supplier is contacted, they would not have the details on their system and would as result not be sure they are the actual supplier making it difficult for a customer to rectify this issue.

The administrators of the grid database SP Energy Networks had to be contacted to check the meter registration information who advised it had been registered with the wrong postcode and so attached to the wrong address.

I managed to get Scottish Power to correct the registration at their end which eliminated this problem.

I sourced 3rd party grant support for the client through a Home Heating Advice award which cleared her debt balance and left her with £200 credit.

This was a great help to the household as it had a substantially positive effect on the household’s budget and mental wellbeing by removing the worry she felt and prevented potential social exclusion for her daughter.

Case Study 2

Dumfries and Galloway Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Support

Cost of Living Grant Programme

Dumfries & Galloway Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (DGRC & SASC) provides emotional and practical support to anyone over the age of 12 who has experienced any form of sexual violence, abuse, or exploitation at any time in their life.

Through the work of Dumfries & Galloway Council's anti-poverty strategy and in partnership with Children & Families Social Work we were selected to receive funding that has allowed us to provide financial assistance to our service users in the face of the ongoing cost of living crisis.

We developed a protocol for administering the grant which included a simple non means tested application process. Application forms asked survivors to identify a priority area of need and to outline how they would spend the money.

In total 129 small grants with average amounts of £100-£150 per person were awarded via BACS transfer where appropriate and vouchers were purchased in lieu of cash awards where there were safety or confidentiality implications (joint accounts, or financial exploitation for example).

67% of grant awards related to energy costs, after which there was a significant drop off with food poverty making up 11% of the overall award spend. Others grants supported issues linked to winter clothing, travel, housing and broadband/mobile costs phone.

Grant recipient feedback:

"It (the grant) helped me heat my house when I had my kids staying so they were warm and cosy".

Many acknowledged the impact the grant had on relieving stress associated with mounting bills and debt.

"It helped a lot as we had nothing so I'm a lot less stressed".

"I was able to pay off a big electricity bill, so I feel I'm keeping on top of things now which is such a relief".

Grant recipient feedback also indicated several unintended outcomes relating to alleviating social isolation:

"It meant I could invite friends' round because I wasn't embarrassed about the house being freezing".

"I was able to pay bills so that freed up money for bus fares to visit family".

"I was able to take my children out to do things like normal families".

Case Study 3 – Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing

Targeted Funded Early Learning and Childcare - 2 Year Olds (Data-sharing – Datapipeline.scot)

While there have been improvements in uptake for eligible two-year-olds in targeted funded early learning and childcare since the statutory entitlement was implemented in 2014, nationally this has consistently been low compared to 3 to 5 year-olds.

Datapipeline.scot enables the secure transfer of data about early learning and childcare eligibility between the Scottish Government and local authorities.

The Scottish Government receives and processes data from Social Security Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions and HM Revenues and Customs about households who are entitled to funded early learning and childcare.

The records in the file are sorted into 32 mailboxes based on their postcodes (one for each local authority area). The local authority is then notified that there is a file available for them to download.

We signed up to access information via Datapipeline.scot to enable us to target eligible families in Dumfries & Galloway.

The data provided us with names and addresses of qualifying households living within Dumfries & Galloway.

The data was firstly matched against existing families that are already in receipt of this benefit. This allowed us to identify local families that had not applied.

We wrote to the families outlining that they may be eligible for Funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for their 2-year-old, detailing the benefits of high-quality Early Learning and Childcare.

There were 343 families exported from Datapipeline.scot.

177 families were already in receipt of this benefit.

166 families were issued with a letter.

27 families responded. 2 not eligible and 10 were pending.

Datapipeline are unable to provide us with children's Dates of Birth, therefore we cannot identify if letters are going to families that are in receipt of a funded 3-year-old place. This may be the reason for a high number of families not responding.

This piece of work has ensured that 15 additional families are now benefiting from this entitlement, with 10 more families currently being assessed. The entitlement is based on evidence that shows that all children, but especially those experiencing the most economic disadvantage, benefit from access to high quality Early Learning and Childcare.

This approach will be undertaken in the Summer Holidays each year. We also post on social media throughout the year to try and reach eligible families.

Case Study 4 – Financial Advice and Wellbeing - D&G Citizens Advice Service

Supporting a young mother – financial wellbeing and employment

Miss V split from her partner 2 months after their baby was born, the client was suffering verbal abuse. The property is in the ex-partners name and Miss V felt it was beneficial for the baby and for herself she leave and move back with her parents for support. The house is overcrowded, client would like to find a house of her own. There were however a number of considerations/concerns including; can she afford to return to work, budgeting issues, covering childcare costs.

The Adviser undertook the following actions:

- Made contact with the Housing Options Team and made an appointment to discuss housing prospects
- Completed a “What if Benefits Calculation” - this showed entitlement to Universal Credit and benefit impacts/gains if the client decided to return to work.
- Supported client with a Universal Credit Entitlement Claim - the client will eligible to 85% of Child Care costs. The Adviser and Client worked through a basic budget sheet – no debts were identified
- Suggested legal advice to discuss setting up a formal agreement for father to have access to the child

There have been a number of positive outcomes following the Clients engagement with D&G Citizens Advice Service. Miss V has gained employment in a job she really enjoys, the Housing Options Team have indicated she should be allocated a property with the next 3-6 months.

Miss V reports she is delighted with the service and guidance received from D&G Citizens Advice Service and this has allowed her to gain confidence, plan ahead and start building a positive future for herself and her child.

Miss V will contact the service when she is allocated a property to recap her budget and discuss any other issues which may require support.

Case Study 5 – Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing

To reduce the cost of the school day for families whose child(ren) attract PEF to ensure that this is not a barrier to participation and education

North Rhins Partnership Primary Schools looked at how Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) could be used to achieve the following positive outcomes:

- Pupils will be provided with equal access to opportunities at school (events, trips, after-school clubs, etc.) and barriers to participation and learning for pupils from low-income households will be removed
- Parents/Carers will feel less financial pressure associated with school costs placed on family incomes

In order to achieve this, the school consulted families on how the school can best support their child and requested suggestions for how they feel PEF spending could be best utilised. PEF was used to provide 3 interventions within the partnership schools:

- Offer to pay for after-school clubs for those children who attract PEF – via email to parents to ensure confidentiality.
- Offer to pay for school residential trip for P5-7 pupils.
- To provide after-school club open to all pupils, led by the Learning Assistant who is a skilled gardener, to promote social skills, positive mental health and wellbeing, and family learning as parents can attend alongside their child too.

The funding allowed the after-school gardening club to run on a weekly basis. It has provided lots of opportunities that pupils otherwise would have not received, including: composting, planting flowers/strawberry plants/veg, growing herbs, making bird feeders, weeding, etc. It has promoted fine motor skills, wellbeing through being outdoors and developed pupils' responsibility. The gardening club has also promoted parental engagement as parents have been able to attend the club to work and learn alongside their child. They have also held family garden tidy-ups on Saturdays at the school, further promoting family engagement.

The financial support enabled pupils to attend other after school clubs which they may have otherwise not been able to attend due to cost including badminton and sports. The financial support also allowed the pupils to attend the residential trip and ensured 100% attendance, giving them a city break experience which many of our rural pupils had never had - including a theatre trip, going on the subway, and the museum.

All of the above has ensured that money is not a barrier to participation and has provided pupils with experiences that they otherwise may not have been able to afford.

In a survey put out to all stakeholders in April 2024, 100% of parents who responded said that using some of our PEF to support cost of the school day for families was an 'important priority that helps a lot.'

The gardening club has sought further funding for a polycrub and chicken coup, providing further learning opportunities that all pupils in the school will benefit from.

The partnership plan to continue using some of their PEF to support the cost of the school day, to reduce the financial strain on families for those pupils who attract PEF.

The residential experiences are valued by all pupils and their parents. Many of our PEF children experience learning new skills and participate in different experiences outwith the school context during such excursions. We have taken account of our rural setting and now plan to offer a two-year rolling programme to all P6 and P7 pupils – one year will be a city break and alternate year will be outdoor education, to further maximise the impact of experiences provided.

The gardening club was piloted at one school in the partnership and has since been adapted and duplicated at another this year. The benefits of parental involvement in supporting this was a consideration when taking this forward in another setting. This parental involvement has extended to community involvement in both schools – linking in with partners, including the local churches as our garden gangs made scarecrows and provide produce for the forthcoming Harvest festivals.

We have learned that the PEF impact and positive outcomes have extended out with our school classrooms.

Case Study 6 – Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership/ Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service Staff Financial Wellbeing Project

Supporting a staff member with financial wellbeing concerns

A staff member (hereafter referred to as 'the Client') approached the Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice worker who has a specific role in supporting H&SCP staff with financial wellbeing matters.

The Client works full time however their partner is recovering from an illness and was not ready to go back to work. The Client has a child who requires additional support. They are already in receipt of disability payments. The family is struggling with the cost of living and has presented to the service seeking advice on any other benefits/support they may be entitled to.

The Adviser carried out a benefit check which showed that the Client was eligible to apply for Universal Credit (UC) and Scottish Child Payment (SCP). The Client was advised of the application process for UC and provided with the claim line telephone number and links to apply. The Client was advised that once they are in receipt of UC then they will automatically be entitled to other benefits such as the Best Start grants. The first being the school age payment which is received once a child is ready to start school.

The Client was made aware of the rent element of UC which they may be entitled to if their circumstances change and also the disability element should their partner not be able to return to work as soon as they hoped.

Client applied for both UC and SCP and this was granted. This provided the family with an additional monthly income which helped to take the pressure off their financial situation and provided them with some breathing space in respect of their partner having to find work before they were ready, providing them with some stability during what is a difficult time for them.

The overall financial gain for the Client was £7,120.

The Client has reported that they were very happy with the advice and support provided by the service and welcomed the fact that the additional monies would significantly help the family until the Clients partner was ready to return to work.

Case Study 7- Health Visiting

Health Visiting supporting parents to access financial support through routine enquiry

A Health Visitor home visit to complete a routine 27–30 month review was undertaken. The visit had been delayed due to family moving house after being homeless for a short while

The Health Visitor through routine enquiry asked about family finances and promoted the Best Start Card and grants. This question reminded Dad that he had had a letter from the Best Start team to remind him to spend the money on the card.

The family had applied for the card when child was born but had either not received the card or lost it. During the visit, Dad called Best Start and was told he had over £700 on the card and a new one was being posted out to the family's new address.

Mum and Dad were really pleased as this would help them to manage their finances after a difficult period of being homeless and dad recently being diagnosed with a chronic health condition.

Case Study 8 – Welfare and Housing Options Support Team

Direct Payments to Vulnerable Young People

XXXXX is a 16-year-old care experienced young person who lives with her grandparents and 3 younger siblings. Both of her grandparents are retired. XXXXX and 1 of her siblings were able to access a grant to provide support to the family over the holiday period. The grant included a £40 food voucher, 2 mobile phone top-up's and the remainder being spent on gas and electric top ups.

Feedback from the grant recipient:

“The grant was really appreciated by my grandparents as it helped us a lot over Christmas. It's a difficult holiday because you're off a long time but there's nowhere to really go so there's a lot of being at home, extra food and electric. The food voucher helped us not to worry and the phone top-up's meant me and my sister could still talk to our friends as we don't have wi-fi at home”.

The grant provided short-term breathing space for a family under pressure at an expensive time of year. The family were grateful for the support and were provided with information for services that could assist if required. They are in a difficult position due to their age, health and voluntary status as Carers.

Case Study 9 – Whithorn Trust

Summer of Play

The Whithorn Trust operates the visitor attraction at the Whithorn archaeological site, providing a museum, guided tours, special exhibitions, shop and cafe, and are a partner of Historic Environment Scotland. The Trust also promotes visits to the area through support of the Whithorn Way long distance walking route, working with partners to promote it. They also provide support to partners in providing facilities for youth employability, particularly heritage construction skills and additionally provide open classes, usually free at the point of use for members of the public, particularly where this supports wellbeing and inclusion. The Whithorn Trust also provides support to community events such as Santa's Grotto by working with community partners.

For Summer 2023, the Whithorn Trust said they would not be able to include younger children in their activity plans if they were not awarded Summer of Play funding. Their existing funds for youth engagement were targeted to young people aged 12 and over, meaning without funding they would not have the capacity to deliver the opportunity to under 12's. The Trust also has limited resources and does not open at breakfast time due to extra staffing and food required. Summer of Play funding would mean that Big Breakfast Clubs could run, as well as including children and young people under the age of 12 in the activity offer.

The team at the Whithorn Trust offered ten days that featured the “Big Breakfast Club” where young people took part in fun activity-based sessions, as well as having their breakfast. The children and young people started with a big healthy breakfast sitting down together to eat, followed up by an artist-led creative session that utilised different media and approaches. Activities included: creating your own postcard of the town; marbling; origami; willow sculptures and chalk and paint work. The activities were very popular within the local community, and a band of volunteers were enlisted to help with the numbers of children and young people who were accessing the sessions. There were 10 sessions all together spread throughout July, sessions lasted for 2 hours. The Whithorn Trust brought in creative arts professionals to help deliver the art activity sessions to the children and young people, including Urbancroft Films.

Children and young people enjoyed the stimulation of led and structured activities, which were different each day and offered new skills. The sessions were organised but also informal so that they could be amended to suit the needs and wants of those attending. The breakfast aspect was hugely popular and children who were attending were hungry, the options were healthy and local suppliers such as Balnab Dairy were used for milk, situated a mile down the road.

Children and young people got the opportunity for social interaction with others who may be in different classes to them, or even attend different schools. The Big Breakfast Club was held at a time when there were no visitors or other adults present, and the children and young people got the entire space to themselves to explore. The sessions were noisy, and filled with chat and fun, with ground rules in place. Young people were given a sense of achievement when they were able to take their artworks home to parents/guardians to showcase the new skills they had learnt by participating in the sessions.

The age split allowed for older young people to take care of and assist the younger members of the sessions, and this contributed to their sense of leadership, responsibility and empathy. In total, 35 children and young people took part in the activities ran by the Trust during the activity programme.

9. Looking forward

The next phase for our work on child poverty will be the delivery of a new Child Poverty Action Plan covering the period 2024-2026. Work has commenced developing this Action Plan and has involved input from local partners, Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service.

A key enabler in the delivery of this Action Plan will be an improvement in the use of data to inform the development and implementation of several of the actions. By taking an improved data-driven and evidenced based approach we will be better placed to ensure our work is targeted at families living in our most deprived communities and experiencing the greatest inequalities.

We will also improve our focus on action that targets the six recognised priority groups while also ensuring the meaningful involvement of young people and families with the 'lived experience' in decision making processes.

A key focus for our work will be shifting to a more preventative approach (while still recognising the need for mitigating action).

We will continue to work across our partnerships to ensure a cross-sector approach to our work and together find new ways to tackle the challenges and make things better for everyone.



Dumfries and Galloway

Child Poverty Action Plan

2024-2026



Dumfries &

Galloway

Together is
Better

CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN 2024-2026 DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

‘Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation - and even discrimination - because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.’ (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2019)

1. Child Poverty (Scotland Act) 2017

The *Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017* sets out ambitious targets for the Scottish Government to significantly reduce child poverty in Scotland by 2030. The *Act* also places a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR).

2. Child Poverty Action Plan for Dumfries and Galloway

In Dumfries and Galloway, we are committed to becoming a fairer and more equal society. Shared strategic approaches and partnership values shape everything we do. Tackling inequalities and creating a society where no one lives in poverty and where everyone can experience the same life chances and opportunities is our shared ambition across Community Planning Partners.

The Child Poverty Action Plan for Dumfries and Galloway (hereafter referred to as ‘the Action Plan’) sets out the key priorities and supporting actions to be delivered across services and partners which will impact on tackling child poverty.

This Action Plan should be considered as a ‘refresh’ of previous Action Plans.

There is recognition that there is already a significant amount of work being undertaken by partners and organisations across Dumfries and Galloway which directly or indirectly contribute to tackling child poverty. This Action Plan does not seek to duplicate these actions, rather it details a range of actions which build upon existing work. Several of the actions are considered to be developmental in nature. Through working with partners these will be expanded into specific, measurable and timebound actions.

The Objectives of the Action Plan are:

- To develop, deliver and manage, in partnership, strategic and operational activities that focus on reducing child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway
- To reduce the number of children living in poverty and mitigate the impact of poverty for low-income families

This Action Plan is structured around the 3 recognised key drivers of Child Poverty:

- Increasing income from employment
- Reducing the cost of living
- Increasing income from Social Security Benefits and benefits in-kind

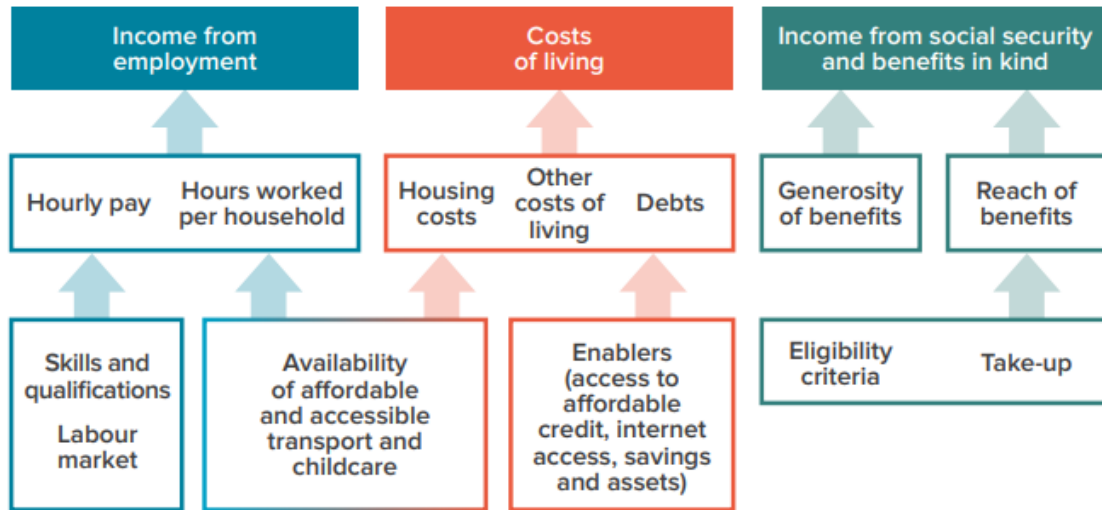


Figure 1: Drivers of child poverty reduction

[Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026](#) (Scottish Government, 2022)

Importantly, the Action Plan also includes several enabling/supporting actions which are the key ‘building blocks’ of our work across the three key drivers of child poverty.

Income from Employment	Income from Social Security and benefits in-kind
Reducing the cost of living	Enablers and supporting action



Figure 2: The 4 ‘building blocks’ of action within the Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan

3. Child poverty and deprivation profile in Dumfries and Galloway

Every year the End Child Poverty Coalition, together with the Centre for Research in Social Policy at the University of Loughborough, publish data on the number of children living in poverty, in each Westminster Constituency and Local Authority across the UK. This data is based on Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesty’s Revenues and Customs information mainly in relation to family income levels after housing costs. The data is restricted to the age group 0-16 years. Data released in June 2024 showed **Dumfries and Galloway to have a child poverty rate of 26.9% for**

2022-2023. This represents a 0.9% increase on the previous year or a 3.5% percentage increase for the period 2015-2022. The data also shows **that in 2022-2023 there were 6,841 children living in poverty in Dumfries and Galloway** compared with 6,751 for the previous year, representing an increase of 90 children.

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
% Children in Poverty	23.3	25.3	24.8	26.4	25.0	26.7	22.9	26.0	26.9
Number of Children in Poverty	6,356	6,739	6,529	6,650	6,697	6,926	6,243	6,751	6,841

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Table 1: Child Poverty Statistics for Dumfries and Galloway (published June 2024) – End Child Poverty Coalition/University of Loughborough

The Department of Work and Pensions provides data on the Number and percentage of children living in relative low-income families. **Appendix 1** (Table 2) shows the percentage of children living in relative low-income families within each of the Dumfries and Galloway Electoral Ward areas for the period 2015-2023.

Child poverty is highest in the Stranraer and the Rhins Electoral Ward area, with 31.3% or 792 children living in relative low-income families in 2023.

4. Other relevant data

Further analysis of local data allows us to gain a deeper insight into our local context. We recognise that to ensure our actions reach those individuals and communities in most need we must get better at making informed decisions based on the best available data. Working with partners at national and local level one of our key actions is to draw together local data which informs our future action.

5. Priority Groups

In Scotland almost 90% of all children in poverty live within one of the six priority family types as identified by the Scottish Government:

Family Type	% in Relative Poverty
Lone parent families (of which 90% are women)	38%
Minority ethnic families	38%
Families with a person with disabilities	29%
Families with a younger mother (under the age of 25)	55%
Families with a child under the age of 1 year	34%
Larger families (3+ Children)	32%

Table 3: Child Poverty Priority Groups (Best Start, Bright Futures, Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 [Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026](#))

There is local data which we can use to support our work, ensuring it is targeted at priority groups.

Priority Group	Description	Number or percentage
Lone Parents	Number of lone parent households receiving Universal Credit (Dumfries and Galloway 2024)	3,896
	% of income from Social Security Scotland received by lone parents (Scotland average 2014-2022)	70%
Ethnic Minorities	% of income from Social Security Scotland received by ethnic minority families (Scotland average 2014-2022)	30%
Families with 3 or more children	Number of households receiving Universal Credit where there are 3 or more children in the family (Dumfries and Galloway 2024)	1,244
	% of income from Social Security received where there are 3 or more children in the family (Scotland average 2014-2022)	55%
Families where a member of the household is disabled	Number of households receiving Universal Credit where a member of the household is disabled (Dumfries and Galloway 2023)	1,535
	% of income from Social Security where a member of the household is disabled (Scotland average 2014 - 2022)	54%
Mothers aged under 25 years	Number new mothers under 25 years (2023)	193
	% of income from Social Security received by mothers aged under 25 (Scotland average 2014 - 2022)	58%
Families where the youngest child is under 1 year	Number of households receiving Universal Credit where the youngest child is under 1 (Dumfries and Galloway 2023)	401
	% of income from Social Security where the youngest child is under 1 (Scotland average 2014 - 2022)	48%

Table 4: Child Poverty Priority Groups Number and Percentage in Dumfries and Galloway (Stat Explore 2023)

Intersectionality within the priority groups is very common. For example, 40% of children in lone parent families also have a person with a disability at home, 54% of children in a family with a younger mother are also in a lone parent household and 50% of children in a large family are also in a family in which someone has a disability.

It is important that our future work demonstrates how we will target and benefit these priority groups.

6. Our approach to tackling child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway

In Dumfries and Galloway our approach to tackling child poverty focuses on prevention and early intervention and mitigating the impacts of poverty. Tackling the root causes of poverty and building

families capabilities through employment, reducing the cost of living, income maximisation and promoting positive life changes is at the heart of what we do.

We recognise that action to tackle child poverty requires cross sector and whole system approaches. There is a degree of complexity involved in delivering meaningful action. Effective action is generally multi-faceted in nature and requires the support of multiple organisations. No one single organisation can tackle child poverty.

Anchor Organisations

Anchor Organisations are generally described as large, locally rooted organisations like Local Authorities, NHS Boards/Health and Social Care Partnerships, Universities/Colleges and the Police. These organisations have a major presence and impact in a local area. They can employ many people, spend large amounts of money, own land and deliver crucial public services. Similarly, large private, voluntary and community sector organisations can also be considered 'Anchors' if they have a significant stake in a local community.

By redirecting and more fairly distributing income, power and wealth back into local communities and placing equity at the centre of all decision-making whilst understanding how to support marginalised or disadvantaged communities 'Anchors' have real potential to support communities and reduce inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage. It is therefore important that we recognise and understand the connections between *Anchor Organisations* and their potential role in contributing to reducing child poverty.

Our Community Planning Partners, through the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, have agreed to adopt the role of Anchor Organisations and use Community Wealth Building approaches as a key driver within local strategies and plans.

7. Our priorities for action

Partnership workshops held in May 2024 identified the following broad priority areas. These themes will be the focus of our child poverty work over the period 2024-2026:

- Employment – supporting parents to enter, sustain and progress in work
- Reducing the cost of living with a focus on the rural poverty premium and fuel poverty
- Maximising opportunities to target income maximisation (through benefits and benefits in-kind) to priority groups and where there is identified unmet need
- Ensuring better use of data to inform actions
- Involving and engaging with people who have a lived experience of poverty, including listening to the voices of young people
- Enhancing our partnership working across public, voluntary and business sectors to deliver effective actions to tackle child poverty
- Communicating consistent and sensitive, non-stigmatising messages around poverty and inequalities

8. How we will deliver this Action Plan

The Child Poverty Action Plan is one of Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership's key strategies and plans that contribute to the Dumfries and Galloway Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, with Sub-Group 4 of the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership responsible for the development of the Child Poverty Action Plan and the driving forward of its actions.

Child poverty is part of a wider approach on action to reduce poverty and inequalities and we recognise that there are a significant number of actions which contribute to tackling child poverty contained within other local Strategies and Action Plans. Therefore, the Child Poverty Action Plan through detailing actions which are not otherwise included in other Strategies and Action Plans seeks to add value and additionality while avoiding duplication.

We also acknowledge that this Action Plan is not a static document and over time, based upon need and best evidence, we will be looking at further opportunities to develop its content and increase its impact within our communities.

9. Monitoring of this Action Plan

The Child Poverty Action Plan is approved by the two co-statutory partners of Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway and is endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership Board. In addition, given poverty is an identified area of focus within the Children's Services Plan we will also consult with the Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership and contribute to the Joint Annual Report process in relation to the Children's Services Plan.

DRAFT CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN FOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY 2024-2026

Increasing income from employment – Making employment work for families

Snapshot - What we know:

Income raised through employment is a key driver of tackling poverty, directly contributing to a family's available resources. Employment is not just about the labour market, but also people's broader circumstances, including caring responsibilities, family circumstances, life stages or health.

Increasing income from employment is not just about providing support to those who are not currently engaged with work, but it is also about tackling in-work poverty. We know that in Scotland 64% of children in poverty are in working families.

In relation to increasing income from employment the research and analysis publication *Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 What works – evidence review* (Scottish Government 2022) provides a helpful summary of the latest evidence on what works in tackling child poverty

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/annex-6-evidence-review-works/pages/2/>

Area of Work	Action	Measure of Success	Timescales	Owner(s)
Increasing income from employment	Utilising the funding available to DG Local Employability Partnership to develop and commission services via DG Works to support parents to gain and progress in employment.	<p>Annual increases* in the number of parents registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline.</p> <p>Annual increases in parents from the priority families registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline.</p> <p>Annual increases in parents registered and receiving support as part of DG Works progressing into employment, work experience, volunteering, education and self employment.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">*baseline data is available</p>	<p>March 2025 (covering 2024/25)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <p>March 2026 (covering 2025/26)</p>	DG Council Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service acting as the Lead Accountable Body for DG LEP.
Place-based employability programmes	Develop learning from the Stranraer and Upper Nithsdale place-based employability pathfinders to identify improved employment related child	Deliver the action from the service design work in Stranraer and Upper Nithsdale. Including:	March 2025	DG Council Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service acting as the Lead

	poverty reductions in targeted communities. .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2x events in each community per year to raise awareness of employability support to communities, particularly parents. • Open an Employability Hub in Stranraer town centre and Hillview Leisure Centre • Monitor community engagement with the Employability Hubs • Annual increases* in the number of parents from the target communities registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline. • Direct delivery of employability programmes in the community • Deliver service design led, community engagement in Annan and Lochside and Lincluden in 2025/26 	March 2026	Accountable body for DG LEP
NHS Employability (NHS as an Anchor Organisation)	Scope opportunity to develop an NHS D&G Employability programme focused on placements leading to positive job outcomes within the NHS for identified child poverty priority groups (or embed employability support for child poverty priority groups within wider employability programmes)	Employability programme in place and number of ring-fenced placements offered	March 2025	Child Poverty Sub-Group Lead and NHS D&G Organisational Development Lead
Deliver targeted support to households with a	To align work to reduce the regions Disability Employment Gap and Child Poverty by delivering dedicated	60 young people per year supported to enter into positive destination	March 2026	DG Council Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service

<p>disabled family member.</p>	<p>support to households with a disabled family member. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled Young People – Whole Family Support (School Transitions) • Disabled Family Support Project – Wigtownshire(pilot) • Engagement and Support for individuals with disabilities • Supported Employment 	<p>20 families engaged in early intervention work</p> <p>Annual increase in the number of people with disabilities registered and receiving support as part of DG Works progressing into employment, work experience, volunteering, education and self employment</p>		
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DRAFT CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN FOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY 2024-2026

Reducing the cost of living

Snapshot - What we know:

Cost of living has been identified as a key driver of poverty as it impacts directly on the available income families have left. Low-income households spend a greater share on essential costs, such as food, housing, fuel or transport. Households in the lowest income decile spend 54% of their total weekly expenditure in these areas compared with 42% in the highest income decile. Consistently higher essential costs are likely to increase the number of households experiencing material deprivation, fuel poverty and food insecurity.

We are also aware of the rural poverty premium (higher day to day costs associated with living in a rural area) and we will continue to work with partners, families and young people to reduce this premium.

In relation to reducing the cost of living the research and analysis publication *Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 What works – evidence review* (Scottish Government 2022) provides a helpful summary of the latest evidence on what works in tackling child poverty <https://www.gov.scot/publications/annex-6-evidence-review-works/pages/2/>

Area of Work	Action	Measure of Success	Timescales	Owner(s)
Housing	Deliver 166 new affordable homes in 2024-2025 as part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022-2027	Number of new homes delivered in 2024-2025	March 2025	Strategic Housing Partnership
	Deliver additional affordable homes through the ongoing delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022-2027	Number of new homes delivered	March 2027	Strategic Housing Partnership
Free School Meal Expansion	Deliver expansion of Free School Meals to P6 and P7 children whose parents receive Scottish Child Payment benefits	Number of P6 and P7 children in receipt of Free School Meals Capital funding from Scottish Government spent	August 2025	Education / Economy and Infrastructure
Reducing home energy and fuels costs	Develop and implement new and specific actions with all Energy Advice Services	Increase in number of families accessing energy advice and receiving support to reduce fuel costs	March 2026	Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 3
Access to Transport	Develop and implement new and specific actions with Transport providers which reflect the needs of families living in poverty	TBC	March 2026	Southwest of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans)

Study Spaces	Map and thereafter promote availability of study spaces for children and young people across Council and partner facilities, including schools and Customer Services facilities	Number of children accessing study spaces	March 2025	Child Poverty Sub-Group
School Age Childcare	Scope school-age childcare landscape locally in advance detailed delivery plan to be published by Scottish Government in 2025-2026.	Understanding of potential demand and potential models of additional delivery which could be tested locally	March 2026	Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing

Increasing income from Social Security Benefits and Benefits in-kind

Snapshot - What we know:

Social security is designed to supplement the income that households receive from other sources, primarily employment. For some families all of their income comes from social security. Access to social security related benefits is important for all the priority families, and particularly so for some. For example, we know on average single parents and young mothers get a greater proportion of their income from social security than others.

Providing support and guidance on what benefits families are entitled to, embedding advice and support in places and services that families already use (e.g. health settings, schools, nurseries) can be effective in increasing uptake and ensuring families are getting the benefits they are entitled to. Also, removing the social barriers and stigma experienced by those accessing the benefit system is key to increasing benefit uptake.

We have seen the positive impact that the Scottish Child Payment can have on family incomes. We will continue to work with our partners to promote the Scottish Child Payment in order to increase uptake of this payment in Dumfries and Galloway.

Similarly, we know that there are significant numbers of children not accessing their Child Trust Funds. We will work with our Education, Social Work and third sector partners to increase the uptake of Child Trust Funds.

We know that organisations play an important role in signposting families to sources of advice and support. The Poverty and Inequalities Partnership are exploring the opportunity to develop a 'referral portal for Dumfries and Galloway'. It is important to ensure that organisations working with families and children are linked into referral pathways which may be developed as a result of this work.

In relation to increasing income from Social Security Benefits and benefits in-kind the research and analysis publication *Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 What works – evidence review* (Scottish Government 2022) provides a helpful summary of the latest evidence on what works in tackling child poverty <https://www.gov.scot/publications/annex-6-evidence-review-works/pages/2/>

Area of Work	Action	Measure of Success	Timescales	Owner(s)
Partnership working to increase uptake of benefits	Develop and undertake bespoke benefit awareness campaigns based on low benefit uptake data	Increase in number of people accessing benefits	Ongoing	Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 2
	Explore the potential to develop a supports and services leaflet which could be included in 'Birth Registration Packs' issued to parents following the registration of a birth	Increase in number of new parents being signposted to benefits advice and support	March 2025	Child Poverty Sub-Group
	Explore current provision and the opportunity to present business case to possibly procure an online Benefit Checker for front-line staff who work with families and with accessibility to the public, if deemed necessary	Number of staff trained to use the Benefit Checker Number of Benefit Checks completed	March 2025	D&G Council Revenues and Benefit Team and D&G Citizens Advice Service
Financial Wellbeing and Advice in Health and Social Care Settings	Review and ensure financial advice referral pathways within Maternity Services is meeting service and family needs	Financial and welfare advice referral pathway being routinely used and monitored Number of referrals from Maternity Services to advice providers and amount of additional monies reaching families	March 2025	Head of Midwifery Services
	Deliver Financial Wellbeing Project utilising funding from the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund awarded by Scottish Government.	H&SCP/D&G Citizens Advice Service Families Financial Wellbeing Project is delivered and outcomes are routinely reported Satisfaction feedback from clients Number of referrals and amount of additional monies reaching families	March 2026	D&G Citizens Advice Service

	<p>Promote the NHS D&G/H&SCP Staff Financial Wellbeing Project and ensure its outcomes are reported</p>	<p>NHS D&G/H&SCP Staff Financial Wellbeing Project is delivered and outcomes are routinely reported</p> <p>Number of referrals and amount of additional monies reaching staff and their families</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>NHS D&G Workforce Directorate and D&G Citizens Advice Service</p>
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DRAFT CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN FOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY 2024-2026

Enablers and supporting action

What we know:

Involving those with the lived experience of poverty is critical to the success of this work. Particularly we need to develop a more systematic approach to targeting and engaging with Priority Families and those with Protected Characteristics. Through engaging with and listening to the voices of those with lived experiences we will develop our whole family, whole community approach and offer no wrong door approaches where families are connected to the help and support they need.

Changing the way we work to use data-driven approaches to identify and connect with families affected by poverty is vital to the success of this work. Gaining a better understanding of child poverty below local authority level is important for targeting local action and resources efficiently. Currently there is a lack of information and no real way of identifying Priority families within the data we collect. We must strive to improve how we are using data and research to inform our work and work with service providers to develop mechanisms to ensure disaggregated data which reflects Priority Groups is included in future reporting.

Reflecting the complexity of tackling child poverty, we must ensure multi-disciplinary, cross-organisational approaches are effective at locality level in order to build inclusive and resilient communities which strengthen the web of support available to families and children affected by poverty. We need to ensure where there are Local Place Plans, they reflect action which can impact positively on child poverty and do not deepen or widen poverty and inequalities. Partners and partnerships in any strategic and operational action planning need to consider how decisions taken may impact on child poverty and the rights of children.

Poverty related stigma remains extensive and deep-rooted. The way society perceives and treats people experiencing poverty can be extremely degrading, having negative impacts on mental health and self-esteem by reinforcing feelings of shame and self-blame. This in turn adds to barriers for people accessing the support they are entitled to including social security, free school meals, debt advice and emergency welfare. It is also important to note that young people are particularly sensitive to social media content, this content increasingly associates self-worth with material wealth. We will work with partners to ensure our child poverty work is mapped against the articles detailed within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and is subjected to Equality Impact Assessment so as not to widen inequalities and discriminate against protected and priority groups.

Area of work	Action	Measure of Success	Timescales	Owner(s)
Lived experience	<p>Develop and implement new ways to engage and involve young people and priority groups with the lived experience of poverty, building upon approaches used in Youth Work Services, Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service and other areas.</p> <p>Support the DG Works Lived Experience Panel to invest 2-5% of No One Left Behind Child Poverty annual funding using a Participatory budgeting model.</p>	<p>Participation programmes in place</p> <p>Increase in the number of people (especially young people) engaged with decision-making</p> <p>Monitoring the impact of the investment on target programmes/projects.</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p>March 2025 & March 2026</p>	<p>Child Poverty Sub-Group/Youth Work Services</p> <p>DG Council Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service</p>
Data-driven	Develop and agree a local data set for Child Poverty to ensure consistency of data reporting across partnerships and inform future delivery	Data reported is consistent and is routinely being used to inform delivery of actions	March 2025	Child Poverty Sub-Group and Poverty and Inequalities Partnership
Partnership working	<p>Link with the 4 Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Groups to map and ensure alignment of actions and ensure maximum use of resources with no duplication of action</p> <p>Work with local Anchor Organisations to ensure child poverty action is included and embedded within Anchor Action Plans</p> <p>Work with Locality Hubs to explore how child poverty action can be included within local Place Plans (broadly this could include actions in relation to places and space, housing, food, mental health and wellbeing)</p>	<p>Evidence of aligned actions across the 4 Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Groups</p> <p>Evidence of references and connections to child poverty in Anchor Plans</p> <p>Evidence of references and connections to child poverty in Local Place Plans</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p>June 2025</p> <p>June 2025</p>	<p>Child Poverty Sub-Group Lead and Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Group Leads</p> <p>Child Poverty Sub-Group and local Anchor Organisation Leads</p> <p>Child Poverty Sub-Group and Locality Hubs</p>
Communication and Awareness	Deliver a new communication campaign aimed at managers, front-line staff and service providers to promote understanding of what child poverty means and looks like in Dumfries & Galloway	Communication Plan in place and being delivered	June 2025	Child Poverty Sub-Group, Poverty and Inequalities Partnership

	<p>Social media campaign of supports available to families to help with the cost of living as part of Challenge Poverty Week</p> <p>Ensure child poverty is a key feature within Challenge Poverty Week campaigns</p>	<p>Number of communications raising awareness of supports available</p> <p>Number of references to child poverty within Challenge Poverty Week campaigns</p>	<p>October 2025</p> <p>October 2025</p>	<p>Communication Sub-Group</p>
Building capacity	<p>Deliver a programme of bespoke poverty/child poverty awareness sessions for Public and Third Sector Organisations</p>	<p>Number of awareness sessions delivered and number of individuals attending</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	<p>Child Poverty Sub-Group</p>

Appendix 1

	Number of children 2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% of children 2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Stranraer and the Rhins	515	520	588	677	659	729	606	744	792	20.6%	21.0%	23.8%	27.2%	26.5%	28.8%	24.0%	29.4%	31.3%
Mid Galloway and Wigtown West	434	450	434	479	454	445	356	495	524	21.2%	21.9%	21.3%	24.0%	22.1%	22.2%	18.1%	25.3%	26.8%
Dee and Glenkens	244	252	282	303	272	307	273	314	314	16.2%	16.2%	18.3%	19.7%	18.1%	20.7%	18.5%	21.3%	21.3%
Castle Douglas and Crocketford	212	247	256	282	242	265	192	269	264	15.1%	17.7%	18.2%	20.4%	18.0%	19.5%	14.3%	19.9%	19.6%
Abbey	204	187	212	261	222	253	203	272	295	12.8%	11.7%	13.6%	16.7%	14.2%	16.6%	13.6%	18.6%	20.2%
North West Dumfries	539	559	631	746	691	800	608	787	814	18.9%	19.9%	22.4%	26.5%	24.6%	28.8%	22.3%	28.5%	29.5%
Mid and Upper Nithsdale	295	314	318	355	349	418	316	430	438	17.5%	18.3%	18.8%	21.5%	21.2%	25.0%	19.2%	26.3%	26.8%
Lochar	237	229	258	315	340	326	281	371	351	12.1%	11.3%	13.0%	15.5%	16.9%	15.8%	13.7%	17.9%	16.9%
Nith	217	240	226	232	235	309	258	292	399	10.8%	12.2%	11.7%	12.1%	12.4%	16.1%	13.5%	15.5%	21.1%
Annandale South	349	339	419	475	497	507	406	492	542	14.2%	13.7%	16.8%	19.0%	20.2%	21.1%	17.2%	20.8%	22.9%
Annandale North	355	362	366	440	452	486	387	506	528	14.3%	14.6%	14.8%	17.8%	18.4%	19.5%	15.4%	20.4%	21.3%
Annandale East and Eskdale	260	271	290	257	291	351	324	366	365	18.2%	19.0%	20.6%	18.7%	21.4%	25.5%	23.5%	26.5%	26.4%

Number and percentage of children in relative low-income families. Data Source: Stat Explore.

