

**Dumfries and Galloway
Local Child Poverty
Action Report
2021-2022**

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1. Introduction

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. Though our work throughout the reporting period continues to be dominated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been further significant achievements in ensuring that families hit the hardest have received help and support to meet their basic needs and respect their human rights.

In our previous Report for 2020-2021, as well as reporting on our planned work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts, we also highlighted the impact of the pandemic on children, young people and their families, with a focus on those experiencing or at risk of child poverty. For many of these families, these impacts have continued, and in some cases worsened throwing more families into poverty. The demand for advice and crisis help has increased further. As with any emergency situation, those in most need who have no financial cushion, always suffer the greatest impacts to their already challenging lives.

Though many of the pandemic restrictions began to lift during the course of the reporting period, organisations continued to face challenges whilst doing their best to support children and families through the second year of the pandemic. Staffing and resource limitations continued to impact the ability of services to return to the 'new normal' in service provision.

This report reflects our actions to tackle child poverty which were delivered across the region between April 2021 and March 2022. The report evidences that there has been significant work to tackle and mitigate child poverty, as reported on in Chapter 5.

By undertaking a partnership self-assessment process, through work facilitated by Public Health Scotland to begin to map our child poverty system, and through further development of our Child Poverty Sub-Group of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership, we have developed an Action Plan for 2022 to 2026 which is focused on delivering activities which will make a real and sustainable difference to the lives of children and families in Dumfries and Galloway who are experiencing financial hardship.

2. Context for Reporting on Child Poverty

2.1 Our duty to report on Child Poverty

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR). This Report for 2021-2022 is Dumfries and Galloway's fourth published Report with the dual purpose of reporting on progress over the year and intimating our forward plan.

The LCPAR is one of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board's key strategies and plans that contribute to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and progress in the Action Plan is therefore reported on a quarterly basis. In addition, this Plan is not only approved by the two statutory partners of Dumfries and Galloway Health Board and Dumfries and Galloway Council, but it is endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership Board. In addition, we also consult on our draft annual Report to the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership and the Children's Services Partnership who will both also be reviewing and endorsing our finalised Action Plan.

Our previous Report for 2020-2021 is available here:

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/25298/Local-Child-Poverty-Action-Report/pdf/0250-21-Local-Child-Poverty-Action-Report-Report-FINAL.pdf?m=637891719093870000>

Whilst the impact of the pandemic continues to affect all families and individuals who are facing any form of poverty and inequalities, and the increases in the costs of living further increasing the risk of those already in poverty falling further into deprivation, we have ambitious plans to develop an improved partnership approach to child poverty, which in turn will ensure timely future reporting. Further details of the partnership approach can be found in Chapter 6.

2.2 Priority Families

In Dumfries and Galloway from April 2021 to March 2022, we have continued to focus our work to target families in the nationally identified priority groups as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – The Six Priority Family Groups



Overall, 21% of families in Scotland are in relative poverty, while the figures above note the proportion of families within each priority group who are in relative poverty. These family groups are at highest risk of poverty regardless of poverty measure used. It is also worth noting that these family groups are not mutually exclusive, with

many families falling into two or more groups. In addition, 10% of children not in any of these priority family groups are in relative poverty.

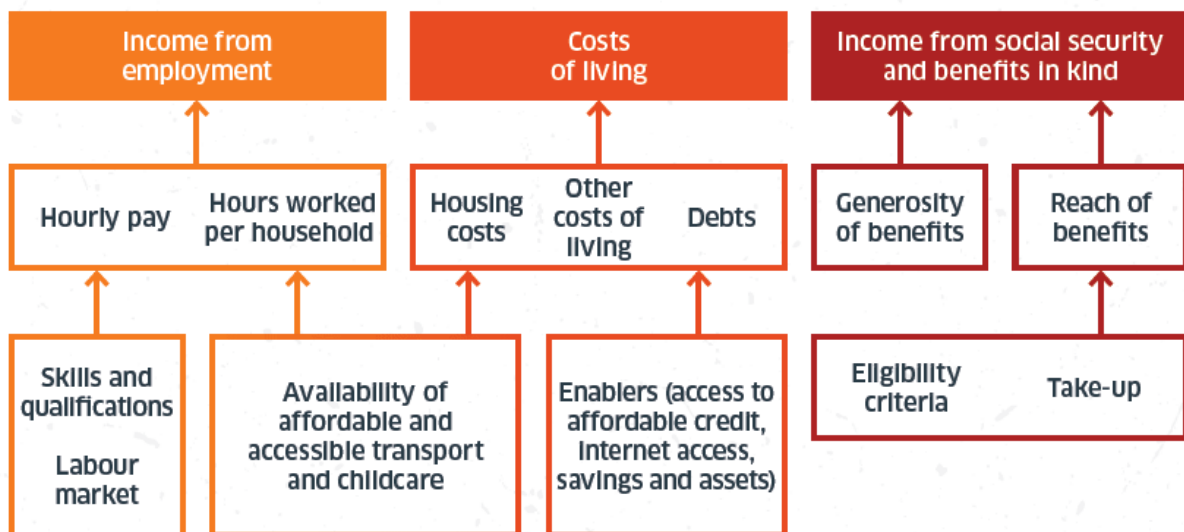
2.3 Key Drivers of Child Poverty

Each Local Child Poverty Action Report must set out a range of commitments to address the key drivers of poverty:

- Increasing income through employment
- Maximise income from the social security system
- Reducing household costs

It is important while addressing these commitments to take into account the rural nature of Dumfries and Galloway and the specific issues that are therefore relevant to our local context which are illustrated in more detail in the diagram below:

Figure 2 – The Three Key Drivers of Action to Tackle Child Poverty



3. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased costs of living

In our previous LCAR for the period 2020-2021, we described in detail the impacts of the pandemic on children and young people's health and wellbeing and on children's and family services, as well as the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

Though the re-opening of schools, the remobilisation of services and the lifting of restrictions has improved the picture, the impacts are very likely to continue to be felt by children, young people and their families for some time to come. Further exacerbating this are the emerging implications of the war in Ukraine and the increased costs of living, both of which are directly affecting children, young people and families, especially those families who were already struggling.

Since early 2021, the costs of living across the UK have been rising, affecting the affordability of goods and services for households. Many factors have impacted rising inflation rates including increased consumer demand, supply chain bottlenecks, increased energy prices as a result of the increased demand as pandemic restrictions were lifted, and lower than normal production of natural gas. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has also affected energy prices which in turn has increased road fuel (both petrol & diesel) prices and home energy bills. These higher prices began to be seen by families during the reporting period of this LCAR, and are expected to continue to increase significantly further at the time of writing (July 2022).

With Russia and Ukraine also producers and exporters of agricultural products such as wheat, grain and many metals, these products have become more expensive on international markets, leading to increases in food and material prices across the UK. As the global economy recovers from its recession there has been increased demand for products, especially consumer goods, and materials which has further exacerbated the need and increased demand for these products.

Whilst almost all households reported an increase in their costs of living, low-income households will be more affected by price increases as they spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food. Many low-income households still have home fuel (gas and electric) Top-Up meters installed which are on traditionally higher rates of costs than households who can access direct debit payment or other alternative options.

A number of measures to support households in light of these rising costs of living were announced towards the end of this reporting period (and some further into the next reporting period) such as energy bill reductions, payments for pensioners, people with a disability and households in receipt of benefits, a cut in fuel duty, council tax rebates for households in council tax bands A-D and an increase in the threshold at which NICs begins to be charged on earnings. Though these measures are designed to benefit low-income households the most, it is expected that poorer households will still significantly struggle longer term.

Whilst services continue to respond to the needs of children, young people and families, those on the lowest incomes whom are already suffering from any form of poverty or inequalities are continuing to experience the greatest impact both in terms of finance and health and wellbeing. The previously reported increases in demand

for help and support by individuals and families as a result of reductions in their income has continued to increase beyond the scales reported in our previous LCPAR and will continue to greatly rise as the crisis lengthens. The planned additional energy cap review by Ofgem in October 2022 is predicted to increase the cost of heating and supplying energy for lighting and all essentials for our homes to a maximum level far out with the costs which can be met by household on low and now medium incomes. All rural and very rural areas traditionally suffer more by these impacts due to the lack of mains gas supplies within very rural areas with the only alternative supplies available being electric or oil-fired heating, both of which are traditionally more expensive than gas supplies. These increases alone will have a detrimental and potentially devastating impact on all households within our region but in particular to our priority groups.

4. Poverty and Child Poverty in Dumfries and Galloway

4.1 Rates of Child Poverty in Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway has one of the highest rates of child poverty in Scotland at 22.9%, 1.9% above the national average, and ranked 7th highest in 2020-2021 out of 32 Local Authority areas. Our Region saw a reduction in the rate of child poverty in 2020-21 which is viewed as a positive change, however almost 1 in 4 children are still living in poverty.

Researchers suggest that the temporary Universal Credit uplift and other government measures during the pandemic could in part be the reason for the decrease in 2020-21 and have noted issues with data sampling. This reported decrease should therefore be treated with caution.

The data for individual local authorities are subject to small statistical fluctuations year-on-year and should be considered within the context of the longer-term local trend. Since 2014 there has been a 0.4% reduction in child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway.

The table below shows the levels of child poverty in each Local Authority Area in Scotland since 2014.

Table 1 – Child Poverty in Scotland by Local Authority Area

Local Authority Area	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Aberdeen City	18.7%	19.5%	21.3%	22.3%	21.1%	21.3%	18.3%
Aberdeenshire	15.6%	16.6%	17.4%	17.6%	15.7%	16.7%	14.2%
Angus	21.1%	21.9%	23.6%	24.1%	23.3%	24.0%	20.6%
Argyll and Bute	20.7%	22.2%	22.7%	23.9%	22.5%	23.3%	18.9%
City of Edinburgh	18.6%	18.8%	20.7%	21.3%	18.9%	20.3%	17.2%
Clackmannanshire	24.2%	25.5%	26.0%	27.3%	26.1%	27.3%	23.9%
Dumfries and Galloway	23.3%	25.3%	24.8%	26.4%	25.0%	26.7%	22.9%
Dundee City	23.8%	25.0%	26.4%	27.0%	26.2%	26.8%	22.5%
East Ayrshire	24.4%	26.1%	25.8%	26.6%	26.8%	27.3%	24.0%
East Dunbartonshire	15.2%	15.9%	16.9%	16.6%	14.8%	16.3%	12.5%
East Lothian	21.9%	22.5%	23.4%	24.7%	22.7%	24.5%	18.9%
East Renfrewshire	15.0%	15.6%	15.5%	15.5%	14.6%	15.8%	12.8%
Falkirk	22.7%	23.2%	23.5%	24.3%	23.8%	24.8%	21.5%
Fife	23.6%	25.0%	25.0%	26.0%	25.5%	26.4%	22.1%
Glasgow City	27.1%	29.5%	29.6%	30.9%	31.0%	32.2%	29.4%
Highland	21.4%	22.8%	22.8%	23.3%	22.6%	23.6%	20.5%
Inverclyde	20.9%	23.0%	22.1%	23.3%	23.3%	23.8%	18.2%
Midlothian	21.8%	21.1%	23.4%	23.8%	22.5%	23.9%	20.0%
Moray	20.8%	22.0%	23.1%	23.2%	21.9%	23.4%	21.3%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	17.5%	20.6%	20.8%	19.6%	18.7%	20.7%	16.7%
North Ayrshire	24.8%	26.5%	26.2%	27.4%	27.1%	27.9%	24.7%
North Lanarkshire	23.9%	25.5%	25.2%	26.3%	25.5%	26.5%	23.2%
Orkney Islands	20.3%	20.7%	21.9%	22.4%	21.2%	22.7%	18.2%
Perth and Kinross	19.9%	21.2%	21.4%	22.4%	21.1%	22.6%	18.7%
Renfrewshire	19.3%	20.4%	21.3%	22.8%	21.9%	23.1%	19.5%
Scottish Borders	20.9%	22.5%	23.2%	23.9%	22.5%	24.2%	19.5%
Shetland Islands	13.3%	15.2%	16.0%	17.1%	14.4%	15.8%	18.7%

South Ayrshire	22.7%	23.5%	24.2%	24.6%	24.6%	24.8%	20.6%
South Lanarkshire	21.5%	22.4%	22.5%	23.5%	22.5%	23.1%	19.6%
Stirling	19.6%	20.0%	20.1%	21.2%	20.2%	21.3%	18.1%
West Dunbartonshire	23.4%	24.5%	25.1%	26.9%	26.3%	26.8%	23.4%
West Lothian	21.3%	22.1%	23.0%	23.8%	22.9%	24.6%	21.1%

Further information on the national picture can be found in the End Child Poverty Report here: https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Local-child-poverty-indicators-report-2022_FINAL.pdf

4.2 Deprivation in Dumfries and Galloway

One of the main sources of information on poverty in Scotland is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which assesses deprivation at local levels across a number of different themes.

Overall Dumfries and Galloway has 19 data zones considered to be in the 20% most deprived in Scotland. This represents just 1.4% of all data zones in Scotland, and 9.5% of those in the local authority. This places the local authority in 20th place, compared with an overall ranking of 19th in 2016.

Table 2 - Overall Local Authority Deprivation Figures

No.	Local Authority Name	Total Data Zones	No. Of 20% Most Deprived Included within Area	Local Share of Data zones within 20% Most Deprived %	National Share %
1	Glasgow City	746	339	45.4	24.3
2	Inverclyde	114	51	44.7	3.7
3	North Ayrshire	186	74	39.8	5.3
4	West Dumbartonshire	121	48	39.7	3.4
5	Dundee City	188	70	37.2	5.0
6	North Lanarkshire	447	153	34.2	11.0
7	East Ayrshire	163	51	31.3	3.7
8	Clackmanonshire	72	18	25	1.3
9	Renfrewshire	225	56	24.9	4.0
10	South Lanarkshire	431	88	20.4	6.3
11	Fife	494	97	19.6	7.0
12	South Ayrshire	153	28	18.3	2.0
13	Falkirk	214	35	16.4	2.5
14	West Lothian	239	35	14.6	2.5
15	Stirling	121	15	12.4	1.1
16	City of Edinburgh	597	71	11.9	5.1
17	Argyll & Bute	125	13	10.4	0.9
18	Aberdeen City	283	29	10.2	2.1
19	Highland	312	30	9.6	2.2
20	Dumfries and Galloway	201	19	9.5	1.4
21	Midlothian	115	10	8.7	0.7
22	Angus	155	12	7.7	0.9
23	Scottish Borders	143	9	6.3	0.6
24	East Lothian	132	8	6.1	0.6

25	Perth and Kinross	186	11	5.9	0.8
26	East Renfrewshire	122	7	5.7	0.5
27	East Dumbratonshire	130	5	3.8	0.4
28	Moray	126	4	3.2	0.3
29	Aberdeenshire	340	9	2.6	0.6
30	Na-h-Elleanan An Sar	36	0	0	0
31	Orkney Islands	29	0	0	0
32	Shetland Islands	30	0	0	0

- Compared with its comparator authorities, Dumfries and Galloway has a lower national share of deprived data zones
- All 19 data zones considered to be in the 20% most deprived are located in just five Wards: North West Dumfries, Stranraer and the Rhins, Mid and Upper Nithsdale, Annandale South and Nith
- Across most domains, with the exception of 'Access' and 'Housing', there has been an increase in the number of data zones in the 20% most deprived measure as well as a rise in the local share of deprived data zones

4.3 Work and Wages

Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in Dumfries and Galloway were lower than the national average in 2021 at £553 per week compared with £606 nationally.

When looking at median hourly pay excluding overtime for **where people live** in 2021, East Renfrewshire has the highest pay at £20.87 per hour, and Dumfries and Galloway has the second lowest of 32 local authority areas, at £11.83 per hour.

When looking at the median hourly pay excluding overtime for **where people work** in 2021, East Ayrshire as the highest pay at £16.92 an hour. Dumfries and Galloway has the lowest of 32 local authority areas at £12.28 an hour.

4.4 Social Security Scotland

Social Security Scotland have continued to be extremely effective & supportive public sector project partners through the last year within our Region.

Representatives from this organisation have been appointed to the main Dumfries and Galloway Poverty & Inequalities Partnership along with two of our Sub-Groups (Sub-Group 2 and 3) and we continually work together to increase the awareness of and number of applications to all of the devolved benefits and grant support which they manage on a day-to-day basis.

Detailed below are the figures for the number of families supported through their current support programmes within our region:

Scottish Child Payments made to the end of June 2022 in Dumfries & Galloway

Total Number of Payments Made: 38,235

Total Value of Payments Made: £2,285,460

Child Disability Payments 26th July 2021-30th June 2022

Total Number of Applications Made: 410

Total % of Applications Authorised: 74%

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods – 10th December 2018-31st May 2022

Total Value of Payments Made:	£2,322,178
Value of Best Start Grant - Pregnancy & Baby Payments	£630,508
Value of Best Start Grant - Early Learning Payments	£514,290
Value of Best Start Grant – School Age Payments	£410,015
Value of Best Start Grant – Food Payments	£767,365

The Poverty and Inequalities Partnership and its Sub-Groups will continue to work together with Social Security Scotland to both highlight and increase the number of applications to their existing benefits but also for all new benefits which are rolled out through the coming year.

5. The Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership, Strategy and Sub-Groups

As noted in our previous LCPAR for 2020-2021, in February 2021 Dumfries and Galloway Council's Communities Committee considered the recommendations from the Evaluation of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2015-2020 and in March 2021, the Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership (CPP) agreed a Poverty and Inequalities Strategy for 2021-2026. The vision of the Partnership is 'A Dumfries and Galloway in which local action has driven poverty as low as possible, and has mitigated as far as possible the impact of poverty when experienced'.

The Objectives of the Poverty and Inequalities Strategy are:

Outcome Objective 1: Tackle severe and persistent poverty and destitution

Outcome Objective 2: Maximising income of people facing poverty

Outcome Objective 3: Reducing the financial pressures on people in poverty

Outcome Objective 4: Building individuals and communities' ability to deal with the effects of poverty

Enabling Objective 1: Building organisational and system capacity

Enabling Objective 2: Addressing barriers to access.

The Poverty and Inequalities Strategy 2021-2026 is one of the key Strategies and Plans identified by the CPP Board as contributing to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Partnership presents performance reports on its Action Plan on a quarterly basis to the Board.

5.1 Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership

The CPP Board also agreed that the existing Tackling Poverty Co-ordination Group be replaced by a regionwide Poverty and Inequalities Partnership with a remit to:

- drive forward the Community Planning Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Strategy through a shared Action Plan.
- To work on a develop collaborative projects that tackle poverty and inequalities
- share advice from a 'lived experience' perspective
- access expertise from other areas and at national level and share our work with them
- identify any hidden barriers to access and participation and ways of overcoming them
- create opportunities for engagement between partner organisations and people experiencing poverty
- act as a forum for consultation, engagement and information exchange
- take a partnership approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the share Action Plan reporting to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

The membership of the Partnership is comprised of public sector organisations; third sector partners, including from the Dumfries and Galloway Equality and Diversity Working Group to ensure alignment with that agenda; and volunteers with lived experience of poverty and inequality drawn from the Tackling Poverty Reference Group. The Partnership is supported by the Dumfries and Galloway Council Poverty

and Inequalities Team. Following an open recruitment process, an independent Chair was appointed in July 2021 and since that time seven Meetings of the new Partnership have been held.

The Partnership has agreed four new Sub-Groups to deliver the Strategy Action Plan:

- Tackling severe and persistent poverty and destitution and building individuals' and communities' ability to deal with the effects of poverty
- Maximising income and reducing debt of people facing poverty
- Reducing financial pressures on people facing poverty
- Developing our approach to tackling child poverty.

Sub-Groups Chairs were appointed from the Partnership to ensure that a Strategic Lead with expertise on each of the Sub-Groups subjects would drive forward the delivery of each of the Action Plans. The appointments successfully completed are all listed below:

- Sub-Group 1: Claire Brown, Operations Manager, Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway
- Sub-Group 2: Christine Sinclair, Operations Manager, Dumfries & Galloway Citizens Advice Service
- Sub-Group 3: Sue Irving, Housing Manager, Loreburn Housing Association
- Sub-Group 4: Laura Gibson, Health & Wellbeing Specialist, Public Health Improvement, NHS Dumfries & Galloway

There are also two short life Group developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and a Communications Plan. Further information about the Strategy and Partnership are available here: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/poverty>.

5.2 Developing Our Approach to Child Poverty Sub-Group

The Developing Our Approach to Child Poverty Sub-Group of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership met for the first time in June 2021 and agreed to undertake a process of self-assessment facilitated by the Improvement Service to support stakeholders to reflect on the local approach to Child Poverty work, consider any challenges or areas for improvement and begin to plan collaboratively for future action across the whole system to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts.

Following this, in March 2022 the Sub-Group were supported by Public Health Scotland through public health needs assessment approach to build a picture of what the local child poverty 'system' looks like in Dumfries and Galloway. The process was also designed to enable the partnership to identify what data is currently being recorded, how that data is being used and to establish how the data could better inform the priorities for this work to support families locally. At the time of writing, a second workshop was held in June 2022 to complete the process and the Sub-Group has received the draft Report from Public Health Scotland and are agreeing mechanisms for sharing the learning widely across the Partnership.








This process has supported the development of the activities set out in the Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026, set out in Chapter 8.







The Sub-Group has also supported the Lead Officers from NHS and Dumfries and Galloway Council to develop this iteration of the LCPAR and has been tasked with developing a proposal to the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership for how collaborative work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts will be taken forward.



6. Report on our actions to tackle Child Poverty in 2021-2022

6.1 Local Child Poverty Action Plan 2020-2023

In our previous LCPAR iteration, we presented a comprehensive narrative of our achievements over that reporting period, supplementing this with by presenting 9 Case Studies demonstrating the impact of our work on children and their families. Presented in the table below is our latest progress update on the 2020-2023 Action Plan.

Action	Driver/Issue	Who/Partnership	RAG Status
1. Develop D&G Employability and Skills Plan	Employment/ Employability	D&G Employability and Skills Partnership	 In Progress, Employability and Skills Plan due to be published Sept 2022
2. Develop 'Project 155' to increase the working age population	Employment/ Employability	DGC and NHSD&G	 In Progress Project continues to be delivered and full statistics on the outcomes achieved will be completed shortly.
3. Contribute to the South of Scotland Regional Economic Plan	Employment/ Employability	DGC/ Regional Economic Partnership	 Complete All stages of the contribution and consultation processes for this Plan have now been successfully completed
4. Implement the 1140 hours of free childcare	Employment Cost of living	DGC (Skills, Education and Learning)	 Complete, 1140 implemented
5. Build on DGC Transformation Programme work, School Transport Policy and Public Sector Partnership model to address access and affordability of public transport for access to work and education	Employment Cost of Living	SWestrans, DGC, TSD&G Sector, PSP on community transport	 In Progress These projects are all on-going and continue to be developed to fit the needs of the residents throughout our Region including those located in very rural areas.
6. Develop Equality Outcomes that support the High Priority Groups experiencing child Poverty	Employment Cost of Living Income	DGC; H&SCP; NHSD&G, SOSE; SDS, SWestrans	 Equality Outcomes published
7. Review financial inclusion pathways for health	Income	H&SCP; DGC (Financial Inclusion Assessment Team); and Financial Inclusion service providers (Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service	 Health Visiting pathway active and effective. Pathways from Maternity and other services in development. This action is now also included within our Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 2 Action Plan.

8. Develop approaches that reduce the 'Cost of the School Day'	Cost of Living	DGC (Skills, Education and Learning & Poverty and Inequalities Team)	 New activities which were considered and developed during the Covid19 Pandemic have now been successfully implemented including a wide range of measures to reduce digital exclusion within all Schools
9. Implement approaches with Registered Social Landlords to address homelessness	Cost of Living	Strategic Housing Forum and Homeless Forum including RSL partners	 In Progress and being delivered as planned with greater co-production between our Local Authority and all RSL's
10. Direct support and funding to reduce fuel poverty	Cost of Living Income maximisation	DGC, Strategic Housing Forum and RSL partners, <i>Poverty and Inequalities Team</i>	 Our Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 3 have the reduction of Fuel Poverty as one of its main outcomes. In addition, D&G Council have also allocated significant funding to a new Home Energy Help Project for Vulnerable Families which will be co-delivered with RSL's & DAGCAS. We are also supporting additional Fuel Poverty Projects which have been developed by third sector organisations.
11. Explore opportunities to ensure food poverty and food insecurity is embedded within Public Health Priority 1 (Place) and Public Health Priority 6 (Eat well, healthy weight)	Cost of Living	Public Health Priority Implementation Groups with support from DGC, TSD&G and Community Food Providers Network. Poverty and Inequalities Team	 The H&SCP Locality Teams now facilitate the Food Provider Networks in the four Areas within our Region and have also formed an additional Network to support the Upper Nithsdale Area. The Poverty & Inequalities Team have also secured an additional 4 Fareshare Memberships for our Region taking our total to 19 and our Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 1 have reducing food insecurity as one of its main outcomes
12. Explore opportunities to ensure culture, play, leisure and sport is embedded within Public Health Priority 6 (healthy weight, physically active)	Cost of Living	DG Unlimited (arts); Major Festivals and Events Partnership; Physical Activity Alliance with support from Play Scotland	 this action is to be amended
13. Partnership events to develop the Local Child Poverty Action	Communication and Engagement	Children's Services Executive Group, Poverty and Inequalities Team	 Our New Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Group 4 has been established and

Plan during 2020-2023			successfully led by Laura Gibson, Health & Wellbeing Specialist which is focused on reducing Child Poverty and the completion of our Annual LCPAR. Self-assessment and system mapping processes were undertaken in partnership with the Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland who will produce a detailed report and recommendations will be implemented during 2022-2023.
14. Partnership event(s) to establish opportunities and identify areas for data sharing across sectors	Data sharing and evidence base	H&SCP (Performance and Intelligence Team); DGC; TSD&G; supported by equalities groups; RSLs; and the Improvement Service, Poverty and Inequalities Team	 System and data mapping process underway and further work on data being planned. Our Health and Wellbeing Specialist and our Anti-Poverty Officer were involved in and supported the Improvement Services Data Analysis Workshops which were held in the spring of 2022.
15. Develop a Communication and Engagement Plan	Communication and Engagement	DGC; NHS D&G; and H&SCP; Poverty and Inequalities Team	 Our Poverty and Inequalities Partnership has formed a new dedicated Communications Sub-Group & is developing a regionwide Communications Plan which will also include all of our planning to support Challenge Poverty Week 2022 in conjunction with the Poverty Alliance.

6.2 Financial Wellbeing Services – Dumfries and Galloway Council and Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service

Within our Region we continue to deliver two dedicated services to all residents in need through our Financial Wellbeing Services within Dumfries and Galloway Council and also through our Advice and Information Services Commission which is delivered by Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service. This Commission which is funded by Dumfries & Galloway Council for the sum of £905,605 includes financial debt advice and income maximisation services which have been specifically designed to complement our Council's own Financial Wellbeing Services.

The resulting figures for the income Maximisation Services are detailed in the below.

Table 3 – Financial Advice and Information 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Service	Client financial gain
Dumfries and Galloway Council Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Services	£3,321,000
Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service	2,502 clients (180% of AIS (Advice and Information Service) Commission Target) with £6,707,191.21 financial gain (96% of AIS Commission Target)
Total	£10,028,191

The majority of this additional income which has been achieved for those most in need will be spent within the local economy of Dumfries & Galloway which significantly increases the sustainability of every Ward within our Region.

6.3 Continuing to Increase the Number of Children Registered to Receive Free School Meals and Education Payments 2021-2022

Through our continuing joint project between our Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Services and our Education Services Teams, we are continuing to identify and increase the number of pupils who are being registered to receive Free School Meals within our Region.

This process is being completed by cross referencing the families who are registered on our Welfare and Benefits System with those on our Education Systems and then by contacting them to complete a Welfare and Benefit check to ascertain if they would be eligible to receive this additional benefit.

By the end of the 2021/2022 School Year, the current number of pupils who are now in receipt of Free School Meals has increased to 4,405. This figure is broken down on a Ward by Ward Basis in Table 4 below and shows an overall increase in 616 additional pupils benefiting from this support.

Table 4 - Current Position in Relation to Free School Meals (at 11th July 2022)

	Nursery			Primary			Secondary			School and Nursery			Total Children	percentage IRO FSM
	No identified eligibility	eligibility identified	IRO FSM	No identified eligibility	eligibility identified	IRO FSM	No identified eligibility	eligibility identified	IRO FSM	No identified eligibility	eligibility identified	IRO FSM		
Abbey	124	5	22	501	3	115	475	2	69	1100	10	206	1316	15.7%
Annandale East and Eskdale	138	7	39	510	6	166	394	7	113	1042	20	318	1380	23.0%
Annandale North	219	17	54	777	7	215	717	6	153	1713	30	422	2165	19.5%
Annandale South	210	11	62	748	7	279	566	5	133	1524	23	474	2021	23.5%
Castle Douglas and Crocketford	146	1	23	549	2	98	443	2	60	1138	5	181	1324	13.7%
Dee and Glenkens	120	5	20	521	4	94	457	2	81	1098	11	195	1304	15.0%
Lochar	283	5	28	860	2	130	725	2	92	1868	9	250	2127	11.8%
Mid and Upper Nithsdale	147	1	38	501	2	187	445	5	136	1093	8	361	1462	24.7%
Mid Galloway and Wigtown West	177	6	46	660	4	179	558	2	124	1395	12	349	1756	19.9%
Nith	212	17	20	647	3	127	592	2	77	1451	22	224	1697	13.2%
North West Dumfries	246	17	113	705	11	397	670	10	242	1621	38	752	2411	31.2%
Stranraer and the Rhins	238	14	84	787	5	356	632	3	227	1657	22	667	2346	28.4%
#N/A	12			33		3	33		3	78	0	6	84	7.1%
Grand Total	2,272	106	549	7,799	56	2,346	6,707	48	1,510	16,778	210	4,405	21,393	20.6%

Please Note: IRO FSM refers to the number of children 'In Receipt Of Free School Meals'. This includes children who receive free meals on discretionary criteria. These children do not receive Holiday food or Pandemic Support Payments. Any application within £50 of the normal qualifying criteria is granted under the discretionary criteria for Free School Meals.

These statistics presented in Table 4, collated by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team, are invaluable in helping us to identify where the highest levels of poverty and deprivation are emerging within our region.

When any child is registered for the Free School Meal Benefit, our Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Services also administer additional grant funding from both our Local Authority and the Scottish Government. This includes Free School Clothing Grants (we pay grant awards of £150 per pupil for Secondary Pupils & £134 per Primary Pupil within our Region through a Policy Development Funding allocation of £155,000), Family Pandemic Payments, Scottish Child Payments, Bridging Payments and Holiday Food Fund Payments. All of the additional funding which has been paid to each of the pupils within each Ward is fully detailed in our Table 5 below. This highlights that in total the families in most need within our Region have received a total of £3,713,236 within the last School Year.

Table 5 - Education Payments Made by Ward 2021/2022 School Term (At July 2022)

Row Labels	Abbey	Annandale East and Eskdale	Annandale North	Annandale South	Castle Douglas and Crocketford	Dee and Glenkens	Lochar	Mid and Upper Nithsdale	Mid Galloway and Wigtown West	Nith	North West Dumfries	Stranraer and the Rhins	Not in region or has since left education	Grand Total
School Clothing Grant	180	270	369	409	162	174	220	316	312	193	647	571	211	4,034
Value	£25,192	£37,924	£51,878	£56,902	£22,732	£24,580	£30,872	£44,440	£43,792	£27,014	£90,538	£80,098	£30,466	£566,428
October 21 Holiday food	181	280	375	424	179	190	213	350	329	220	717	633	19	4110
Value	£7,240	£11,200	£15,000	£16,960	£7,160	£7,600	£8,520	£14,000	£13,160	£8,800	£28,680	£25,320	£760	£164,400
October Bridging payment	175	253	341	384	158	177	201	321	299	203	646	575	15	3748
Value	£28,000	£40,480	£54,560	£61,440	£25,280	£28,320	£32,160	£51,360	£47,840	£32,480	£103,360	£92,000	£2,400	£599,680
December Holiday food	194	300	384	435	171	185	229	338	327	207	705	628	143	4246
Value	£7,275	£11,250	£14,400	£16,312.50	£6,412.50	£6,937.50	£8,587.50	£12,675	£12,262.50	£7,762.50	£26,437.50	£23,550	£5,362.50	£159,225
December Bridging Payment	179	265	345	390	154	169	210	307	292	191	613	565	129	3809
Value	£28,640	£42,400	£55,200	£62,400	£24,640	£27,040	£33,600	£49,120	£46,720	£30,560	£98,080	£90,400	£20,640	£609,440
February Holiday Food	195	305	391	447	172	181	236	340	333	210	718	637	92	4257
Value	£2,437.50	£3,812.50	£4,887.50	£5,587.50	£2,150	£2,262.50	£2,950	£4,250	£4,162.50	£2,625	£8,975	£7,962.50	£1,150	£53,213
Easter Holiday Food	198	306	403	453	178	186	240	346	333	210	738	642	81	4314
Value	9616.86	14862.42	19573.71	22002.21	8645.46	9034.02	11656.8	16805.22	16173.81	10199.7	35844.66	31181.94	3934.17	£209,531
Spring Bridging Payment	181	271	358	404	158	169	218	312	295	193	637	573	62	3831
Value	£23,530	£35,230	£46,540	£52,520	£20,540	£21,970	£28,340	£40,560	£38,350	£25,090	£82,810	£74,490	£8,060	£498,030
Summer Holiday Food 1	202	318	418	472	179	194	248	357	348	215	752	665	37	4405
Value	£16,160	£25,440	£33,440	£37,760	£14,320	£15,520	£19,840	£28,560	£27,840	£17,200	£60,160	£53,200	£2,960	£352,400
Summer Bridging Payment	180	279	363	411	156	174	221	320	302	195	641	583	28	3853
Value	£23,400	£36,270	£47,190	£53,430	£20,280	£22,620	£28,730	£41,600	£39,260	£25,350	£83,330	£75,790	£3,640	£500,890
Total Value	£171,491	£258,868	£342,669	£385,314	£152,159	£165,884	£205,256	£303,370	£289,560	£187,081	£618,215	£553,992	£79,372	£3,713,236

All of this funding is expertly administered by our Council's Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Services. All payments are made to the parents / carers bank accounts to follow our cash first approach which gives our parents and carers the choice of where and how they can best support their own families. This provides the highest level of dignity possible and also the maximum choice which is incredibly important to families who struggle every single day in their constant battle against both poverty and deprivation. The majority of this funding will again be spent within the local area and our Region.

Dumfries and Galloway Council also committed additional funding of £105,000 in April 2021 to cover the costs of Holiday Food Fund Payments over the school holiday periods to all eligible children who are registered in Nursery Education and who would be eligible to receive this support once their children were of school age. This again provides parents who are struggling to help them through the challenging school holiday periods and gives them the choice of where and on what items they wish to purchase to feed their own children.

6.4 Additional Support for Vulnerable Families, Children and Young People

Dumfries & Galloway Council also allocated in February 2021, funding of £65,000 to support our Social Work Services Teams as there had been an increase in the number of vulnerable families coming to the attention of Social Work as a result of the COVID pandemic, due to people not being able to work, being furloughed or job losses due to business closure, home schooling; and lockdown.

The winter months prior to this had compounded this situation with higher energy costs for heating, the need for hot food-and increased digital costs; family tensions; and social isolation and loneliness.

In addition to the above, the impact on those leaving care was compounded as they try to adjust to new circumstances while also adhering to the lockdown restrictions at that time. This was especially difficult for people who are new to living on their own with very limited practical and emotional resources to call upon.

Our Council has responsibilities as Corporate Parents to support them and the funding of £65,000 to Social Workers to use for vulnerable families and Care Leavers – for either one-off assistance or support over a short period of time was very much needed. This has ensured that detailed support has been available until sustainable long-term arrangements were put in place to enable them to live in safe and warm homes and be connected to people out with their home. The purpose of this Project has been to get people to get back on their feet and accessing available support after a time of personal or financial change or crisis in their lives.

The identification of the people and families supported and the appropriate type of support has been undertaken in partnership with our third sector and independent services. It has complemented co-production projects which are currently being delivered by our Registered Social Landlords, Home Energy

Scotland, our Council's Lifelong Learning and Youth Work Service, and has supported people to access the Scottish Welfare Fund, Digital Scotland Fund and Community Food Groups. The urgent support also included:

- provision of electricity cards.
- purchase of key household items
- provision of winter clothing.
- additional financial support to allow a Care Leaver to move home in times of urgency or to ensure their own protection.
- materials and support to ensure older people, children and young people are stimulated and active while restrictions were in place

A full Evaluation of this Project is currently being completed by our Social Work Services Team.

6.5 Time for Inclusive Education (TIE Campaign)

Dumfries and Galloway Council also allocated funding of £22,000 to deliver Time for Inclusive Education Campaigns within each of our 16 Secondary Schools throughout our region. Children and Young People from Protected Characteristic groups face the greatest inequalities and those with intersectional identities (multiple Protected Characteristics) experience multiple barriers.

Our Council agreed to implement a range of findings in relation to the 'Time for Inclusive Education' (TIE Campaign) for LGBT+ young people. This funding has been used to implement the recommendations of the TIE Campaign across all 16 secondary schools by covering the costs of each school achieving the LGBT Youth Chartermark Scheme. An Evaluation of this Project is currently being completed.

6.6 Reducing Digital Exclusion within Dumfries and Galloway

Throughout 2021/2022 our various projects to reduce Digital Exclusion within Dumfries and Galloway have continued with applications being made to the Scottish Government, the Scottish Council of Voluntary Service and additional Charities to increase the number of digital devices and connectivity devices available to all children, young people and families throughout our Region.

The digital devices we successfully received for our children, young people, families and vulnerable adults were mainly funded by the following:

- (1) Scottish Government Connection Scotland Programme Phases 1, 2 and the Winter Social Support Package Phase and
- (2) Third Sector Hardship Fund.

Dumfries & Galloway Council has also supported the Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway Digital Inclusion Research Project which is due to publish its findings later this year. In addition, we also supported various Third Sector Organisations within our Region to apply for funding to the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations to source digital connectivity devices for clients which they directly support.

We are also directly supporting the development of a new Digital Device Refurbishment Project which has been developed by the Castle Douglas IT Centre during 2021-2022. The dedicated Team for this Centre have been accepting in donated Laptops, I-Pads and Mobile Phones which are then wiped and refurbished before being allocated to individuals in most need throughout our Region. Additional funding is currently being applied for to continue this project for future years.

Within our Education Services Teams, a total of £1,002,278.20 was allocated to fund the provision of digital equipment which included one Laptop for every household registered for Free School Meals. This significantly benefitted the families supported as it helped to reduce the competition within each home for access to devices where there is more than one child of school age, especially when they are trying to complete any homework assignments and additional learning.

An additional 20 laptops were also donated by a local company to one of our Secondary Schools to be utilised by the families most in need at that time.

6.7 Youth Work Services within Dumfries and Galloway

Our Award-Winning Youth Work Services continued to deliver its region wide support services throughout the year, adapting services to provide the support and help needed by young people between the ages of 16-25 within our region. It has been recognised that young people have been significantly impacted in many ways due to the COVID-19 pandemic and further support is continuing to be delivered to all those in need.

Below are highlights of the range of supporting mechanisms which have been delivered in 2021-2022:

- Lunch Clubs were established in our Youth Work Services over school lunch periods where young people can come during lunch time to access free healthy lunches
- Youth Fridges were set up across the region in our Youth Work Services hubs, allowing young people to take away fresh food produce to cook their own meals at home
- A new Cook Post was created and based within Oasis Youth Centre to create healthy, high-quality meals for young people and also run cooking groups to pass on skills and knowledge of cooking
- Oasis Youth Centre gained Membership to the Fareshare Scheme and now receives weekly deliveries of surplus food that they distribute onwards to the young people & young parents groups
- Young parents groups continued to deliver a vital resource to young parents and their children, offering activities and information for new parents and their children

6.8 Tackling Fuel Poverty

During 2021 – 2022, we have continued to deliver a range of Tackling Fuel Poverty Projects within our Region. This has included the continuation of the Emergency Fuel Top Up Programme which our Council have delivered in conjunction with all Registered Social Landlords within Dumfries & Galloway to support their Tenants with emergency top-ups of £50 to avoid households having their energy supplies being cut off.

We have also developed additional support mechanisms for private sector tenants which includes a similar emergency Fuel Top Up which is being successfully administered by Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service (DAGCAS). This has been especially welcomed by the private sector tenants as they are at more risk of falling behind in their energy payments due to the on-going increase in private sector rents which have greatly increased since the beginning of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

We have also continued to support the Warm Winter Heating Project through the third sector organisation The Hub which delivers this project throughout the region. Specifically designed for households where fuels such as coal and oil heating are the main fuel costs, this project continues to provide large supplies of Briquettes which are delivered to the residents' home address and grants to residents who are struggling with home oil costs.

Additional funding is being sourced for the continuation and expansion of these project from March 2022 onwards due to the increased costs of home energy costs due to the Ofgen Price Rise Increase.

All of the above projects are being evaluation and full details of each will be used to shape future fuel poverty products moving forward.

6. 9 Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Benefits

Dumfries and Galloway Council Financial Wellbeing and Benefits Teams continue to deliver an incredibly high level of support and assistance to all residents throughout our region in this time of unprecedented need.

Table 6 – Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Reduction (CTR) caseload by ward

	Number of CTAX Properties	Percentage Occupied Properties	Percentage Occupied properties with CTR	Number of active HB claims	Value of Weekly HB	Number CTR	Value of Weekly CTR	Number not UC	Universal Credit	Value of weekly CTR (UC Customers)
Annandale East and Eskdale	5220	95.2%	14.72%	372	£ 28,716	739	£ 10,760	509	230	£3,471
Annandale North	7346	94.9%	16.06%	574	£ 45,778	1122	£ 17,120	733	389	£6,060
Annandale South	7062	96.1%	17.45%	581	£ 48,532	1193	£ 17,204	711	482	£7,109
Annandale and Eskdale Total	19628	95.5%	16.21%	1527	£ 123,026	3054	£ 45,084	1953	1101	£16,641
Abbey	2717	95.4%	12.27%	192	£ 16,060	318	£ 4,801	231	87	£1,355
Lochar	6594	96.8%	9.96%	303	£ 24,308	637	£ 9,639	451	186	£3,070
Mid and Upper Nithsdale	5189	93.2%	20.18%	536	£ 43,294	976	£ 13,793	656	320	£4,584
Nith	6856	95.5%	14.43%	614	£ 67,027	961	£ 13,423	611	350	£4,894
North West Dumfries	6876	95.8%	25.38%	884	£ 76,540	1682	£ 23,721	936	746	£10,662
Nithsdale Total	28232	95.5%	16.87%	2529	£ 227,229	4574	£ 65,376	2885	1689	£24,565
Abbey	2825	92.0%	15.88%	206	£ 16,515	419	£ 6,273	291	128	£1,825
Castle Douglas and Crocketford	4699	94.1%	14.00%	384	£ 36,538	621	£ 9,146	442	179	£2,631
Dee and Glenkens	5426	90.2%	13.36%	376	£ 29,520	660	£ 9,983	475	185	£2,884
Stewartry Total	12950	92.0%	14.15%	966	£ 82,572	1700	£ 25,402	1208	492	£7,340
Mid Galloway and Wigtown West	7112	91.2%	20.60%	703	£ 59,129	1347	£ 20,158	952	395	£5,938
Stranraer and the Rhins	7943	93.2%	24.49%	1007	£ 85,895	1818	£ 26,725	1194	624	£9,180

Wigtown Total	15055	92.3%	22.67%	1710	£ 145,024	3165	£ 46,883	2146	1019	£15,118
June 2022 (snapshot)	75865	94.2%	17.37%	6,732	£ 577,851	12,493	£ 182,746	8192	4301	£63,664
March 2021 (snapshot)	75408	94.0%	18.70%	7603	£ 628,281	13,314	£ 185,079	9080	4234	£56,212
March 2020 (snapshot)				8,290	£ 660,527	12,795	£ 168,016		3008	£36,921
December 2019 (snapshot)	75,097	93.7%	18.19%	8,506	£ 675,894	12,786	£ 168,329		2779	£34,001

The above table details the Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Reduction (CTR) caseload by ward and details the position as at 14 July 2022 and a comparison for March 2020 and March 2021. The number of Housing Benefit cases continues to reduce as people transition to Universal Credit (UC). The HB caseload currently stands at 6,732 which a reduction of 871 since March 2021. However, customers on Universal Credit remain eligible in the main for Council Tax Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payments, Scottish Welfare Fund etc, which are administered by the Local Authority.

The number of active Council Tax Reduction claims continues to fluctuate as changes in the customers circumstances change the level of their CTR award. The active caseload as at 14 July 2022 is 12,493 which a reduction of 302 since March 2021. However, caseload is beginning to rise again, following the change in the regulations for customers on Universal Credit from April 2022, with an increase of 187 households since March 2022. Take up activity continues to ensure all customers who are eligible for this support, are encouraged to apply.

While there is a reducing HB caseload, and CTR remains a fluctuating situation the volume of work for new claims and changes remains high. Currently as the Benefits Team also support Free School Meals / Holiday Hunger / Discretionary Housing Payments / Self Isolation Support Grant and Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery payments administration, the team are stretched to cover all the demands from these. As at 25 July 2022 there were 5,145 benefit administration processes outstanding. Additional resource was agreed by Finance Procurement and Transformation Committee on 17 June 2021 and has been used to employ additional staff since September 2021. The majority of this funding will end in November 2022, and the impacts of this will continue to be monitored.

6.10 Tackling Food Insecurity

Our Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 1 has tackling Food Insecurity as one of its main outcomes and a range of projects have now started which have built on the dedicated co-ordinated, joint co-production projects which were already in place throughout our Region.

Our Poverty and Inequalities Team have also worked in conjunction with the national Food Network Scotland Project to complete and publish a new dedicated Leaflet which highlights the range of Financial Support and Welfare Services which are currently available within Dumfries & Galloway. Leaflets will be supplied to all food providers shortly which will be added to all Food Parcels and deliveries completed.

This joint Project will greatly increase the number of contacts which are made to the hardest to reach families and individuals within our region and all food providers have also noted that they will provide additional help to contact any of the Services on the new Leaflets if their clients are struggling to complete or who have no means of making this first step to accessing additional financial wellbeing support including debt management and income maximisation.

6.11 Fareshare in Dumfries and Galloway 2021-2022

Fareshare is the Community Food Share Project managed by Move On throughout Scotland. Whatever the focus of a service, as long as you use food to make a difference in your community you can sign up for this service. The food which is provided is surplus from the food industry. Surplus food occurs everywhere in the supply chain from field through to fork and includes surplus food from growers, manufacturers and retailers.

As well as giving organisations access to varied and nutritious food, a Fareshare Membership saves food providers money. Fareshare Food is worth an average of £7,900 to each of the Community Food Members.

Dumfries and Galloway Council again allocated Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Policy Development Funding in April 2021 to cover the Membership & Delivery Fees for each of our 15 Memberships in recognition of the significant contribution which this Project makes to combating food insecurity.

During 2021/2022, our 15 Fareshare Organisation Members received the following allocations of food:

- *169 Tonnes of Food Delivered*
- *402,389 Meal Portions*
- *£603,583 Value of Meal Portions*
- *162 tonnes of Co2 saved*

This above figure is all the more impressive given that the Fareshare Membership guarantees the following amounts for our Region:

- *91.8 Tonnes of Food to be delivered*
- *218,565 Meal Portions*

Our Fareshare Memberships have provided an amazing additional 77.2 tonnes of food which equates to 183,824 additional meal portions. This Project continues to make a significant difference to all of the Food Banks supported and each and every client supported through the provision of these essential supplies.

An added benefit of this project is the additional bonus of helping to save on Co2. Through all of the food products and supplies which have been received in, an extra 162 tonnes of Co2 has been saved which will greatly contribute to our Dumfries and Galloway Council's Carbon's Emissions Target.

In addition, during March 2022, we successfully secured an additional four new Memberships for the following organisations:

- *The River of Life Church, Dumfries*
- *The Oasis Youth Centre, Dumfries*
- *Castle Douglas Stepping Stones Project, Castle Douglas*
- *Dalbeattie Community Initiative, Dalbeattie*

Case Studies from food providers clients which highlight the difference which this selection of high-quality food makes to the families most in need is included within the Case Study Section of this Report.

6.12 Period Dignity Project in Dumfries & Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway Council were one of the first Local Authorities in Scotland to introduce the allocation of free Period Dignity Products in both Primary and Secondary Schools which we funded from March 2017 onwards.

We further developed our provision of Free Period Products during Covid 19 with the development of our Online Period Dignity Project which offers anyone in the Region in financial need the opportunity to order Free Period Products Online which are then delivered to their home address. This Service has been very successful in reaching individuals and families in need and also ensuring that the products are received with no stigma for the residents being supported.

This project is delivered and managed by our Support DG Team with our Poverty and Inequalities Team providing the Strategic Lead as well as managing the funding for the Project. The following table highlights the increase in support which this Project has provided from April 2021 – March 2022.

Table 7 – Period Dignity Project April 2021 to March 2022

	Deliveries	People Supported	Products Delivered
April 2021	671	1056	2461
March 2022	1199	1974	4734

We are currently investigating a new delivery model from July 2022 onwards which would potentially involve a co-production model with Food Bank Providers within our Region in order to continue with the expected increased need for this Project due to the Costs of Living Crisis.

6.13 Free Bank to School Uniform Events, Uniform Stores and Warm Winter Clothes Events

From April 2021 – March 2022, we again completed our Free Back to School Uniform Events during August 2021 and also Free Warm Winter Clothes Events in late November / early December 2021.

These events have been specifically designed to help families and young people to receive additional new and pre-loved clothing and supplies including stationery, water bottles and lunch boxes before they head back to school for their new Term after the summer holidays. The Events which are held throughout the Region also feature Hairdressers who provide free Hair Cuts to all pupils attending, saving parents and carers at least £10 for each child. This additional benefit from the event ensures that the pupils have everything that they need to head back to school, free of charge and ready to face all of their peers with no stigma in relation to their Clothes, Haircuts and stationery supplies.

During the last year, over 6,500 items of school uniform were donated, cleaned and redistributed throughout our Region with just over 500 pupils assisted through this project. The clothing items have also been saved from landfill which is again reducing our Co2 emissions as a local authority.

During this year, we have also further developed and launched 7 permanent Free School Uniform Donation and Collection Points throughout our region. These sites are available throughout the whole year for any families to collect additional items whenever they are needed. The locations of each are listed below:

- Reuse Recycle, Enterprise House, Fountain Way, Stranraer, DG9 7UD
- Newton Stewart Initiative Community Shop, Dashwood Square, Newton Stewart, DG8 6HQ

- Dalbeattie Community Initiative, 71 High Street, Dalbeattie, DG5 4HA
- Castle Douglas Community Town Shop, 188 King Street, Castle Douglas, DG7 1DB
- Action for Children, Kirkfield, Greystone Avenue, Kelloholm, DG4 6RB
- Poverty & Inequalities Team Free Uniform Store, Loreburn Hall, Newall Terrace, Dumfries, DG1 1LN
- Newstart Recycle, Provost Mill, North Queensberry Street, Annan, DG12 5BL

Our Free Warm Winter Clothes Events was a new Project which our Poverty and Inequalities Team developed and delivered during November and early December 2021. Five events were held throughout our Region with approximately 315 families receiving a range of warm winter clothes which have helped them through the cold winter months.

In addition to the free clothes, all families receive information on the day of where to access help and advice in relation to benefits, local food banks and help and advice on financial wellbeing through the insertion of leaflets within the bags which are provided when the families arrive at the event.

We are planning to increase the number of families and young people supported in the coming year through our permanent Uniform Sites and also through additional events which we may hold during the October and Easter School Holidays.

6.14 Embedding Financial Inclusion Referral Pathways in Health Services

Work continues to improve the links between money advice services and health and social care services across Dumfries and Galloway, resulting in an increased number of referrals to money advice services and substantial financial gains for local families. Health Visitors continue to routinely enquire about financial wellbeing and money worries at appropriate contacts with parents and carers of young children. Maternity Service continues to signpost expectant and new partners to DAGCAS and are working to embed routine enquiry and online referral.

In the reporting period, 52 direct referrals from the Health Visiting service resulted in a client gain of £23,166, which predominantly related to Disability Living Allowance applications. It is likely that this data under-represents the true number of referrals and the client financial gain as there are challenges with source reporting and also because client gains from benefits checks (requests for which are increasing in response to the increasing costs of living) often result in low or non-existent gains.

6.15 Family Nurse Partnership

In the reporting period, the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) had 83 active clients. FNP works with first time mothers under age 19, from early pregnancy until the infant is two years old, at which point the family returns to Health Visitors within Universal Services. With parents' economic self-sufficiency one of the main aims of the programme, support and advice is delivered to two priority family groups (families with children under 1 and mothers under 25) to

break the cycle of poverty and achieve study or career aspirations that can contribute to future financial wellbeing.

6.16 Raising awareness with Health and Social Care staff

Having a basic knowledge of inequalities and the impact of poverty and child poverty on health and wellbeing enables staff to deliver poverty sensitive services for the people who use them. A short 2-hour online training session has been developed and is being delivered live to staff working across the Health and Social Care Partnership. With approximately 40 staff participating in the first few sessions during the reporting period, plans to further roll-out the training to enable more staff to develop an awareness and develop actions they can take to tackle poverty and inequality in their service area will ensure that financial wellbeing is a consideration in that the Partnership delivers.

7. Case Studies

Building on the previous chapter, this chapter aims to bring to life through Case Studies the impact of our work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts. It also demonstrates 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 families involved.

7.1 Case Study 1 – Free School Meals Financial Support

J had contacted the Challenge Poverty Inbox for help in relation to a change in her financial circumstances due to her family break up. She had three children between Primary and Secondary School age and was really struggling in terms of finances due to the change in financial circumstances – the family had already been struggling prior to the break-up and the additional stress which this has caused was a factor in the subsequent split of the family.

J was referred onto the Dumfries and Galloway Council's Education and Benefits Team and our Welfare and Benefits Team who helped with completing the streamlined process for applying for the Free School Meals Benefits & School Clothing Grants as well as additional funding including Crisis Grant Funding. A full Financial Review was completed and all of the resulting Benefit Payments were successfully applied for paid to J.

Our Poverty and Inequalities Team had followed up a few weeks later to check on how J was managing since we had last spoken to her. The feedback received was that the help and support provided by all of the Teams who had helped her since she had contacted our Challenge Poverty Inbox had been incredibly supportive, welcome and had made such a difference to her and her children at the most difficult time in their lives. Due to the complexities of the split within the family, the Team had been able to advise and support JC and help her with the benefit funding which she was now receiving. She noted that the additional payments which she would be due during the School Holiday Periods (Holiday Food Fund Payments and School Holiday Bridging Payments) would be incredibly welcome as these were the times when the family would usually struggle the most. J noted that the Team had explained how the various funding amounts would be paid and when and that over the next year, the total additional funding would amount to over £2,000.

J wanted to highlight the positive and supportive way in which she had been dealt with by all of the Team Members which she had engaged with, especially during the times which she had completed the Applications. She noted that everyone had been very patient with her during times when she was very emotional which she really appreciated.

This support has made a huge difference to this family both financially and in terms of increasing their mental health too. J now has contacts that she can get in touch with for advice and guidance and will be forever grateful for their dedicated support when she and her children were in most need.

7.2 Case Study 2 – Free Back to School Uniform Events

D had called into one of our Free Back to School Uniform Events which we held in Castle Douglas in August 2021. During discussions while she was receiving help to find additional uniforms for her two children, she had opened up about her financial struggles which she was experiencing at that time.

Due to her family circumstances and income, she was not eligible to receive Free School Meals and other benefits as she was just over the financial threshold for applications. She noted that her family had been really struggling as due to the COVID-19 Pandemic her partner had been on furlough and then had his hours significantly reduced when the firm he worked for did reopen. The last 18 months had been incredibly challenging and she was so grateful for the support which this event offered.

D was able to choose on the day 24 items of clothes for her two children, some of which were new. This meant that they had new uniforms which would fit them perfectly when they returned to school and additional uniform items which they could grow into through the school year. D noted that having so many items to choose from meant that the only items that she would now need to purchase would be new shoes for both children.

Additional help was offered for referrals to support organisations including Dumfries & Galloway Citizens Advice Service, the local Food bank, the Period Dignity Project and also the Castle Douglas IT Centre for help with accessing refurbished digital devices for her family all of which she has since accessed and received support from.

D has highlighted that calling into this one event was a changing point in her and her family's life at its most challenging time. All of the support which she has received has made significant impacts and all have resulted in her family's income stretching further than it did in prior to that point. As well as the financial impact which all the support has helped with, the increase to all of the family's mental wellbeing has been incredibly welcome too and has significantly eased the pressure which they have all been under. D's partner has been applying for full time employment and is hoping to secure a new position as soon as possible which will hopefully bring them back to the income levels which they had experienced before the COVID-19 Pandemic began.

7.3 Case Study 3 – Dumfries & Galloway Period Dignity Poverty Project

C had visited one of the Poverty and Inequalities Teams Free Back to School Uniform Events and had chatted with the Anti-Poverty Officer once she had collected a number of both new and pre-loved items from the large number of donations which had been received in.

C had not realised that the Period Dignity Project was available and after giving all of her details to the Anti-Poverty Officer who registered her for this Project,

she received deliveries every month for herself and her two teenage daughters of the period products which she had chosen.

C had e-mailed the Anti-Poverty Officer to thank her for her help a few months later and had noted that this Project was saving her around £20 every month between all of the various products which her family would normally have to purchase (one of her daughters was still at Secondary School and was continuing to receive free products from this site too). C noted that because of this saving, she was able to top up her Electricity and Gas Meters with this additional funding every month which she had not been able to complete before. Although this funding may not seem to be a significant amount, just having this amount of additional available cash means that one of her worries was reduced and she knew that each month, she would have a little extra left over to top up her meters.

This Case Study helps to highlight the difference how even a smaller amount of saving being made through the provision of free products to our families in need through projects which have been specifically designed to help the most vulnerable can make. Every element of support which is provided helps our most vulnerable families when they are on such tight budgets when every penny counting, every day, every week and every month.

7.4 Case Study 4 – Fareshare Support to Foodbanks within Dumfries & Galloway

J is a single dad of 3 young children who is struggling financially- to meet all of the family costs every month. He can only work part time due to him being a single parent. He has been supported by both the Dumfries & Galloway Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team along with DAGCAS but due to the rising food and energy costs he is being squeezed more financially than ever before.

Due to his home being in a rural area, he has also experienced the rising costs of fuel in the last month which has further reduced his limited income. He was referred to his local Food Bank by our Council's Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team.

J noted that this additional support from the Foodbank has made a huge difference to himself and his family over the last few months. Being able to call in on a weekly basis to receive the Food Parcel which has been packed with his family in mind has been a lifeline in the most challenging period of their lives. J has noted that the Foodbank Volunteers had given him background information on their formation, their support which they receive from the Council and other local Groups including Tesco and also the Fareshare Project which deliver the majority of their food donations every week. Although the foodbank never knows in advance what will be supplied every week, they receive through a large number of items which can all be used by J and his family.

J has noted that this has helped him and his family to develop more cooking skills as the food can be used in so many different ways and he now aims to cook up a few days of meals if he can from the customised Food Parcel which he receives, then freeze these for using later in the week. It has also ensured that his children get the chance to experience a whole range of different foods which he admits he would never have had the chance to try as every penny which he has is spent on the essentials which they need every week to survive. J noted that he now dreads his shopping trips due to the huge increase in price rises and that every time he goes into the supermarket knowing exactly how much money he has to spend, that he can buy less items every single time due to the price increases.

The stress of just surviving at this time is immensely challenging but he keeps going for the sake of his children to make sure they are shielded from the financial challenges which he and his family face.

Without these essential food supplies every week, J would not have been able to continue to feed his family due to the rising food costs. Before the extra help from the Foodbank, he was only eating once a day to make sure that his three children had meals every day. He is also very grateful for the kindness of the Food Bank Volunteers who continue to support him and to highlight all new projects and activities which they are informed of through their networks which are aimed to help families in need.

J has noted that just having a few kind words and knowing that this help will always be there has been one of the few things which has got him through the last few months. The support which Fareshare provide has been a lifeline to him and his family and J has noted that once he is more financially secure and his children are slightly older, he is hoping that he can repay the kindness which he has been shown by volunteering with his local foodbank.

Case Study 5 – Emergency Fuel Top Up Vouchers for Private Sector Tenants

After a Referral which was completed to Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service, K was supported to apply for a Fuel Top Up Voucher to help her at a time of crisis in her life. K, a young person living on her own, was staying in private rented accommodation and due to a loss of employment because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, she had fallen behind in her energy bills which she had previously managed well through her Top Up Meters.

She had also been further impacted due to an unexpected rise in her rent which she had been informed of by her landlord in the correct manner. This was causing her further financial challenges at a time when she had just lost her job.

K stated that the referral to DAGCAS enabled her to receive the additional support of the £40 Energy Grant Top Up which saved her electricity from being cut off. This grant also provided the funding to keep her Meters topped up for

the time which she needed while securing new employment. In addition to this, she also received specialist advice and guidance in relation to her Tenancy from DAGCAS and Dumfries and Galloway Council's Housing Options and Homeless Team and was supported to move to a new private sector tenancy.

K highlighted that without this initial referral to DAGCAS to receive this support, she would have defaulted on her electricity account payments which would have affected her credit score, resulting in a negative impact on being able to secure future tenancies and finance. She also noted that the Advisors had been very supportive in terms of the help and advice which they had provided and without their guidance, she would not have been able to secure her new tenancy at a time when she was very much alone and just beginning a new post which she was finding very stressful.

K has confirmed that this one small grant has kept her life on a better financial footing and enabled her to move to a better tenancy which has significantly reduced her rent costs moving forward. K reports that just one intervention to help her at a time in crisis led to her life being improved in more ways that she could have ever hoped for.

Case Study 6 – Routine enquiry of family finances in Health Visiting

R is a single father with caring responsibilities for his 5 young children aged under 8. Previously from the travelling community, reliant on public transport as unable to afford to run a car, R recently moved to a DGHP property in a rural area of the region.

When the trainee Health Visitor completed the Universal Health Visiting Pathway 4-5 year review in November 2021, using routine enquiry they asked about family finances. In receipt of Universal Credit at £935 per month and unsure what else they were entitled to, R reported that he was worried about money and often had to choose between putting the heating on and buying food. The trainee Health Visitor referred R to DAGCAS for a benefits check and to the local foodbank.

DAGCAS supported R to claim for Child Benefit, Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Card and Best Start Grants. DAGCAS were also able to help family claim an electronic device for the eldest child, carpets for living room and bedrooms, and a fridge and a washing machine.

The Financial gains for the family were:

- Child Benefit: £344.94 per month
- Scottish Child Payment: £346.68 per month.
- Best start card for youngest: £18 per month
- Referred for Free School Meals and Holiday Food payments for eldest child: worth approx £360 per year
- Best Start Grant Early Years Payment for twins: £535.30
- Best Start Grant Pre School Payment for second child: £267.65

Referral to the local church-led food bank ensures that the family receives a food parcel delivered to their door every fortnight plus occasional energy vouchers. R has told the trainee Health Visitor “I don’t know what I would have done without all your help, I’m so grateful”.

Case Study 7 – Parental Employability Support

F is a mother to 3 children under the age of 18. At the point of accessing support, she had been unemployed for a long time, was living in an employment deprived area and felt that she lacked skills. She was struggling to find employment that could fit in around her family commitments. A Key Worker from the local authority Employability and Skills team met with F on a few occasions, initially to build a relationship and understand her worries, needs and any aspirations. F was then registered for support as part of the No-One Left Behind pipeline of support, specifically Parental Employability Support. She was keen to take part in a programme being delivered by the Employability and Skills team in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway College. This offered her the chance to get experience of working and the opportunity to gain qualifications as well as benefitting from one-to-one key worker support throughout.

F has flourished with this support. She has achieved a huge amount already with the guidance, encouragement and support of her key worker. She completed 100 hours of work placement at a local primary school and passed her learning assistant course with Dumfries and Galloway College. Her organisational skills, ability to manage deadlines and set and achieve goals has improved and along with developing the skills to update her C.V. and practising interviews, this has given her the confidence to apply for employment.

The great news is that F has succeeded in securing a 3-month contract as a Parental Support Worker. In this paid role she will be working with a group of other parents to help design an employability support offer that meets the needs of parents in similar challenging circumstances. She will continue to have the support of her Key Worker as she builds her portfolio of evidence to demonstrate her transferable workplace skills and achieve her SCQF Level 5 Workplace Skills Award. We have every confidence that F will continue her progress and with ongoing support where needed, will succeed to secure sustainable and fair work that meets her needs as a working mother and therefore helps improve the lives of her three children.

8. Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026

8.1 The Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Strategy and Partnership

Following the evaluation of “On the Up”, Dumfries & Galloway Council’s first Anti-Poverty Strategy 2015 to 2020, a new approach to tackling poverty and inequalities was developed and agreed by Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership. A new Poverty and Inequalities Partnership has been developed with an Independent Chair, and a new Strategy which will be delivered by the Partnership agreed.

The vision of the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Strategy 2021-2026 is:

‘A Dumfries and Galloway in which local action has driven poverty as low as possible and has mitigated as far as possible the impact of poverty when experienced’

Supporting this Vision are four Outcome Objectives and two Enabling Objectives:

- Objective 1: Tackle severe and persistent poverty and destitution
- Objective 2: Maximising income of people facing poverty
- Objective 3: Reducing the financial pressures on people in poverty
- Objective 4: Building individuals and communities’ ability to deal with the effects of poverty

Enabling Objective 1: Building organisational and system capacity

Enabling Objective 2: Addressing barriers to access

The Poverty and Inequalities Partnership has four Sub-Groups focused on delivering actions to achieve the partnerships objectives. The four Sub-Groups are:

- Tackling severe poverty and destitution and building individual and community capacity to tackle poverty
- Maximising income and reducing debt
- Reducing financial pressure on people in poverty
- Developing our approach to Child Poverty.

Sub-Group Chairs were also appointed from the Partnership to ensure that a Strategic Lead with expertise on each of the Sub-Groups subjects would successfully drive forward the delivery of each of the new Action Plans:

- Sub-Group 1: Claire Brown, Operations Manager, Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway
- Sub-Group 2: Christine Sinclair, Operations Manager, Dumfries & Galloway Citizens Advice Service
- Sub-Group 3: Sue Irving, Housing Manager, Loreburn Housing Association

- Sub-Group 4: Laura Gibson, Health & Wellbeing Specialist, Public Health Improvement, NHS Dumfries & Galloway.

In addition, a Communications Sub-Group will take forward a partnership approach to communications relating to the work of the Partnership along with a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which will ensure that the delivery of each of the Short Term and Long Terms Actions included within each of the Action Plans are delivered within the agreed timescales.

The formation of the new Partnership and the Sub-Groups will ensure that our overall vision is reached through our new approach which is now delivered through effective partnership working at all levels by all public sector and third sector partners. By ensuring that we all share our approach to reducing and mitigating poverty and inequalities throughout our Region, we will be able to effectively and efficiently work together by:

- Local partners maximising their impact through a partnership, whole organisation, whole system and action-focused approach.
- Organisations and staff at all levels within them understand the contribution that their organisation and team, and they personally, can make to tackling poverty in all their work.
- Every initiative taken forward by the public and voluntary sectors considers its impact on people in poverty, and access issues for people in poverty, and their actions do not at any point add to the burden of people in poverty.
- Funding and activity focuses most on those in most need.
- Organisations learn from each other's successes and mistakes.

This Child Poverty Action Plan & Sub-Group both complements and supports the work of the other three Sub-Groups and their actions plans providing additional projects and actions which will ultimately reduce child poverty throughout our Region. All of our Action Plans should always be considered in the whole as four plans which, although they may appear to show some projects and actions which will achieve similar outcomes, each project has been developed to complete a specific action which will deliver our agreed outcomes which will compliment and support others throughout the timescale of our Partnerships Strategy.

8.2 Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan

8.2.1 Objectives

The objectives of our Child Poverty Action Plan are:

- To develop, deliver and manage 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.

We aim to achieve these objectives by working in partnership to focus on activities that:

1. Maximise income from employment

2. Maximise income from benefits
3. Reduce the costs of living
4. Provide help in other ways – access to opportunities and support that will help families to address the cause and effect of poverty e.g. food insecurity, period poverty and digital exclusion.

8.2.2 Priority families

Reflecting the evidence about who is most at risk of poverty, we will prioritise:

1. lone parent families
2. families with a disabled member
3. families with 3+ children
4. families where the mother is under 25
5. families with a child under 1
6. ethnic minority families.

In addition to this, we will also focus our actions on:

- families with experience of the care system
- families with a caring responsibility.

8.2.3. Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026

The table below sets out the activities that the Partnership plans to undertake from April 2022 to March 2026 to achieve the objectives set out above. This Plan both introduces new actions and builds upon existing action already being delivered locally.

It must be noted that many of the activities detailed within the three Action Plans of the other Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Groups will impact on and reduce Child Poverty and therefore these Action Plans should be read alongside the Action Plan presented below. This Child Poverty Action Plan focuses specifically on households with children which is significantly different to the other three Action Plans.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that there is work in other strategic areas that cross-cuts Child Poverty. As this is out with the scope of the Child Poverty Sub-Group and the wider Poverty and Inequalities Partnership to deliver and report on, these activities are not detailed here.

The other national and local legislative, policy and priority areas that cross-cut Child Poverty include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| *Best Start Bright Futures | *Regional Transport Strategy |
| *Scottish Attainment Challenge | *Children's Services Plan and |
| *Early Learning and Childcare | Priorities |
| *Local Employability and Skills | *Violence Against Women and Girls |
| Partnership Delivery Plan | *Community Learning and |
| *Local Housing Strategy | Development Partners' Strategic |
| *Mental Health Strategy | Plan |
| *Physical Activity Strategy | *Maternal and Child Health |

- *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- *Child Protection/Public Protection
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- *Corporate Parenting Plan
- *Young Carers Strategy
- *Health and Social Care Strategic Plan
- *Regional Economic Strategy
- *Locality Plan on Food Sharing
- *Equality Outcomes
- *Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
- *Education Improvement Plan
- *Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits
- *Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan
- *Whole Family Wellbeing Fund
- *UN Sustainable Development Goals

8.2.4. Monitoring and evaluation

A number of the short-term actions set out below are enabling actions which seek to explore the potential for developing new actions. These actions won't always have reviewable outputs or outcomes, however monitoring their delivery is important as additional actions are developed and added to the Action Plan. To do this comprehensively for both short and long-term actions, the Tool developed for monitoring and evaluating the actions of the other three Partnership Sub-Groups will be periodically completed for each action within the Child Poverty Action Plan.

Currently, the Community Planning Partnership has remitted the requirement for Local Authorities and NHS Board's to jointly report on actions to tackle child poverty to the Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership. However, with the establishment of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership, the Lead Officers for reporting on Child Poverty have been tasked with developing our local approach to child poverty and following the development of the Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026 will develop a proposal for how our work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts will be taken forward, including monitoring and evaluation of action.

In line with the other three Sub-Group Action Plans, the short-term actions are expected to be delivered within a 6-month period. Long-term actions will take one year or longer to achieve and require to have specific timescales agreed with the lead service(s).

Performance measures and indicators for each of the actions also require to be added to the Plan.

Driver of child poverty reduction - Income from employment Hourly Pay, Hours worked, Skills and qualifications, Labour market, Digital inclusion				
Actions for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)		Cross-over with other P&IP Sub-Group Action Plans / other strategic plans	Lead service(s)	Timescale for achieving Action - Short or long-term (*to be specified)
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	Long-term
2	Capacity building sessions are offered to ELC and school staff to enable them to effectively identify and signpost parents from low-income families for whom employability support would be appropriate		Education, ELC partners, Local Employability and Skills Partnership	Long-term
3	Develop an effective means of sharing accessible information on opportunities with ELC/ school staff to enable them to pass on to parents they know may benefit		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	Long-term
4	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	Long-term
5	Build capacity of organisations providing employability support to use 'Better Off in Work' Calculations to help families understand the	Local Employability & Skills Partnership	Local Employability and	Short-term

	potential difference to family income by being in employment/ better employment	Delivery Plan 2022 - 2027	Skills Partnership	
6	Develop a tailored offering for parents using No One Left Behind 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	Long-Term
7	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	Short-Term
8	Support employers to be more inclusive and flexible increasing the number of employers adopting the principles of Fair Work		Local Employability and Skills Partnership	Long-Term
9	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	Long-Term
10	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	Long-Term

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 for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)		Cross-over with other P&IP Sub-Group Action Plans / other strategic plans	Lead service(s)	Timescale for achieving Action – Short or long-term
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	Local Housing Strategy	Housing	Short-term
12	Schools and ELC 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 Plan	Education	Long-term
13	Continue the roll out of free school meals to all ELC and primary aged school children P1 to P5 and increase the uptake of Free School Meals in secondary schools	Education Plan	Education, School Meals Service, Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits team	Long-term
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 Plan Sub-Group 3 Outcome 3	Education	Long-term

		Sub-Group 1 Objective 3.2		
15	Low level mental health support continues to be available to young people in school settings and communities	Children's Services Strategic and Planning Parenthood (CSSaPP) Mental Health Strategy Group Mental Health in Schools Sub-Group	CSSaPP Mental Health Priority Group, Education, Youth Work Services	Long-term
16	Explore further opportunities that ensure children and young people in low-income families have access to food through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast clubs in ELC settings, schools and other community settings • Holiday food provision (cash payments) • Weekend food provision (cash payments) • Active Schools activities • FareShare Membership and Provision 	Education Plan	CSSaPP, Education, Youth Work Services, Active Schools, Third Sector. Poverty and Inequalities Team	Short-term
17	Promote free sanitary products in primary and secondary schools and some community settings, including provision over school holidays		Education, Poverty and Inequalities Team	Long-term
18	All Midwives, Family Nurses and Health Visitors actively promote Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods to all pregnant women and families	Maternal and Infant Nutrition Framework	Women, Children and Sexual Health Directorate	Long-term

			(WC&SH)	
19	Explore opportunities to further increase the number of Credit Union Schools Savings Projects in schools (currently 10)	Sub-Group 3 Objective 1	Credit Unions, Education, Poverty and Inequalities Team	Short-term
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 Plan	Education	Long-term
21	Pupil Equity Funding continues to be used discretionally to fund school excursions for eligible families	Education Plan	Education	Long-term
22	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	Short-term
23	Repeat the Cost of the School Day research from 2015 and establish new actions	Scottish Attainment Challenge/Cost of the School Day	Education	Short-term
24	Explore opportunities to develop additional actions that aim to increase the uptake of School Clothing Grants, Free School Meals,		Financial Wellbeing and	Long-term

	<p>Holiday Food Payments and Council Tax Reduction by low-income families.</p> <p>Current actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Referencing of all families who apply for Benefits which would also qualify for Free School Meals and Free School Clothing Grants • Continue to use the Automatic Enrolment Process which has been developed by D & G Council Education Benefits and Financial Wellbeing & Revenue Teams (ensures that Applicants do not have to complete more than one Application Form) • Highlight to all families through the Education Services Family Contacts to get in touch for a Benefit Check to see if they may be eligible for Free School Meal Benefits and Free School Clothing Grants • Also highlight that through their applicants to the above, that families will then also receive the Scottish Government Holiday Food Fund Payments • All new clients who complete Benefit Checks are advised if they would be eligible for Free School Meals • Referrals continue to be made by DAGCAS to the Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team, D & G Council for all of the above Benefits. • Families are supported and signposted through each Primary & Secondary School to apply for a Benefit Check to access the additional financial support available 		Revenues Team, Education	
25	Explore opportunities to offer discretionary funded childcare / ELC places for children who do not meet the eligibility criteria i.e. child <		CSSaPP, Education	Short-term

	2 years (including FNP families and low-income families with children under 2 years) where young parent <18 wishes to return to education or training		Social Work Private Childcare Sector Childminders	
26	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	Holiday Food and Childcare Programme	CSSaPP, Education, Private childcare sector	Long-term
27	Explore opportunities with SWestrans to develop actions that will improve the availability and affordability of transport for low-income families	Regional Transport Strategy	SWestrans, D&G Council Transportation Team,	Short-term
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	Regional Transport Strategy, Sub-Group 3 Objective 4	D&G Council Transportation Team, Education Youth Work Services	Long-term
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	Long-term
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 upto 18 years to enable them to claim expenses for travel, subsistence and accommodation costs in respect of hospital visits		WC&SH	Long-term

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	Short-term
32	Promote Pharmacy First across the Partnership to reduce costs of medicines for minor illness or complaints (available for all children and also adults in receipt of certain benefits)		WC&SH Pharmacies Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team, All Partners	Long-term
33	Promote baby boxes which provide essential items for new parents, increasing the uptake		WC&SH, All Partners	Long-term
34	Explore opportunities to promote healthy affordable food choices for families of children with complex needs e.g. diabetes		WC&SH	Short-term
35	Explore opportunities to build upon Connecting Scotland's work to provide children from low-income families with digital devices and internet connectivity.	Digital Connectivity	Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	Short-term
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	Long-term
37	Complete a mapping of all Breakfast, Mid-Morning & Snack Clubs / Projects which are delivered in primary and secondary schools	Sub-Group 1	Poverty and Inequalities Team, Youth Work	Short-term

			Services, Education	
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	Short-term
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, Youth Work Services	Short-term
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.	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	Short-term
41	Increase awareness to all families of The Hub Help for Heating Scheme Include all families in the launch of the new Emergency Energy Payment Assistance Programme for Vulnerable People Scheme (due to be launched in October 2022) including highlighting in the same ways above	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	Short-term
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	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, RSLs	Short-term
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	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	Long-term

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	Long-term
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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 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)		Cross-over with other Sub-Group Action Plans / other Strategic Plans	Lead Service(s)	Timescale for achieving the Action – short or long-term
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDFs on iPads back up leaflets in baby boxes which may have been discarded 	Sub-Group 2	WC&SH, DAGCAS Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team	Short-term
46	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	Long-term
47	The Grow Well in D&G App is expanded to include information about welfare and benefits including Young Patients Family Fund		WC&SH	Short-term
48	Increase the awareness of social work staff to embed income maximisation advice, benefits checks and charitable funding applications into social work practice for all families with social work involvement including Kinship carers.	Sub-Group 2	CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority Group, Social Work, DAGCAS,	Long-term

			Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team	
49	Expand the support available to Care Experienced young people and Homeless young people to maximise their income from social security and benefits	Housing Strategy	Social Work, Housing	

Other priority areas not covered by the three nationally identified drivers of child poverty reduction					
Actions for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)			Cross-over with other Sub-Group Action Plans / other Strategic Plans	Lead Service(s)	Timescale for Achieving the Action – short or long-term
50	Financial wellbeing and confidence	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	Long-term
51	Impact assessment	Poverty impact assessments are embedded into decision making by all Public and Third Sector partners through the Fairer Scotland duty to impact assess against equality, diversity, health inequalities and children's rights		All partners	Long-term
52	Poverty related stigma	Explore opportunities to take action to reduce stigma related to income, financial status and welfare		Communications Sub-Group, Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	Short-term
53	Collective approach	Explore through the CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority Group and Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, opportunities to ensure low-income families know how to access help and	Whole Family Support	CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority Group	Short-term

		support when they need it, taking a no wrong door approach.			
54	Using data and evidence	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	Short-term
55	Mapping our family support system	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 and develop solutions to overcome these		NHS/HSCP, Council, CSSaPP, Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	Short-term
56	The voice of people with lived experience	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	Short-term
57	Increasing the number of 16–19-year-olds accessing their Child Trust Funds	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	Long-term
58	Young people's voice	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		Youth Work Service	Short Term

		with around 50% of all children and young people aged 12-25 in Dumfries and Galloway			
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