

PERTH AND KINROSS
COMMUNITY PLANNING
PARTNERSHIP
Working Together for Stronger Communities

Local Child Poverty
Action Report
2022/23 and
Local Child Poverty
Action Plan 2023/24



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Policy Context

This report has been jointly produced by Perth and Kinross Council and NHS Tayside, it reflects the wider collaboration with our Community Planning Partners and a deepening engagement with our key stakeholder groups.

It is our fifth Child Poverty Action Report and includes actions taken to implement our [Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026](#).

The Child Poverty Delivery Plan aligns with [Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan](#) of the Scottish Government which covers the same period. It connects to and will deliver a rights-based approach as set out in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) with reference to those articles which relate to child poverty:

- [Article 3 \(best interests of the child\)](#)
- [Article 6 \(life, survival and development\)](#)
- [Article 12 \(respect for the views of the child\)](#)
- [Article 26 \(social security\)](#)
- [Article 27 \(adequate standard of living\)](#).

It is underpinned by [GIRFEC \(Getting It Right For Every Child\)](#) the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by offering the right help at the right time. It supports children and their parents to work in partnership with the services that can help them. The GIRFEC approach is child-focussed and uses the [SHANARRI](#) wellbeing indicators, to identify need and measure progress.

It also aligns with the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind approach to employability support. In particular, the growing emphasis on supporting parents into work, and to increase their earnings in work.

It will contribute to the delivery of [Scotland's Promise to care experienced children and young people](#) that they will grow up loved, safe and respected and relates to the delivery of [Plan 21-24](#) which requires organisations to demonstrate how they are ensuring that they play a part in mitigating the impacts of poverty.

It flows from the [Perth and Kinross Corporate Plan 2022/23 - 2027/28](#) which has Tackling Poverty as a corporate priority and the [Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2022-2032](#) adopted by our Community Planning Partners which sets Reducing Poverty as a strategic priority.

Context

Perth and Kinross has the outward appearance of an affluent area. We have only 3 data zones in the bottom decile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) – Blairgowrie East (Ratray) – 03, Hillyland, Tulloch and Inveralmond – 01 and Muirton – 01. A deeper dive into the data coupled with lived experience research and the experiences of our frontline services paints a different picture with areas of severe poverty and deprivation that we need to tackle.

The powerful testimony of people with direct experience of poverty led us to an understanding that "intense poverty exists in Perth and Kinross" and that "it restricts the life chances and opportunities of those who experience it." The report on "Child Poverty in Perth and Kinross" by the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit and the Poverty Alliance galvanised the Community Planning Partnership, Perth and Kinross Council and NHS Tayside to make tackling poverty a key priority.

The real extent of poverty is masked by 3 things:

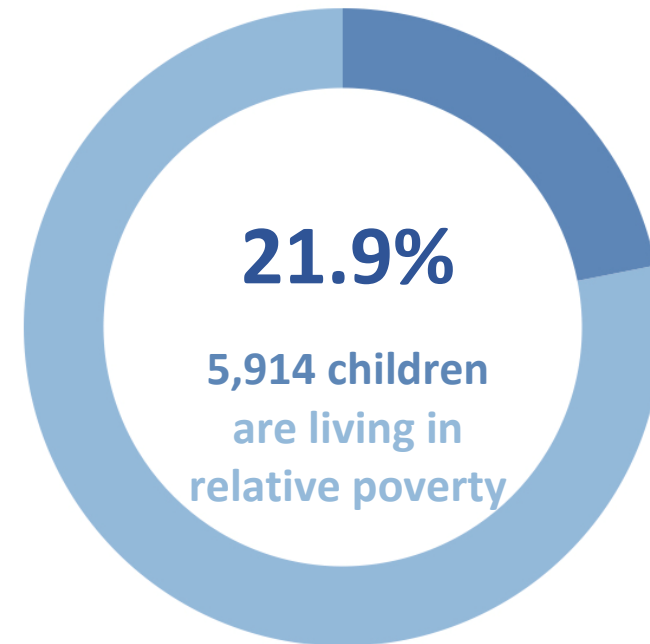
- Poverty is stigmatised and it is difficult for people to be open about the fact that this is a challenge that they face.
- The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, used as a proxy for measuring poverty, identifies deprived areas, not people. It is not good at identifying poverty where it is dispersed such as in rural areas like Perth and Kinross. The Scottish Government distributes £369M to local authorities based on SIMD data.
- The over-reliance on income-based measures which do not take account of the higher cost of living in rural areas. The Scottish Government's report "Poverty in Rural Scotland" found that many rural households were at risk of poverty due to their high expenditure on travel, food and fuel.

The Poverty Threshold (before housing costs) is 60% of median earnings – equivalised by family type and size.

The UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS) Report 2022 provides an income calculator which can be used to identify the income level which different family types need to attain to secure an acceptable standard of living. These figures were then updated to give an approximation of where the MIS rested for different family types in rural Perthshire.



The most recent estimates for child poverty in Perth and Kinross assess that 5,914 children (21.9%) are living in relative poverty.



This suggests that mitigation measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect as poverty rates have remained fairly stable between 2017 and 2022. Further information is available [here](#). We do not yet know what impact the Cost-of-Living Crisis will have had on children as this data has not yet been gathered.

This year's Measuring Poverty Report which is included in the [Children's Scorecard 2021/2022](#) is incomplete as some of the statistics that we would normally use to measure child poverty are not available as COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns have disrupted the collection of data. The data that is available in the main was collected before the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis was felt and is therefore slightly out of date. However, there are some positive movements:

- The number and percentage of employees across Perth and Kinross earning less than the Real Living Wage as defined by the Real Living Wage Foundation has significantly reduced (13,000 in 2019/20 to 8,000 in 2021/22).
- There has been a slight reduction in job density, meaning fewer people are chasing available jobs (0.77 in 2019/20 and 0.84 in 2021/22).
- Median earnings increased by 8.8% in the last year; this would have enhanced the ability of families to cope with the Cost-of-Living Crisis where inflation reached 10.4%.

However, there are areas for ongoing concern:

- There has been little movement on the gender pay gap (13% in 2019 and 14% in 2022).
- Private sector rents increased by 26% over 3 years (2019/20 – 2020/21 and 2021/22) compared with a 9.6% increase in local authority rents over the same period.
- The number of workless households increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic and is still 10% above the pre-COVID-19 rate (4,000 in 2019/20 and 4,400 in 2021/22).
- There has been a significant increase in payments from Scottish Welfare Fund which is an indicator of ongoing financial stress (£342,463 in 2019/20 and £460,834 in 2021/22).

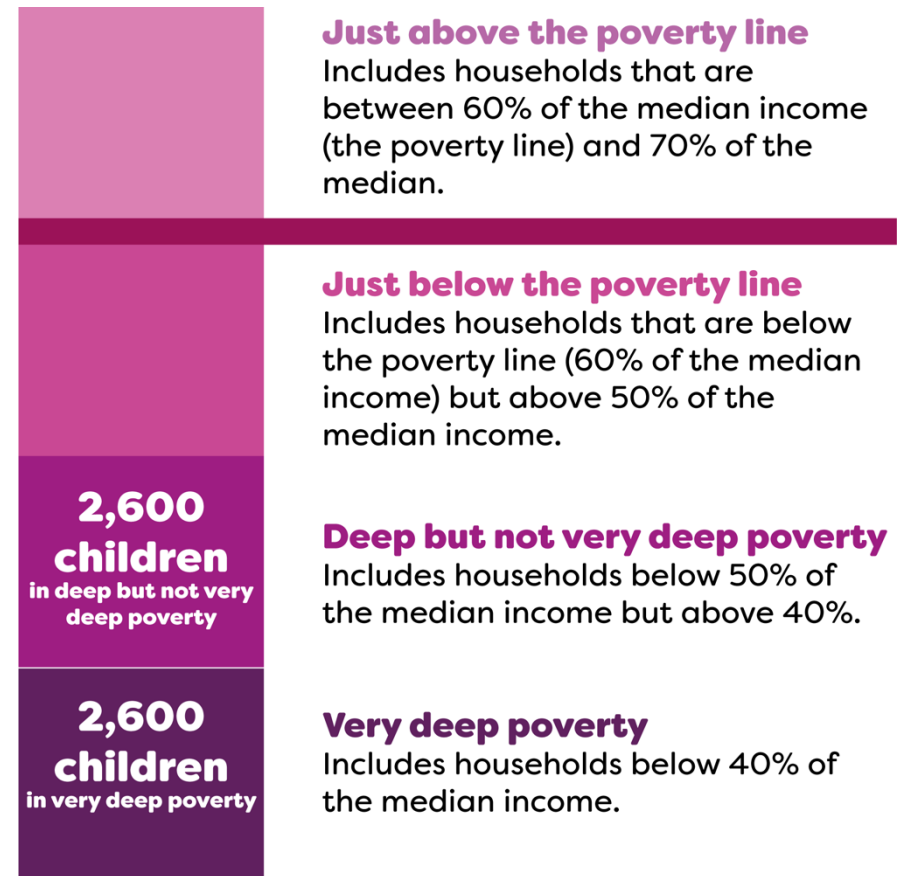
Deepening Poverty for Some

There are different levels of poverty experienced by people:

- Just above the poverty line – this includes households that are between 60% of the median income (the poverty line) and 70% of the median.
- Just below the poverty line – this includes households that are below the poverty line (60% of the median income) but above 50% of the median income.
- Deep but not very deep poverty – this includes households below 50% of the median income but above 40%.
- Very deep poverty – this includes households below 40% of the median income.

Local figures for Perth and Kinross for deep poverty and very deep poverty do not exist, however the Joseph Rowntree Foundation produced the following estimates for us based on their research:

- 2,600 children in deep but not very deep poverty.
- 2,600 children in very deep poverty.



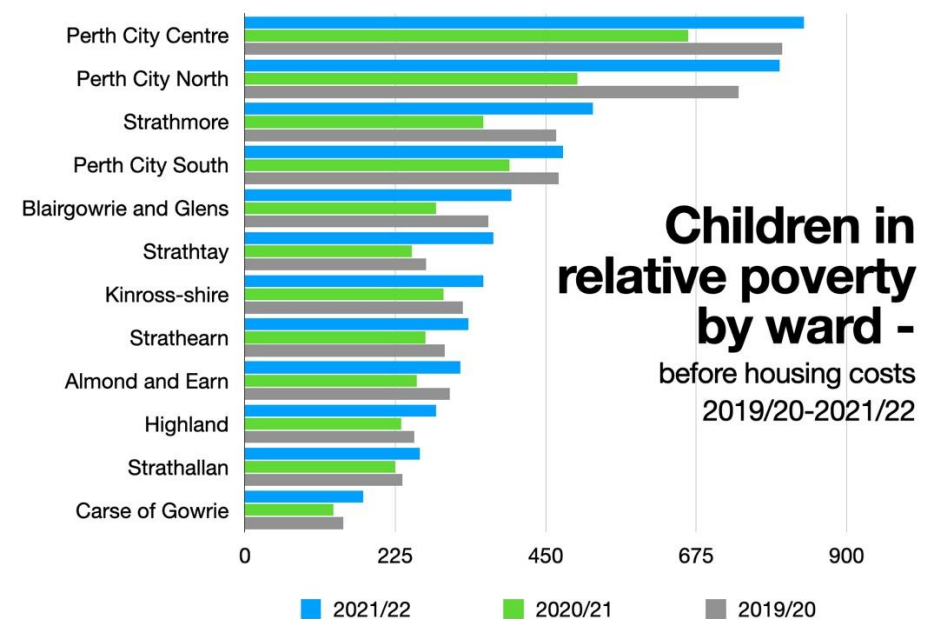
ACORN Data

Aside from those who are experiencing relative poverty, the ACORN data for Perth and Kinross reports at household level. As there is an average of 2.21 persons per household for Perth and Kinross Council (based on 2018 data), it is likely that the number of people who are struggling financially stands at around 58,000 – or 1 in 3 of those living in Perth and Kinross.

	Total	%
Affluent Achievers	21,572	31%
Rising Prosperity	2,728	4%
Comfortable Communities	20,017	29%
Financially Stretched	16,860	24%
Urban Adversity	7,783	11%

Ward Level Data

At this stage we can only provide Ward level data for children in relative poverty – before housing costs. Therefore, this is an underestimate of the actual numbers of children in poverty. It does however provide a useful means of comparing one Ward with another in terms of prevalence. In previous years percentages have been provided, but these are not currently available for 2022.



Spotlight on

Anti-Poverty Taskforce

The Taskforce was born out of a need to provide a more co-ordinated and cohesive response to protect the most vulnerable citizens of Perth and Kinross. The Taskforce was established to leverage expertise from across Perth and Kinross and beyond to engage and inspire collective ownership and commitment to mitigating the worst effects of the cost-of-living crisis in the short-term and mitigate the longer-term effects of poverty within Perth and Kinross.

The Perth and Kinross Anti-Poverty Taskforce provides independent active leadership and support for cross-sector collaboration and action to help those most affected by poverty and the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The Taskforce draws upon expertise from across the area and offers meaningful support to those experiencing poverty and most at risk from rising costs. It also provides a co-ordinating focal point for all the current activities aimed at reducing inequalities – child poverty, fuel poverty, food supply, rural poverty premium.

The Taskforce membership is drawn from elected members, third sector partners, Police Scotland, NHS Tayside, PKAVS, Citizens

Advice, GrowBiz, supported by Council officers and with expert advice from Professor John McKendrick at SPIRU (Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit). A dedicated project manager has been recruited to provide support to the Taskforce, funded by Perth and Kinross Council but managed through our partners in PKAVS.

So far, the Taskforce has:

- facilitated direct connections to a large range of organisations offering support and assistance
- co-ordinated an approach to Cash 1st with Perth CAB securing funding from the Trussell Trust to develop a Cash-First partnership
- facilitated the expansion of the Perth Gift Card for use in local supermarkets to enable a Cash-First approach to be broadened
- co-ordinated a multi-agency approach and communications in response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis and in particular winter planning arrangements

Ongoing work includes:

- contributing to the development of a Perth and Kinross Anti-Poverty Strategy, co-produced with all key stakeholders

- facilitating discussions with Stagecoach and the Trussell Trust to provide free bus travel to foodbanks
- developing a scheme for the disposal of Council minibuses to local community groups to facilitate better transport links, especially in our remote and rural communities

Community wealth building – NHS Tayside as an anchor institute

NHS Tayside is the largest Anchor Institute in the local region of Tayside and as such recognises the significant opportunities this presents and its part to play in improving not only the health of its population but in also supporting the region’s social and economic development.

Examples of current completed actions and work in progress include:

As an employer

- Full implementation and accreditation of the “Real Living Wage”.
- Being a Disability Confident Employer providing links with employability programmes and guaranteed interviews.

- Work to increase visibility in different sectors of population through promotion of jobs at careers fairs and schools etc.
- Partnership working with colleges and encouraging uptake of foundational apprenticeships through a current pilot in six schools within Tayside.
- Continuing support of healthy working lives initiatives and staff wellbeing programmes alongside promotion and ongoing enhancement of flexible working policies.

As a mass procurer of goods and services

- Full implementation and accreditation of the “Real Living Wage” for all contracts.
- Increasing % of total spend with local suppliers (currently 35% is local to Tayside).
- Meet the buyers’ events, procurement surgeries and providing coaching on Social Value (SV).
- Development and promotion of NHS Community Benefits Gateway to local community groups.
- Ensure apprentice numbers on contracts are advocated and adhered to.
- Work to understand where the current gaps in recruitment are and utilise the opportunities to include a requirement in

construction contracts to encourage employment for long-term unemployed; utilising links with Local Employability Partnerships and the meet the supplier events.

NHS Tayside's position as an Anchor Institute will encourage other organisations to reducing health inequalities associated with poverty.

Children's Scorecard



PKC commissioned research on the lived experience of Priority Families experiencing poverty in Perth and Kinross. The research was conducted by the Poverty Alliance and the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit at Glasgow Caledonian University. Families told us how poverty impacted on their lives and how they experienced our services. Families were asked what services they needed and what services could do differently or better to meet their needs.

The areas of most concern to families were:

- support for mental health and wellbeing
- stigma and dignity
- crisis support
- access to good quality, affordable housing
- for schools to provide information about what help was available and improve the quality of school meals
- affordable, flexible childcare and after school provision to support parental employment
- affordable transport

(More detail on these issues can be found in the Children's Scorecard linked above.)

The research was shared with Perth and Kinross Council's Services – was used to determine the indicators that were used to measure how well the Services respond to meet needs.

A Children's Scorecard was developed as a means of reporting on progress and identifying areas of improvement.

The first Children's Scorecard laid the baseline – and in 2022 the second Children's Scorecard was published. It showed that progress had been made in most of the areas identified by Priority Parents – but it also identified those areas where further work is required. These have now been factored into ongoing workplans and will be addressed in the coming year.

The Children's Scorecard for priority parents has:

- created a focal point for discussion with services which centres on what parents need – and enables the Services to factor this into their Service Improvement Plans
- identified gaps in provision and to move resources to those areas of most importance to parents
- enabled us to measure how well we are responding to the concerns raised by parents

A review of the Children's Scorecard identified areas of improvement which we will address in the coming year.

- We will close the time lag between gathering and reporting on the performance information – we will do this by aligning with the Council's Improvement Planning process and the LCPAR (Local Child Poverty Action Report) reporting cycle.
- We will embed consultation with Priority Families in the wider stakeholder engagement and consultations undertaken by the services and ensure that the Children's Scorecard areas of focus are updated accordingly.

NHS Tayside Community Benefit Gateway

A Community Benefit Gateway has been established by NHS Tayside as part of its broader role as an economic anchor institution. Ongoing work through NHS Tayside procurement processes have encouraged local suppliers to register and use the portal – 60 new suppliers signed up in the last quarter of 2022/23 – bringing supplier sign-ups on the system to 244.

Click [here to access the NHS Community Benefits Portal](#).

Perth and Kinross Council is also working with communities and businesses to achieve social value from the money we spend. We include Community Benefit Clauses on as many of our contracts as possible. For more information on what this has delivered click [here to access the community benefits map](#).

The Love Letham Commission comprised 3 distinct groups to provide appropriate spaces for people to work with peers before collaborating more widely.

Each school Commission was given £500 for their time that they could spend on something which would boost wellbeing at their school. Young people fed back that they preferred to work without adults and then share what they came up with.

The issues raised were broad – and poverty-related issues featured amongst those that young people wanted to see addressed. Young people’s focus on safety, decent homes and mental health support was echoed by adults.

Concerns relating to poverty raised by young people

- People can’t afford good food.
- People don’t have enough money.
- Homelessness.
- Houses are overcrowded.
- Access to services.
- There is no doctor, nurse, health visitor or mental health services in Letham.
- If you are disabled, it is hard to access everything.

- Spaces for young people to meet and spend time.
- Not enough public transport.
- Need more after school clubs.

What comes next?

Building on the experience of Love Letham, Perth and Kinross are setting up a multi-disciplinary team of service providers from across the Council and Community Planning Partners. They will be empowered to respond to the unique needs of the area – and will address the issues of concern raised by young people.

“We like having our opinions listened to and valued.”

Member of the Inbetweeners Youth Group

“Children’s voices lead the whole process. We kept going back to them to get more clarification and test things with them. We believe this is more meaningful than typical engagement processes with children.”

Commissioner

“We hope that Perth and Kinross Council will be able to follow through quickly with simple things. Making younger people part of the decision-making process is an excellent way of beginning this journey.”

Elsa (20) and Linda (72) Commission members

Wraparound Care for Working Parents

The Pitlochry community was provided with Out of School Care Services by a voluntary management committee. They reached out to the Childcare Strategy Team as the service was at risk of closure. A Pitlochry Wraparound Care pilot was agreed to provide affordable, flexible childcare, before and after school and during some of the school holidays.

Pitlochry WAC (Wraparound Care) currently provide childcare for 68 children from 45 families. The pilot has been extended to deliver this service for the coming year ensuring families can access dependable childcare that will allow them to sustain employment.

Cash-First

[Letham4all](#) is a local community anchor organisation and is the lead organisation for a Cost-of-Living Crisis working group involving a range of organisations including Perth and Kinross Council, third sector organisations delivering services to vulnerable groups and locally-based community service delivery organisations.

Aim

To identify new ways of delivering a Cash-First approach to support people impacted by the Cost-of-Living Crisis and to deliver a faster response to people needing emergency top-ups of utility cards.

Challenges

- Governance around cash handovers.
- Concerns around storing and accessing cash in office premises.
- Time taken to process support, especially in relation to emergency pay-as-you-go utility top-ups, keys and cards.
- Concerns around issues relating to dignity, lack of personal choice and confidentiality in the community.

Problems Encountered

Very few charities use the PayPoint System and as a result it took longer than anticipated to complete the installation of the PayPoint service. As a stopgap measure the group purchased a supply of MicroNEX Perth Cards. These were used at participating shops as a pre-paid Mastercard and enabled people to purchase anything from food, clothing, fuel and utilities.

PayPoint

Letham4all received some funding from Perth and Kinross Council to install a PayPoint System. The process involves:

- obtaining the service user's name and mobile phone number
- sending a unique code to the service user's mobile phone

This can be used by the service user at any PayPoint store to top up a utility card, pay a bill or receive cash.

Installing PayPoint cost £10,000 and there is an ongoing annual cost of £7,500 in addition to a charge of £1.50 for each transaction.

The Perth Card cost the face value of the card and the staff time involved in handing out or delivering the card to the service user.

Use of the PayPoint system reduced staff time taken to access and process a cash payment.

“It eliminated the need for staff to go with the tenant to top up the card or key. It is less intrusive to those who have received it and doesn't feel as though staff are micromanaging the situation.”

Amounts paid out were small – from £20 to £45. Over a 3-month period, 27 payments were made. Letham4all saved an estimated £32.70 per transaction as a result of reducing the staff time involved in processing payments.

85 Perth Cards with a value of £30 were distributed by Letham4all enabling those who were experiencing financial crisis to get immediate help to tide them over until the service user could be signposted to Welfare Rights, Perth CAB or other support organisation.

“We have been able to offer immediate support which alleviates stress to parents and their children. There is no stigma attached to this type of payment. Anecdotally we have been told of the relief that people feel at being given these relatively small amounts of money to tide them over in a financial crisis, preventing things getting worse in relation to their own mental health and being able to provide the basic necessities for those they care for is really important.”

“We are able to help someone who is having an emergency out with the opening hours of the Community Fridge and local foodbank. And it offers personal choice and dignity in the process.”

Next Steps

Perth and Kinross Council and Letham4all are interested in a test of change project to see if the PayPoint System can be scaled up and delivered across Perth and Kinross. This could be of assistance in rural areas where access to community larders and foodbanks is hampered by transport availability and cost.

Crisis Prevention – A Belt and Braces Approach

Households can access our local Financial Insecurity Fund (FIF) if they agree to a welfare benefits check. This ensures that households are receiving their full UKG entitlements. The Welfare Rights Team ensures that households are receiving their full entitlements so that they are better equipped, financially, to cover their ongoing costs of living. Once this is done, the families’ situation is reviewed, and payments can then be made if the household fits the eligibility criteria with a view to preventing crisis

at a future date. The process has minimal ask of customers in terms of evidence due to the access we have to statutory information.

NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds) Crisis Grants

There is no comprehensive benefit check for these cases as there is no recourse to public funds. We routinely make onward referrals to the Ethnic Minority Law Centre for these households, many of whom are EEA Nationals with no status.

Child Poverty, Debts and Rural Poverty

The FIF targets low-income households, Priority Family Groups and people with protected characteristics.

The Fund includes one-off rural hardship payments and other payments which assist with the cost of oil/gas/solid fuel which requires large, upfront payment. The Fund can also assist with priority debts such as rent, Council Tax, energy, school dinner and broadband debt.

Added Value

Households do not need to be in crisis to access the FIF therefore it is preventative.

Help with priority debts can:

- prevent or remove the costs attached to diligence
- prevent sequestrations
- replace some provision that Welfare Reform removed (Discretionary Housing Payments in respect of Council Tax)
- prevent the need for Money/Debt advice thus protecting Partners valuable resources
- address the issue of school dinner debt which SG later included in their priorities and issued best practice
- act as a powerful incentive to households to have a benefit check (win-win) which reduces the need for crisis assistance later

Effective partnership working with the Child Protection Team, Community Safety, HSCP (Health and Social Care Partnership) and Health colleagues to prevent risks to children and adults and contributes to prevention and detection of crime, of which we have some examples.

Partnership Working

Pink Saltire/Perth Welfare Society/Gypsy/Traveller Community Groups

We worked closely with Pink Saltire, Gypsy/Traveller Community Groups and Perth Welfare Society to provide funding to them so

that they could provide grants, with one-off funding, to households in their communities that found barriers to accessing mainstream assistance. We are working with the Equalities Team and these groups to establish what would best meet their needs and how services should be delivered to meet those.

Working with schools

We have a referral agreement in place with schools and Community Link Workers Families on a low-income are awarded grants to contribute to the cost of clothing for school-age children.

Aberlour – Tayside Hardship Project

The three Tayside Councils work in Partnership with Aberlour to provide an enhanced welfare rights service to families with children on the edge of care. Almost all of the families have debt situations and we have been able to assist over 20 families.

Testimonials from Aberlour:

Feedback from two Aberlour families:

“It’s been the best thing anyone has ever done for me.”

“I feel much more confident that I can manage my own money better now and I know what to do in the future if I have a problem.”

Breakdown of FIF payments 2023/24

A breakdown of the payments made direct to people’s pockets can be found in the [Welfare Rights Team Annual Report 2022/23 - Payment Schemes - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\)](#) and in addition, Pink Saltire was allocated £15K to distribute grants and Perth Welfare Society was allocated £10K to distribute grants to the people in their communities.

The FIF goes beyond signposting, advice and information; it is practical help at a point in time and at the first point of contact. It is an example of one of the most holistic ways of working. It is preventative and it also gives a bit of hope to households. If entitlements are in place and if debts are removed, reduced or more manageable then the overall stress for low-income households, most of whom may have multiple stressors, reduces and people feel that wee bit more able to cope.

Cost-of-Living Crisis Response

A Cost-of-Living Crisis group was convened by Letham4all, a local community anchor organisation. The group comprised participants from Perth and Kinross Council (Chief Executive's Service, Housing, and Education and Children's Services), Police Scotland, NHS Tayside, Church of Scotland, Baptist Church, Aberlour, Remploy, Penumbra, Perth Welfare Society, and Homestart. Membership of the group varied between July 2022 and April 2023.

The group identified the need for a community-based response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis which spanned the provision of advice, warm spaces, community food, warm home packs and emergency Cash-First payments.

Partly in response to this group's feedback, the Council prepared a Cost-of-Living Crisis Strategy which was fast tracked for approval in September by Perth and Kinross Council who provided an initial funding package of £320,000 which was later augmented by a further £100,000. The fund opened in October 2022 and closed in January 2023 when all funds had been allocated.

120 community organisations were involved in delivering warm spaces, warm home packs and community food. Signposting to other services and support was available at all locations.

The evaluation reported that 16,575 people were direct beneficiaries of the community response (11% of the population of Perth and Kinross) and 1,049 volunteers were involved in delivering the support provided.

A Reflective Practice Day is planned for September 2023 to capture lessons learned and propose actions to be taken this winter.

“There was a real benefit to people knowing that lunch would be provided, and their heating didn't need to be on until the evening – it saved money and worry.”

St Columba's Episcopal Church

“2 people found employment through engaging in the warm space. People were able to come together and found friendship and support.”

Rannoch Community Trust

“I have been attending the warm space from the very start, it gives me so much. Not only does it reduce my costs, but I find myself being part of a group that is very friendly.”

Anonymous Beneficiary

“Bringing my kids and letting them play games while I speak to others gives me a very big break. I feel I don’t need to ask the common questions such as is the food halal? Thank you very much.”

Anonymous Beneficiary

“The warm space has been a lifeline for many. We recently received over 30 people from the Sri Lankan community. We always ask how they found out about the warm space – the answer is varied – social media, PKC website and word of mouth. Daily we are serving a minimum of 50 people.”

Perth Welfare Society

Programme Areas for Action in 2023/24

Work – Support parents to enter, sustain and progress in work

- Support parents into employment which pays the Real Living Wage or more.
- Take action to close the gender employment and pay gaps.
- Address the challenges presented by rurality.

Improvement Required

- Greater engagement with business and the private sector. To support the need to take effective action to help parents into employment that pays the Real Living Wage and close the gender employment and pay gaps.
- Ensuring our investment in economic development delivers inclusive growth that benefits all in our communities and delivers economic opportunities for groups and communities which are currently experiencing disadvantage.

- Join up action to deliver access to affordable housing, transport and childcare to support parents into work.
- Remove the barriers to employment for parents and those living in rural and remote rural areas.

Partners

Anti-Poverty Taskforce, Perth and Kinross Council, NHS Tayside, GrowBiz, other business partners to be identified.

Actions

- We will work with organisations such as the Business Gateway, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and GrowBiz to champion the benefits of paying the Real Living Wage and the Fair Work principles.
- We will identify, and promote best practice on delivering the Real Living Wage and embed this within our Economic Wellbeing Strategy and ensure it features in Supplier Development programmes.
- NHS Tayside will work with employability, procurement and estates staff and partners to develop itself as an Anchor Institute with the aim of using its strategic influence to tackle poverty and health inequalities.

- Raise awareness about the Real Living Wage during Challenge Poverty Week.
- Update Perth and Kinross Economic Wellbeing Strategy to ensure investment is used to promote Fair Work, address barriers to labour market participation, and creates economic opportunity and investment in areas of disadvantage.
- NHS Tayside will prioritise its role as an anchor employer and will improve the interface with the Local Employability Partnership to improve access to employment and representation in the NHS workforce amongst people who are care-experienced, carers, black and minority ethnic groups including Gypsy Travellers, people living in the 20% most deprived areas, disabled people and lone parents.
- PKC will take the following actions to extend childcare provision to support parental employment:
 - expand the service redesign of Wrap Around Care to provide flexible, affordable childcare packages
 - launch Community Childminding to support the most vulnerable families
 - increase uptake of strong start 2 places
- Support parents who wish to take-up self-employment as childcare providers to gain the necessary skills and qualifications to provide community-based childminding services.
- Ensure more joined-up partnership working between the Council's Employability services for parents, and teams working to support parents through childcare and educational initiatives.
- Make effective use of the additional £300K secured in the Council budget from 2023/24 to provide additional support to parents seeking to get into work or increase their earning power in work.
- Make effective use of the Parental Employment Support Fund to connect childcare, employability and transport offers to remove barriers to employment for Priority Parents.
- Work with the Local Employment Partnership and Network to promote collaborative approaches to securing funding for employability programmes which target Priority Parents.

Dignified Living – Maximise the support available to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs

- Addressing the rural poverty premium.
- Addressing the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller and other minority ethnic communities.
- Addressing stigma which prevents parents and families from seeking support.

Improvement Required

Delivering a one-Council, whole-family, whole-community approach requires us to develop and embed multidisciplinary, cross-organisational working in our localities to connect children and families to the help that they need and want.

We need to have a more systematic approach to targeting and engaging with our Priority Families and those with Protected Characteristics.

Partners

Anti-Poverty Taskforce, Perth and Kinross Council, NHS Tayside, Improvement Service, Perth CAB, Letham4all, community anchor organisations, locality-based multidisciplinary teams (Highland Perthshire, Coupar Angus, Letham) Perth Welfare Society.

Actions

- Using data-driven approaches which analyse socio-economic data and data relating to the uptake of Council concessions, plot gradients of unmet need to local schools.
- Target income maximisation, employability offers and, where possible, social prescribing to schools with the greatest levels of unmet need associated with poverty and inequality.
- Develop locality-based multidisciplinary, cross-organisational teams who can support and connect parents and families to services which take them beyond crisis interventions to sustainable livelihoods. This will involve:
 - formation of locality, multi-disciplinary, cross-organisational teams
 - engagement with key stakeholders in local communities including Priority Parents and people with Protected Characteristics

- mapping of local service provision across the public, third and community sectors
- development of referral management processes and software to support frontline workers and local service managers to connect families to a broad range of services covering crisis intervention, whole-family health and wellbeing, housing, income maximisation, debt management and employability
- delivery of training programmes to frontline workers (Support and Connect) and Priority Parents (Building Resilient Families) to enable them to support Priority Parents to access the help and support they need to move from crisis to sustainable livelihoods
- identification of local gaps in service provision and development of local service footprints for those services currently centrally delivered
- devolved budgets to support the development and implementation of Locality Plans
- NHS Tayside will promote the Warmth Matters app and website to enable frontline workers to signpost people to a range of services and support across income maximisation, debt and energy advice, mental health and wellbeing and employability.
- Our Welfare Fund Team will work in partnership with Perth Prison to provide an accelerated service to people on release from prison as part of a wider voluntary throughcare programme.
- Our Welfare Rights and Welfare Fund Teams will provide outreach at Perth and Glenochil prisons and to prisoners' families. This will be a Scotland-first, no other Council has ever provided Welfare Fund services within prison establishments.
- Our Welfare Rights Team will work with Aberlour to establish a Welfare Rights Academy to provide training on welfare benefits and income maximisation across Perth and Kinross.
- Develop a joined-up approach to crisis intervention which is underpinned by a Cash-First approach. This will involve:
 - Perth and Kinross Council Welfare Rights and Welfare Fund Teams will continue to deliver Cash-First training to the frontline across Perth and Kinross and work closely with foodbanks and community groups to ensure that those accessing food are first accessing statutory cash provision
 - establishment of a Think Yes fund to enable frontline workers to get quick emergency cash to children

- support Letham4all to make PayPoint System available across Perth and Kinross to Support Cash-First emergency payments of small amounts to tide people over until benefits are received
- NHS Tayside staff will be provided opportunities to access income maximisation services
- The development of a new referral management system (see above) which will be undertaken by Perth CAB and rolled out across Perth and Kinross. NHS Tayside will contribute to the development of Cash-First approaches through networking, co-delivery of training, sharing knowledge of services and good practice.
- NHS Tayside will increase the number of health placed income maximisation referrals to welfare/energy advice services. This will include new work with families where children are severely disabled or have complex needs. We will also focus on staff working in paediatrics to ensure they can refer appropriately to connect families to help and support.
- Following a 'Health in All Policies' pilot with PKC Housing Services, NHS Tayside and Public Health Scotland, NHS Tayside will work with their local authority partners to

strengthen impact assessments around health inequalities and poverty.

(Link to report - [Health Inequalities Impact Assessment](#))

Survive and Thrive – Supporting the next generation to survive and thrive

- Closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Addressing the challenges faced by disabled young people entering further and higher education and the jobs market.
- Addressing mental health and wellbeing issues for parents and children affected by poverty.

Improvement Required

Recognition that children from more disadvantaged backgrounds have not recovered from COVID-19 as readily as those from less disadvantaged families. Address the challenges faced by disabled children and young people, children with complex needs. The poverty-related attainment gaps show a mixed picture, narrowing for P4 and S3, but some areas widening at P1 and P7 and remaining largely static for school leavers. Whilst children from more disadvantaged backgrounds have performed more strongly than ever, those from less disadvantaged families have improved slightly more, essentially bouncing back more readily after the disruption from COVID-19.

Partners

NHS Tayside and PKC (Education and Children's Services)

NHS Tayside Actions

- We will enhance current links with CAHMS to provide training on poverty sensitive practice and referring to services for financial inclusion and cost-of-living support.
- Our Public Health team will work with ECS to promote Cost of the School Day resources.

PKC Actions

- We will work with partner organisations to put in place robust referral pathways around mental health and wellbeing support which parents can access on their own behalf or on behalf of their children.
- We will work with our headteachers to maximise the impact of PEF (Pupil Equity Fund) funding on children experiencing educational disadvantage because of poverty. Education and Children's Services will ensure there is
 - continued promotion of, and support to schools in the delivery of, evidence-based interventions to target aspects of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing building upon our growing local evidence base
 - effective deployment of Scottish Government Strategic Equity Funding in Perth and Kinross to

- rigorously map, challenge and support school PEF building upon existing structures and approaches
 - development of the Closing the Gap Tool to create a holistic planning and impact measurement tool
 - regular reporting and analysis of progress to the Raising Attainment Board
- We will develop and implement a refreshed Raising Attainment Strategy for 2023-2026 reflecting our unwavering commitment to achieving the highest outcomes for all, especially those most disadvantaged by poverty. The Raising Attainment Strategy 2023-2026 will set our approach to ensuring that every child achieves:
 - the highest standards in literacy and numeracy
 - the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to succeed
- We will work in partnership with local community organisations to provide School Holiday “Fuelled for Fun” programmes to provide activities and food to school-age children.
- We will work in partnership with Tayside Contracts to increase the take-up of free school meals.
- Our Early Years and Childcare Service Team will develop work with Gypsy Traveller families to support their child’s development, expanding on the provision of starter sacks.
- We will implement the Perth and Kinross Corporate Parenting Plan 21-24. This will include:
 - creating a Connections Plan for every looked after child
 - providing support and training for foster and kinship carers around strengthening connections between the child and those most important to them
 - strengthening joint work between Children’s Services and Criminal Justice Services to expand programmes in the community to prevent and divert young people away from offending behaviour
 - using an opt-in model, providing all children aged 5+ with access to independent advocacy and information on how to be supported by Children’s Rights Lawyers
 - using an opt-In model, providing independent advocacy to families with children under the age of 5
 - increasing support to the Young People with Care Experience Groups

Other Important Developments Planned for 2023/24

NHS Tayside – Child Health Commissioner

A newly appointed dedicated, Child Health Commissioner to NHS Tayside has a key role in the creation of policy, processes and practice which will contribute to all children and young people's services across NHS Tayside. The Child Health Commissioner will contribute to the strategic approach of tackling child poverty and health inequalities.

Challenges

1. We have not been able to report on services and support to Priority Family Groups and those with Protected Characteristics – outwith the “Fuelled for Fun” holiday food programme. At present our services have no way to identify priority families within the data we collect. In the next year, we will commence discussions with key service providers on how this disaggregated reporting might be achieved in future years.
2. Information Governance and the requirements of the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) legislation prevent us from using Council and NHS held data to identify and target

specific families for support. There are also significant information governance requirements involved in sharing data. We have contributed to the Improvement Service's Rural, Remote and Island Child Poverty Network to raise and address these concerns.

3. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, used as a proxy for measuring poverty, identifies deprived areas, not people. As Scottish Government distributes monies/funding to local authorities based on SIMD data, this is problematic for Perth and Kinross that has rural areas where poverty is dispersed.

Appendix 1 – Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026

Strategic Aims

- To raise awareness about the causes and consequences of child poverty.
- To foster social cohesion and reduce stigma surrounding poverty for children and families.
- To reduce the negative effects of living in poverty for children and families.
- To enable children and families to prepare themselves for a life free from poverty.

Objectives

Work

Provide opportunities and support needed to enter, sustain and progress in work
(Employability and skills, housing and economic opportunity, connectivity and childcare)

Sharpening Focus

- Supporting parents into work that pays the Real Living Wage or more.
- Taking action to close the gender employment and pay gaps.
- Addressing the challenges presented by rurality.

Dignified Living

Maximise the support available to families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs.
(Person-centred support, social security and income maximisation)

Sharpening Focus

- Addressing the rural poverty premium.
- Addressing the needs of the Gypsy Traveller community and other minority ethnic communities.
- Addressing stigma which prevents parents and families from seeking help and support.

Survive and Thrive

Supporting the next generation to survive and thrive.
(Education and Children's Services, Health and Social Care)

Sharpening Focus

- Closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Addressing the challenges faced by disabled young people entering further and higher education and the jobs market.
- Addressing mental health and wellbeing issues for parents and children affected by poverty.

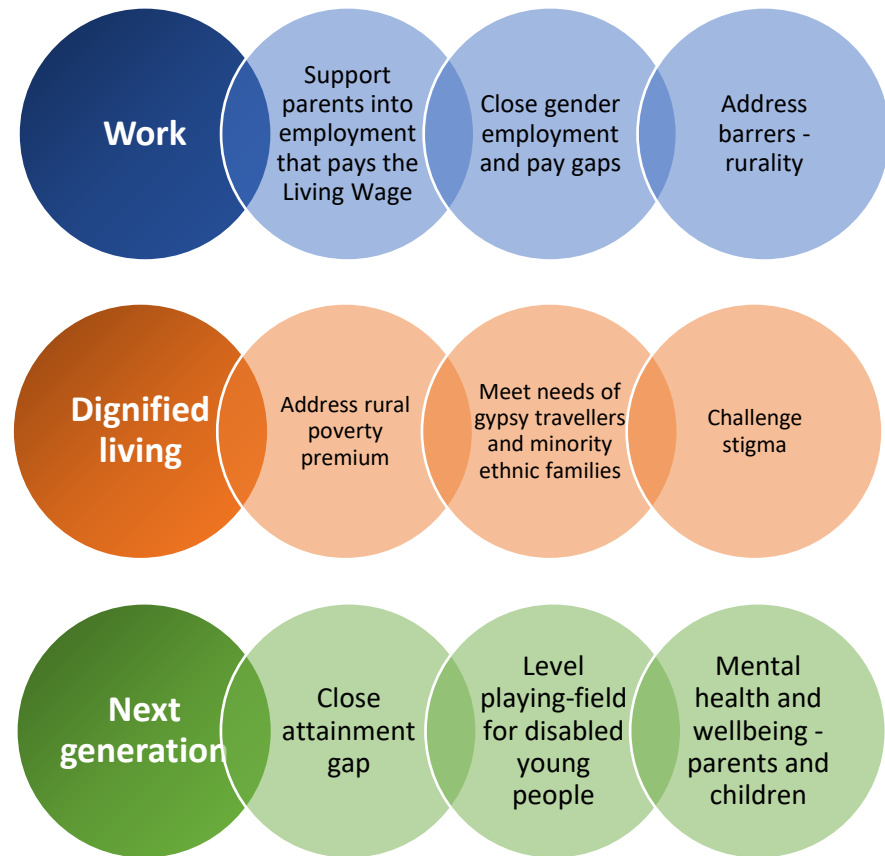
Our Approach

Deliver a one-Council, whole-family, whole-community approach to connecting children and families to the help and support they need to mitigate and move beyond poverty.

Sharpening Focus

- Changing the way we work to use data-driven approaches to identify and connect with families affected by poverty.
- Offer no wrong door approaches to connecting families to the help and support they need and want.
- Developing multidisciplinary, cross-organisational working in teams at locality level to build inclusive communities which strengthen the web of support on offer to families and children affected by poverty.

One Council – whole family – whole community approach

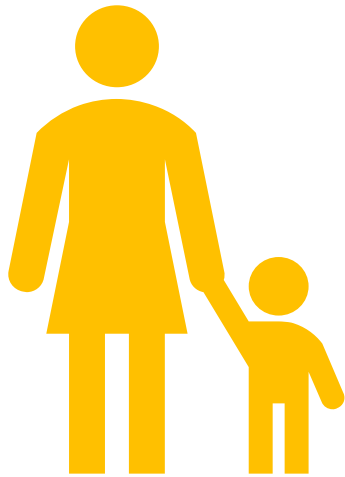


Multi-disciplinary teams – cross-organisational delivering key worker support to connect families to holistic help and support

Appendix 2 – Additional Data on Priority Families

There is limited local data available on Priority Families.

Lone Parents



There are approximately

4,800

lone parent families

in Perth and Kinross¹

Just over a third of families on Universal Credit are headed by a lone parent (31%) – 2,756 families in all ²

Disability



505

households

claiming Universal Credit claim the Disabled Child Element¹

16.5%

of households

with children claiming Universal Credit receive the Carer Element²

¹ Stat-Xplore HHs on Universal Credit – Single Parents May 2023

² Stat-Xplore – HHs on Universal Credit by Carer Element (Feb 2023)

Households with 3 or more children



There are

705 families

claiming Universal Credit who have 3 or more children³

Youngest Child Under 1



There are

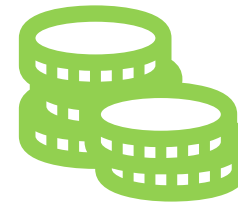
1,153 children

under 1 year of age³

Mothers Under 25

No data available.

Other information



5.8%

of households

with children claiming Universal Credit receive the Childcare Element.

Only 219 families with children are claiming the Childcare Element available on Universal Credit.

³ [Perth and Kinross Council Area Profile \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://nrs.scot.nhs.uk/nrs/scotland/council-profiles/perth-and-kinross-council-area-profile) National Records of Scotland (Aug 2023)

Appendix 3 – Links to Companion Publications

[Children's Scorecard](#)

[Local child poverty action report 22/23](#)