

Meeting of Lanarkshire  
Population Health Primary Care  
Community Services Governance  
Committee

14 May 2019

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## SUBJECT: LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORTS

### 1. PURPOSE

This paper is coming to the Committee:

For approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For endorsement	<input type="checkbox"/>	To note	<input type="checkbox"/>
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The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of planned work to address child poverty in Lanarkshire and seek approval for the North and South Lanarkshire local child poverty action reports.

### 2. ROUTE TO THE COMMITTEE

This paper has been:

Prepared	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reviewed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Paper prepared by Ashley Goodfellow, Public Health Specialist.

### 3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

#### The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (the Act) places a duty on Scottish Ministers to prepare Child Poverty Delivery Plans in 2018, 2022 and 2026. They must report on these plans annually. The first plan was published in March 2018 and is titled 'Every Child, Every Chance – The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22'. The Delivery Plan sets out new policies and proposals to help achieve the 2030 national income-based child poverty reduction targets. These are;

- Less than 10% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- Less than 5% of children are in persistent poverty.

The Act also places a statutory duty on local authorities and NHS Boards to jointly prepare a local child poverty action report, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year. The first of these reports should be published by 30 June 2019. Whilst the legal duty to prepare these reports is on the local authority and NHS Board, both North and South Lanarkshire Partnerships have agreed a multiagency approach across community planning partners, recognising the benefits of collective efforts in addressing this complex issue. Local child poverty action reports should describe the measures being taken in the local authority area during the reporting year (2018/19) and planned measures for the year ahead (2019/20). These measures should contribute to the 2030 targets.

### Current child poverty estimates

The Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland report 2015-18 (based on the Family Resources Survey) estimates that 24% (n=240,000) children in Scotland live in relative poverty.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-two percent (n=210,000) of children in Scotland live in absolute poverty.<sup>2</sup> Both of these measures are calculated after housing costs have been deducted. Relative poverty rates have been rising since 2010-2013, much of which is influenced by economic and political factors which govern the labour market, employment and social security. Welfare Reform is and continues to be a significant factor. Certain population groups are at higher risk of poverty and are therefore a priority for local action. For example, 44% of children with a mother less than 25 years old, 37% of children from minority ethnic families and 36% of children in lone parent families live in relative poverty. Other groups at higher risk of poverty include families with a disabled child or adult, larger families or families with children under one year. These data are not yet available at local level.

### Drivers of child poverty

Evidence suggests that there are three main drivers of poverty and these should be the focus of both national and local efforts. These are;

- Income from employment
- Costs of living
- Income from social security and benefits in kind.

It is recognised that there is a range of work that helps families in other ways to indirectly tackle poverty and inequality, for example, supporting good mental health and wellbeing. However, much of this work sits within other plans and is not replicated here.

The North and South Lanarkshire child poverty action reports 2019 are attached.

## **4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

This paper links to the following:

Corporate objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	LDP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government directive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory requirement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AHF/local policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Urgent operational issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO QUALITY**

This paper aligns to the following elements of safety and quality improvement:

### ***Three Quality Ambitions:***

Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	Effective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Person Centred	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<sup>1</sup> Relative poverty is defined as individuals living in households whose equivalised income is below 60 percent of median income in the same year. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> Absolute poverty is defined as individuals living in households whose equivalised income is below 60 percent of inflation adjusted median income in 2010/11. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are seeing their incomes rise in real terms.

**Six Quality Outcomes:**

Everyone has the best start in life and is able to live longer healthier lives; (Effective)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People are able to live well at home or in the community; (Person Centred)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Everyone has a positive experience of healthcare; (Person Centred)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff feel supported and engaged; (Effective)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare is safe for every person, every time; (Safe)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Best use is made of available resources. (Effective)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**6. MEASURES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Income from employment

Increasing income from employment is key to tackling child poverty. In both North and South Lanarkshire local action reports, this section focuses on employability support for parents, youth employability and tackling in-work poverty. From a health board perspective, this relates to what can be done by NHS Lanarkshire as a large employing organisation. Much has already been achieved by the organisation, including achievement of Living Wage accreditation.

**Key actions agreed for 2019/20 include;**

- **Establishing a process, in partnership with North and South Lanarkshire Councils, to ensure care experienced young people are offered appropriate work placements and employment opportunities within the organisation**
- **Continuing to monitor, and where possible increase, the proportion of trade spend to Living Wage accredited suppliers and explore an increase in trade spend to Supported Businesses**
- **Where opportunities exist, being proactive in reducing levels of underemployment amongst key staff groups.**

Costs of living

Rising living costs pose a very significant challenge to many families, with some making hard choices about how to make a limited household income stretch to cover the cost of basic essentials, such as food and heating. This section of the local action reports outlines what actions is and will be taken to address issues such as affordable housing, fuel poverty, costs associated with the school day, provision of accessible and affordable childcare, digital inclusion, the cost of borrowing and the cost of leisure. Whilst much of this action is led by council services, NHS Lanarkshire staff are active partners in its planning and delivery. For example, health visitors advising the parents of vulnerable two year olds about free nursery provision. In addition, NHS Lanarkshire plays a role in promoting saving and access to affordable borrowing through the NHS Credit Union.

Income from social security benefits

Maximising household income is an essential step in addressing child poverty. Given increasing levels of in-work poverty, families both in and out of work rely on welfare benefits to provide an adequate standard of living. Welfare Reform has had a negative impact on many families, with a significant number seeing a reduction in welfare support through benefit caps, freezes and other changes. There is, however, often a gap between benefit entitlement and benefit uptake and therefore, scope for improvement. A key action for

local partnerships will be to maximise low income families' awareness and uptake of welfare benefits and entitlements. Work to maximise income from benefits in the earliest years has been an important focus to date. A financial wellbeing pathway has been established within midwifery and health visiting services, working towards the goal of all pregnant women and families with children under five years being offered financial wellbeing advice. In South Lanarkshire, 841 families were referred to money advice services (2018/19), with 79% engaging with the service. Of these engagements, 44% were lone parent families (one of the priority groups at higher risk of poverty). In a sample of 20 families, the collective financial gain was £95,995. The financial wellbeing pathway is currently being tested in two localities in North Lanarkshire to assess the impact of increased referrals to North Lanarkshire Council money advice services.

**Key actions for 2019/20 include;**

- **Spread and scale of Routine Enquiry on financial wellbeing at key pregnancy and health visiting contacts, increasing appropriate referrals to and support from local authority money advice services**
- **Continue to develop and deliver health and welfare advice hubs in community healthcare settings**
- **Explore the advice needs of low income families with school-aged children and assess the potential need for advice hubs, as well as curricular support materials.**

Cross cutting issues

In conjunction with partners across North and South Lanarkshire, there are a number of cross cutting issues that need to be considered in 2019/20.

- Workforce development – training has been delivered to specific staff groups on an ad hoc basis. For example, to midwives and health visitors in order to support the delivery of Routine Enquiry on financial wellbeing. It is important that all staff working with children and families have an understanding of the causes and consequences of child poverty.
- Communications – key messaging on child poverty should be developed to raise general awareness of the impact of poverty and what services and practitioners can do to support children and families. A 'once for Scotland' approach to this is being explored.
- Engaging those with lived experience – community planning partnerships are committed to engaging those with lived experience of poverty to help inform future action in this area. This will be a key action in 2019/20.
- Data collection – a range of child poverty measures are in use, some of which are available at national and local level, whilst others are available at national level only. Clear agreement and understanding of the data being reported and monitored is essential. In order to ensure appropriate targeting and engagement of those at higher risk of poverty, relevant information systems will be reviewed to ensure, where possible, the necessary data on population groups is being captured.
- Evaluation – child poverty action reports must demonstrate that delivered activity is having the desired impact on child and family poverty. Therefore, key indicators of success need to be agreed for each activity in order to ensure best use of available resources. Where there is a continuation of existing activity, evidence of effectiveness must be apparent.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Scottish Government has stated clearly that they wish to see a step-change in relation to tackling child poverty. The child poverty action reports should not simply be a description of business as usual but a stepping up of efforts to meet unprecedented challenges. Whilst these first reports provide an important baseline, going forward, it is likely that further financial resources will be required. For example, an increase in referrals from midwives and health visitors (as well as other services such as district nursing) will require additional investment in money advice services to meet increasing demands.

**8. RISK ASSESSMENT/MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

None identified at this time.

**9. FIT WITH BEST VALUE CRITERIA**

This paper aligns to the following best value criteria:

Vision and leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Effective partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance and accountability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Performance management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Equality and diversity impact assessments will be undertaken on the joint plans. Initial assessment indicates a positive impact on the protected characteristics of age, disability, race and sex.

**11. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

As noted above, engagement activity will be undertaken with those who have lived experience of poverty to inform future action.

**12. ACTIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee are asked to:

Approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Endorsement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify further actions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Note	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accept the risk identified	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask for a further report	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Committee is invited to approve the North and South Lanarkshire child poverty action reports 2019 for publication and submission to Scottish Government in June 2019.

**13. FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information about any aspect of this paper, please contact *Ashley Goodfellow, Public Health Specialist on Tel: 01698 858235.*