

LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2020





Introduction

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 placed a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Plan (LCPAR), North Lanarkshire Council with its Partners produced the report in 2019 together with an Action Plan identifying how we would tackle poverty and its impact on our children and communities

The report was the catalyst for the Council to implement an earlier Fairness Commission recommendation to produce an overarching Tackling Poverty Strategy, with the Council launching its Strategy: "Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire" in September 2020. www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=35136

The foundation of the Tackling Poverty Strategy is held within the Local Child Poverty Action Report, Using the foundations and the lessons we learned when producing the report, the Council took the step to have an overarching Tackling Poverty Strategy which would encompass all work in relation to tackling poverty and inequality, and would allow us to meet our statutory obligations to tackle poverty and report on the work we are doing.

The Strategy will ensure that all Council policies and procedures have been "poverty proofed" to ensure maximum impact and avoid unintended consequences in line with our Fairer Scotland duties and an effective and co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty.



North Lanarkshire

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Using the foundations and the lessons we learned when producing the report, the Council took the step to have an overarching Tackling Poverty Strategy. It was recognised that there has been positive work carried out by all services and partners. However, it is also important that this can be times, albeit well intentioned, fragmented.

The Tackling Poverty Strategy will embrace the One Plan approach being delivered and ensure that our communities, residents and those working in North Lanarkshire have access to the services they need when they need them by addressing challenges through integrated solutions rather than through fragmented approaches that meet one goal at the expense of another and supports sustainable communities.

In North Lanarkshire we do face challenges, we have significantly high levels of child poverty with all but two North Lanarkshire wards above the Scottish average of 24% of children living in poverty. In two of our wards we have as high as a third of our children living in poverty.

This makes it more important to take the overarching approach to tackling poverty ensuring that our children living in poverty do not grow up to be adults living in poverty.

The Strategy identifies the work that the Council and its partners are doing to tackle poverty, however, it is also important to note that poverty is influenced by national and international circumstances, with the recent COVID 19 pandemic highlighting this. The Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group will review our activity regularly and provide an annual update on our programme, this information will be part of our regular updates to the Scottish Government.



Outcome and Next Steps

The outcomes of the steps we have taken are detailed below together with the next steps the council and our partners.

In January 2020, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation figures were published, within this document it is identified that six council areas have a larger share of the most 20% most deprived data-zones in Scotland compared with the SIMD 2016 figures, North Lanarkshire is one of these.

It is difficult at this early stage to know the impact our measures will have on Child Poverty in North Lanarkshire, the overall Tackling Poverty Strategy will ensure that the decisions we are taking as a council will have a positive impact on our children and overtime will reduce the levels of child poverty and we will start to see reductions in the SIMD figures.

The COVID pandemic has seen a considerable increase in enquiries to the Financial Inclusion Team, enquiries are in relation to benefits, debts and requests for help with food. These enquiries are expected to increase as we move through the pandemic and its impacts. As part of the Strategy a survey was produced to ensure that we could hear our communities' voices. The Strategy will be a live document and will help shape our services and how and where they are delivered, the survey will be instrumental in doing this.



Local Child Poverty Action Plan Updates


Whilst work across a number of our Services has been interrupted by the COVID 19, there has been progress made in tackling child poverty across North Lanarkshire. The report details our progress with the Tackling Poverty Strategy identifying our future work.


Action	Update	Future Steps
Health Visitors & District Nurse pilot project (embedding money issues into the assessment process) in Coatbridge and Airdrie locality (From November 18)	The Financial Inclusion Team received 275 referrals between April 2019 - March 2020, generating £27,105 in additional income.	The pilot to be rolled out to all health visitors and district nurses across the local authority
8 Families Project	<p>Although the rationale behind the project was laudable the project did not achieve evidenced positive outcomes.</p> <p>There was some learning in terms of the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was difficult to sustain partner agencies in this approach given competing demands. • Families did not remain engaged in this approach • Changes in family circumstances led to them leaving the project 	<p>This approach has been discontinued due to the difficulties indicated in the outcomes section.</p> <p>In terms of future approaches it will be necessary to make interventions shorter with such a small group as it is difficult to sustain the group over a long period. On a positive note the formation of Education and Families has brought about opportunities for a more interconnected approach and should realise a more positive outcome for future family support. SAC are committed to, and are actively involved in pursuing the potential of a more integrated approach.</p> <p>The development of a cluster approach for session 2020-21 should also provide a more focused and nimble structure and promote collaboration within services.</p>



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Health Hubs for Information and Advice	<p>Health Hubs were held in 3 health centre's across the local authority; Wishaw, Coatbridge and Airdrie.</p> <p>At the onset of lockdown the Hubs no longer provided face to face service, however, as with all appointments patients have been offered assistance via telephone. In April 19 - March 2020, 216 benefit checks were carried out generating £440,088 additional income for patients .</p>	<p>The Financial Inclusion Team is looking to redesign how it delivers services, this will have a positive impact on health, opening up referrals into the team for all practitioners as opposed to only those in specific health centres.</p> <p>Health are investing £200,000 for 2 years in North Lanarkshire to deliver financial link workers, the money will be divided evenly between the local authority and the third sector to provide support to locality link workers working with GP practices across the authority.</p>
Kinship Carers Income Maximisation	<p>Advice and Information is provided to Kinship Carers across the authority, in order access Kinship Care payments a benefit check is provided with assistance given to make appropriate claims for families. 258 benefit checks have been carried out for kinship carers, resulting in 101 claims, generating £140,293, between April 19 and March 2020.</p>	<p>The redesign of the Financial Inclusion Team will assist in progressing this key piece of work with Education, Children and Families Team, ensuring they have a single point of contact for all kinship queries.</p> <p>This work will continue through 2020 and onwards.</p>
Club 365	<p>Attendance increased over each holiday session, however, numbers remained low. The COVID 19 pandemic brought many challenges for families who accessed Club 365 as we were no longer able to provide venues.</p>	<p>Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Education, Children and Families had to relook at how this service was being delivered to those children reliant upon free school meals. The local authority introduced a voucher scheme to ensure that no child was left without food. Due to COVID restrictions the voucher scheme has been rolled out to meet the costs of weekend and holiday meals for families.</p>



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Provision of free sanitary products in school	All high schools, community centres and public buildings have sanitary products available.	The contract for the provision has been renewed and this scheme will continue.
Supported Enterprise 	<p>21 care leavers are being supported through the Family Firm Project (ROOTS) 13 of whom are currently in employment and the remaining 8 are being supported in training, development and finding employment.</p> <p>215 people with a learning disability have been referred to the service. 175 of whom have been supported into employment and the remaining 40 at different stages of the supported employment five stage model.</p> <p>79 people with mental health issues have been referred to the service, 59 are currently being supported in work, with the remaining 20 at different stages within the model.</p>	Supported Enterprise Service will continue to support people with disabilities and those facing challenging barriers to entering the local labour market. The service provide tailored support for the individual to sustain and progress within their chosen careers
Prospects Programme	1043 unemployed residents with at least two barriers to entering the labour market were supported into employment. 74% have sustained employment for at least 6 months.	Supported Enterprise Service will continue to support people with disabilities and those facing challenging barriers to entering the local labour market. The service provide tailored support for the individual to sustain and progress within their chosen careers

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 <p>Developing Young Workforce</p>	<p>90 young people engaged with the programme from August 2019</p> <p>10 have gone into employment</p> <p>23 are in modern apprenticeship placements</p> <p>17 have gone into further education</p> <p>25 are in training placements</p> <p>3 have an activity agreement</p> <p>8 are in continued support - this includes young people who are work ready but have not secured employment or a Modern Apprenticeship</p> <p>4 are with Family Firm a subsidised work placement.</p>	<p>Following an extensive evaluation by the Psychological Services Team together with ongoing evaluations the programme will continue to run and will extend beyond statutory winter leavers to include support for those young people who leave at the end of S4 who are at risk of entering a negative post school destination.</p> <p>Strengthen links with schools, the virtual school, family firm , modern apprenticeship team, and restorative justice to ensure holistic joined up working.</p> <p>Investing in a new support worker for the initiative.</p>
<p>Child Care Development Fund</p>	<p>325 people used the service for advice and guidance only, the fund also approved child care for 64 people</p>	<p>The fund will continue to be used to purchase registered childcare to suit the needs of the client. The Child Care Development Fund is facilitated by Childcare Key Workers and delivered by Routes to Work.</p>



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Project Search	<p>16 students commenced Project Search in August 2018, and all 16 students graduated in June 2019. Students are based within University Hospital Wishaw and University Hospital Monklands. Each site has a job outcome rate of 65%.</p> <p>By the end of the project 11 students entered employment. The remaining 5 students received support from the service to enter volunteering in the community or further education.</p>	<p>DFN Project SEARCH is a nine month employability course for people with additional support needs who are working towards finding a job.</p> <p>NHS Lanarkshire are not recruiting any additional candidates for Project Search in 20/21 due to Covid restrictions</p>
Financial Education	<p>The Money Advice/ Consumer Advice (MACA) project delivered 334 sessions from April 19 - March 2020 to 2792 pupils.</p>	<p>Education and Families have produced their plan to Poverty Proof all their schools and family learning centres, this includes working with the Financial Inclusion Team to develop the MACA project to be suitable for school leavers and their families.</p>
Food Poverty Referral Gateway	<p>The Food Referral Gateway continues to be promoted and used within North Lanarkshire. Following COVID there has been a number of food initiatives opened up to try and help their communities. A survey was sent to all providers to help inform a Good Practice Guide as well as identifying any gaps in our localities. The Good Practice Guide has been produced to ensure our vulnerable residents have access to information and advice services to assist them.</p>	<p>The Good Practice Guide continues to be a live document and will evolve as we learn more about food poverty and insecurity and the needs of our communities.</p>



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<p>Income maximisation via benefit uptake</p>	<p>The financial inclusion team generated £40,501,399 in additional income via social security benefits for residents within North Lanarkshire from April 19 - March 2020</p> <p>This is achieved through working with internal services; health and social care, Education and Families and Housing. As well as external services such as Health and MacMillan.</p>	<p>Due to the COVID pandemic the Financial Inclusion Team have had to adapt to ensure service delivery continues for people at this time. The Team will deliver services via the telephone, will collect forms from people's houses etc to ensure that people still have access to services.</p> <p>The Financial Inclusion Team are looking at how services are delivered and are looking to redesign their services to compliment the Councils' Tackling Poverty Agenda.</p>
<p>Debt Advice</p>	<p>The Financial inclusion team assisted North Lanarkshire residents with a Total amount of debt of £7,606,882 from April 19 - March 2020.</p> <p>The Team also assisted people in generating £962,571 from charities.</p>	<p>Due to the COVID pandemic the Financial Inclusion Team have had to adapt to ensure service delivery continues for people at this time. The Team will deliver services via the telephone, will collect forms from people's houses etc to ensure that people still have access to services.</p> <p>The Financial Inclusion Team are looking at how services are delivered and are looking to redesign their services to compliment the Councils' Tackling Poverty Agenda.</p>



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MacMillan Advice Service	<p>During 19/20 the DWP were no longer able to provide a visiting service to people with a cancer diagnosis. The Financial Inclusion Team is now responsible for all referrals via the MacMillan Service.</p> <p>The team received 965 referrals from the MacMillan Team generating £3,408,295 in additional income for people with a cancer diagnosis and their carers</p>	The Financial Inclusion Team will continue to support the MacMillan Cancer Services and people in North Lanarkshire who have a cancer diagnosis.
Fuel Poverty	<p>The fuel energy switch site has been met with a number of difficulties including low take up. Those who did participate saw an average saving of £174 per household.</p>	Internal and external issues are being addressed in relation to home energy and fuel poverty issues.







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