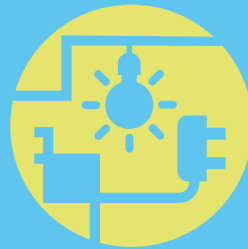




South Lanarkshire
Partnership
Stronger together

South Lanarkshire's **Local Child Poverty Action Report**

Our progress to support
families over 2021/22
and our plans for
2022/23 and beyond



Providing the
best start and
brighter futures for
every child and family
in South Lanarkshire

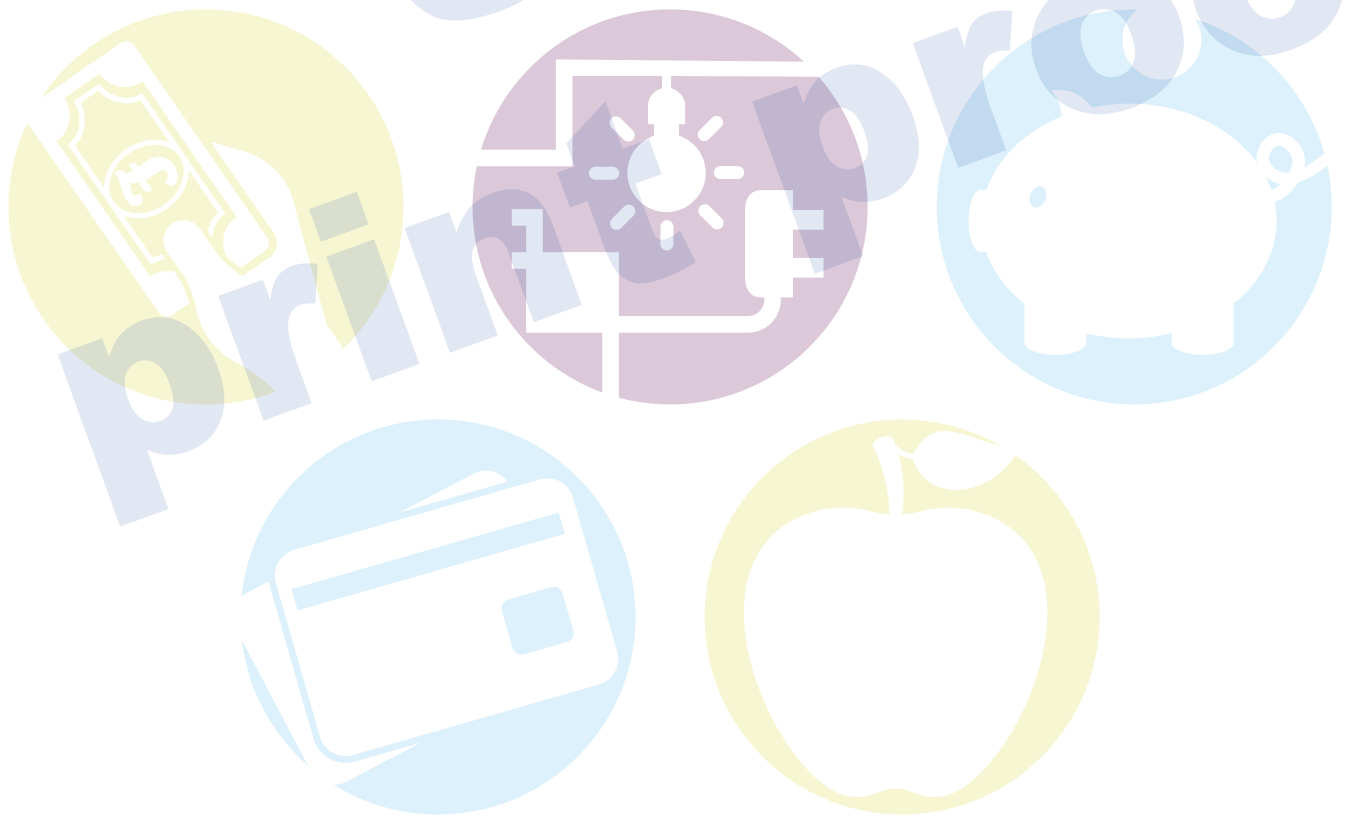
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Welcome to the fourth edition of South Lanarkshire's Local Child Poverty Action Report. As a partnership we are beginning to take a look beyond what has been our core offer of support to families over recent years and consider what more we can do to make things easier for families, especially at this time of rapidly increasing cost of living.

While COVID-19 is still with us and the impacts of the pandemic still weigh heavy on individuals and communities, we can see our lives getting back to normal and on the road to recovery. With that in mind we want to explore practical solutions with families experiencing poverty related challenges, to find out what support can help make real changes in their lives.

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

To achieve this, a whole family approach to tackling poverty and improving wellbeing is essential in how we support families, especially at the point of first contact with support services. An approach highlighted in the new national delivery plan Best Start: Brighter Futures bit.ly/TacklingChildPovertyDeliveryPlan2022-2026 that highlights 'To deliver sustained reductions in child poverty over the longer term and break the cycle of child poverty, we will work with partners to provide the integrated and holistic support parents need to enter quality employment, improve their wider wellbeing and engage with the drivers of poverty reduction'.

Our approach in South Lanarkshire will be built upon:

- Providing opportunities and integrated support to parents and young adults to enter and sustain progress in work
- Supporting families to live dignified lives with their basic needs met, and:
- Doing everything we possibly can to ensure our next generation thrives

Our plan for 2022-23 has four parts. Three sections consider the work we are already doing and will develop around the three main drivers to address poverty. This year we have added a fourth section that looks at how we will work together to deliver support differently and more effectively to families.

Over the past year we have taken time to work together to identify the areas where we can work differently and maximise our capacity and resources for the benefit of families. The following commitments reflect where we will improve what we do and how we do it:

- We will make sure that policy development and future service delivery is influenced by the voice of families experiencing poverty
- Our third sector organisations with their strong links to communities will be more involved and at strategic level
- We will make better use of existing data that could be used to improve a shared understanding of the impact of poverty at household and locality level
- We will deliver more holistic, wraparound support services which are as accessible as possible to families experiencing poverty
- We will develop shared short, medium and long term outcomes and identify the necessary resources to work collaboratively towards them, which adds value to our core offer of support to families

- We will build a more comprehensive evaluation of services and interventions, to better understand the impact of support on households

With this step change in our approach to our work, we plan to move to a three-year strategy to address child poverty in South Lanarkshire. This journey will be closely aligned to the last three years of the national delivery plan Best Start Better Futures and our forthcoming 2023-26 Children's Services Plan. Our vision for this approach is that we will have the voice of our children and families at the centre of our planning and service design.

Finally, a big thank you to all the staff from our statutory, voluntary sector and community partners who have contributed to the work to make a difference to families. Your hard work, commitment, and dedication to make changes to how we support families to achieve best possible outcomes is very much appreciated.



Cllr Joe Fagan
Leader of South Lanarkshire Council



Martin Hill
Chair of Lanarkshire NHS Board

2 The current context

Families, and the agencies that work alongside them, are living and operating in a landscape where the adverse impacts of COVID-19 are still being felt. In addition to this the rising cost of living, and particularly of fuel and food, means that money is stretched even further than it was before. Inflation has been predicted to rise to over 10% by the end of the year, and to remain high throughout 2023. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has pushed energy and fuel prices to new highs, and this has an impact on the availability and cost of other goods.

Inequalities within communities continue to be a real concern and we know that some groups of people are affected more than others by this, including the priority groups for our local child poverty action:

- one-parent families
- a household where someone is disabled
- families with three or more children
- minority ethnic families
- families with a child under one year old
- families where the mother is under 25 years of age.

We also know that young people who are care experienced are directly impacted by these changes in a disproportionate way. We have borne these groups in mind particularly when writing this report, as well as remembering that the rising cost of living impacts upon all families.

As part of our ongoing work to support families, we have made a firm commitment to improving our services as a partnership. In the last year we have worked to identify some key areas where we can do this, and this year's report has a focus upon them. In the future, our plans are to work to create a three-year strategy which we will report on and update on an annual basis. This will allow us to create longer term aims and actions and measure improvement more effectively.

Of course, our work on child poverty does not happen in isolation. Nationally, the Scottish Government has a new four year delivery plan "Best Start, Bright Futures" which details the support they will provide through initiatives such as the Scottish Child Payment and other financial supports. It also details national funding streams such as the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, which will be devolved to us at a local level to spend. Along with our existing resources, we commit to making sure that these funds are used to support improvements in the services we provide and to make a difference to the lives of children and families in South Lanarkshire. This includes working towards the aim of 5% of our spend on spend on health and social care being on preventative measures by 2030.

Locally, we have just produced a new Community Plan for our Community Planning Partnership. This partners a new Council Plan which shares its vision of improving the life and prospects of everyone in South Lanarkshire. To do this, all of the partners involved locally will be working to make sure that we are supporting people to overcome the impacts of poverty, learning together about what does and does not work, and acting sustainably to support our communities and our planet for the future.

This includes continuing our work on neighbourhood planning, where communities facing the greatest inequalities are supported to articulate and deliver upon their own priorities. Much of this work involves children and families in very practical ways, helping people support each other and making sure that the resources of partners are used to the best effect in our communities. You will see examples of this work through this report and we continue to recognise the importance of community led activity and of shaping our services in response to the voices of those with lived experience of poverty in making sure that we do help to improve lives for children and families.

Our plan and its progress

The following section details the work undertaken in relation to each of our priority themes:

Driver 1

Progress on increasing income from benefits

Increase the uptake of benefits

Work of local Financial Advice Services

Citizens Advice Bureau

The past 2 years have provided a challenge to CAB's in South Lanarkshire as regular face to face advice and support has been curtailed due to COVID-19 restrictions, with the service limited to telephone or online contact in many cases. Over the last year CABs have begun to return to their traditional way of working and have experienced an increase in families seeking support. Across South Lanarkshire there has been a 40% rise in the number of financial health checks being delivered over the past year (500 compared to 357 in 2020/21), with the number of families supported increasing by 106% (233 compared to 113 in 2020/21). Together the money and debts advice provided by the South Lanarkshire CAB's has led to over £720,377 in financial gains to clients including families, a 250% increase on the previous year.

One area where there has been a noticeable rise in people and families seeking advice is on energy related costs. CAB's report a 33% increase in enquiries related to energy costs over the year (2,651 compared to 2,000 in 2020/21), with an estimated £126,608 in financial gains secured for clients, e.g. negotiating new tariffs, payment plans, obtaining related benefits and supports.

South Lanarkshire Council Money Matters Advice Service

The Money Matters Advice Service is a free and confidential service operated by South Lanarkshire Council to provide monetary advice and advocacy support to households experiencing financial difficulties. Over the past year Money Matters has helped 843 new clients with benefits and debt advice through their popular Telephone Advice Line service, which represented a slight increase on the number of new clients referred in 2020/21.

Thanks to the work of Money Matters staff, almost £1.5 million in financial gains have been secured for clients through unclaimed or backdated benefits over the past year that would have otherwise been lost without this help.



Expanding the routine enquiry approach

NHS Lanarkshire Midwife/Health Visitors and Money Matters Advice Service

Routine Enquiry as part of child health improvement support has been embedded in practice among Health Visitors and local Midwives for a number of years.

As the first point of contact midwives and health visitors refer pregnant women and new mothers at risk of financial hardship, onto local financial advice services. Over the last year, more than two thirds (68%) of referrals to Money Matters Telephone Advice Line were from NHS Lanarkshire staff using the Routine Enquiry, representing a total of 510 women.

Partnership working - Proving financial advice in health settings

The Royal Hospital for Children - NHS Lanarkshire

A financial advice service has been provided for parents with children at the RHC in Glasgow for a number of years. 38 South Lanarkshire parents received advice through the service during 2021/22, an increase from 30 recorded last year. Over £100,000 in financial gains were secured for families using the service during 2021/22.

GP Community Link Worker programme

The GP Community Link Worker (CLW) programme is a new service introduced in April 2021. GP CLW's are non-clinical practitioners who work directly with patients to help them navigate and engage with wider services. They offer non-clinical holistic support to patients, enabling them to set goals and overcome barriers, in order to take greater control of their health and well-being.

As part of the GP CLW programme NHS Lanarkshire has commissioned a Financial Wellbeing Advice (FWA) service, delivered through SLC Money Matters and the Hamilton, Rutherglen, Clydesdale and East Kilbride CAB's. During the first full year of operation, there were 597 referrals made to the Financial Wellbeing Advisors, with around £305,202 in financial gains secured for the families/individuals referred.



(Working in partnership - Money Matters Advice Service and NHS Family Nurse)

A young woman aged 18 with a new baby was in homeless accommodation, with no parental support. With the help of the family nurse, the Money Matters Advice Service undertook several home visits to provide support. The Money Matters advisor assisted the young women with a claim for Universal Credit, and as a result she got £114.09 per week with her housing costs paid in full by the council.

The advisor also helped the client apply for Child Benefit and secured a payment of £21.15 per week. Once the client started to receive Universal Credit, she was also entitled to a Best Start Grant of £606 (one off payment) and Best Start Food payment of £36 every 4 weeks.

As well as financial help, Money Matters got in touch with the young women's energy provider and helped her to deal with energy debts, as she was having to pay more than £400 per month for gas and electricity. The advisor arranged for Home Energy Scotland to work with her to clear this debt and arrange financial assistance to help with the bills.

Money Matters also arranged for the young women to be provided with emergency food parcels, including clothes and toys for child as it was Christmas time. The client also received a £50 Asda voucher from Swaddle to help with the costs of Christmas shopping.



Rolling out financial advice services into Schools

CAB's and Money Matters Advice Service - school outreach work

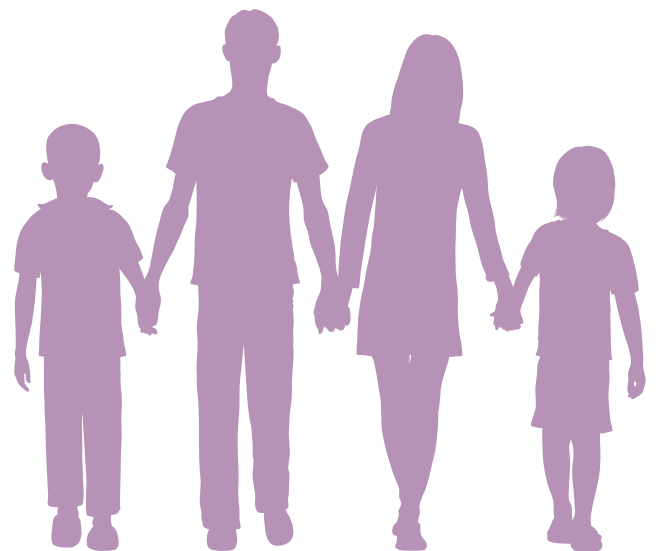
The Money Matters Advice Service were unable to offer outreach support to parents and children in schools last year due to the continuation of COVID-19 restrictions. Money Matters were able to provide alternative support through the SLC Education School Holiday Programme however.

Working with the SLC Community Wellbeing Team, Money Matters carried out financial outreach work within local schools at school holiday clubs during 2021/22. Through this work 91 families were referred back to Money Matters for further benefits advice and support. This outreach support secured financial gains for families of £14,838 in unclaimed or back dated benefits. Money Matters and CAB's are currently looking at ways to develop a joint approach with Education Resources to sustain a presence in local schools for the years ahead.

Social Security Scotland - new and existing child/parent targeted benefits

Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods support children in low-income families with costs such as food, clothing, and school equipment, as well as toys and school trips. During 2021/22 Social Security Scotland approved 70% of applications from South Lanarkshire families for Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods, which is the highest figure recorded since the benefit was launched more than three years ago. Since the introduction of Best Start in December 2018, South Lanarkshire families have benefited from over £5 million in accrued payments.

The Scottish Child Payment was introduced in 2020/21, as a means to tackle child poverty more directly. 'Best Start, Bright Futures' the national Child Poverty Delivery Plan identifies this support as making a critical contribution to achieving the long-term ambition of reducing relative child poverty in Scotland to 10% by 2030. Initially paid at £10 for every child under six in a household every four weeks, the payment has increased to £20 per child from April 2022. In the period up to 31st March 2022, 9,460 applications for the new payment have been received from South Lanarkshire parents, resulting in over £3.5 million in new additional benefits going to children in qualifying families.



Driver 2

Progress on minimising the effects of Cost of Living rises

Increase uptake of funded and early learning and childcare entitlements for 2 and 3-year-olds

South Lanarkshire Council Early Years' Service

The Early Learning and Childcare service continue to work with colleagues across Education, Health, and Social Work to promote early access to quality nursery provision and maximise take up of free funded entitlements for two and three year olds. Over the last year we exceeded the target to improve the uptake of funded places for eligible two-year-old children, with the number of two year olds taking up a place increasing from 15.5% (471 children) to 24% (795 children) in 2021/22.

During 2021/22 100% of children in South Lanarkshire entitled to 1,140 hours of funded childcare have benefited from the opportunity. The Early Years' Service continues to build on the work to support parents from low-income households not eligible for 1,140 hours funded childcare to apply for exemption to nursery fees.

In 2021 we opened eight new childcare establishments, seven of which provided additional places for two-year-old children. Thanks to these new settings we have provided an additional 160 full time equivalent places.

Reduction in financial barriers to education for school age children

Reducing the cost of the school day initiatives

Significant progress has been made during the course of 2021/22 with the target of 100% of schools having a Cost of the School Day Position Statement in place by March 2022 being achieved.

Schools have used the cost of the school day toolkit to implement changes to help families cope with costs.

St John Ogilvie and Biggar High Schools and Netherburn and Rigside Primary Schools have featured in national guidance as examples of good practice: <https://cpag.org.uk/talking-costs> (download resource PDF)

Staff training sessions have been delivered in every school on cost of the school day and poverty awareness over the past year and a new Twitter feed <https://mobile.twitter.com/slcequity> has been established to provide updates to the school community and encourage networking among pupils and families on cost of the school day issues.

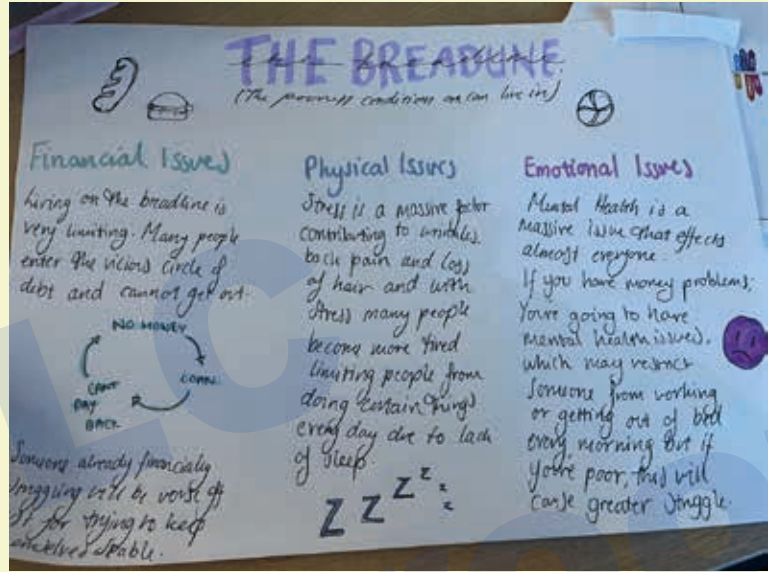
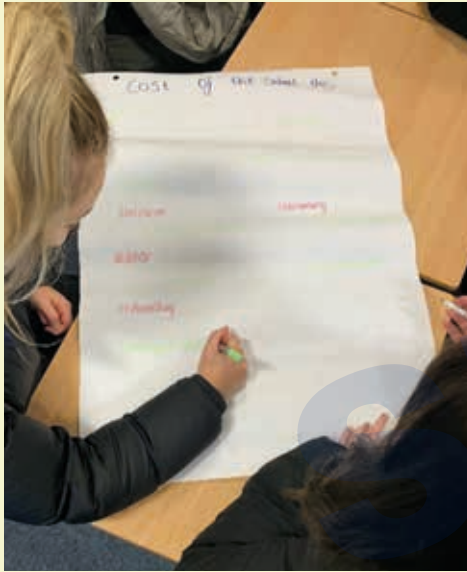
A cost of the school day policy document is currently being produced and should be available for consultation by March 2023, with full publication planned for June 2023. We will also build on the school cost of the school day position statement initiative and ensure that at least 60% of schools have moved from a position statement to a policy by June next year.

What difference have we made in 2021/22

Case study

(Increasing COSD awareness in schools/Challenge Poverty Week 2021)

Several events during Challenge Poverty Week in October 2021 increased knowledge among pupils around Cost of the School Day issues. Lesmahagow High School (below left) nominated a 'Captain of Equity and Inclusion' to lead on discussions with other pupils on what more the school could do to remove financial barriers to education and tackle the Cost of the School Day.



As part of their work during Challenge Poverty Week Calderglenn High School's S4 pupils (above right) discussed the effects of poverty on families as part of Modern Studies lessons. Pupils were tasked with mapping the impact that poverty can have on wellbeing and discussed what actions could be developed to support people out of poverty.

In common with other primary schools during Challenge Poverty Week, Neilsland Primary School in Hamilton held a series of activities including class discussions, pupil presentations (given at a virtual school assembly), and encouraged the donation of unwanted clothes for low income pupils/families ahead of winter ('Rake and Take Rail')



Maximising the uptake of School benefits – free school meals and clothing grants

The latest figures on free school meal uptake shows that the percentage of pupils taking a free school meal in South Lanarkshire has returned to pre-COVID19 levels, with 65% of eligible primary pupils and 41% of eligible secondary pupils being recorded to regularly take a free meal during 2021/22, the same level as was recorded in 2019/20.

More pupils entitled to clothing grants have also been claiming the benefit over the past year with an increase from pre-COVID levels being recorded from 12,537 payments in 2019/20 to 12,784 in 2021/22.

Tackling food poverty out with regular school hours/ Holiday Hunger programmes and Breakfast Clubs

A voucher scheme has been introduced to cover meal costs for children from low-income households during school holiday periods. The vouchers provide a payment of £2.50 per day/ per child to cover meals during all school holiday periods. 9,557 children eligible to free school meals used a voucher (later replaced by direct payments through Pay Point) during 2021/22 which represents a slight increase on the level recorded in 2020/21.

Prior to the pandemic, 88 out of 124 SLC primary schools had a breakfast club, with close to 6,000 pupils aged between 5 - 12 benefiting. During 2020/21 the effects of COVID-19 restrictions meant attendance at clubs was limited to children of key workers, however last year's LCPAR action plan set a target for all primary schools to reintroduce breakfast clubs and to aim for attendance to surpass the levels recorded pre-COVID. As of the end of 2021 all our 124 primary schools have an attached breakfast club with regular attendance levels at almost 8,000 pupils per week (7,843 per week), well above pre-pandemic levels.



Participatory Budgeting in Schools - Improving engagement with children, parents, and staff to ensure that the priorities of school communities better guide spending decisions.

South Lanarkshire has been identified as one of the pioneers in the implementation of Participatory Budgeting and our schools have been cited in recent national guidance, as models of good practice in aligning funding to school community priorities - <https://blogs.gov.scot/participation/2022/01/24/participatory-budgeting-pb-in-scottish-education/>.

Although PB in schools was introduced in 2019, COVID-19 restrictions have hindered the rollout of the process, with 2021/22 being the first full year of participatory budgeting in all 146 schools in South Lanarkshire. Over the past year 81% of schools have allocated the minimum 5% of their Pupil Equity Funding through PB, whilst 19% of schools allocated more than this. Overall, 6% of the £9.9m local authority Pupil Equity Funding Allocation was distributed through participatory budgeting across all South Lanarkshire schools, a total of £607,137. A total of 27,972 pupils, 9,689 parents/carers and 3,806 staff were involved and 90% of schools reported participatory democracy increased citizen participation in their school. As part of the next LCPAR 2022/23 we intend to ensure that 100% of SLC schools will again commit to spending at least 5% of their budgets via PB during the coming year.

146 projects designed by young people and their families, which focused on closing the poverty-related attainment gap have been implemented. Schools were encouraged to have their own aims for their projects, which were then used as a basis to report impact. The most popular themes selected by school communities were outdoor recreational resources and more funding for extra-curricular activities. We are committed to ensure that 100% of schools committed to spending at least 5% of their budgets via Participatory Budgeting in 2022/23.

What difference have we made in 2021/22

Case study

(Participatory Budgeting in Schools, Strathaven Academy Barista project)

A Participatory Budgeting Group, comprising of staff, pupils and parents, sought ideas from stakeholders. Suggestions for potential projects included new outdoor seating; a school gardening project; and a Barista Project. All three options were publicised in a short video and voted for by stakeholders via a Google form (paper/email vote were also available). In total 76% of pupils, 70% of staff and 441 parents voted.

The most popular option (the Barista Project) has allowed pupils to achieve accredited qualifications (SQA Barista Award, Skills for Work, SQA Enterprise and Employability - Certificate of Work Readiness), as well as improve their skills for learning, life and work, helping them access part-time work in the hospitality field as well as positive destinations beyond school.

Pupil: *"I feel like we have a voice and were listened to. I really enjoyed being part of this and can't wait to learn new skills once the Barista machine arrives."*

Guaranteeing Privileged Transport and increasing Active travel

The Privileged School Transport Places scheme allows children entitled to Free School Meals free travel to school under certain conditions. Before the pandemic 55 school pupils were registered with the scheme, however this was reduced during 2020/21 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The figures for 2021/22 confirm that scheme membership has returned to pre-COVID levels with 55 pupils again registered for Guaranteeing Privileged Transport.

Information from the **Sustrans** suggests that the percentage of South Lanarkshire children using active travel modes (walking, cycling, scooted/ wheeled) has grown, increasing from 44.1% in 2020, up to 45.6% in 2021 (the most recent available). The number of schools completing Travel Plans has also been progressively increasing over the past 5 years, with 75 schools now having a plan in place, the highest number on record.

What difference have we made in 2021/22

Case study

(Encouraging Active Travel among young people, Clyde Gateway – Supporting Families project)

In Autumn 2021, the Supporting Families project established walking buses from two local primary schools (St Columbkille's and Burgh in Rutherglen) with the aim of increasing attendance at afterschool childcare sessions and to make sessions more accessible for families that might experience access barriers due to the increasing cost of travel. By taking an inclusive approach to reduce inequalities, there was an 83% increase in participants attending the sessions (an extra 11 families attending).



Through the project the wider school community, including parents and carers have been encouraged to see walking as an easy way to improve physical, mental and social health. It is free, and no special equipment is needed. It is hoped that participation in the project will have long lasting benefits and encourage the school community to realise the advantages of active travel choices, both financially in terms of cost savings on travel at a time of rising costs, but also to the local environment, and reducing the number of unnecessary car journeys.

Reducing housing costs for families

Increasing the supply of affordable homes for families - Increase the availability of inclusive types and designs

SLC Housing and Technical Resources delivered 657 additional homes for rent during the course of 2021/22, a 48% increase on the number of built in 2020/21. The latest figures include 604 new build properties and 53 homes bought from the private sector through the council's Open Market Purchase Scheme. 200 of the new build properties completed last year were allocated to families with children under the age of 16, including 30 properties to families with disabled children.

Deliver regeneration projects to improve housing and built environment in priority areas (East Whitlawburn)

South Lanarkshire Council has continued to work in partnership with key stakeholders and partners to deliver 230 new social rented homes as part of the Whitlawburn Regeneration Masterplan (170 being council homes). During 2021/22 there were 122 council properties built bringing total completions to 160 council owned properties.

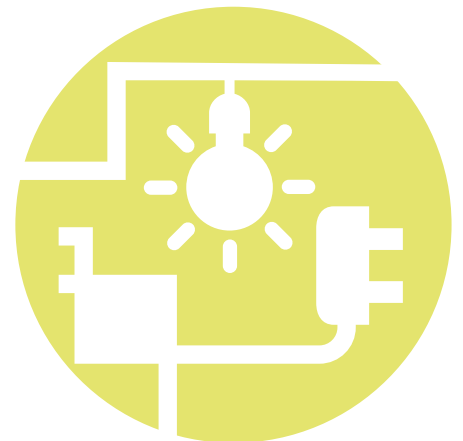
Maintaining affordable rents for Council tenants

Housing and Technical resources continues to strive to keep rent levels low for tenants, and actively engages with tenants on rent levels that are thought to be reasonable in light of cost of living rises. The South Lanarkshire Council average rent of £74.55 per week remains lower than the Scottish average of £77.83. The annual rent increase was set at 2.2% with 1,133 council tenants playing a central role in the process. The increase planned for 2022/23 has again been capped at 2.2%.

Supporting the housing needs of minority groups - ethnic minorities and travellers

We have continued to support households with children from minority ethnic communities, to access and sustain affordable accommodation, including Gypsy/Travellers and refugee families resettled through the UK resettlement scheme. There are two council owned Gypsy/Travellers sites within South Lanarkshire: Springbank Park, East Kilbride and Shawlands Crescent, Larkhall. 100% of tenants on both sites have sustained their tenancy during 2021/22.

In terms of refugee families, SLC Housing and Technical Resources have resettled eight families as part of the UK resettlement scheme during 2021/22. As with the travelling community, 100% of refugee families have sustained their tenancy over the past year.



Reducing energy costs for families

Improving the energy efficiency of homes for families

The proportion of homes meeting current Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing in South Lanarkshire continues to increase, with 98% of council stock meeting this standard. The council continue to work towards maximising the energy efficiency of its homes through the ongoing Home+ programme. As part of the Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, we are now working towards increased energy efficiency standards that requires all properties to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate Band B by 2032.

As of 31st March 2022, 6.48% of the council's domestic housing stock already meets the EPPC Band B standard. A financial commitment has been made by SLC Housing and Technical Resources to continue to work towards 100% of its eligible domestic stock meeting the increased standard within the next 10 years. The total amount of funding secured for energy efficient work in 2021/22 was £2,901,995.

Reducing homelessness and the threat of homelessness among families, children and young people

Housing allocation - prioritising homeless families with children

South Lanarkshire Council continues to work with partners to reduce the overall number of homeless households. As of 31st March 2022, there were 231 households with children residing in temporary accommodation, a 3% reduction on the level recorded before the pandemic (238 at 31st March 2020).

The council's homelessness services continue to work to reduce the time families spend as homeless. Latest evidence confirms that number of days families spend as homeless has reduced from 192 days in 2020 to 164 this year, a 14.5% reduction.

Providing support with homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment

A Tenancy Sustainment Fund was introduced in 2020 to support tenants maintain their rent payments in order to sustain their tenancy and prevent homelessness. In total there were 538 homeless households provided with support over the last year, 25% of the awards were provided to families. As a result of the award 93% of tenants reported an improvement in budgeting, engagement and overall wellbeing.

Supporting care experienced young people to plan for and move to independent living in the community

SLC Social Work staff offer intensive and ongoing support to young people just out of care to help them sustain their tenancy as part of the Throughcare initiative. During 2021/22, 96% of tenancies were sustained by Throughcare applicants, compared with just 80% in 2020/21.

What difference have we made in 2021/22

Case study

(Providing 'holistic' support to families under the threat of homelessness)

Housing and Technical Resources work closely with families living in temporary accommodation. One example was a mother and her young daughter who were assessed as homeless after fleeing domestic violence. The family were supported by the Housing Officer, Women's Aid and her GP, who confirmed they were suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of the domestic violence.

The family were placed in temporary accommodation where they both became settled, the child was enrolled in a local nursery, the mother joined a local church, and the neighbours were a support.

Educational Psychology had been working with her daughter as she was not coping well due to her experience as a very young child. As a result of the support, there has now been a huge positive change in her daughter's behaviour, and she is now looking forward to a bright future at school in August.

The mother advised she has received great support from Housing and neighbours since she has been living in the temporary accommodation. The Housing Officer identified the temporary accommodation was a good move for the family and discussed the possibility of offering the temporary accommodation as a permanent settled home and a positive solution to their homelessness. The accommodation was then made permanent, and the family is continuing to flourish.

The mother was also provided with a laptop and three years free data through the 'Bringing IT Home' programme, allowing her to take up a course at South Lanarkshire College, which she is really enjoying. Administered by Housing and Technical Resources and funded jointly by the Scottish Government and Scottish Procurement Alliance, Bringing IT Home has provided 55 devices with connectivity to homeless households across South Lanarkshire.

Quote from the parent:-

"I am delighted that my house has been flipped from temporary to permanent. My voice has been heard and the Housing Officer has been such a great support to me and my daughter. I now have somewhere to call home"



Ensuring digital inclusion for families in the most deprived areas

A range of digital supports were made available for schools, pupils and families including chrome books, Mifi devices and cloud storage. A resource called Texthelp was made available for all schools with training for staff available. SchoolCloud was purchased for all establishments and has been used by a large number of schools and pupils with feedback being very positive and resulting in purchase of this resources for a second year for all schools

A Digital Development Officer has been in place since October 2021 to support the implementation of the digital support in schools and for pupils and families.

Maximising opportunities to participate in Leisure and Cultural activities among young people from low income families

Active Schools Programme - South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture continue to work to increase the level of participation with Active Schools through expanding the number of staff delivering activities and the number of pupils engaging with the programme. The aim is to provide more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before, during and after school, and to develop effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community.

The LCPAR 2021/22 action plan set out an ambition to progressively return Active Schools attendance back to pre-COVID levels, starting with a target 155,000 pupil visits (40% of all pupils) to programme events. The 2021/22 figures confirm there has been a 60% increase in the number of pupils engaging with Active Schools programmes over the past year, with nearly a quarter of a million (249,893) visits to activities recorded, well above the target of 155,000. Similarly, the latest figures for pupil participation (as a % of the school roll) indicates that the target of 40% of pupils participating in Active Schools programmes has been exceeded with 41% of the school roll (18,585 pupils) attending events during 2021/22.

In order to achieve increased participation, the Active Schools team have been working closely with Head Teachers and Health and Wellbeing Lead Officers across local schools to develop a diverse programme of activities designed to be more attractive to pupils of any age or ability. All Active Schools Coordinators are now fully re-engaged with their learning community partners to develop and deliver a range of intervention programmes.

Staff have been working to extend delivery of Active Schools beyond traditional school hours through providing more student placements, linking to our Income from Employment work and providing local sports students with valuable work experience.

Partnerships are in place with local colleges to recruit more than 100 students to increase the capacity for young people to access Active Schools programmes/ events across our communities next year. The Active Schools team have also trained 75 senior pupils to deliver free activity to their peers and neighbouring primary school pupils.

Increasing concession scheme membership among young people from deprived neighbourhoods - South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture provides a membership concession scheme for low-income families, that allows a 50% reduction in fees to access sports and leisure activities.

Before the pandemic there were over 6,000 members of the concession scheme, and partners are committed to rebuilding scheme membership back to pre-COVID levels, with an ambition of 5,000 members by end of year 2021/22 (the target in the LCPAR action plan 2021/22), and increasing to 6,000 by the end of 2022/23. The latest figures indicates (31st March 2022) there are currently 5,541 live memberships of the concession scheme, well above the target set of 5,000.

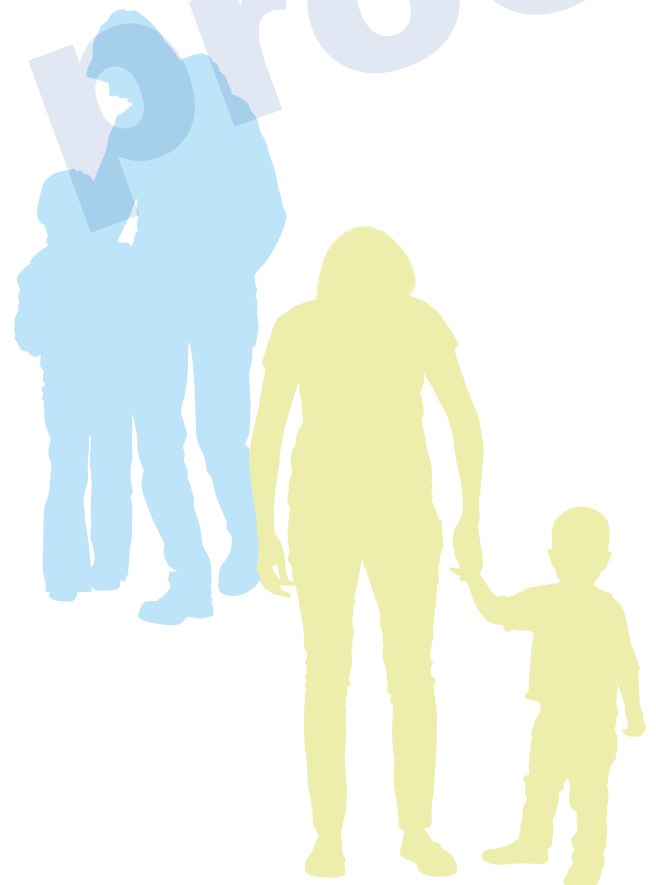
A new pricing structure to access leisure facilities has been introduced to specifically encourage greater use by children and young people. Staff have been actively promoting the new scheme along with the importance of physical activity in schools, sports and community groups. Feedback suggests that the new pricing structure is proving popular among young people and has contributed to increase in the use of facilities over the year.

Reducing addictions and health harming behaviours among young people and parents from low income families

NHS Lanarkshire run a dedicated service aimed at tobacco control, and a smoking cessation programme 'Quit Your Way' has been running locally for several years. Our action plan is aimed to reduce smoking among pregnant women resident in areas with the highest levels of deprivation.

Over the last year the NHS tobacco control team have been pro-active with activities aimed at securing greater levels of smoking cessation. Staff have continued to deliver awareness sessions to pregnant women within local community settings and with partner organisations such as Healthy Valleys and Family Centres. Training sessions were also delivered to staff working in maternity services, student midwives and Family Nurse Partnership team.

NHS Lanarkshire has also conducted a mapping exercise to allow Quit Your Way staff to engage with organisations and to train maternity staff and develop resources to contribute to a further reduction in pregnant women smoking in target areas by March 2023.



Driver 3

Progress on maximising opportunities to increase income from employment

Reduce the gap in school leavers entering a positive destination between most deprived 20% and least deprived 20% areas

Support provided via the Aspire Youth Employability Team has helped more young people into a positive post school destination. The latest figures (2020/21) suggest that more than 96% of South Lanarkshire pupils leaving school have moved into a positive destination, such as employment, training or higher/ further education, an increase over the previous year.

Although the gap between leavers in high deprivation and low deprivation areas moving into positive destinations has increased slightly over the past year (from 6.3% in 2019/20 to 6.4% in 2020/21) this is a result of a greater rise in the number of leavers from the least deprived areas achieving a positive destination, rather than a fall in the number of leavers from deprived areas entering into employment, education or training.

Support care experienced school leavers sustain a positive destination

The commitment to increase the number of young people from care experienced backgrounds sustaining a positive destination after they leave school, and maintaining this level above the Scottish average has been achieved. 90% of South Lanarkshire leavers from care backgrounds have sustained a destination in employment, training or further/ higher education according to the 2020/21 SLDR follow up survey, a higher figure than the Scottish average (88%) and an increase from the level (86%) recorded in 2019/20.

Linking the skills of young people to the needs of the local economy

The Youth Employability service has been working with Skills Development Scotland, South Lanarkshire College, New College Lanarkshire and locally contracted training providers to develop training as part of the Grad8 programme. Gradu8 supports young people, particularly those from areas of high deprivation to take advantage of new employment opportunities in growth sectors such as Construction. 229 young people have completed an SCQF Level 4/5 Construction Foundation Apprenticeship during 2021/22, up from the target set against last year's total of 138.

Modern Apprenticeships

South Lanarkshire Council's Employability and Youth Employability services, along with Skills Development Scotland, and other agencies have continued to work with employers over the past 12 months to maximise Modern Apprenticeship opportunities for local young people. The figures from 2020/21 suggested that the number of Modern Apprenticeships in South Lanarkshire had dropped by over a third, compared to 2019/20 (from 1,926 to 1,251) directly due to the impact of the pandemic. The latest figures indicate that the number of apprenticeship opportunities in SLC is returning to pre-COVID-19 levels with 1,688 places being taken up during 2021/22, an increase of around 35% on 2020/21, suggesting that local employer confidence in recruiting and training staff has recovered faster than expected.

Increase employment support for low-income parents

South Lanarkshire Council Employability Service

The Employability Service, along with the DWP, local employers, voluntary sector, local training and further education providers are working together to overcome the challenges of COVID-19. As part of the recovery new working practices, such as providing more targeted support to child poverty priority groups, e.g. lone parents, families with disabled adults/ children, BAME families and larger families, are being prioritised as a key feature of this work. The new approach will continue to adapt to the “new normal” of the post pandemic labour market, finding innovative solutions to supporting and engaging with families and parents in order to help these households lift themselves out of poverty.

Over the past year the Council’s Employability service has helped 129 parents with their employability goals. This has resulted in 41 parents increasing pay and/or hours worked. All 129 parents have reported increased skills and a growth in confidence in their own abilities and prospects.

More intensive models of supporting parental employability are in currently in development. These will be more person centred and intended to meet the requirements of the whole family with parents/ families designing solutions tailored to their own individual needs.

What difference have we made in 2021/22

Case study

(Employability programmes - Routes to Work South)

Client N was referred to the Making It Work program by Job Centre Plus in November 2021. Having recently left a violent relationship, N was suffering from extreme anxiety and had to relocate in an attempt to get their life back on track. N is a single parent to an eight year old and has been unemployed for over two years, claiming Universal Credit.

Prior to becoming unemployed, the client was a qualified painter and decorator and was seeking a career change. N was keen to secure a job in social care or childcare but lacked experience, confidence, and self-esteem. Initially they worked with an advisor to improve their confidence before considering the various training courses available. Eventually N settled on the Safari Course, a 4-week intensive training course that focuses on personal development and provides participants with the opportunity to gain an Institute of Learning and Management award.

N reported that they gained a lot from the course and with the support of their Advisor and they began applying for job opportunities within the care sector. N attended an interview with a care home and was offered a part time job, 17 hours per week over three days, which provided a balance between working and being a lone parent and accepted the job offer. N is being supported by their employer to complete a HNC in Social Care and is due to start college in August this year.

Since joining the program and over the last six months, N has reported increased confidence and self-esteem and believes that their new job is the perfect fit. N is continuing to focus on rebuilding their life.

Clyde Gateway - Supporting Families project

The Clyde Gateway 'Supporting Families' model in the Rutherglen area is focused on employability, skills development, childcare and all elements of wellbeing (financial/mental/physical). It is specifically aimed at families identified within the six child poverty priority groups. One of the main components of the project is the Family Support Worker role who works closely with referred families to deliver holistic support. Through the adoption of this new holistic support model, families report better participation, fewer barriers to employability opportunities, and increased wellbeing.

As part of the new support model each individual and family completes a Holistic Needs Assessment to establish and agree realistic and tangible goals for the family with clear short, medium, and long term outcomes. The assessment helps to identify suitable, bespoke, and wraparound interventions for the family.

In recognition of the success of the approach, the project model was extended from a single nursery in Rutherglen (Glenburgh) to three local primary schools.

Working in partnership has been the key to the project's success, with South Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, One Parent Families Scotland and Routes to Work South and Head Teachers all involved. During 2021/22 the project supported 25 people into employment, a further 33 people benefited from skills development, volunteering, and employability support,

As well as employability support, the project has also helped families with financial and benefits advice. 59 people were supported to achieve reduced living costs and a reduction in personal debt, resulting in an estimated £69,547 in financial gains. A further 34 people were supported through crisis situations and into stability through financial advice, resulting in a further £23,891 in financial gains.

More details on the Clyde Gateway Supporting Families project are available here - www.clydegateway.com/community_posts/childcare-and-family-support.



What difference have we made in 2021/22

Case study

(Clyde Gateway - Supporting Families project)

"We have worked with one family for several years due to domestic abuse and supported mum in a variety of ways in order to build her confidence and independence, however it was always limited to the school setting. The Supporting Families project was able to support her in being able to access and apply for work and she has successfully applied for a new job. We can see first-hand the positive impact this has had on mum's self-esteem and self-worth but also the pride her child feels about her mum."

Andy Gray, Headteacher, St Columbkille's Primary School.

"I would like to thank my support worker for all the help and information that she gave me and to tell her that she changed my life in a very good way. I was not aware of the help that I could get before meeting her and the options that I have to study, work and look after my children at the same time. Thank you very much." **Family A - supported in the project**

"I was in a place where I desperately needed help but didn't know how or where to find it. Without this project I would still be struggling." **Family B supported in the project.**

Employee upskilling

South Lanarkshire Council Employability Service

Since the majority of families that experience child poverty are already in employment, upskilling has a vital part to play in tackling the problem. The Employability Service upskilling programme aims to allow staff working in lesser skilled jobs, experiencing low pay and underemployment a chance to gain new qualifications, increase their working hours and levels of pay, and enhance employment prospects while still in the workplace.

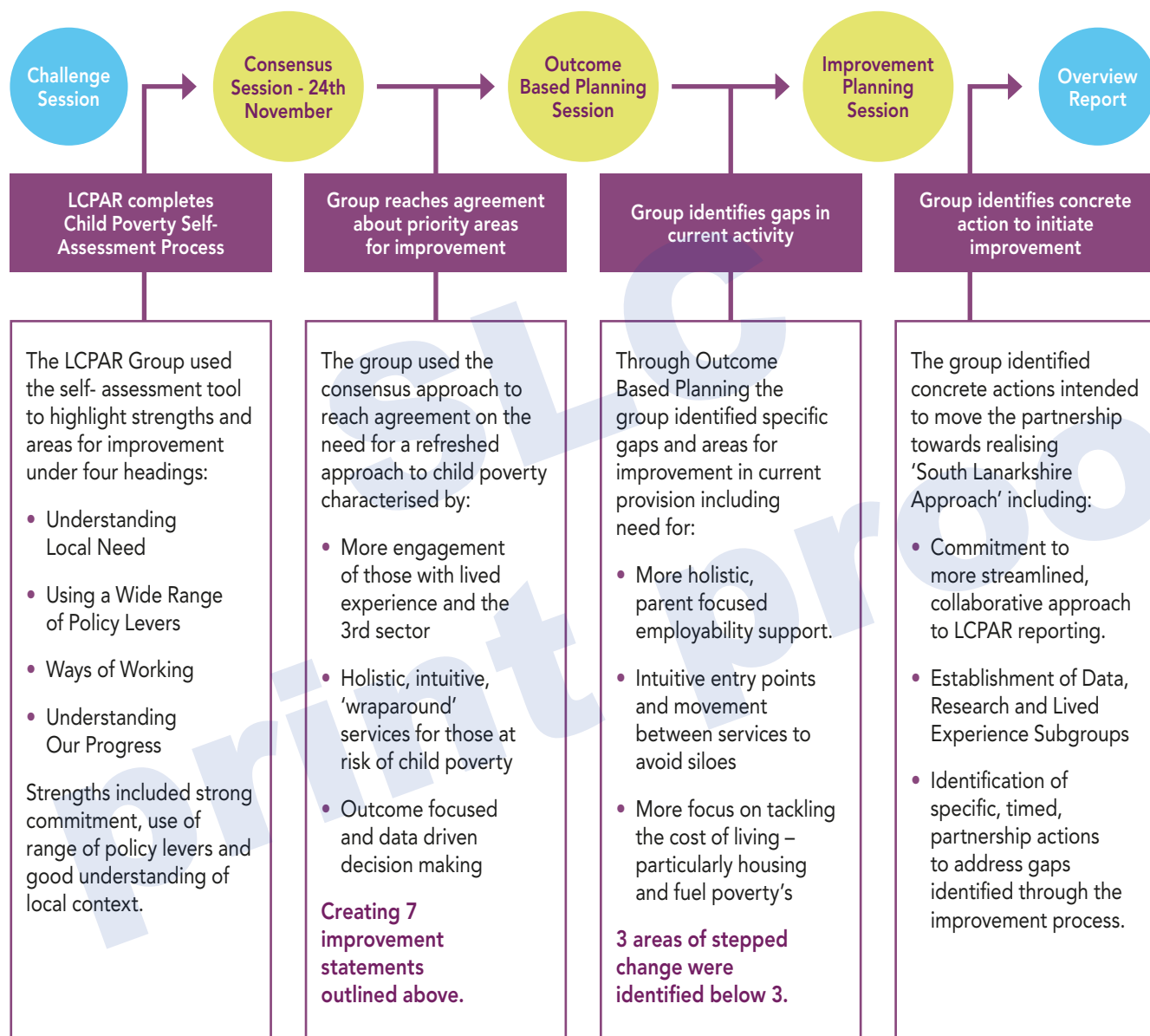
During 2021/22 169 employees engaged with the Upskilling Programme. 27 employees successfully increased their hours or ensured Job security within the workplace, while 37 staff secured promotion at work. The service noted that there has been a high demand for employees to re-skill and gain Health and Social Care qualifications.



Our approach to improvement

Working with colleagues from the national Improvement Service we engaged in four action learning sessions online to consider which aspects of our approach to tackling child poverty was working, to take time to think through any challenges experienced and identify future areas for improvement.

The diagram below shows an overview of the step change process and outputs, which informed our decision-making process around our 3 stepped change ideas.



Three stepped change areas

The three areas for development identified as stepped change in addition to our priorities: -

1. Successful extension of routine enquiry and active referral beyond existing pathways
2. Develop holistic, wraparound support for parents to guide them through obstacles to employment (skills, childcare transport, mental health, benefit entitlement) and beyond
3. Work together to reduce the impact of energy and household bill increases on families with children experiencing or at risk of child poverty (including the priority groups)

How will we achieve this?

- Increased focus on joint working and the pooling of expertise and resources to deliver additional value through the LCPAR group and the organisations it represents.
- Commitment to an increasingly evidence based, outcome focused approach which gives particular consideration to the needs of the priority groups at highest risk of child poverty.
- Systematic involvement of people with lived experience and the third sector in policy development, decision-making and delivery.
- Long term, strategic thinking. The partners are currently giving consideration to whether three or five year tackling poverty / child poverty strategies – supplemented by annual progress reports - might help support a more holistic, preventative approach.

Our integrated approach

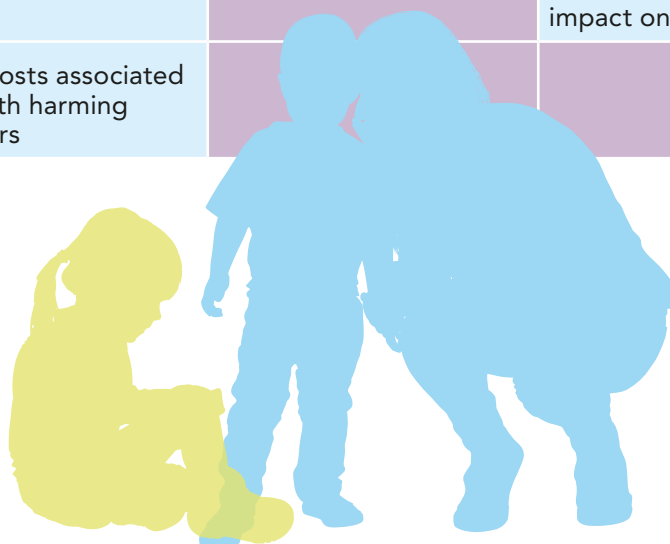
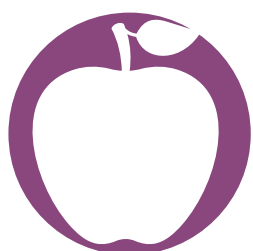
To support our commitment to improvement work, there is high level buy-in for our step change approach from Community Planning Partners. This is crucial where we try to break down barriers to progress, to shift investment from areas not having the desired impact for families and to build confidence in doing things differently to help families make positive changes.

This buy-in also provides greater governance and scrutiny of our work and provides a sense check on the pace of change and the difference that this is making for families. There is regular reporting to the Council's Corporate Management Team and through this engagement valuable contributions are made by senior management to our child poverty working group when necessary.



Our priorities for 2022/23 and the longer term

Income from benefits	Cost of living	Income from employment	Working together to deliver differently
An increase in the awareness of families about the benefits and entitlements they are eligible for	Reduction in financial barriers to education for school age children	Reduce the gap in school leavers entering a positive destination between most deprived 20% and least deprived 20% areas	The voice of children and families experiencing poverty informs policy development and service delivery
Families are more aware of changes in available benefits	Reduced housing costs for families	Support care experienced school leavers sustain a positive destination	Support the third sector to be involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of child poverty activity in South Lanarkshire
	Increased uptake of funded and early learning and childcare entitlement for 2- and 3-year-olds	Increase employment support for low income parents	Improve use of data so that partners can build a shared understanding of poverty at household, neighbourhood, and locality level
	Improved digital inclusion amongst families in the most deprived areas	Employees being paid the living wage - parents	Deliver more holistic, wraparound, accessible support to families experiencing poverty
	Reduce Food Poverty	Employee upskilling - parents	Develop shared short-, medium- and long-term outcomes and identify the necessary resources to work collaboratively towards them
	Reduced costs of participation in Leisure and Culture experiences		Cary out a comprehensive evaluation of services to better understand the impact on households
	Reduce costs associated with health harming behaviours		





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