

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 7th SEPTEMBER 2023

**TACKLING POVERTY & INEQUALITIES – CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT
2022/23**

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report is to ask Committee to consider and agree the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Report prior to its publication.

1.2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 To agree the Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2022/23

1.2.2 To consider the feedback from Education & Children’s Service Committee

1.2.3 Identify any changes or improvement within this area of work which the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group can implement; and

1.2.4 Acknowledge and support the progress made in tackling this agenda

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 The Scottish Government has an explicit commitment to ending child poverty through the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (‘the Act’) which outlines a statutory requirement to reduce the number of children who live in poverty. The Act also places a statutory duty on Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare and submit, to the Scottish Government, an annual “Local Child Poverty Action Report” (‘the Action Report’) that identifies what action has been taken in the previous 12 months and the actions that will be taken in the future to reduce child poverty.

2.2 The Local Child Poverty Action Report (Appendix 2) has been developed alongside Community Planning partners, most noticeably with NHS Grampian, which has the joint statutory duty with Aberdeenshire Council to produce the Action Report.

2.3 Reducing poverty is one of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) priorities which is led by the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Strategic Partnership, chaired by Amanda Roe, Buchan Area Manager. The Action Report contributes to the LOIP priority.

2.4 The draft Action Report was considered by Education & Children Services Committee on the 31st August and the feedback has been taken into account within the final version prior to publication.

3 Discussion

3.1 On the 24th March 2022, the Scottish Government published the second version of the Tackling Poverty Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 “Best Start Bright Futures.” The plan builds on the foundations of Every Child, Every Chance and continues to focus on the three drivers of child poverty. The plan highlights 3 main drivers of child poverty:

- **Employment:** Income from parents’ work and earnings is insufficient to lift them from poverty;
- **Household costs:** The costs of living that households must cover are too high;
- **Social Security:** Income from Social Security has been cut back significantly, particularly for families with children

It also continues to highlight the six priority family groups.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/>

3.2 The Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan (Action Plan) was developed with those with lived experience, partners and comments from the Area Committee and Education & Children Service Policy Committee also informed the final version. This Committee agreed the new Action Plan on the 30th March 2023 and an updated version is attached at Appendix 3.

3.3 The priorities of the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership are:

- Reducing the number of children/people living in poverty;
- Preventing children/people falling into poverty;
- Enabling children to live poverty free in adult life; and
- Improve the wellbeing of people living in poverty.

3.4 Poverty is technically defined as when a person's household income is less than 60% of the UK average income. However, poverty is much more than just low income. The factors that generate poverty are wide-ranging and encompass many aspects of day-to-day life such as health, housing, educational attainment, employability, and access to services.

The Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership have adopted the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition of Poverty which is –

Poverty is when your resources are well below your minimum needs.

Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.

3.5 The table below outlines the most recent Child Poverty figures from the UK government's national statistics for 2020/21 estimates children under 16 living in poverty across Aberdeenshire.

Constituency	2020/21	2021/22
Banff & Buchan	3326 (18%)	4054 (22.8%)
Gordon	2897 (13.3%)	3270 (15.2%)
West Aberdeenshire & Kincardine	2453 (11%)	2753 (12.8%)
Total	8, 676 (14.2%)	10,077 (16%)

Data source - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics>

3.6 In Aberdeenshire our approach to tackling child poverty focusses on early intervention and prevention. Tackling the root causes of poverty and building families capabilities through income maximisation, employability and promoting positive life chances. A partnership approach is vital in ensuring opportunities and services are accessible and relevant. The draft report highlights good practice and the following outcomes which have been achieved over the last 12 months:

- **880** young people and parents have enhance their employability skills through targeted training programs, work experience and delivery of supported employment schemes.
- **21,731** households have been supported to reduce household costs with a client financial gain of **£6,509,323**.
- Through specialist pathways **386** priority families have been supported to secure additional financial support.
- **608** people shared their experience, with over **250** being young people. These experts of experience informed practice around the stigmatisation, ensure information was available by development of a Worried About Money Leaflet, Young Scot TP&I page and the Child Poverty Action Plan & Report.

4. Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 The work and outcomes delivered through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities partnership helps delivery of all of the council priorities.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Learning for Life Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Climate Change Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economic Growth Infrastructure and public assets

Specifically, it supports the outcome to 'Improve the life chances of people at risk of falling into poverty, or already living in poverty.

- 4.2 The activities and outcomes, delivered through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership, helps deliver against the CPP Local Outcomes Improvement Plans, Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan and links with a range of strategies including Criminal Justice, Housing, Transport and Economic Development.

This report helps deliver against the Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan Priority of Promoting Wellbeing / Resilience – Addressing Inequality / Child Poverty which over arches the strategic priorities. It also delivers on the LOIP Priorities, Reducing Poverty and contributes to the Healthy Eating & Active Lifestyles actions.

- 4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		x	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Climate Change and Sustainability		x	
Health and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Town Centre First		x	

- 4.4 No staffing implications have been identified and it is anticipated that the ambitions set out in the revised Child Poverty Action Plan will be met from within existing resources, where necessary there will be changes to the way in which services are delivered at no additional cost to partner organisations.

Funding opportunities such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and at a local level the Fairer Aberdeenshire Funding, will be explored where appropriate.

In addition, the Scottish Government's Delivery Plan, 'Best Start, Bright Futures', highlights a range of funding opportunities which will come onstream during the life of that plan. Opportunities to access these funding streams will be explored as appropriate.

4.5 An integrated impact assessment was carried out in 2021, updated in 2023 and is attached as Appendix 1. This assessment reflects the current work being undertaken and there is still a positive impact as follows –

- The work which is delivered and monitored through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership aims to maximise income and improve employability for people on a low income and can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, which helps meet our aims under the Fairer Scotland Duty.
- The children and young peoples' rights and wellbeing implications are likely to close the inequalities gap and support improved quality of life, which may contribute to children and young people living a poverty free life in adulthood.

4.6 The following risk has been identified, as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP007 – Social Risks, changes in population Poverty & Social Inequality [Corporate Risk Register](#)

The following risk have been identified through the Business Services Directorate risks: BSSR001 - Our young people have improved life chances

- Difficulty in sourcing data to report KPIs
- Challenges in sourcing sustainable funding streams

[Link to risk register page on website](#)

The integrated approach taken in developing the new Child Poverty Action Plan will ensure improved data collection and sustained outcomes through partnership resourcing.

5 Scheme of Governance

5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Report and their comments are incorporated within the Report and are satisfied that the Report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section D.4.4 – To approve the Council's annual Local Child Poverty Action Report following consultation with Area Committees and Education & Children's Services Committee.

Rob Simpson Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Annette Johnston, Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Coordinator

Date 8th August 2023

List of Appendices –

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment.

Appendix 2 – Draft Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Report

Appendix 3 – Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan.