

ABERDEENSHIRE CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN 2022- 2026

INTRODUCTION

In Aberdeenshire people are living in poverty due to low wages, high living costs, lack of accessible affordable flexible childcare, affordable transport and the premium felt by those living in a remote and rural area. Preventative approaches to address children poverty ensuring they have a rural bias is a priority for this plan.

Parents worry about the impact poverty has on their children, particularly that they may be bullied because of the circumstances in which they live. They can also feel stigmatised when accessing services which can result in reluctance to access support in future. Children living in poverty frequently report feeling excluded and embarrassed, citing it as a key source of unhappiness, and worry about their parents.

This plan has been informed by and will be monitored by those priority families that have lived experience. The actions do reflect the rural challenges and are driven by the need to improve outcomes for priority families. This plan will be delivered by a strong partnership who are committed to jointly achieve outcomes that will reduce Child Poverty in Aberdeenshire.

The rural dimension of Aberdeenshire creates distinct challenges. In addressing the specific dynamics of rurality, the development of providing localised a whole family approach where partners are collocated gives a real meaning to “no wrong door”.

THE POLICY CONTEXT

The Scottish Government’s Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 26 Best Start Bright Futures 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 have to cover are too high.
- **Social Security:** Income from social security has been cut back significantly, particularly for families with children.

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

ABERDEENSHIRE PRINCIPLES

Our approach to tackling Child Poverty focusses on tackling the root causes and building people's capabilities through income maximisation, employability, improving quality of life, helping families manage the impacts of poverty and promoting positive life chances. It is important the voices of those with lived experience are not just heard but their views construct future strategies and action plan as these families are key to deliver the 4 overarching goals which are highlighted in this plan. These are:

- Preventing children on the margins of poverty falling into poverty.
- Reducing the number of children living in poverty by moving those in poverty out of poverty.
- Protecting children living in poverty from its most adverse effects.
- Enabling children to live a poverty-free adult life.

The plan includes actions that in some cases contribute to more than one of the above overarching goals.

ABERDEENSHIRE CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

The intention of this Action Plan is to improve outcomes for all families living in poverty or at risk of living in poverty, but the key emphasis will be supporting families where the risk of children living in poverty is highest. To this end the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan will focus on the needs of 'priority families' who are at high risk of poverty, these are:-

- lone-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.

Those in low-paid work, those who are part of marginalised communities such as Gypsy/Traveller families; people experiencing substance misuse issues and those families impacted by the criminal justice system will also be key groups that the actions set out in this action plan will support.

This Action Plan outlines a range of actions under 3 main aims –

- Making Employment Work
- Making every opportunity count
- Making the future possible for all

RESOURCING THE DELIVERY OF THE ACTION PLAN

It is anticipated that some of the ambitions set out in this action plan can be met from within existing resources where changes to the way in which services are delivered can be made at no additional cost to partner organisations. At a local level funding opportunities such as Fairer Aberdeenshire Funds, LACER, ESF, UK Prosperity Fund, No one Left Behind and ADP funding will be explored where appropriate. In addition, Scottish Government's Delivery Plan highlights a range of funding opportunities which will be explored as appropriate.

Reducing Child Poverty Action Plan 2022 – 2026

Priority Area
<i>Making Employment Work</i>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress made since approval	Lead
Develop and deliver a range of employability programmes that supports those within priority families.	The number of priority families supported into employment. The number of priority families supported to enhance their employability.	Increase income from employment.	880 individuals have been supported to enhanced employment skills out of which 225 have secure sustainable employment. https://employmentconnect.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Aberdeenshire-LEP-3-Year-Plan-Overview-002.pdf	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Recruit Child Poverty Employability workers who will use a place-based approach to identify and address barriers to securing or sustaining work.	The number of priority families supported through integrated flexible pathways. The number of working parents supported to reduce the cost of childcare and transport. The number of parents from the priority groups that secure or sustain	Increase income from employment	The recruitment of 2 Child Poverty Employability workers has taken place and they will start in September 2023. These posts will work with families to increase access to	Aberdeenshire Employment Support Team

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress made since approval	Lead
These workers will support families through developing positive relationships with them which will identify and address barriers such as money advice, transport, affordable childcare or digital access			sustained employment and training opportunities especially for those living in rural & remote areas.	
Provide appropriate support to address in-work poverty by targeting support to help parents already in employment to remain active in the workplace. Support them to access a range of support such as - the Parental Support Fund, Tax Free Childcare and gain skills or additional qualifications which supports Career progression.	<p>The number of parents from priority families, who are in work , to enhance their skills or supported through career progression.</p> <p>The number of families accessing the Parental Support Fund to support them to stay in work.</p>	Increase income from employment	<p>Over the last 9 months number of sessions around the Rising Cost of Living was delivered . These sessions raise awareness of the support available to working parents.</p> <p>The Parental Support fund supported 188 families. Including 54 into other employment including self-employment.</p>	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Develop a partnership with local employers to increase the number of local businesses who are Living Wage employers.	<p>The number of employers that have been engaged with to support them to become a living wage employer.</p> <p>The number of Living Wage employers who operate within Aberdeenshire</p>	Increase income from employment	The number of accredited Living Wage employers increased from 64 in 2022 to 71 in July 2023.	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Encourage all businesses that are delivering services which have been procured by Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partners to be living wage employers with a diverse	The number of employability opportunities delivered through procured services	Increase income from employment	<p>Through procurement 171 employers are paying their staff the living wage this is an increase of 23% from previous years.</p> <p>From the 01 July 2023, all employed staff, including</p>	Aberdeenshire Community Planning Board.

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress made since approval	Lead
workforce which has no gender pay gap			apprentices and any other workers engaged in delivering grant-funded activities for Aberdeenshire Council must be paid at least the real Living Wage.	

Priority Area

Making Every Opportunity Count

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>To continue to deliver good quality accessible information & advice services through the Information and advice framework. Money Advice & welfare rights workers will use a key worker approach to support for priority families.</p> <p>To increase accessibility to the service the workers will be hosted within Primary Health Care facilities, housing services, community organisations including foodbank and within rural & remote communities.</p>	The number of priority families supported to ensure they have secured all benefits and financial support available to them.	Maximising income from social security benefits;	<p>Pathways have been developed with NHS , Foodbanks, ADP, Progress In Dialogue, Resettlement Team and a pilot in Meldrum Academy will inform future services within ECS.</p> <p>Through these specialist pathways 386 priority families have been supported to access additional benefits and the financial available to them.</p> <p>An allocation of £3,173,790 has supported 4737 children and young people to access</p>	Tackling Poverty & Inequalities (TP&I) Strategic Partnership

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>A community-based information & advice service will be delivered by a consortium which has been developed to include the 4 Citizen Advice Bureau who operates across Aberdeenshire. This consortium will deliver a range of advice services including debt advice, benefit, housing, relationship and employment advice.</p>			<p>food, clothing and essential items.</p> <p>Over the last 12 months 9,841 clients have accessed Information & Advice Services £9,355,405 has been secured in client financial gain.</p> <p>The main issues that clients are receiving support for are benefits, debt, housing, energy debt and support with the rising cost of living.</p>	
<p>To develop a cash first approach to food security through delivery of the Worried About Money Leaflet, developing a strategic partnership and delivering wellbeing funds through a range of trusted partners and social landlords.</p> <p>To develop partnership projects and initiatives which reduces food security, fuel poverty using a cash first approach.</p> <p>To develop and deliver the Fair Food Aberdeenshire action plan to increase access to affordable nutritious food,</p>	<p>Number of 'Worried About Money' Leaflets distributed to partners and communities.</p> <p>Number of priority families who accessed support through the wellbeing funds.</p> <p>The number of priority families supported through to reduce fuel and food costs.</p> <p>The number of integrated food & advice sessions delivered to priority families and the wider community.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire has distributed over 120,000 leaflets to households, community groups and partner organisations.</p> <p>Over 350 priority families have increased their household income through accessing love local cards and Wellbeing funds.</p> <p>706 Households have been supported to reduce their heating costs.</p> <p>62 advice sessions have been delivered to parents and partners.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire's Financial Inclusion Partnership</p> <p>Fair Food Aberdeenshire partnership</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>reduce food waste and increase food skills.</p> <p>To deliver the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) action plan which aims to make healthy eating and active living possible and achievable for everyone in Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>The number of priority families engaged with emergency food providers.</p>		<p>3,149 low-income families have engaged with the emergency food providers resulting in 4,944 children have been fed by emergency food providers.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership.</p>
<p>To increase awareness and access to services when people need support through developing campaigns for transition periods of a child life enabling families to be aware of the support available at these stages of the child's life.</p> <p>Deliver partnership training and awareness to address the stigma felt by those families when accessing services.</p> <p>Develop a range of targeted pathways for families who have a new-born baby , those households with a disabled parent or child, those engaged with Criminal Justice System and clients supported through the Alcohol & Drugs Partnership service hubs.</p>	<p>Number of social media shares and reach for campaigns.</p> <p>Number of participants who have engaged in training & awareness sessions.</p> <p>Number of priority families supported through the targeted pathways.</p> <p>Number of households/ people who have benefited from integrated services to improve their wellbeing , reduce poverty & inequalities ensuring positive outcomes</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits;</p>	<p>Several campaigns have been hared on the social media platforms – Best Start Grants Parental Support Fund Fuel Fund These posts have reached over 6500 people per month.</p> <p>Over 978 people and young people have participated in on line and face to face training and awareness raising session.</p> <p>Through these specialist pathways 386 priority families have been supported to access additional benefits and the financial available to them.</p> <p>The total number of people who have participated in the services, opportunities and events that the partners have</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Financial Inclusion Partnership</p> <p>Financial pathways for families and those with new-born babies - NHS Grampian</p> <p>Vulnerable & disabled Households – TP&I partnership. Specialist pathways - Criminal Justice</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
			collectively delivered in 2022 is 26,073 out of which 3,272 are children and young people.	Aberdeenshire ADP
<p>Deliver a range of opportunities to ensure those experts of experience can coproduce services, develop opportunities, inform practice and strategies.</p> <p>Support priority families to participate in the Local Voices Forum, expert panel sessions including deep dives into issues such as Fuel Poverty, affordable & flexible Childcare, accessible transport.</p>	<p>Number of partners involved in Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Network (ALEN)</p> <p>Number of interventions made by the network or expert forums which informs strategies, budgets, policy and practice.</p> <p>Number of priority families involved in expert sessions and forums.</p> <p>Number of coproduced services or opportunities.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>There are 18 partners involved in ALEN.</p> <p>There have been 15 different opportunities for those with lived experience to be involved in improving services , practice setting budget priorities, fees, developing strategies and policies.</p> <p>608 including 250 young people from priority families have led and participated in sessions which informs practice and policy.</p> <p>Those experts with experience have coproduced training, Child Poverty Plans & reports and allocating funding.</p>	<p>TP&I Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Aberdeenshire’s Lived Experience Network</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Forum</p>

Priority Area

Making the future possible for all

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>Support young people from priority families to participate Youth led projects which use a rights-based approach. Through these projects young people will challenge stigma and ensure the inequalities felt by those young people living in poverty are addressed.</p> <p>Strengthen the voice of children & Young Peoples to ensure future plans, strategies and funding allocation is informed by their lived experience in relation to Poverty & Inequalities</p> <p>Ensure young people are aware of all the financial support available to them at different life transitions.</p>	<p>Number of young people involved in rights-based TP&I projects.</p> <p>Number of interventions made by the young people which informs strategies, budgets, policy and practice.</p> <p>Number of children and young people from priority families involved in expert panels, informing consultations and participating in structures that empower young people.</p> <p>Number of coproduced services, campaigns or opportunities to address poverty & inequalities which children and young people have developed.</p> <p>Number of young people from priority families who secure the Education Maintenance Allowance</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>250 young people have been involved in TP&I projects which identify priorities.</p> <p>Through Education & Children Services there is a commitment from all partners to engage and empower young people. Through this structure there has been opportunities for young people to coproduce and inform policy around a number of areas which is outlined in the published Children Service Plan Childrens Service Plan 2023-26</p>	<p>TP&I Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Education & Children Services</p>
<p>Increase access to ESOL , digital skills and literacy support for priority families especially targeting those from marginalised communities where literacy levels are low.</p> <p>Improve digital access , affordability and skills for priority families across Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>Number of priority families who access ESOL support.</p> <p>Number of priority families that are supported with improving their literacy and digital skills.</p> <p>Number of priority families that are digitally connected.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>Increasing literacy, numeracy and digital skills will improve the ability for families to take up offers and new service deals which they may not have been aware of.</p> <p>It gives the families increased opportunities not only through employment but social cohesion.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Community Learning Partnership</p>
<p>Develop and share good practice examples using the Pupil Equity Funding</p>	<p>Number of pupils benefiting from a PEF programme or activity.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p>	<p>Children, young people and their families will be supported</p>	<p>Education & Children Services</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
(PEF). These projects and interventions are developed to support pupils on lowest income close the poverty and attainment gap.	<p>Number of families supported through PEF initiatives.</p> <p>Number of projects and interventions that are shared as good practice examples through the partnership.</p>	<p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>to reduce the cost of the school day, increase opportunities to enhance their learning through a range of support and interventions.</p>	
<p>To develop a childcare sector-based training programme to address the challenges faced by providers with recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>To pilot a childcare training academy targeting a rural setting which will also deliver wrap around childcare for those with primary age children.</p> <p>Develop models of flexible, affordable and accessible wrap around childcare for priority families and working parents that would include not only early years but primary age children and young people who may require a higher level of care.</p>	<p>Number of flexible childcare pathways developed to support the rural and remote communities.</p> <p>Number of training programmes for childcare / early years workers delivered through the sector-based training programmes.</p> <p>Number of new Childminders, models or providers.</p> <p>Number of new employment opportunities filled.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>A tender has been developed with partners and those with lived experience to commission a review and research project which will be delivered in 2023. The outcomes will inform a Childcare strategy which will support working families going forward.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership</p> <p>Education & Children Services</p>
<p>Ensure local transport strategies reflects the challenges and needs of priority families.</p> <p>Explore & develop new ideas to overcome the transport challenges that rural communities face especially for low-income families.</p>	<p>Number of safe active travel routes across Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Number affordable & responsive rural transport projects.</p> <p>Number of sustained rural transport routes</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>An expert panel will be recruited from priority families to identify barriers and possible solutions around accessible and affordable transport.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>NESTRAN</p>
<p>Raise awareness and improve access to services aimed at pupils to improve physical and mental well-being of</p>	<p>Number of children & young people supported by the range of initiatives.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p>	<p>There is clear evidence of the link between the increased stress and worry that living on a low income brings and</p>	<p>GIRFEC Strategic group.</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>children and young people experiencing poverty.</p> <p>Raise awareness and improve access to wellbeing services for priority families through the development of hubs and interventions that prevent crisis within the family.</p> <p>Deliver and fund a range of community-based wellbeing programmes.</p>	<p>Number of new projects, initiatives and opportunities available through the development of the wellbeing projects / hubs.</p> <p>Number of wellbeing programmes being integrated within existing opportunities.</p>	<p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>deterioration of people's mental health.</p> <p>There had been significant increase in mental health and anxiety because of the pandemic which is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, particular for young people and their families. Through raising awareness and new opportunities people's wellbeing will improve.</p>	<p>Education & Children's Services</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA)</p>
<p>Ensure strategies and action related to affordable housing, prevention of homelessness domestic violence, the prevention of childhood accidents; parental substance misuse; supporting the needs of the Criminal Justice population; parenting and mental health can reduce the inequalities gap and further improve quality of life and life chances for children and their families living in poverty</p>	<p>Number of strategies and action plans informed by experts of experience.</p> <p>Number of staff & volunteers that are trauma informed.</p> <p>Number of coproduced strategies and action plans that are developed, monitored and delivered.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>Increase ownership of local , area and national strategies and action plans.</p> <p>A workforce that will deliver inclusive services with dignity and respect .</p> <p>Improved life changes for all.</p>	<p>TP&I strategic partnership.</p>