



South Lanarkshire's

South Lanarkshire
Partnership
Stronger together

Local Child Poverty Action Report



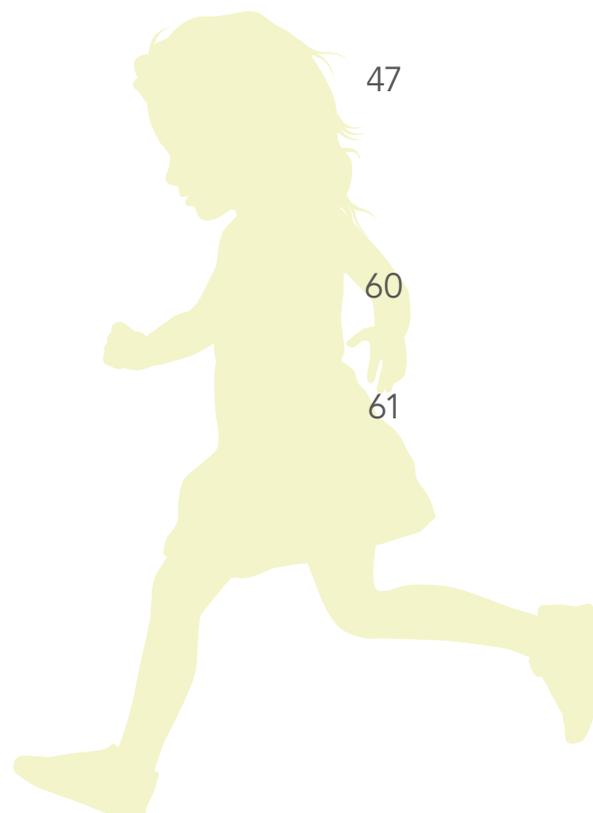
South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership's
progress over 2020/21 and our plans for 2021/22

Giving every child
in South Lanarkshire
every chance



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SLC proof



Foreword

This is our third Local Child Poverty Action Report. It comes at the end of another challenging year, and one which the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still unclear. However, we do know that many children continue to live in poverty in South Lanarkshire and that our work to address the problem must progress to find new, innovative ways to improve their lives. We also know that the collaborative approaches we have taken to address the pandemic and our learning from this has given us a solid base to co produce solutions with our communities and make the greatest positive impact upon lives. As we do this, we will keep an eye to the emerging trends around child poverty and make best use of the information that will tell us how life is changing for our families.

Our report continues to focus on the three main drivers that we can use to reduce child poverty – Income from Benefits, Income from Employment and Reducing the Cost of Living. While all of these are important, we recognise that it is actions linked to the Income from Employment driver that will ensure the best way we can assist families to find long term, sustainable solutions to their poverty related issues. We will continue to provide the support needed for parents, carers and families to gain the skills and confidence to enter employment, and to strive to ensure that good quality employment opportunities which pay a fair wage are available to them, as our key commitment to this work.

Our ambition is for all of our children to have the best start to their lives, without the additional challenges which poverty places upon them, and we will continue to work towards this. We commit to continuing our improvement journey, and through this to identifying and making the changes we need to support our most vulnerable children and families. As part of this we continue to place their lived experience at the heart of our strategy, recognising the importance of the expertise which they bring in informing the services we should deliver. If you are reading this document and would like to talk about your experiences and contribute towards our future development, we urge you to contact us using the details at the end of the report.

We also recognise the hard work of our staff across the partnership, including statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations in producing this report and more importantly, in delivering the actions within it. Thank you for your commitment and for continuing to work with us to make the improvements we all want to see for our children and families.



John Ross
Leader of South Lanarkshire Council



Neena Mahal
Chair of NHS Lanarkshire Board

1 Introduction

In November 2017, the Scottish Parliament passed the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, which set the following targets to reduce child poverty in Scotland by 2030:

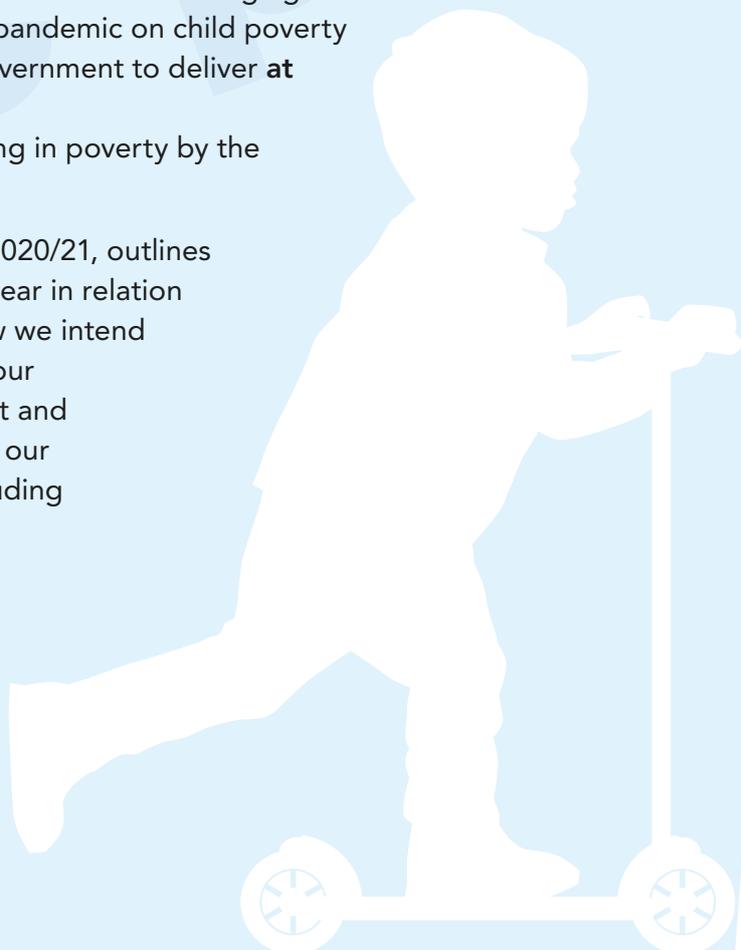
Of children living in households in Scotland

- less than 10% should be living in relative poverty
- less than 5% should be living in absolute poverty
- less than 5% should be living with combined low income and material deprivation
- less than 5% should be living in persistent poverty

The legislation placed a statutory duty on local authorities and NHS Boards to report annually on step change and improvement activity to reduce child poverty in their local area. This is our third Local Child Poverty Action Report for South Lanarkshire and follows a decision taken by the Community Planning Partnership to produce a joint report reflecting the Community Planning Partnership approach to tackling child poverty. The following report is in recognition of the critical contribution all local partners are making to reducing child poverty in our communities.

The Scottish Government has recently (as of June 2021) renewed the focus on tackling poverty and child poverty. The newly published **Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, 3rd Year progress report 2020/21** while acknowledging the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child poverty levels, re-commits the Scottish Government to deliver **at pace and scale** to reduce the number of children living in poverty by the end of the decade.

The South Lanarkshire report for 2020/21, outlines the progress made over the past year in relation to the key poverty drivers and how we intend to build on this progress through our action plan for 2021/22. The report and action plan has been produced by our community planning partners including South Lanarkshire Council; NHS Lanarkshire; South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership; Skills Development Scotland, Job Centre Plus and our third sector organisations.



Strong partnership working is evidenced right through the report, both in terms of the contribution that the partners have made to the overall design and content, and the co-authorship model used to develop the actions/measures included in the action plan for 2021/22.

In the development of the Year 3 plan/report the input of a wide range of stakeholders, other than the statutory partners, were also prioritised. These included testimonies from vulnerable and disengaged families who usually have been reluctant to engage with public services e.g. from fear, embarrassment, or lack of knowledge. Conversations with those with lived experience has been critical to help identify improvement areas within the plan for 2021/22 and this approach will remain important as we move forward into Year 4. The Community Planning Partnership holds to the view that the LCPAR represents a real and enduring opportunity for deeper engagement with families with a lived experience of poverty in order to ensure that their priorities and ambitions continue to steer the planning process going forward.

As with last year's plan, the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions still influence the way in which we deliver our services and the CPP has remained conscious of the need to prioritise support to the most vulnerable families and groups within our communities. The economic effects of COVID-19 in particular and the ultimate cost to the government budgets of interventions such as aid packages and other supports have yet to be fully understood, but it is clear that the financial and social consequences are likely to fall disproportionately upon those who already were experiencing poverty prior to March 2020, further widening inequalities.

Recent research by the Scottish Government (December 2020)¹ on the impact of the COVID-19 on household incomes has indicated that it is the families that ranked in the lowest 20% income group before the pandemic, that have experienced the biggest drop in their earnings during the first 6 months of 2020/21, as compared to higher income groups. When assessed against higher income families, lower income households were also found to be twice as likely to have increased their level of debt during the pandemic, to be 50% more likely to be saving less, and to have recorded a higher level of credit card use.

The monitoring and planning approaches in-built into the Year 3 LCPAR and action plan, will provide the means for the Community Planning Partnership to continue to evaluate the lasting social and economic effects of the pandemic on our local communities and our most vulnerable households in order to ensure that we maintain the right actions to address the difficulties they face.

¹ *Scottish Government, Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 (December 2020)*

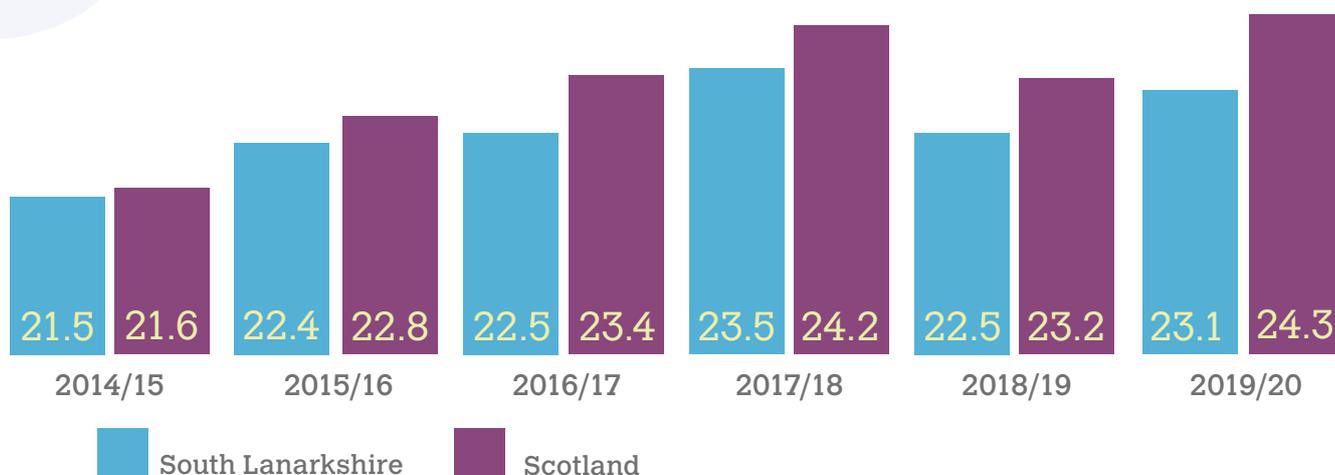
2 The scale of the challenge nationally and locally

Earlier this year the Campaign to End Child Poverty/End Child Poverty Coalition (ECPC) published their latest set of figures (2020) on child poverty in local authorities, which confirmed that relative poverty amongst children in households across the UK has been progressively increasing over the past 10 years². The medium-term effect of the post 2009 economic recession and the corresponding policy response by central government in the form of austerity measures over the succeeding years and reforms to the benefits system, such as the introduction of Universal Credit, can all be evidenced to have contributed incrementally to this growth in poverty levels.

The ECPC publication was based on re-modelling work carried out by Loughborough University and confirmed that estimated rates of child poverty (relative poverty) have been rising across all the local authority areas in Scotland. South Lanarkshire, as with the other 32 council areas, has demonstrated a similar pattern with an overall increase in levels of relative child poverty before housing costs from the baseline year of 2014/15 (see Figure 1 below).

The most recent figure (2020) indicates that just under 13,000 children in South Lanarkshire (23.1%) live in relative poverty once housing costs have been taken into account. This equates to a rise of approximately 1,000 children living in relative poverty in South Lanarkshire during the period 2014/15 to 2019/20.

Figure 1: Percentage of children (0-15 years) living in relative poverty (after housing costs)
Source: Campaign to End Child Poverty/ End Child Poverty Coalition (ECPC)



² Hirsch, H. and Stone, J. *Local Indicators of Child Poverty after Housing Costs 2019/20* (Loughborough University, Centre for Policy Research, May 2021)



**A family is judged to be living in relative poverty if their household income is below 60% of the median average UK household income- this was approximately £24,000 per annum in 2020.*

Although overall child poverty levels in South Lanarkshire have either been in line with, or just below the Scottish average since 2014/15, at the ward level it becomes evident that there is much variance in child poverty rates between different local communities, and that there are pockets where levels of child poverty persist well above the Scottish average. When examining the problem at a neighbourhood level it becomes clear that there is a strong correlation between areas of known multiple deprivation and local child poverty levels.

Results from the most recent publication of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020) suggest that residents (including children under 16) living in the 20% most deprived data zones in South Lanarkshire are three times more likely to experience income deprivation, than residents living out with these areas. While no detailed breakdown of the 2020 relative child poverty figures is available at the SIMD data zone level, analysis of child poverty rates at the ward level indicates that for selected communities in South Lanarkshire, the wards with the highest levels of area deprivation (as recorded in the SIMD 2020), also tend to experience the highest levels of child poverty (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Percentage of children in relative poverty (after housing costs) against number/percentage data zones in SIMD most deprived 20%

Source: End Child Poverty Coalition (ECPC)

Most deprived 5 wards for Child Poverty	Number/ Percentage of data zones in most deprived 20% SIMD 2020 (as % of ward area DZ's)	Percentage of children in relative poverty (CPAG 2019)
Rutherglen Central and North	8 (42%)	29.2%
Larkhall	8 (33%)	27.9%
Blantyre	9 (36%)	27.7%
Hamilton South	9 (30%)	27.4%
Hamilton North and East	5 (26%)	26.8%
Least deprived 5 wards for Child Poverty		
East Kilbride East	1 (5%)	18.3%
Avondale and Stonehouse	1 (4%)	17.8%
East Kilbride Central and South	0 (0%)	17.5%
Bothwell and Uddingston	1 (6%)	13.7%
East Kilbride West	0 (0%)	10.3%
South Lanarkshire	88 (20%)	22.5%



A comparison between the most recent 2019 CECP figures and figures published in 2013 confirm that there has also been relatively little movement in terms of levels of child poverty in selected wards and the wider localities in South Lanarkshire over a 6 year period (see Figure 3 below).

The 2019 data illustrates that the same wards continue to rank as the best and the worst for child poverty across all four locality areas, as they did back in 2013. The local figures also reflect both the national and council level trends referenced previously, that levels of relative poverty amongst children have been increasing to varying degrees across all four locality areas in South Lanarkshire, and in the majority of the council wards in the period leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 3: Percentage of children in relative poverty by ward (after housing costs) – Change 2013 to 2019

Source: Campaign to End Child Poverty (CECP)

Locality/Ward area and year	2013	2019	Change 2013-2019
Hamilton	21.2%	24.8%	+3.6%
Most deprived ward (Larkhall)	26.5%	27.9%	+1.4%
Least deprived ward (Bothwell/Uddingston)	12.8%	13.7%	+0.9%
East Kilbride	17.7%	18.3%	+0.6%
Most deprived ward (East Kilbride South)	24.8%	25.5%	+0.7%
Least deprived ward (East Kilbride West)	8.6%	10.3%	+1.7%
Rutherglen/Cambuslang	21.3%	25.3%	+4.0%
Most deprived ward (Rutherglen Central and North)	26.4%	29.2%	+2.8%
Least deprived ward (Cambuslang West)	17.5%	20.7%	+3.2%
Clydesdale	20.4%	22.4%	+2.0%
Most deprived ward (Clydesdale South)	25.0%	25.1%	+0.1%
Least deprived ward (Clydesdale West)	22.1%	20.6%	-1.5%

South Lanarkshire average

2013 20.4% 2019 22.5% Change +2.1%

It is also clear that levels of child poverty differ according to social/ demographic variables, such as the type and size of households or the employment status of parents. Regular analysis by the Scottish Government confirms that household characteristics such as the size of the family, age of parents, whether one or both parents are in employment, families with disabled members and the ethnicity of families are all major determinates of child poverty. The latest detailed statistics published by the Scottish Government (Scottish Government, Income and Inequality Statistics 2017-20 (see Figure 4 opposite) suggests that children in households headed by a lone parent, ethnic minority households and households where parents are in part-time employment, are more than a third more likely to experience poverty than the Scottish average.



For other household types, such as where a mother is under the age of 25, or where no adult in the household is in paid employment, the chances of child poverty is two or three times greater than the Scottish average. As with overall levels of child poverty, levels of poverty for children living in these more vulnerable groups has been getting worse in the years running up to 2020.

Figure 4: Child poverty rates amongst selected priority groups

Source: Scottish Government, Income and Inequality Statistics 2017-20

Priority Group	% children in relative poverty 2015-2018	% children in relative poverty 2016-2019	% children in relative poverty 2017-2020
Lone parent households	40%	38%	38%
Households with a disabled person (either or both adult/ child)	30%	30%	29%
Large families with 3+ children	32%	30%	32%
Minority ethnic families	n/a	n/a	38%
Youngest child aged under 1 year	32%	31%	34%
Mothers aged under 25	55%	n/a	n/a
One or both parents in part-time employment only	38%	37%	41%
One parent only in full-time work	33%	35%	37%
No one in household in paid work	63%	63%	61%
Housing tenure: Rented from a LA or HA	45%	46%	47%
Housing tenure: Rented privately	43%	41%	40%

Scottish average – relative poverty (children in all household types)

2015-2018 24% 2016-2019 23% 2017-2020 24%

More detailed analysis of the latest Income and Inequality figures (2017-20) suggests that more than two thirds (68%) of children living in poverty in Scotland live in families where at least one household member is in paid employment, has seen an increase of 3% over the previous year's figures (2016-19)³. While almost half of parents with disabilities (49%) that have a child living in poverty are recorded as having a mental health condition⁴.

³ Scottish Government analysis of the Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Incomes dataset, 2020

⁴ Scottish Government, Additional Child Poverty analysis, Disability dataset, 2021

COVID-19 Impact

It is hard to predict the social and economic effects of COVID-19, but it can be presumed that the pandemic will continue to accelerate the long-term trend of rising child poverty levels into the future. Research carried out by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) in June 2020⁵ predicted that the COVID-19 crisis had the potential to increase the number of children living in poverty in the UK by between 100,000 to 300,000 by the end of 2020. Projecting forward this would increase the overall total for children living in relative poverty across the UK to over 4 million within the next few years. If the IPPR predictions are correct, then it can be expected that there is going to be an extra 500 to 1,500 children in South Lanarkshire moving into poverty over and above current (2020) numbers in the immediate future.

Recent expenditure commitments introduced by the Scottish Government, such as the introduction of targeted child payments, and a pledge to increase the level of these payments⁶, will help address some of the worst economic effects from the COVID-19 crisis on poverty levels in the short term. Other spending interventions made by local and central government (both Scottish and UK) over the past 12 to 18 months will also have slowed the trend of overall rises in child poverty levels during this period. The early evidence suggests that actions such as increasing access to benefits e.g. removing conditionality around Universal Credit claims, expanding Free School Meals provision and introducing COVID related hardship payments has helped hard pressed families to some extent. The introduction of new Social Security Scotland benefits (e.g. the Scottish Child Payment), temporary changes to housing legislation (such as banning enforced evictions) and the extension of employment furlough schemes and support payments to businesses, have all made a positive contribution in terms of alleviating difficulties.

Although some of the new innovations and policy around child poverty are intended to be permanent (extension of Free School Meals, the new Scottish Child Payment etc), it is also recognised that many of the government commitments made over the past 18 months are temporary measures, and it is expected that many will be discontinued during 2021/22. There is concern that the ambitious child poverty targets set by the Scottish Government for the end of the decade will be missed without sustained and targeted increases in public spending^{7 8}. With this in mind the 2021/22 South Lanarkshire LCPAR has been developed in the recognition that the scope and influence of the plan is limited to activity under the control of the council and other CPP partners at the time of writing. The actions that have been included in the plan and the targets that have been set for 2021/22 have been devised on the understanding that both must be realistic and deliverable at the local level taking into account the expected levels of funding available.

⁵ Parkes, H and McNeil, C, *Estimating the Impact of Coronavirus, Microsimulation Estimates* (Institute of Public Policy Research, June 2020)

⁶ Scottish Government, *Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, 3rd Year progress report 2020/21* (June 2021)

⁷ McKendrick, J. et al *Poverty in Scotland 2021- Towards a 2030 without Poverty* (Child Poverty Action Group, June 2021)

⁸ Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland *Programme for Scottish Government: 2021-26* (June 2021)

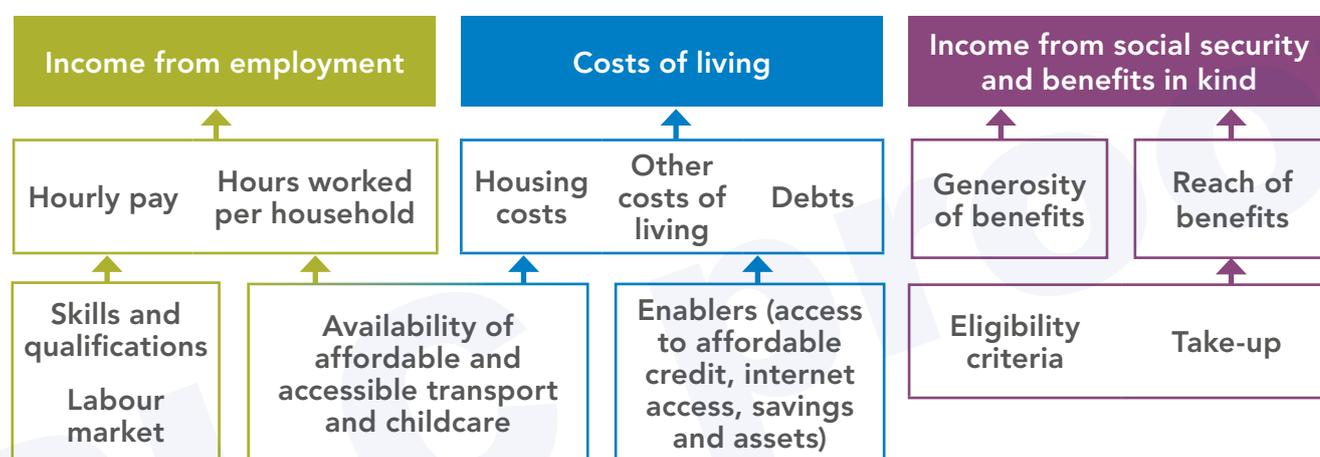


3 Scope of the plan and links to others

The Scottish Government, working with a range of national bodies has provided direction and guidance to ensure that both the National Delivery Plan and Local Child Poverty Action Reports are suitably focussed on policies and activity that evidence shows are most likely to reduce the number of children living in poverty.

This report therefore continues to focus on the three key drivers of child poverty shown in Figure 5. In simple terms the things we need to do to put or keep more money in the pockets of low-income families struggling to make ends meet.

Figure 5: Drivers of child poverty



It is important to note that tackling child poverty is not a new priority for the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership and partnership improvement plans have included actions to tackle the causes and impacts of poverty over many years.

In 2018 the Board decided that tackling poverty and inequality would become its single overarching objective within the new community plan (Local Outcome Improvement Plan) for South Lanarkshire 2017- 2027 in line with the Community Empowerment Act 2015. This coincided with the statutory duty on local authorities and local NHS boards contained in the Child Poverty Scotland Act 2017, to produce Local Child Poverty Action Reports.

While this report will focus on the three key drivers above, our Community Plan, Children’s Services Plan, Health and Social Care Strategic Commissioning Plan and other partnership plans all contain a wider set of priorities and actions to prevent and mitigate the impacts of poverty on children and families. *(Links to these documents are provided in Appendix 2).*

These actions, including early intervention activity, often from pregnancy and the early years of a child’s life, will lessen their chances of experiencing poverty. Working with families to support early child development and enable all our children and young people to achieve their full potential in and beyond school and within their adult lives is central to this prevention and early support philosophy.

The Fairer Scotland Duty (part 1 of the Equality Act 2010) came into force in April 2018 and places a legal responsibility on public bodies to pay due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. The work outlined within this report will be an integral part of South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire’s contribution to achieving an equality of outcomes for our residents.

4 Governance and reporting arrangements

The governance structure shown in Figure 6 highlights how the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership has overall accountability for this report through a hierarchy of relationships to associated groups. The role of the Community Planning Partnership is to provide strategic leadership for the development of the LCPAR and to co-ordinate the delivery of the improvement actions. It also seeks to ensure wider scrutiny amongst the related partnerships maximising buy-in.

A Child Poverty Lead Officer Group was established in 2019 to share experience around child poverty issues between partners and to identify where working together can maximise positive outcomes for families, as well as practically manage the development of the annual action plan and report. The breadth of knowledge and capacity brought by the Lead Officer Group can be evidenced in the content and of this report and action plan. Despite the continuing challenges posed by the pandemic over the last year, the group has met regularly and is well integrated into the relevant community planning partnership thematic boards.

The Lead Officer Group will lead on the ongoing monitoring of the progress of the LCPAR, including identifying and addressing areas that have not progressed as planned.

An annual progress report will be presented to the Getting it Right for South Lanarkshire’s Children Partnership Board and to the Community Planning Partnership Board, as well as key CPP partner organisations such as the NHS Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

Figure 6: Governance structure around tackling child poverty



5 Using local data to shape our plans

The LCPAR is informed by the use of available data and a data profile for South Lanarkshire has been produced that incorporates many recommended national indicators (where data is available locally) and this has been included as an appendix (*Appendix 1*).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the difficulties of placing too much reliance on data (both local and national) to give an indication child poverty levels locally, and the effectiveness of actions and measures in the plan designed to tackle these. The publication of several national surveys and datasets aimed at quantifying levels of household poverty/ child poverty (e.g. Family Resources Survey) have been curtailed due to COVID-19 restrictions. At a council level too, several of our actions and measures outlined in the plan for 2020/21 based on data from local programmes have been difficult to report against due to temporary service closures, a lack of activity, or having to adopt alternative methods of delivery due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The volume of research published over the last 18 months on the impact of COVID-19 on child poverty highlights the rapidly changing environment and the need for LCPAR's to take better account of new emergent themes in child poverty, some of which did not exist prior to the pandemic. Given the recognised limitations with established data sources, it is intended that the South Lanarkshire LCPAR for year three will be a transitional plan in the deployment of data, taking a more selective approach to the use of measures based on local programmes and project activity. Careful consideration has been taken to ensure that the measures included in the 2021/22 plan are robust and take account of potential COVID-19 impacts. Priority has also been given in the year three plan to include actions and measures that are intended to increase step change activity and to promote further joint working amongst partners and services.

We continue to use of the three-step improvement framework to plan and evaluate our work and recognise that all relevant partners need to be involved in the improvement activity. We will make sure our workforce has the relevant skills and knowledge to enable them to make best use of data and other evidence around child poverty, in order to allow the planning and delivery of interventions that guarantees the best possible outcomes for South Lanarkshire's families.

We will also continue to work to improve our gathering and understanding of poverty data at lower geographies/ neighbourhood levels and to increase the voice of those with lived experience of poverty in the development of future reports and plans.

Looking further ahead to year four of our LCPAR (2022/23), we intend to focus more on step change and improvement led activity. As part of this approach, we will make greater use of lived experience evidence to agree future priorities and consider new methods for testing and evaluating activity. Locally derived data will be essential to this planning and will complement strategically and nationally held data. Some of this work will be specific to the child poverty plan. However, some will be embedded in the engagement activity around our Children's Services Plan, or part of our broader work with communities to refresh our Community Plan. We plan to make better use of local survey data that already exists and consider new approaches to the collection and use of qualitative data from consultations with children and young people, e.g. such as participatory budgeting in schools.

Our research task group will make a valuable contribution in helping us understand emerging themes in child poverty and to compare and contrast national evidence with local intelligence.

6 Workforce development

The Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality to the Scottish Government recommends that

public service delivery should be respectful, person-centred and preserve the dignity of people in poverty. Pre-employment and in-service training should include the importance of avoiding stigma and developing understanding of the challenges of living on a very low income.

Our overarching objective to tackle poverty, deprivation and inequality includes a commitment to ensuring our services meet this recommendation. Our greatest resource is our workforce, and we are committed to making sure they have the knowledge, awareness and skills they need to deliver services competently and confidently to support our most vulnerable families.

This year we have, in addition to our usual campaigns and ongoing training, we have encouraged staff across the partnership to undertake the Public Health Scotland modules on child poverty awareness which are available online. We have used social media to spread information about the work being undertaken locally and the themes which impact upon child poverty. We have also been involved in the Challenge Poverty Week campaign, raising staff awareness through internal emails, intranet posts from partners and making use of our communications channels to post news stories to a wider audience in South Lanarkshire.

We continue to the Promote the Poverty Alliance's "Stick Your Labels" campaign as widely as we can, encouraging partners to commit to the three pledges:

Poverty is not inevitable:

It is a problem of political choices. It is neither natural nor acceptable.

We all have a role to play in addressing poverty:

We will set out our contribution to tackling poverty in Scotland.

Attitudes matter:

How we talk about poverty and how we portray it can stigmatise and harm people:

We will never use language that might stigmatise people experiencing poverty.

Actions change attitudes:

To change beliefs about poverty requires action across our whole society:

We will develop actions that help address negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty.

We also continue to promote our bespoke online poverty awareness and tackling stigma training to partners and staff, to further build their understanding and commitment.

To increase our shared understanding of the child poverty landscape, we have established a task group who will analyse and summarise ongoing research and intelligence as well as good practice around child poverty and produce a summary of findings to inform our decision making and planning. This is an ongoing piece of work which alongside developing improvement work is a priority for us in the coming year.



7 Area based approaches to Neighbourhood Planning

As referred to in section two, there are communities and neighbourhoods in South Lanarkshire where local levels of poverty are significantly higher than others.

In response to the duty in the Community Empowerment Act placed on Community Planning Partnerships back in 2017 our partnership agreed to establish a new Neighbourhood Planning approach to develop locality plans for areas where outcomes and life chances are judged to be poorest.

To date (as of June 2021) we have neighbourhood planning activity under way in nine of our communities, with seven of these having produced their own plans based on robust consultation with local residents. Critical to our neighbourhood planning approach, is the ability to bring together local people who understand what it feels like to live in poverty, with partners who can facilitate new and innovative types of intervention and services to improve the lives of everyone living there. This work is centred around the idea of helping communities to build on the activities which they themselves have told us that they already value, along with promoting new ways of engagement in order to identify and develop supports tailored to the actual needs and priorities expressed by local residents. The shared priorities which we have identified across our neighbourhood planning areas are reflected in the content of the LCPAR and have also been used to help us develop our strategic vision going forward.

In addition, other communities across South Lanarkshire are being supported by a range of partners to develop local place plans. We are confident that these community led processes will lead to improvements at a local level, that will add value to our activity to address child poverty as articulated through this report.

South Lanarkshire Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership, along with a number of voluntary sector partners have invested significant resources in support to communities e.g., via the Integrated Care Fund (administered via VASLan), community led support in Clydesdale and building and celebrating communities.

All of this reflects our ongoing commitment to change the way we talk and listen with our communities, and to resource them to make the changes needed for themselves, as well as to deliver the best quality services where these are needed to help lift people out of poverty.

8 Our Local Child Poverty Progress Report 2020/21 and Action Plan for 2021/22

This section highlights the range of activity that has taken place in South Lanarkshire to support families and help drive improvements in their ability to manage financially, especially in helping to cope with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The section is organised around the three main drivers of:

- Income from benefits and entitlements
- Cost of living and
- Income from employability

Chapter 1

Taking action to increase income from benefits and entitlements

Why is this work important?

Financial wellbeing impacts on all aspects of family life including our general health, wellbeing and it can affect the choices and opportunities our children and young people have to thrive. While households assets are not purely material and comprise much more than financial income, maximising incomes for families is essential for achieving best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Our aim is to improve financial wellbeing in particular for those who are financially vulnerable, by focusing on maximising low income households through access, awareness and uptake of welfare benefits and entitlements.



Maximising the income coming into households with children is key to tackling child poverty, including money management, tackling debt, saving and affordable borrowing options, reducing costs including fuel bills; and supporting financial know-how from school onwards. Given the rising levels of in-work poverty, both families in and out of work require welfare benefits to provide an adequate standard of living. Partner actions require a focus on reducing the gap between those entitled to welfare support and the uptake levels. A key aspect of this activity is through raising awareness of entitlements and supporting access to effective support and services.

Welfare Reform has had a negative impact for many families in South Lanarkshire with significant numbers seeing a reduction in welfare support through the benefit cap, benefit sanctions and other changes. Social security changes are affecting the wellbeing of children, families and the communities that support them. This is further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) report (July 2020) concentrates on the impact of COVID on families living in Scotland and highlights that many families are struggling financially due to inadequate support from the social security system. This includes impact as a result of the benefit cap, tax credits awards stopping when a claim was made for universal credit (UC) to which the family were then not entitled or were entitled to less money. Other negative impacts reported include no longer receiving benefits for 16 and 17 year olds who had left education, but who could not move into work or claim benefits in their own right, parents being unable to work while schools and childcare providers were closed and in some cases being asked to pay to retain a childcare place.

Research by Save the Children and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that seven in 10 families surveyed in Scotland about the impact of COVID-19 have had to cut back on food and other essentials. In addition, 51% of families have fallen behind on rent or other household bills, 55% of families on Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit in Scotland have been pushed to borrow money – with many relying on expensive forms of credit and four in 10 people claiming Universal Credit took an advance which needs to be repaid.

Save the Children research focused on **experience of low income families with children aged 0 to 6 years in Scotland**. Many parents reported the pandemic as a 'tipping point' having already been in a precarious financial situation, with financial worries often exacerbated by inadequate or gaps in support. Parental wellbeing has suffered due to increased anxiety around money worries, sacrifices made and loss of support networks.

Analysis by Welfare at a Social Distance estimates that around **430,000 to 560,000 people in the UK, who were eligible for Universal Credit** at the start of the pandemic did not claim it. Some were aware that they were eligible but did not claim, some did not want to claim because of perceived hassle, while others did not apply because of stigma.

Analysis by Covid Realities has identified that for England between 2013-2020 there was a **rise in antidepressant prescribing linked with more people claiming Universal Credit (UC)**. For every 1% increase in people claiming UC, there is around a 5.6% increase in antidepressant prescriptions.

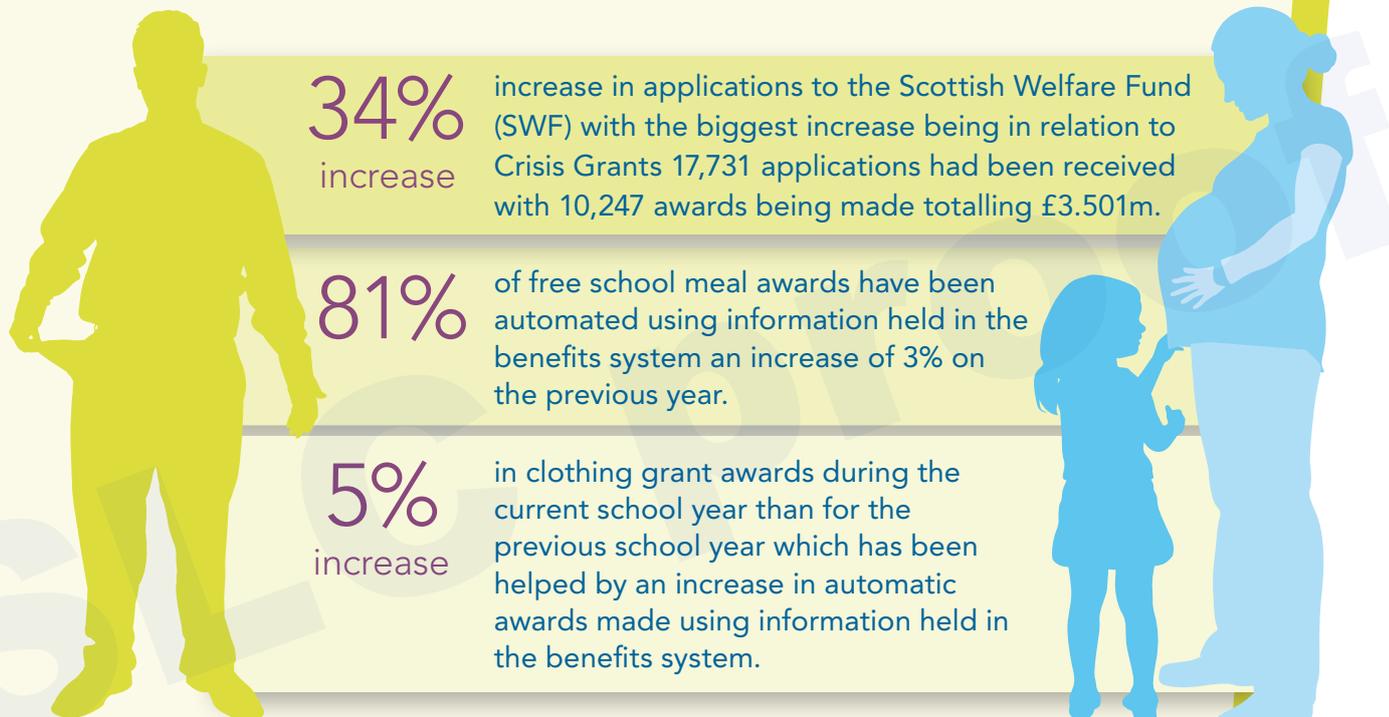
Where are we now?

There is no doubt that over the last year COVID-19 has increased further the risk of even greater inequality it is essential that we continue to target our resources as best we can to build on the progress made so far by our child poverty action report.

Uptake in benefits

Partners have worked hard to support families access the benefits they are entitled to. These include Free School Meals, Discretionary Housing Payments and Fuel Payments and Winter/Spring Payments.

As a result, we have seen a general increase in income for many families e.g.



34%
increase

increase in applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) with the biggest increase being in relation to Crisis Grants 17,731 applications had been received with 10,247 awards being made totalling £3.501m.

81%

of free school meal awards have been automated using information held in the benefits system an increase of 3% on the previous year.

5%
increase

in clothing grant awards during the current school year than for the previous school year which has been helped by an increase in automatic awards made using information held in the benefits system.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau continue to offer financial health checks with a focus on targeting families. Over the past year 113 financial health checks (for families with children) have been carried out by CABs across South Lanarkshire, which is an increase from 85 in 19/20. In addition 967 families have been given advice about their benefits. The CABs remained open throughout the pandemic and had to move quickly from predominantly face to face services to mainly telephone and email based advice with as little disruption as possible. They have continued to offer face to face advice for the most vulnerable, in line with Scottish Government guidelines. CABs found that they had contact from many families who had never used the service before and found themselves having to negotiate a benefits system that they had never had to use before.



COVID-19 has had a massive impact on face-to-face services making it challenging to support families in the local community. CABs continued to offer phone advice to those that would have attended in person making good use of strong partnership connections and referral pathways to ensure families continued to receive advice support in these most difficult and challenging times. A total of 961 clients have been referred with a total of £447,205 benefits awarded.

People asking for support from CABs presented with a wider range of issues than prior to pandemic. These included employment issues relating to shielding and self-isolation and carers rights. Financial assistance through foodbank referrals and help to pay for utilities all increased significantly. Family and relationship matters also increased including support following bereavement due to COVID-19, domestic abuse and difficulty in understanding COVID-19 guidance.

In NHS Lanarkshire a 'Routine Enquiry' approach to supporting people is embedded into practice in Midwifery and Health Visiting services. During COVID-19 there has been a reduction in the number of face-to-face contact with families over the last year. However routine enquiry has remained a key part of support offered and overall, small increases have been recorded.

70 families have been supported through the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow with a total financial gain of **£205,853**. The hospital has seen fewer families than last year due to reduced routine appointments and admissions due to COVID-19 restrictions.



A Community Link Worker programme is currently being developed for South Lanarkshire as part of the Primary Care Improvement Plan and the first group of staff started in January this year. Staff provide support patients through GP surgeries, enabling them to identify and access relevant resources or services in their community. To support this work a Financial Wellbeing Pathway has been put in place for referrals in collaboration with CABs and Money Matters Advice Service. This pathway commenced 1st April 2021 and will run for 2 years as part of a pilot phase allowing patients to be referred to financial advice services, or for those patients who might be at risk of homelessness to housing and financial support.

Health Improvement staff have been working with third sector organisations to build sustainable financial inclusion pathways into their local Covid-19 response and increased numbers of NHS staff have been signposting to the wellbeing helpline to support patients access crisis support for food and other financial support. The Test and Protect team have been highlighting financial supports available to people who are required to self-isolate and signposting to local services and pathways.

The Money Matters Advice Line has supported 834 families, slightly lower than last year due to restrictions and reduced face to face contact. However, this support has resulted in increased benefits of £2,163,673.93 for South Lanarkshire families e.g. more families accessing grants and Universal Credit for first time due to job loss and a huge increase in fuel poverty, where families have been supported to access charity and grants to help heat their homes.

In addition to increased benefits there have been increased applications for food banks and fuel vouchers due to families all being at home and using more energy and food.

Social Security Scotland staff have supported claimants to benefit from a range of benefits including Best Start grants, Young Carers grants, Carers Allowance, Scottish Child Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance totalling over £13.7m and providing much needed income for vulnerable families helping to reduce stress and monies worries especially when children are young and making sure that families have an increased awareness and understanding of the benefit system and available benefits. The Scottish Child Payment was made available from February 2021 and is accessible to families on low incomes with children under 6 an extra £10 per week for each child. It is planned to be extended to children under the age of 16 by the end of this year.

Free School Meals

Pupils eligible to free school meals have been entitled to £3 per day with payments made on a fortnightly basis during both school closure and holiday periods. Approximately 9,300 pupils have benefitted from this support and additionally pupils who were self-isolated or shielded also received one-off payment of £30 to cover the cost of lunch from November 2020.

Workforce development and support to staff

An important aspect of our strategy is to ensure that our workforce is knowledgeable, informed and confident about providing the best possible support and accurate information to families. With this in mind we have worked hard to provide extra support and training to staff as we aspire towards best practice for families.

Money Matters Advice Service provide bespoke training for staff however, training events were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic the exception being Social Care training. New training opportunities are being planned and will be delivered over the next year including a presentation for school staff to raise awareness of how services can assist families and will feature any new benefit changes e.g., the introduction of the new Scottish Disability benefits.

Social Security Scotland delivered several targeted staff sessions to continue to raise awareness of the new agency and associated benefits and are now part of the network within South Lanarkshire and continue to raise general awareness and engage across a wide range of stakeholders to deliver information on current and future benefits. This includes South Lanarkshire Council services staff, Money Matters, CAB, VASLAN, NHS Lanarkshire, the Health and Social Care Partnership and numerous third sector organisations.

The following case studies help show where our working together has helped deliver positive outcomes for children and families.



South Lanarkshire case studies

Case study one

A client had just received his Universal Credit, but advised that by the time he had paid his bills he only had £50 left for the next two weeks. The client was paid twice per month and also had his housing element paid directly to the landlord. He was paying extra rent separately because he lived in a 2-bedroom property and therefore had a £50 per month shortfall. The client was paying £30 every time he received his Universal Credit, twice per month to cover this.

CAB advised the client that as he had a rent shortfall and that he could apply for discretionary housing payment. As the client was unable to do this online CAB helped with the application and carried out a benefit check to help work out the shortfall. CAB also made a foodbank referral for client and advised of the possibility of a crisis grant. However, the client didn't feel he was in a crisis, just struggling to make ends meet. CAB also made a referral to Home Energy Scotland for a fuel voucher.

Case study two

James is 19 years old single and had experienced trauma in childhood due to difficult relationships with his parents. Because of this he was unable to live at the family home. He has mental and emotional health problems and is subject to frequent spells of overwhelming distress. The only family member that he relied on for support is his grandmother. He is a tenant in single person accommodation, organised with Social Work support and has claimed Universal Credit and gets help with housing costs. His school years were frequently interrupted, and he was referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for ongoing support.

Since leaving school he has been referred for psychotherapy and is currently receiving two counselling sessions a week. James was advised by his psychotherapist that he may qualify for Personal Independence Payment due to the severity of his mental health problems and the significant impact they have on his quality of life. James also lacks motivation due to depression relating to his traumatic childhood. In addition, he has little experience of supporting himself and it is likely that he will continue to need support from both mental health and advice services, if he is to maintain himself independently. James had been advised by Community Mental Health to seek advice and assistance with his benefit claims.

CAB were able to support James with regard to his Universal Credit claim and he has been given assistance to complete and submit a Work Capability Questionnaire and apply for a Personal Independence Payment. As James is well supported by the Community Mental Health Team and his GP, they have provided supporting evidence for his Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment claim.

South Lanarkshire case studies

James was advised of the help and ongoing support that he can receive through CAB and being allocated to a caseworker from the Health and Welfare Advice Team is an example of the bespoke support CAB can offer.

Looking forward, as James is a vulnerable adult, he will continue to benefit from ongoing casework to support him in living independently. While he is reluctant leave his home unless he is accompanied by his grandmother whom he trusts, James is happy to accept CAB's help to support him to remain in his tenancy.

Case study three

The focus of the case study is a family with three children aged ten, eight and three months, The mother was on statutory maternity leave and getting £151.97 per week, claiming Child benefit for 3 children of £48.95 per week. As the father was working full time, they received no benefits in place as income too high. However, as a result of COVID-19 the father lost his job and was unable to secure alternative work.

A health visitor passed on their details to Money Matters Advice Service as a result of a routine enquiry as the family were unaware of available benefits to apply for. The family had mortgage worries, bills to pay and were concerned about how to feed the family. Money Matters Advice Service contacted the family by phone who were very worried and anxious. They were advised to make a claim for Universal Credit for the family and Job seeker allowance for the father.

Money Matters helped the family to make claims for Universal Credit and a council tax rebate, an application for a Best Start grant and a Scottish Child payment. The family were advised to speak to their mortgage provider to get payment holiday, which provided some temporary relief and their utility provider to temporarily reduce payments.

By phoning the family and building trust with them, Money Matters were able to maximize their income allowing them to their bills and feed the family. In addition, Money Matters were able to get vouchers for Asda from a charity as they were not entitled to any free school meals and they were struggling with food and baby milk. Providing this crucial support and listening to the family at a difficult time meant Money Matters were able to advise what best suited the family and how best they could support them.

Ongoing phone calls with the family make sure that they are getting all the benefits they are entitled to and that the children are financially supported, bills are paid and the family fed. Money Matters report 'the father is very grateful for the help and support that we have given him at this difficult time and he says if he ever gets to meet me he will give me a big hug, or elbow!



Key challenges for 2021/22

Going forward it is essential that partners are aware of new benefits being launched for families, including the Child Disability Payment due to be launched in the Autumn as a replacement for Disability Living Allowance for Children. Also the Scottish Child Payment, which was made available to low income families with children under six from February 2021 will be extended to children under the age of 16 by the end of this year.

To support these changes Social Security Scotland will launch its local delivery service nationally, including in South Lanarkshire. From autumn 2021, support and advice will be available on 11 Social Security Scotland administered benefits face-to-face at a location in local communities. Social Security Scotland will also continue to offer support sessions for partners as new and devolved benefits are rolled out, ensuring awareness and encouraging uptake.

In addition, as almost all training and events were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exception being Social Care training. Money Matters Advice Service will develop a strategy to safely resume training and deliver events to support partners in their knowledge about benefits and entitlements and any changes. This may have to be on different platforms such as MS Teams, or increasing the number of webinars available.

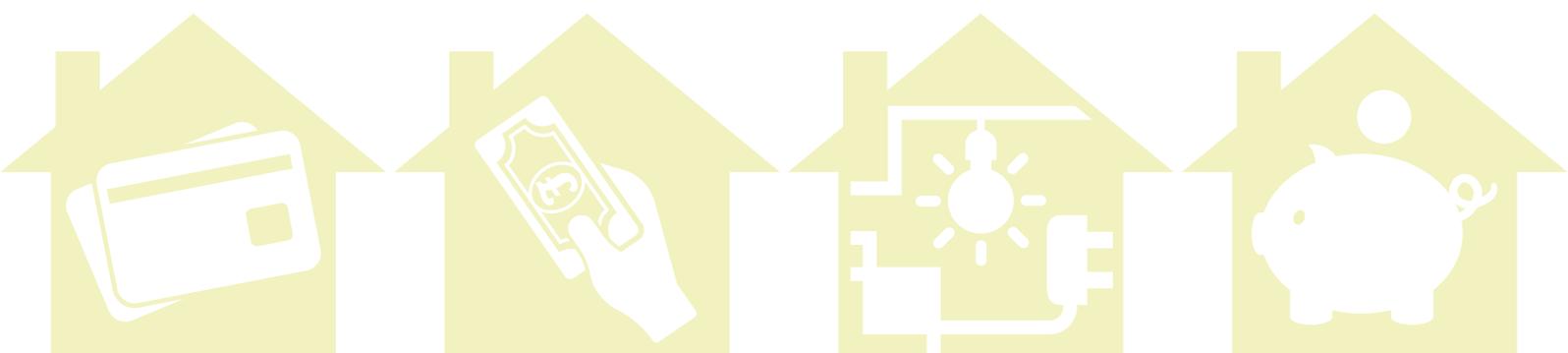


Table 1: Actions and measures: what will we do in 2021/22?

Change required	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
1.1 Increase the uptake of benefits and entitlements.	Deliver the Scottish Government funded financial health check to families via CAB.	Number of financial health checks delivered	280	Continue to target families and increase the number of FHC offered to this target group	Rutherglen CAB £13,004 EK/ Hamilton/ Clydesdale Funding allocation TBC in Oct 2021	Jennifer Howdle CABs consolidated monitoring spreadsheet	Low income families
		Number of families with children receiving benefits advice	85	Continue to target families with children and increase the number receiving benefits advice			
	Midwives and Health Visitors will deliver a routine enquiry on financial wellbeing of families at key pregnancy and health visiting assessment visits and refer to Money Matters.	Percentage of routine enquiries by midwives	76%	80%	£20k NHS Lanarkshire	Vivian Boxall	Low income families
		Percentage of routine enquiries by health visitors	91.5% across all age groups	92% across all age groups			
Monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and adapt Money Matters Advice Service as needed.	Percentage of and number of families engaging	1,005/77%	Maintain above 70%	£90k SLC MMAS	Angela Martin	Low income families	
		Total amount of benefits awarded	£2,590,075				Maintain above £2,000,000



Change required	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
1.1 Increase the uptake of benefits and entitlements (continued).	The NHS Lanarkshire GP Community Link Worker Financial Wellbeing Advice Service will provide support to families referred by GPs.	<p>Number of new referrals made to Financial Wellbeing Providers (FWAs)</p> <p>Number of people who engage with a Financial Wellbeing Advisor appointment</p> <p>Financial gain following engagement with Financial Wellbeing Assessment</p>	New programme, no baseline at 2019/20 or 2020/21	New programme, target to be established during 2020/21	NHSL £212k £42k over 3 years from NHSL	Alana McGlynn Carla Maxwell	Low income families
	Money Matters Advice Service will deliver financial outreach support to parents through a video developed to be used with schools.	<p>Number of schools using the video</p> <p>Number of enquiries made to MMAS</p> <p>Total financial gain for families</p>	New programme, no baseline at 2019/20 or 2020/21	9 schools New programme, target to be established during 2021/22 New programme, target to be established during 2021/22	Existing resources	Angela Martin	Low income families



Chapter 2

Taking action to reduce the cost of living

Why is this work important?

Rising living costs pose a very significant challenge to many of our families. We know from our front-line staff and volunteers that some families are having to make hard choices about how to make very limited household income stretch to cover the costs of running a home, as well as feeding and clothing their children.

Families can very quickly move into poverty, or severe financial hardship through a change of circumstance, unexpected costs or issues relating to benefits, or income. Getting support as early as possible is crucial to minimising the financial and wider impacts for families. The Scottish Welfare Fund is a key source of support for families in these circumstances as are pathways into welfare advice from a range of settings including from health.

Cost of Living factors impacting on families with children include rent, council tax, gas and electricity, food and clothing, school costs and a range of other demands that impact on the money families have to live on.

Whilst impacting on every family in the country, COVID-19 is likely to have a particular damaging impact on those children and young people already living in poverty. It is likely that financial pressures will rise and low-income families already struggling to budget for unexpected expenses will be hardest hit by the increase in cost of living. Families will have children at home more often and earnings for some parents are likely to decrease. Families will have had to increase their use of technology e.g. for schooling, accessing appointments, which they may have had to (partially) self-fund. This means many families are struggling with the cost of food and other household essentials. The end to the furlough scheme, potential job losses, the impacts on families that have had to shield, and the end of protection from evictions from private rental, will cause further negative impacts to families at an already precarious time.

Reports from Food banks show families requiring emergency food aid, but who can't afford the fuel bills to cook the food. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of people requiring food support has increased due to a range of circumstances such as changes in financial situation, self-isolation or limited availability of the support system with people being ill or having to self-isolate. Data collected from food banks in South Lanarkshire show that 27,750 households or 50,565 people were referred to receive emergency food provision from April 2020 to March 2021. The number of food parcels distributed by food banks has increased by 93.4% compared to last year. In total, 16,133 children have received food from food banks in South Lanarkshire and this represents a 171% increase compared to the previous year.



Cost of the school day

As a partnership we have worked to reduce financial barriers to education for school age children as part of our Cost of the School Day programme.

Almost all of our schools have a Cost of the School Day Position statement and all schools have reviewed their equity policies and procedure as part of their COVID-19 recovery school improvement plan. Schools continue to signpost families to dedicated support and guidance e.g. Hamilton Grammar have worked with Money Matters to develop a series of helpful videos on financial supports for families (<http://hamilton.s-lanark.sch.uk/cost-of-the-school-day/money-matters-advice/>).

The Breakfast Club service was put on hold as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, but are a priority, as they provide a calm and safe environment before school to help develop social skills and provide the opportunity for additional learning, encouraging pupils to arrive at school on time, or even encourage them to attend at all and be ready to learn when the formal school day begins. We know they enhance wellbeing, academic performance and behaviour, especially for children whose parents might not otherwise be able to afford to provide them with regular meals. Breakfast clubs were re-established from 19th April 2021 and at time of reporting there were 105 clubs operating in schools that are fully established and an additional 14 clubs operating a smaller 'toast and go' service to pupils. In addition, innovative solutions were developed to continue the provision of breakfast during the pandemic, such as breakfast deliveries organised by the Machan Trust, which helped an average of 47 families in the Larkhall area throughout the period when breakfast clubs couldn't operate.

Free school meals

Pupils eligible to free school meals have been entitled to £3 per day with cash payments were made on a fortnightly basis during both school closure and holiday periods.

Free School Meals have benefited an average of 9,300 pupils from April 2020 to March 2021. In addition, pupils who self-isolated or shielded also received one-off payment of £30 to cover the cost of lunch from November 2020.

Going forward, Free School Meal payments for school holidays is continuing to ensure that pupils currently in receipt of free school meal provision receive free school meal payments during the Spring holiday period.

In addition, a Family Pandemic Payment will be offered to families as two one-off payments of £100, which will be given to help families of children entitled to free school meals (excluding those entitled to universal provision of P1-3 meals). One will be for Summer 2021 and the other will be given in Winter 2021. If there is more than one eligible child, then the family will receive more than one set of payments. The payment is funded by the Scottish Government, will be made directly into parents'/guardian's accounts, and can be used by families for any purpose as they see fit.



9,300 pupils
from April 2020 to March 2021
benefited from **free school meals**.



Summer Programme



Over the Summer holiday period 2020 from 27 June to 3 August, 450 young people accessed the Summer Holiday Hubs that provided high quality activities and support along with a healthy breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack for children in areas of high deprivation.

In total, 6,229 free meals were provided in 10 different locations. However, the hubs took a different form than envisaged due to COVID restriction.

School Clothing Grants

In the 2020/21 academic year 13,369 clothing grant awards were been made, which compares positively to the 12,362 awards made in the previous academic year.

Of the awards made, most were automated utilising information already held on council systems on household income and therefore did not require a separate application form. During the year the automated process is refreshed on a weekly basis to ensure any new cases with entitlement to a clothing grant are identified and payment made as quickly as possible.



Transport costs

We have worked to reduce transport costs to school for some families through offering targeted Privileged School Transport Places for pupils entitled to Free School Meals.

As a result of effective targeting of privileged school transport places, we have provided 26 privilege places allocated for pupils over the last year. Going forward we will continue this support and advertise this provision from the start of the August term to try and increase the uptake.

To tackle food insecurity during the COVID-19 period, different council services has been involved in emergency food provision. For instance, the Youth Family and Community Learning service (Education) has also distributed 786 food parcels to families in need identified thanks to their engagement with the service. An additional 84 themed food parcels including utensils and kitchen electricals' were distributed as well 200 boxes over the Christmas period. Social Work also delivered meals to vulnerable family with the so-called Child and Family programme. From April to June, 26,113 meals were delivered.



26 privileged school transport places provided for pupils entitled to Free School Meals.

Free sanitary provision (P Card scheme)

As of April 2021 most health premises across Lanarkshire and various teams working with vulnerable people have free sanitary products available to supply patients and staff.

Posters will promote this service and a discrete card can be shown by anyone who requires products. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the promotion of this service has been limited, however throughout the next year this service will be further promoted as restrictions allow e.g. more hospital sites will get added to the scheme.

Digital inclusion

Digital inclusion became increasingly important in our communities throughout the pandemic.

Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government initiative providing iPads, laptops and MiFi devices for communities. 386 devices were secured by NHS Lanarkshire's Health Improvement team for both Family Nurse Partnership teams, Health Visitors and Keep Well and 5442 devices were secured by Education for pupils and families to support their learning as a result of online and blended learning delivery.



Housing support

South Lanarkshire Council is the fifth largest local authority landlord in Scotland and is one of the most affordable for tenants with the seventh lowest average weekly rent.



New build council housing at Gilbertfield, Cambuslang

During 2020/21 there were **1,544 council mainstream properties** let during and of these, **32% were to family households providing good quality, energy efficient and affordable homes.**

There has been a **significant reduction of 41%** in the number of households waiting more than a year for permanent accommodation.

The South Lanarkshire Local Housing Strategy 2017-22 includes actions that are responding to the particular needs of children, young people and families and reducing the costs associated with housing. These include:

- **Investment to increase new affordable housing supply**

By delivering an additional 392 affordable homes in 2020/21, including 53 open market purchase properties, the council and its Registered Social Landlord partners increased the number of affordable homes available to rent across South Lanarkshire. This included a range of family sized homes, ensuring as many families as possible can access affordable housing. There has been a significant reduction of 41% in the number of households waiting more than a year for permanent accommodation (95 households in 2019/20 to 56 in 2020/21) and of the 56 households, 22 of them had children.

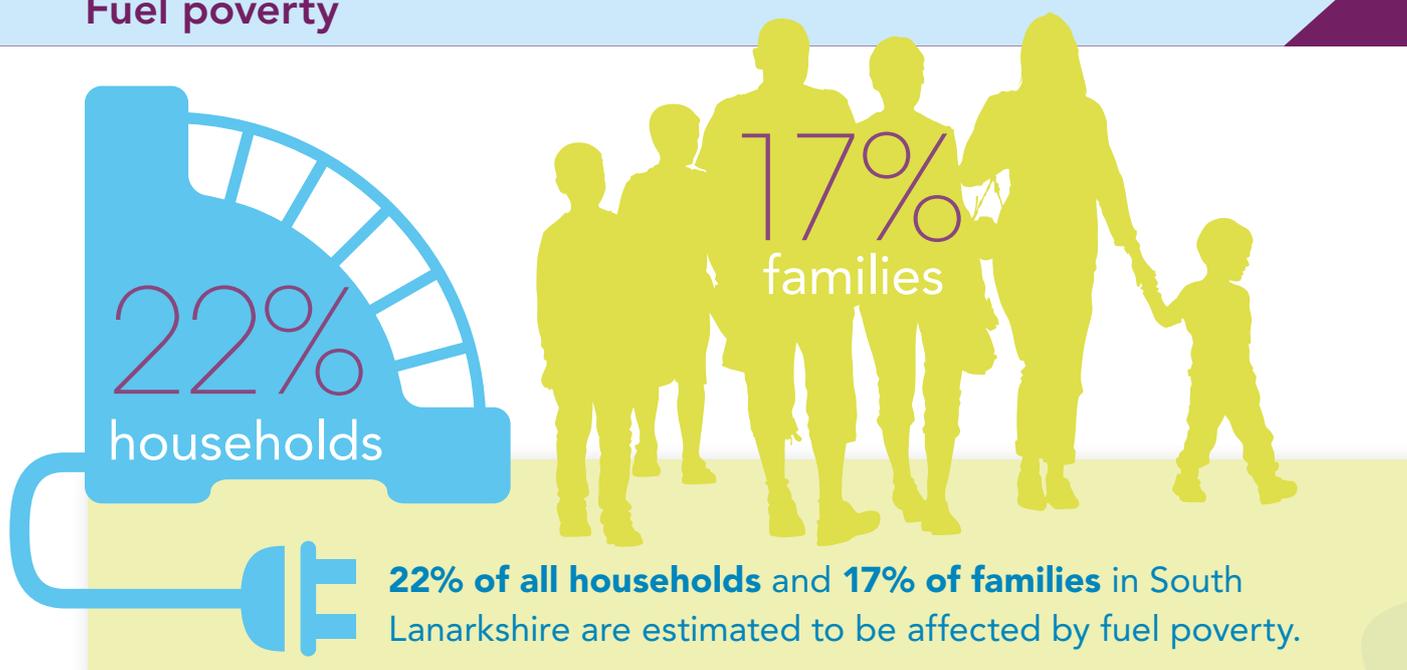
- **Ensuring households affected by homelessness are supported to move to suitable settled homes as quickly as possible**

Launched in 2019, South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-24 (RRTP) sets out how the council and its housing, homelessness and health partners aim to prevent and tackle homelessness over the next five years. Key progress made during 2020/21 was the 'flipping' of 27 properties previously classed as temporary accommodation to allow families to remain in the community they made their home after being homeless. A further six homeless households moved into settled accommodation through the Housing First model with ongoing support provided by Housing and Technical Resources and its commissioned services. There were 1,030 permanent lets made to homeless households during 2020/21 with 30% of those lets made to homeless households with children.

- **Maintaining lower than average rents**

The council continues to ensure rents are kept as low as possible whilst delivering the services and support tenants need. Working with tenant representatives and extensively consulting with tenants to understand the services they need; the council will continue to ensure rent levels remain affordable.

Fuel poverty



Lone parents and low-income families living in rural South Lanarkshire are more likely to be affected, often relying on higher tariff methods for paying for the energy they use.

South Lanarkshire continues its good track record in terms of partnership actions to tackle and reduce fuel poverty with a dedicated group progressing a range of actions to assist households in reducing their energy bills and making homes more efficient. In 2020/21, the Council's Money Matters Advice Service were able to help households write off over £41,699.85 of energy related debt. Home Energy Scotland also continued to increase the level of advice and support provided to households, with 5,726 appointments provided with 899 of these households estimated to having children under the age of 16.

Active Schools Programme

The Active Schools programme provides a positive and increasing range of sport and leisure opportunities, however the programme was disrupted due to COVID-19.

Leisure facilities were also closed for long periods throughout the year and to counter this, the Active Schools team developed alternative ways of working. Sport and Physical Activity were provided to those attending the Education Emergency Childcare Hubs and virtual support was provided to primary schools. Online platforms were utilised to encourage young people to stay physically active while in lockdown e.g. 25 challenges were shared on social media through various campaigns ran to encourage dancing, walking and all round wellbeing. Furthermore, the team developed and delivered a range of online continuous professional development for school staff and senior pupils, with 1,144 attendances at online training. In January 2021 'Active Schools Live' was launched enabling children and families to take part in live yoga sessions from home twice a week.



The first session recorded
1,000 pupils
taking part.



Other supports to families:

Foodbanks

South Lanarkshire Council has worked with third sector partners to ensure supply and up until the end of May 2021 had provided 28,288 bags of food through the Scottish Government Food Fund (equating to 433,732 meals).

Some of these were supplied to foodbanks and some to community response groups who helped ensure local access to resources. A small number of packs were supplied to those who were vulnerable in other ways, such as homeless people in temporary accommodation.

The latest figures for the foodbanks operating in South Lanarkshire indicate that over the last year a total of 27,750 households were referred for assistance, with 50,656 people being fed through emergency food distribution an increase of around 93.4%.

Tobacco Control

NHS Lanarkshire's Quit Your Way service, which supports people to Stop Smoking has been adapted and behavioural support to clients is delivered to clients over the telephone and products to support quit attempts are delivered to clients homes.

The service has seen a reduction in the number of people attempting to quit smoking, however for those people who have engaged with the service the quit rate has been higher. In South Lanarkshire the 'quit rate' increased from 35% in 2019/2020 to 51% in 2020/21. Smoking cessation support has continued to be provided by community pharmacies and during the pandemic partnerships have been strengthened. A media campaign 'Don't Wait' has been launched to promote services to people who smoke to encourage them to make a quit attempt. The service is also using technology such as the use of 'Smoke-free App' and 'Near Me' video calling with pregnant women.

During COVID-19 pandemic, the service in South Lanarkshire has supported over 448 successful 12 week quits, 263 of which were from our most deprived areas, These successful quitters have saved and/or been able to redirect monies normally spent on cigarettes and tobacco products to cover other costs of living. During COVID-19 clients have potentially saved/been able to redirect monies that they might have previously spent on travel costs to attend Quit Your Way services.

Vitamins

Free Health Start Vitamins are now freely available to all children aged 0-3 years. There was a total of 8345 pots of vitamins given out between April 2020 and March 2021.

To ensure uptake among lower income families there were targeted distribution points within the community i.e. at food banks, and via third sector organisations who are working with the most vulnerable communities.

South Lanarkshire case studies

St Paul's Primary School Hamilton

Staff at St Paul's Primary School identified the need within the community for more local food support. The local food bank is situated at the other end of town and is not greatly accessible for families. As a result, the school formed a partnership with the food bank and have set-up their own local pop-up food bank in the local church each week. The food bank provides bags of food for this, and the school has secured support from local companies who provide fresh food weekly. This is run by the school's linked Youth Family and Community Learning Officer and some local volunteers. It has been vital in supporting families during the remote learning period, as you can see from the parents/ carers voices:

St Paul's foodbank is well stocked and run by the school. The school are doing a great job and really meeting the needs of the community.

I couldn't manage without the help of this foodbank, as I can't travel across Hamilton.

You don't know what this means to me, I have been made redundant recently and we are really struggling. This has been a life saver.



South Lanarkshire case studies

Housing: Moving On

Housing and Technical Resources continue to work with partners to provide support to young people living in temporary accommodation. Recently, a young person living with their parent with various health issues and financial struggles had attended their GP. The GP recognised the need for support and made a referral to the Breaking the Cycle service.

Due to the stress caused by their home circumstances, the young person did not attend school for some time and decided to apply for a house of their own. A dedicated officer from Breaking the Cycle worked with colleagues from across the council to secure the right type of accommodation for the young person and arranged for a package of support to be put in place. This included liaising with health and education services to ensure the young person had everything they needed to live on their own and to start attending school again. Health services identified an issue with the young persons' hearing and provided new hearing aids, and they were also provided with new clothes and equipment to help improve their confidence for returning to school. The officer also arranged for the costs of transport to and from school from their new home to be provided, along with arranging opportunities to allow the young person to meet and build relationships with family and friends.

The support provided to the young person has now led to them securing a permanent tenancy, allowing them to maintain stability in their life. The young person said:

I can't believe Breaking the Cycle staff did all this for me, got me a safe place to stay, got me bus tokens so I could go back to school, got me in contact with my aunt and uncle and made sure I saw my sister every week. Thank you for everything you have all done for me.

Housing: A Happy Customer

Over the past year Housing and Technical Resources have continued working with families living in temporary accommodation to identify where it would be appropriate for them to be offered the accommodation on a permanent basis. By converting a temporary tenancy to a permanent home aims to prevent further upheaval for the household.

In one homeless household, an eight-year-old child had developed severe anxiety, due to witnessing violence against his parent whilst they were in a previous relationship. The child would not let his mother out of his sight, becoming very isolated and not interested in playing with other children.

Following their homelessness application, the household were allocated temporary accommodation that met their needs, in an area that they felt comfortable in. Soon after moving into the accommodation, the child's demeanour improved and they appeared to become more settled. They started going to the local park with other children and the school noted an improvement in the quality of classwork.

Recognising the positive impact their temporary move had on the household and the child in particular, the Housing Support Officer discussed with them the opportunity to convert the temporary property into their permanent tenancy. The family accepted the offer and the child was able to continue building their confidence in a new, safe place to call home. The lead tenant said:

This really worked in my benefit, I couldn't believe my luck and I'm over the moon, my neighbours are pleased there is someone in the house permanently, I am a happy customer.



South Lanarkshire case studies

Tobacco Control: savings from quitting smoking

During COVID pandemic the Quit Your Way service continued to provide support to pregnant women and their families to stop smoking. Clients experienced positive outcomes including a pregnant mum living with her partner and three year old daughter. Both her and her partner wanted to stop smoking.

A Quit Your Way specialist nurse assessed both mum and the partner and arranged a support plan. In line with COVID-19 guidance, the couple were then allocated a health improvement practitioner to provide telephone behavioural support throughout their quit attempt, as face to face contact was suspended. The practitioner contacted the couple individually every week to provide tailored telephone support and arranged for Nicotine Replacement Therapy to be delivered to the couple's home.

I wanted to stop smoking as I fell pregnant and for my own health. Also because of financial reasons, and my partner and I both smoked. When the quit your way service called me, that's when my partner decided to try stop smoking too. I've now been smoke free for four and a half months. Being pregnant, it has helped me mentally knowing I am doing the best for my baby, and also financially it has helped as I'm able to prepare for my baby's arrival, fix things around house and treat my three year old daughter. If we wanted to go out for a day trip as a family, we now have money to do it. Just having some freedom to be able to do things as a family – having a disposable income. I was provided with a money tin from the Quit Your Way service, which I gave to my three year old, as we had a savings account which we used for the money we saved. We would give her some small change and she would save it in the tin – we told her that was her pennies as Mum and Dad didn't smoke anymore, which she now gets weekly magazines etc. with the savings.

Key challenges for 2021/22

We know that those who experienced poverty prior to the epidemic were already pushed into unacceptable hardship and may have been pushed deeper into poverty due to the effects of the coronavirus. There will also be a number of families who have now experiencing poverty for the first time. The one off payments and additional payments to cover holiday food costs are welcome, but so would taking full advantage of benefits checks and income maximisation particularly for those who have not previously engaged with the service. This will be a key feature going forward.

There is still a need to work to increase the uptake of Free School Meals, especially across secondary schools. Additionally, all families that were entitled to receive free school meals will continue to receive vouchers throughout the Summer holiday period.

The impact of COVID-19 reduced inclusion amongst vulnerable families. Good work has already been put in place to enable families to be digitally included so that school pupils are supported to enable their child's education at home. Consideration needs to be given as to how families can be supported in the longer term, if there is a general move for more services to continue to be conducted online.

COVID-19 has impacted on the way people live their lives, for some they have been able to adopt healthy behaviours such as quitting smoking, increasing exercise, choosing to breastfeed their baby etc that not only provide health benefits, but provide a cost saving in relation to household income. For others, the pressures will have influenced an increase in alcohol consumption, gambling, etc. Services need to continue to support people to adopt and persist with healthy behaviours and cost effective lifestyles.

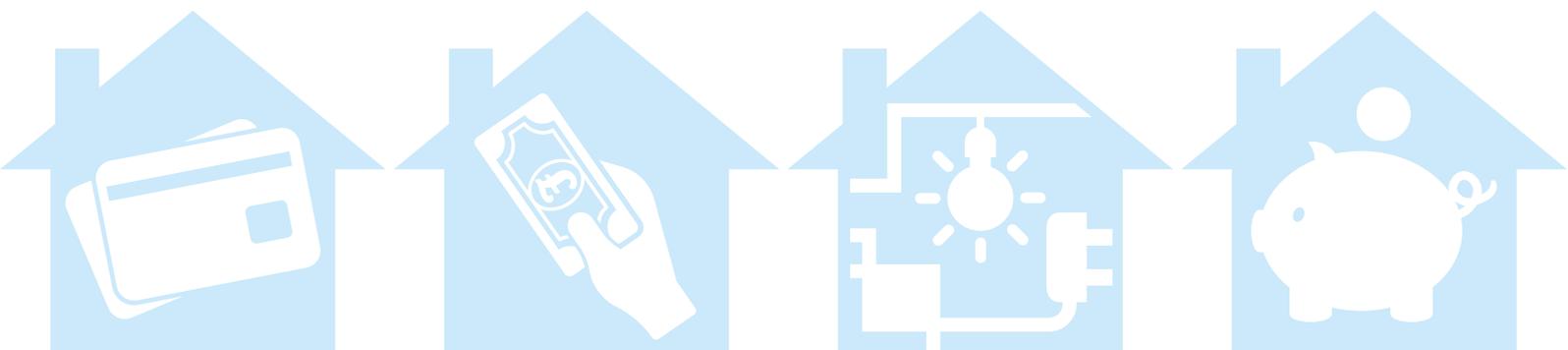


Table 2: Actions and measures: what will we do in 2021/22?

No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
2.1	Increased uptake of funded and early learning and childcare entitlement for 2 and 3 year olds.	Continue to work with a range of professionals and services who will have contact with eligible families and will promote free Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for 2-year-olds.	15.5%	Maintain at 15.5%	Existing resources	Janice Tod	Low income families
		All schools will establish a Cost of the School Day policy by the end of academic year 2020/21.	Nil	100%	PEF/SAC funding	Kevin Mullarkey Laura Mitchell	Low income families
2.2	Reduction in financial barriers to education for school age children.	Continue to raise the profile on Cost of the School Day by encouraging schools to be "poverty-aware" schools.					
		All schools will review their equity policies and procedures as part of their COVID-19 recovery school improvement plan.					
	Schools will work with Money Matters and signpost parents and families for appropriate financial help.	Number of families referred	New programme, no baseline at 2019/20 or 2020/21	New programme, target to be established during 2021/22	PEF/SAC funding	David Harkness	Low income families

No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
2.2 Reduction in financial barriers to education for school age children (continued).	Work to increase the uptake of Privileged School Transport Places for pupils entitled to Free School Meals and develop new active travel opportunities for pupils.	Number of Privileged School Transport Places offered	55	60	Existing resources	Kevin Mullarkey David Hinshelwood	Low income families
		Percentage of pupils recorded as using active travel to school	44.1% (2020)	Increase the proportion of journeys to school by pupils using active travel methods	£1.48m spending committed for 2020/21 for all infrastructure projects connected to the promotion active travel	Colin Smith	
	Increase the uptake of free school meals through continued automated enrolment. (South Lanarkshire Council, Finance and Education Resources)	Percentage of free school meals uptake in primary schools	65.21%	Maintain primary/secondary at March 2021 levels	Existing resources	Kevin Mullarkey Gerry Donachie	Low income families
Fund free school meals to eligible children during the holiday periods (£30 voucher per fortnight covering Summer, October, Christmas, February and Easter holiday).	Percentage of free school meals uptake in secondary schools	40.89%	Maintain primary/secondary at March 2021 levels	Existing resources	Helen Gourichon	Low income families	
	Number of children receiving vouchers	9,500 (2020/21)	No target applicable, contextual measure. The number of children supported depends on the number of children eligible for free school meals, and this is variable	£1.516m (budget allocated to the council by the Scottish Government)			



No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
2.2 Reduction in financial barriers to education for school age children (continued).	Continue to offer the increased level of School Clothing Grant, currently £130 per child and increase uptake through automated enrolment and additional promotion to encourage uptake. (South Lanarkshire Council, Education Resources and Finance Resources)	Number of pupils claiming school clothing grant for pupils claimed	12,537	Maintain at March 2021 levels	£1.738m	Fraser Morrison Louise Harvey	Low income families
		Percentage of pupils claiming school clothing grant for pupils claimed	29.38%	No target applicable, programme will not be repeated after 2021/22	£850,000	Kevin Mullarkey Roz Gallagher	Low income and vulnerable families
2.3 Reduced housing costs for families.	Maintain affordable rents for council homes, benchmarked against Scottish average.	Number of meals provided as part of the programme	New programme, no baseline for 2019/20 or 2020/21	No target applicable, programme will not be repeated after 2021/22	Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget 2021/22 (£109.401m)	Jonathan Read	Low income families
		Average rents for all council homes and for larger-size family homes	New programme, no baseline for 2019/20 or 2020/21	No target applicable, programme will not be repeated after 2021/22	Resource Planning Assumption 2021/22 is £34.99m	Jonathan Read	Low income families
	Invest and deliver additional affordable housing, built to Housing for Varying Needs standards (meeting higher energy efficiency standards and minimising fuel costs) and ensure this includes allocations to families with children and young people.	Number of new affordable homes delivered, including those allocated to households with children	284	Increase the number of new affordable homes built throughout the financial year			

No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
2.3 Reduced housing costs for families (continued).	Deliver regeneration projects to improve housing and built environment in priority areas (East Whitlawburn).	Number of new affordable homes delivered for families in area-based regeneration project	Baseline not applicable, area based project	Increase the number of new affordable homes built in the Whitlawburn regeneration area	Included within above figure	Jonathan Read	Low income families
	Support households with children, within minoritised ethnic communities, to access accommodation including Gypsy/Travellers and refugee families resettled through the UK resettlement scheme.	Number of households with sustained tenancy of one year and over	New action, no baseline at 2019/20 or 2020/21	Target not applicable, services are demand led	Housing Revenue Account and UK Resettlement Scheme Funding Provision	Jonathan Read	Minoritised Ethnic Communities
2.4 Reduced energy costs for families.	Target housing investment to improve fuel and thermal efficiency of larger homes and reduce energy costs.	Proportion of housing meeting energy efficiency standards for social housing (EESSH2)	4%	7%	Housing Investment Programme - £27.224m	Jonathan Read	Low income families
	Promote and administer national funding mechanisms including ECO: Flex and Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Schemes to support families within owner occupied and private rented properties.	Total amount of funding secured for 2021-22 for EES: Area Based Schemes Number of properties improved through ECO: Flex scheme in 2021/22	New action, no baseline for 2019/20 or 2020/21 New action, no baseline for 2019/20 or 2020/21	Target not applicable, services are demand led Target not applicable, Services are demand led	Scottish Government Funding Energy Company Obligation Funding	Jonathan Read	Households with children at risk of fuel poverty



No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
2.5	Reduced homelessness including families with children and young people.	Prioritise allocation of available housing for those in need, including homeless households.	238 households 449 children (March 2020)	Reduce against baseline	Housing support and homelessness budgets	Jonathan Read	Low income families/ homeless households
		Provide housing support service provision to improve homelessness prevention and support tenancy sustainment.	192	Reduce against baseline	Housing support and homelessness budgets		
		Continue to implement joint working through the care protocol to prevent and reduce homelessness for care experienced young people and support them move to independent living in the community.	937	Maintain number of households receiving support	Homelessness Business Plan and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan funding	Jonathan Read	Low income families
2.6	Improved digital inclusion amongst families in the most deprived areas.	Identify and provide support to families with school pupils who require extra help with digital inclusion to enable any blended learning model to take place effectively.	73 through care applicants of which 29 active and 44 deferred (not ready to be permanently housed)	Target not applicable, services are demand led	Homelessness Business Plan and Social Work Resources Budgets	Jonathan Read	Care experienced young adults
			5,442	Target TBC	Scottish Government Connecting Scotland Fund Scottish Government Pupil Equity Fund	Kevin Mullarkey	Low income families

No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
2.7 Reduce Food Poverty.	Delivery of Breakfast Clubs in schools.	Number of Breakfast Clubs operating in schools	88 (June 2019)	124 (all SLC Primary School)	£600,000 allocated for 2021/22	Kevin Mullarkey David Hinshelwood	Low income families
		Number of children benefiting from Breakfast Clubs	5,883 (June 2019)	6,500 children benefiting (or a 10% increase)			
	Increase the uptake of free nutritional supplements.	Total number of eligible children receiving free vitamin D through the universal vitamin distribution programme	773 pots of vitamins distributed	Increase the distribution of free vitamins Increase the number of distribution points for free vitamins			
2.8 Reduced costs of participation in Leisure and Culture experiences.	SLLC will work with schools to maintain targeted delivery of the Active Schools programme where possible throughout the COVID-19 recovery phase.	Number of visits pupils make in attending the active schools programme	391, 952 (2018/19)	*155, 000 visits	18 FTE active schools co-ordinators (funded by Sports Scotland, Education Resources and SLLC) £789,528	Patrick Murphy	Pupils from low income families
		Percentage of school roll participating in Active Schools activities	48% of all pupils (2018/19)	*40% of all pupils			
	Continue to offer the SLLC concession scheme through promotion and awareness raising.	Number of concessions taken up	6,005 (2018/19)	*5,000 (by March 31st 2022)			
2.9 Reduce costs associated with health harming behaviours.	Support families in higher poverty areas to reduce costs associated with health harming behaviours e.g. tobacco, alcohol and drug use.	Number of pregnant women living in 40% most deprived areas of who stop smoking	2019/20: 19 successful quits from pregnant women in the 40% most deprived areas	20 pregnant women living in SIMD 1 and 2 will stop smoking	SLC fund/ direct SLLC to deliver Concession scheme	Patrick Murphy	Low income families
				Existing resources			

*Note in all cases the baseline figures (2018/19) are higher than the targets for 2021/22. This reflects the impact that the closure of SLLC/SLC facilities has had on programmes such as Active Schools and concession schemes during 2020/21.

Chapter 3

Taking action to increase income from employment

Why is this work important?

Children of working families do better in terms of long-term education and employment chances. Work provides a gateway out of poverty, provides self-esteem, resilience and makes a positive contribution to mental health. Every Child, Every Chance (the national child poverty delivery plan) identified 'increasing income from employment' as a main driver of child poverty reduction.

Being in employment does not always guarantee a route out of poverty and parents need to be able to access high quality jobs with a decent rate of pay and with enough hours to meet their family's needs. Over half of families living in poverty have at least one parent working. In South Lanarkshire we have made good progress in delivering sustainable employment opportunities for parents and young people. Benefits include decent rates of pay, good training and support, opportunities for progression and enough hours in work to meet basic family needs.

Activity to support young people in the senior phase of education develop the skills and experiences to progress to sustained positive destinations has a key role in increasing income from employment. Young people who experience periods of unemployment at an early age are more likely to experience unemployment in later life and the support provided to young people through effective career management skills, appropriate training and employability skills development can increase reduce youth unemployment, improve young people's life chances and increase income for young people and their families. The delivery of such programmes has been extremely challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The level of median pay for South Lanarkshire residents working full time has increased for a 5th consecutive year, up by 7.5% since 2019. This is the biggest single increase recorded in a single year. The level of weekly median pay for South Lanarkshire residents working full time also continues to run well above the Scottish average.

The record levels of full-time weekly pay registered by South Lanarkshire residents over the past year does mask a drop-in part time pay rates. While pay levels for full-time employees have increased by 7.5%, pay levels for part-time workers have fallen by 4% over the same period. The drop-in part-time earnings is more telling than the figures for full time earnings, as part time workers are more vulnerable to in-work poverty. The drop recorded may be a reflection of South Lanarkshire's greater dependence on COVID-19 vulnerable industrial sectors as a source of employment, with many jobs in these sectors also being part-time e.g., Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants, Other Services, Manufacturing and Construction.

Figure 7: Median Gross Weekly Pay (Residents) – Part-time Employees 2015-2020

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)



South Lanarkshire’s employment rate is currently (as of April 2021) at the highest level recorded since local authority estimates were first published in 2004. The area is also one of only nine local authorities whose employment rate has increased during the period up to 2020.

The largest employment sectors in the South Lanarkshire economy are health and social care and construction, and both predicted to continue to be key to the local economy. The other sectors of significance are tourism, engineering, food and drink, and finance. Tourism and financial services are predicted to remain stable over the next few years and engineering and food and drink may see a small reduction in employees working in these sectors. Delivering good quality and targeted employability interventions will bring the obvious benefit of getting local people into good work opportunities with wider benefits, improving life chances in education and employment and mitigating against health inequalities.

During 2020 all areas of life including employment and learning have been impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic and additional challenges have emerged as we hopefully look forward to recovery. Challenges include engaging with families, digital capability and access, lack of employer engagement and strain on family budgets.

The impact of the COVID-19 economic lockdown can clearly be seen to have had an influence on claimant unemployment locally. The latest claimant unemployment figures (April 2021, at the time of writing) indicates that there has been a 75.9% rise in unemployed claimants in South Lanarkshire since the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020.

On a more positive note the latest claimant count figures (April 2021) also indicates that the number of young claimants (16-24) has started to fall locally e.g. from 2,390 in March 2021 down to 2,350 in April,. The latest data on youth unemployment does suggest however that South Lanarkshire continues to record a higher level of youth unemployment when compared to the Scottish average (e.g. a 7.6% rate in South Lanarkshire, against 6% in Scotland) a long term trend that pre-dates the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In South Lanarkshire, the most recent figures available on furlough support (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) records that 19,200 employees in the authority are currently furloughed (as of March 2021). It is likely that government employment supports schemes, such as CJRS, could be masking the full economic impact of the pandemic and we may see an increase in the number of redundancies when furlough is no longer an option for employers.

The number of accredited living wage employers in South Lanarkshire has increased since last year, from 90 at March 2020 up to 93 at March 2021. South Lanarkshire remains as the local authority with the 4th highest number of accredited Living Wage employers in Scotland.



Where are we now?

Youth Employability Support

We have continued to deliver a wider range of employability support to young people during the last year, adapted to reflect the need for social distancing and lockdown restrictions.

Our work with young people to progress into a positive destination post school provides individualised support for employability, skills development and health and wellbeing. The main provider of this initiative is the Aspire Programme, which supported 338 young people over the last year.

In addition, we have provided a range of Modern Apprenticeships, however the number of starts (670) continues to be lower than previous years (1926 in 2019/20) as employers have understandably focused on challenges of COVID-19 rather than recruitment or up-skilling of staff.

Skills Development Scotland has worked to be creative in enhancing existing delivery and have provided several new initiatives to support young people and employers, include: Adopt an Apprentice, Apprenticeship Transition Plans, Pathways Apprenticeships, Transition Training Fund and Apprenticeship Employer Grants. Skills Development Scotland and partners developed implemented a new national helpline and digital resources, with 29 employers and 895 young people benefiting by December 2020.

Modern Apprenticeships

South Lanarkshire Council has continued to invest across all their apprenticeship programmes, a particular focus has been on areas where forward workforce planning is a priority such as childcare, social care and roads maintenance. In these programmes the salaries are paid by the council and the training costs are met by Skills Development Scotland. In addition to their 180 existing apprentices, this year the local authority recruited 85 additional young people.



The Aspire Programme supported **338 young people** over the last year.

In addition to their **180 existing apprentices**, this year the local authority recruited **85 additional young people**.

Scottish Youth Guarantee

We are committed to implementing the Scottish Government's Youth Guarantee, making sure that every young person aged between 16 and 24 will be guaranteed either the opportunity to study at university or college, to take part in an apprenticeship programme, take up a job or work experience, or participate in a formal volunteering or training programme according to their own personal circumstances.

Our local employability partnerships are committed to protecting the diverse range of existing provision and ensuring that the right support is put into place for those who rely on these services. The support helps to address inequalities within the labour market and improve young people's quality of employment, pay and progression. Priorities for the Youth Guarantee resources include employer recruitment, volunteering, key worker support, and supported employment for young people with additional support needs.

School Leaver Destinations

We have worked hard to support school leavers through a wide range of amended activity and while the positive destination rate for South Lanarkshire fell slightly to 94.8% from 95.7% the previous year, we maintained the target to be above the national rate (93.3%).

The Care Experienced Employability Focus Group has continued to meet to track the destinations of care experienced young people and while the positive destination rate for care experienced young people fell slightly to 85.4%, it still remained above the national average (81.4%). A new SCQF level 4/5 Foundation Apprenticeship programme in construction was established and 200 young people started on the programme in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire College, New College Lanarkshire, and First Steps Future Training. The number included 30 young people who took part in a winter leaver's pilot programme and 40 summer leavers.

Kickstart

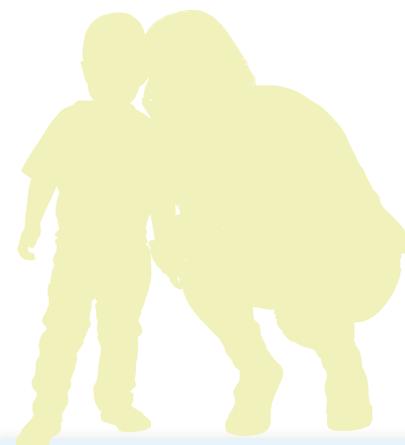
South Lanarkshire Council has successfully bid to provide 330 work placement opportunities through the Kickstart initiative. Young people will be offered a work placement opportunity with a wage subsidy for 25 hours per week for 26 weeks and in-work employability support. The initiative will help create new and additional jobs including skills and training to help support young people in the workplace.

Parental Employability Support

The Parental Employment Support programme is funded by the Scottish Government and is designed to support parents who are out of work and those who are in work, but in receipt of low incomes. The programme delivers a joined-up model of working with families and 65 parents were supported into fair work opportunities and to enhance their career prospect over the last year.

Additional funding has supported young parents through the provision of additional 1140 hours childcare and supported families where a parent or child has a disability.

The adult No One Left Behind initiative has provided additional employment skills for 120 local unemployed residents, including those with multiple barriers who are adversely impacted by COVID-19 and require intensive employability support to access training that develop skills needed by the labour market.



65 parents were supported into fair work opportunities.



Upskilling

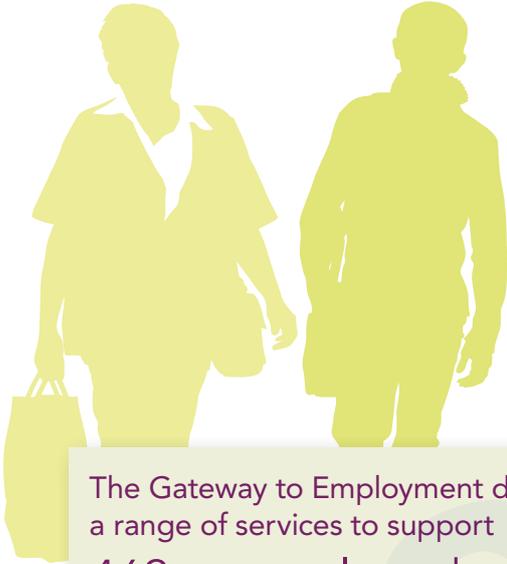
The Upskilling Programme helps address the market demand for skilled workers and has supported 120 people (including 57 parents) in work who are in receipt of low incomes or are underemployed, to improve their chances of in work progression and mitigate the difficulties of in-work poverty.

Gateway to Employment

The Gateway to Employment delivered a range of services to support 463 unemployed adults with multiple barriers preventing them from accessing sustainable work opportunities.

The programme matches clients with the needs of employers and provided bespoke pre-recruitment training that meets business recruitment needs. Clients benefited from training including core skills designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills that meet the needs of employers and industry.

NHS Lanarkshire have developed an employability action plan for Health Improvement staff to support patient's employability options. This has resulted in an increase in employability knowledge, skills and understanding of staff and has meant that patients, including parents have been better supported with their employability needs. This has been particularly successful in helping people cope with COVID-19 related employability issues and supported access to sustainable fair work. In addition, employability staff are now better placed to support the health and wellbeing needs of their clients.



The Gateway to Employment delivered a range of services to support **463 unemployed adults.**

Digital Inclusion

Housing and Technical Resources delivered a digital inclusion project for Homeless Families, 'Bringing IT Home'. It started as a pilot project and 25 families were identified and allocated digital devices and a year of internet access to assist with education, employment opportunities and accessing government services. Following the success of the pilot this was rolled out so that 55 more families will benefit from IT devices and two years of internet access at a reduced rate. The criteria for support, is families who are identified in the vulnerable and shielded category, or to support disadvantaged children in accessing online content to support their learning.

In addition, we were able to work with 25 local community organisations as part of the Connecting Scotland initiative and were able to support 714 families or care leavers benefit from free IT devices and access to the internet.

This support for families has been particularly important in the current circumstances as service providers have adapted over the past year, moving away from face to face support and onto more digital methods of providing services. There were however exceptions for the most vulnerable service users who were supported in person where and when it was safe to do so.



55%

more families will benefit from IT devices and two years of internet access at a reduced rate.

South Lanarkshire case study

Case study 1 (Parental Employment Support – in work)

K is a 21-year-old single parent who resides in Blantyre within one of the worst 20% SIMD area and was referred to the programme in March 2019. She started working at a local Nursery in Cambuslang where she completed her childcare apprenticeship and gained her SVQ Level 3 (Children and Young People qualification). To further her career and improve her income, she needed to gain additional skills and qualifications.

K was put forward by her Key Worker and employer to complete her PDA in Childhood Practices. As a young single parent this would further expand her knowledge and open job opportunities with her current employer (Local Nursery). She received one-to-one support and guidance and a workplace mentor and key worker support including a structured learning pathway to help her with the qualification linked to her job.

K progress has been excellent and she completed her PDA in Childhood practices and a further Paediatric First Aid qualification which enabled her to be being promoted to Senior Nurse Practitioner and has since given her an increase in her salary.

In K's words:

“During completing my PDA Childhood Practice, my employer was great with me and I felt really supported by them throughout the course. During the course I was promoted to the Nursery Senior Practitioner which gave me the opportunity to perform extra duties within the nursery. By getting a promotion this allowed me to have more insight into what the job entails which helped to complete my units. By getting my promotion I also received a salary increase which helps me immensely financially.”

K's Supervisor comment:

“K was able to achieve her PDA Childhood studies, this was a big help to her to be able to achieve her qualification which has had an impact on her practice within the nursery and her knowledge to continue to help improve the running of the nursery and helps the children to be able to develop. This has made K. become much more confident within her senior role.”



South Lanarkshire case study

Case Study 2 (Parental Employment Support – Unemployed)

Kayleigh was referred to the Parental Employment Support (PES) Team by Social Work. She is a 19-year-old, lone parent, who suffers from anxiety and depression and who relied on Universal Credit for income.

The necessary intensive Key Worker support was put in place to help her achieve sustainable employment. After several discussions on skills, strengths and previous experience, a CV was created for Kayleigh to start the process of applying for jobs.

Kayleigh successfully gained employment in January with a local Call Centre working from home full time. A company laptop was provided, and initial training undertaken. There was some confusion with her benefits which resulted in Universal Credit being stopped a few weeks prior to Kayleigh receiving her first wage, which resulted in a temporary financial struggle. The PES Key Worker spoke with Money Matters, who were able to call and offer advice and resolve her benefit issues.

As a laptop was provided by the employer for training purposes only, Kayleigh needed a device to carry out her work duties at the end of her training period. Without this, her employment would be in jeopardy and could have led to employment being terminated. Financial constraints meant the client was unable to afford the proper equipment to carry out the role successfully. The PES Key Worker obtained a suitable device from the Connecting Scotland project which came with MiFi capability.

Kayleigh is now successfully able to work from home and has sustained employment for more than 3 months.

South Lanarkshire case study

Case Study 3 - Supporting Families (Access to Childcare)

A parent was referred to the Supporting Families project by a local primary school to get support for the family around childcare, as both parents were studying on full time courses. The mother is studying an HNC in childcare, which will allow her to then undertake her degree in teaching next year. The father is studying a degree in Graphic Design, allowing him to eventually teach this subject to high school students.

The mother stated that she would have to undertake a placement, which would cause the family difficulties around accessing a childcare place for their youngest child who is currently 2 years of age. In addition, the wrap around hours for the other children (9 and 3) didn't cover school and nursery hours. She indicated that this would have a significant financial impact for the family and on her ability to continue with her studies. The family had few extended family options for childcare, as both grandparents have health issues. However, the parent hoped to work something out with a friend and grandparents for two of the days, leaving two days with no planned childcare. In addition, the childcare issue became more immediate as the college indicated students had one week to arrange childcare, with the placement due to start a week later.

The Family Support Worker arranged some wrap around childcare allowing the parent to undertake her placement and also some financial support for the family with short term funding to enable the flexibility of childcare required.

The worker then contacted the college to find out if there was any eligible funding the family might be able to benefit from and was able to provide the family with further information around the childcare element of funding and discretionary funds available from the college, which the family would be eligible to apply for.

The parent applied for both these funds with some support and was successful in accessing further funding to support with the family's childcare needs, allowing both parents to continue their studies. The parent was able to start her placement and continue her studies with no further worries around childcare or its costs. The family were extremely grateful for the projects support.

In the parent's words:

“I received a phone call from Margo. The video call was very professional, and she made me feel at ease from the start. I was blown away by how quick, helpful, and in-depth her answers were. She provided a few options and understood when we said we weren't comfortable with one of the options. Without her I would be incredibly stressed out and more than likely dropping out from a course! She went above and beyond for us in a time of need and we will forever be thankful!”



Key challenges for 2021/22

The employability landscape is currently uncertain due to COVID-19. E.g. once support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends, the number of individuals facing redundancy is expected to increase.

Due to the restrictions, there have been no living wage promotional activities in South Lanarkshire over the past 12 months and it is a priority to resume a schedule of activities and promotional events over the next year for this important area of work to address in-work poverty.

Ensuring that families are not disadvantaged by digital exclusion will be crucial in getting the right support to make best use of the online services. Much work has been done already to identify vulnerable families through the work of schools and other partners and we need to make sure no families miss out on being connected. E.g. Hamilton Jobcentre is part of a pilot of regular interaction with some customers using digital video appointments, this is being potentially progressed nationally. Digital access continues to be the preferred method of contact with customers using email, telephone or Universal Credit Journal messaging. The DWP are now delivering virtual sessions to customers, including recruitment events with employers.

Our local action plan outlines a range of actions and measures to support fair work opportunities for families, delivered through our local employability services and the Parental Employment Support (PES) programme. Delivery is based on the No One Left Behind (NOLB) principles, working with partners, to draw extensively on the lived experience of potential service users and identify best practice.



Table 3: Actions and measures: what will we do in 2021/22?

No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
3.1	Reduce gap in school leavers entering a positive destination between most deprived 20% and least deprived 20% areas.	DYW partners will provide early support to school leavers to support positive transitions from school.	SL 6.3% National 6.3%	Maintain the gap at the national level or better	Additional Scottish Government funding for DYW in schools £350,000	Brian Cameron	Young people in low income families
		Deliver an SCQF Level 4/5 Construction Foundation Apprenticeship. (SLC)	138 completers (2020/21)	229	Up to £500,000 for 229 starts (funded on milestones) Demand led budget	Douglas Hashagen	Young people in low income families
3.2	Support care experienced school leavers sustain a positive destination.	Youth employability partners work with employers to provide an increase in Modern Apprenticeship opportunities. (SDS)	1250	1,251		Brian Cameron	Young people in low income families
		Continue identification of individual support needs of care experienced young people via the Multi Agency Tracking Group consisting of the Council and SDS.	SL 86% (2019/20) National 81%	On or below national level	Existing resources	Brian Cameron	Care experienced young people



No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
3.3 Increase employment support for low income parents (continued).	Clyde Gateway will deliver an inclusive employability support programme within the Clyde Gateway corridor supporting families in the Rutherglen Project and Glenburgh Nursery into fair work.	By March 31 2022, 60% of families will be supported through crisis situations and into stability	New programme, no baseline at 2019/20 or 2020/21	60%	£139,000 Scottish Government Access to Childcare Fund £50,000 from	Natalie Phillips	Low income families
		By March 31 2022, 100% of eligible parents take up full entitlements of existing and new social security benefits	New programme, no baseline at 2019/20 or 2020/21	100%			
3.4 Employees being paid the living wage.	The Lanarkshire Living Wage Campaign Group will promote the living wage to employers across Lanarkshire to increase the number of employees earning the living wage. (SLC)	The number and proportion of employees earning less than the Living Wage	18,000/ 20.8% (2020) (ASHE)	Reduce to below 20%	Existing Resources	Gary Ross	Low income families
		The number and proportion of employees earning the Living Wage or more	70,000/ 79.2% (2020) (ASHE)	Increase to 80%			
		Number of accredited employers providing the Living Wage	93 (as of 31 March 2021)	Increase from baseline			
3.5 Employee upskilling.	South Lanarkshire Council will deliver an upskilling programme for staff experiencing low pay, underemployment and a lack of skills and qualifications in the workplace.	By March 2022 120 staff will become more financially independent	120 (2020/21)	120	Mainstream Council budget with European Funding match	Gill Bhatti	Low income families
		By March 31 2022, 40% of staff will increase their hours	11 (2020/21)	50			
		By March 31 2022 60% of staff will secure promotion at work	64 (2020/21)	75			



No.	Action	Measure(s)	Baseline 2019/20 (unless otherwise stated)	Target 2021/22	Resources allocated 2021/22	Lead Officer/ Reporting Officer	Who will benefit
3.6	Trade spend to living wage employers.	NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council will continue to monitor, and where possible increase, the proportion of trade spend to Living Wage employers.	Proportion of spend to living wage accredited employers	*No target applicable, this is a contextual measure	From existing resources	Craig Fergusson/ Emma Smith (SLC) Euan Erskine (NHSL)	Low income families
		Proportion of trade spend to Lanarkshire based employers (as a percentage total spend to all suppliers)	NHS Lanarkshire 2.7% (amounting to £6,744,092) SLC 90% of regulated contracts awarded to Real Living Wage employers	*No target applicable, this is a contextual measure			
		Proportion of trade spend to supported employers.	NHS Lanarkshire 24.8% (amounting to £57,200,000) SLC 18% (core spend £58.8m) NHS Lanarkshire 0.002% (amounting to £3,875) SLC 0%	No target applicable			

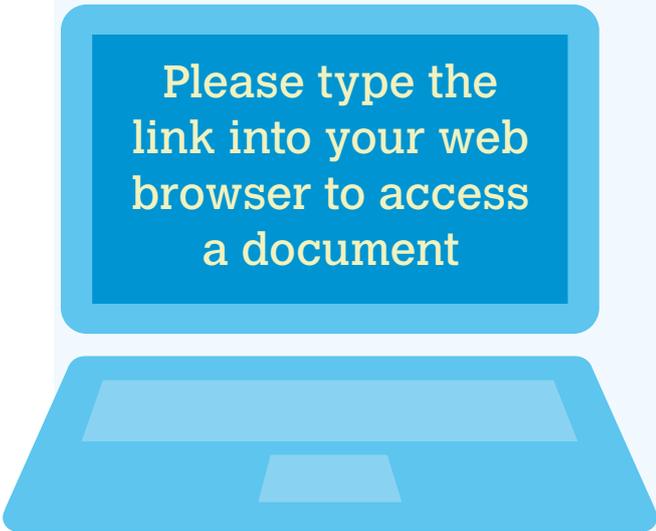
*NHS Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council cannot actively favour the award of public sector contracts to Lanarkshire based employers or employers that pay the Living Wage (both Real and Accredited) due to current procurement regulations. The proportion of trade spend awarded to Lanarkshire based employers and employers who pay the living wage is also dependent on the number of enterprises that have this status bidding for contracts at any given time which fluctuates year on year and is subject to variable factors, such as local market conditions, beyond the control of SLC and NHS Lanarkshire. As a consequence SLC and NHS Lanarkshire have a limited ability to influence this measure through the setting of performance related targets.

**Over the past two years (2019/20 and 2020/21) the level of trade spend to Supported Employers by NHS Lanarkshire has been minimal, while there has been no trade spend by SLC to Supported Employers during this period.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1:

Links to associated plans and policies



Please type the link into your web browser to access a document

Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

<http://bit.ly/ChildPovertyAct2017>

Scottish Government Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22

<http://bit.ly/ChildPovertyDeliveryPlan>

Scottish Government Child Poverty Delivery Plan Guidance

<http://bit.ly/ChildPovertyDeliveryGuidance>

Fairer Scotland Action Plan

www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-action-plan/

South Lanarkshire's Community Plan 2017-27

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/cp/CommunityPlan2017-2027

South Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/cp/childrensservicesplan2021-23

South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Commissioning Plan

www.southlanarkshirecommunityplanning.org/downloads

South Lanarkshire's Economic Strategy

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/economic-strategy

South Lanarkshire Local Housing Strategy

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/local_housing_strategy



Appendix 2:

Useful links

Advice Line for Pregnant Women and Young Families

Phone: 01698 453154 or 01698 453180

Email: telephoneadvice@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 4.45pm;

Friday 8.45am to 4.15pm (outwith these times you can leave a message)

Managing Your Money

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/managing_your_money

Financial Inclusion within Maternity and Health Visiting Services

www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM7V9S3vKzs

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/best_start

When Money is Tight Booklet

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/money-is-tight

Citizen's Advice Scotland

www.cas.org.uk/

Money Matters Advice Service

Phone: 0303 123 1008

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/mmms

Housing support and homelessness

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Local Housing Office – phone: 0303 123 1012

Out of hours – phone: 0800 24 20 24

If you would like to talk to us about the content of this report or be involved in helping us plan further actions, please contact the Community Engagement Team.

Phone: **0303 123 1017**

Email: communities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Notes

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