

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	CLH 45/19

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Care, Learning and Housing

**Date:** 21 August 2019

**Report Title:** Local Child Poverty Action Report

**Report By:** Acting Head of Policy

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 In 2017, the Scottish Government introduced the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act. This replaced the previous UK Child Poverty Act 2010 and included duties on both the Scottish Government and local partners to address child poverty. It also introduced income targets as a driver for reducing child poverty across Scotland. One section of the Act includes a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly produce an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report. This report requires to set out what has been undertaken in the previous year to address child poverty and to propose future actions for the coming year.
- 1.2 This report introduces the first Local Child Poverty Action Report for Highland. Although the duty is on the Council and NHS to lead and produce the report, a community planning approach has been adopted which reflects the multi-faceted nature of poverty and the importance of all partners working together to address child poverty.
- 1.3 The report can be found at appendix 1. It sets out an assessment of poverty in Highland, actions undertaken during the previous year to address child poverty including case study examples and the proposed actions for 2019/20 to address child poverty in Highland. Members are asked to consider and agree Highland's Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2018/19.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to:

- Consider and agree the Local Child Poverty Action report for Highland for 2018/19.

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resources:** the new actions identified for 2019/20 will be progressed and monitored within existing resources.
- 3.2 **Legal:** there is a new duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report annually.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** An impact assessment has been carried out on the action report for equality, socio-economic and rural impacts. The current and proposed actions in the action report are intended to tackle poverty, and to have a specific beneficial impact on addressing child poverty in Highland. There is specific consideration of the specific drivers of poverty within rural communities. In general, the actions in the report will be positive across the protected characteristics and negative impact is not identified. However, any positive impact will reflect the implementation of individual actions. Several of the actions are targeted and are intended to positively impact on the protected characteristics of sex, disability, age and race.

As a result of the impact assessment, several key actions were recommended for inclusion for 2019/20. This included activities to address the stigma of poverty, and raise awareness with the wider public, include consultation with people with lived experience of poverty and work with key partner groups to better understand disability related poverty. These are all included as actions for the coming year.

- 3.4 There are no **Risk, Climate Change, or Gaelic** implications arising from this report.

### 4. Background and Legislative Context

- 4.1 In 2017, the Scottish Government introduced the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act. This replaced the previous UK Child Poverty Act 2010 and included duties on both the Scottish Government and local partners to address child poverty. It also introduced income targets as a driver for reducing child poverty across Scotland.
- 4.2 The legislation requires the Scottish Government to produce a Child Poverty Delivery Plan every four years highlighting how it intends to meet the child poverty targets laid out in the Act. It must also publish annual progress reports setting out progress towards meeting the child poverty targets. The Scottish Government's first Delivery Plan – Every Child, Every Chance sets out policies and proposals to help reach the child poverty targets set for 2030.

- 4.3 The Scottish Government's Delivery Plan considers that children are at risk from poverty if they live in households which are below poverty thresholds, after housing costs, related to the following 4 measures:
- Relative poverty
  - Absolute poverty
  - Combined low income and material deprivation
  - Persistent poverty
- There are ambitious Scottish targets against each measure to be met by 2030/31 with interim targets by 2023.
- 4.4 Local authorities and health boards are required to jointly prepare annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports which set out activities that have been undertaken in the local authority area during the previous year to reduce child poverty and contribute to the delivery of the national targets and any planned future activities. In Highland, it was decided to take a community planning approach to developing the report in recognition that poverty is multi-faceted and that there is strength in collaborative and collective action to address child poverty. This approach supports the partnership commitment to addressing poverty and inequality.

## **5. The Highland Plan**

- 5.1 There is a strong commitment in Highland to address poverty and inequality within individual agencies and across the Community Planning Partnership. The vision for the Community Planning Partnership through its Highland Outcome Improvement Plan is:

*"To work together to reduce inequality within Highland communities"*

Within Highland Council, the 'Poverty and Inequality Working Group' provides scrutiny through the identification of a number of improvement themes specifically addressing poverty and inequality. Child poverty is a key priority of this working group.

- 5.2 It is difficult to isolate child poverty from the wider partnership work being undertaken to address poverty and inequality. Whilst traditional definitions of poverty focus on income-based drivers, in Highland, the Community Planning Partnership is cognisant of the wider focus on socio-economic inequalities. The lack of equality of opportunity and barriers to accessing services such as housing, work and learning opportunities, or transport all have a significant impact upon poverty in this area. This is also a specific rural dimension to the experience of poverty in Highland, including poverty of opportunity. The development of this report takes account of this wider focus on addressing poverty and inequality. The Scottish Government's drivers of poverty also reflect this broader approach focusing on income from employment, costs of living and income from social security and benefits identified as all influencing the experience of poverty.

5.3 This report has three sections:

Section 1: sets out the context in which partners are working, providing a picture of poverty in Highland and our key strategic drivers.

Section 2: summaries key actions that have been undertaken over 2018/19 to address child poverty and contribute to meeting the national targets. This section has been structured to reflect the Scottish Government's drivers of poverty (income from employment, costs of living and income from social security and benefits) and also includes case studies of specific work undertaken to address child poverty in the previous year. A full list of activity is outlined in appendix 1 of the report. This outlines the action, who leads on it, how it is resourced, how the action is measured, the key groups impacted and the poverty drivers it is intended to influence. It is recognised that whilst comprehensive, it is unlikely all activity in Highland has been captured.

Section 3: sets out areas for action for 2019/20. Having reviewed the wide range of interventions and actions currently being undertaken across Highland to reduce child poverty, the partnership has recognised the need to develop an outcomes framework which is centred on the needs and experiences of children, young people and their families. This section has been structured around three key outcomes which aim to support families to mitigate the experiences of poverty but also to provide opportunities to support people out of poverty.

- Outcome 1 - Families with children have access to services, support and advice required to ensure their household income is maximised and quality of their lives are improved
- Outcome 2 - Children, young people and their families have the knowledge, skills and opportunity to maximise their potential
- Outcome 3 - Highland has strong and resilient communities that are supported to develop local approaches to address poverty

**6. Next Steps**

6.1 The development of the Child Poverty Action Report has been particularly helpful as it has provided an opportunity to consider the extensive range of activity already in place across Highland to support children and families experiencing poverty. It has also provided a focus for examining gaps and key actions for the forthcoming year. These actions include:

- Understanding the cost of the school day
- Embedding referral pathways to support access to welfare support and advice
- Addressing the poverty related attainment gap

- A children's rights approach to understanding poverty
  - Developing approaches to food insecurity and holiday hunger
  - Developing a refreshed integrated children's services plan (FHC5) which including a core theme on 'Child poverty and inequality'.
  - Organisational and community awareness raising of poverty
  - Understanding disability related poverty
- 6.2 The Child Poverty Action Report is an annual report and therefore the actions highlighted for the coming year will be monitored and actioned through existing plans. Many of the actions from this plan will be driven forward through the revised Integrated Children's Service Plan (For Highland's Children 5) which from 2019 will have a specific theme on poverty and inequality but also the Council's Poverty and Inequality Working Group plan and the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan Delivery Group on Reducing Poverty. Updates on progress of For Highland's Children 5 and the Council's Poverty and Inequality Working Group are reported to the Care, Learning and Housing committee.

Designation: Acting Head of Policy

Date: 12-6-19

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Appendix 1: Highland Local Child Poverty Action Report

# **Highland**

# **Local Child Poverty**

# **Action Report**



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## The approach in Highland

Highland is a unique area. Serving a third of the land area of Scotland, including some of the most remote and sparsely populated parts of the United Kingdom.

The total land area, including all islands is 26,484 square kilometres. This is 33 per cent of Scotland.

Whilst there is rapid population growth in the inner Moray Firth, many rural communities are experiencing population decline.

Both the geography and population dispersion of Highland contributes to the challenges the area faces. This includes factors which exacerbate and contribute to poverty within the region.

There is a strong commitment in Highland to address poverty and inequality within individual agencies and across the Community Planning Partnership. The vision for the Community Planning Partnership through its Highland Outcome Improvement Plan is:

*“To work together to reduce inequality within Highland communities”*

Within Highland Council, the ‘Poverty and Inequality Working Group’ provides scrutiny through the identification of a number of improvement themes specifically addressing poverty and inequality. Child poverty is a key priority of this working group.

It is difficult to isolate child poverty from the wider partnership work being undertaken to address poverty and inequality. Whilst traditional definitions of poverty focus on income-based drivers, in Highland, the Community Planning Partnership is cognisant of the wider focus on socio-economic inequalities. The lack of equality of opportunity and barriers to accessing services such as housing, work and learning opportunities, or transport all have a significant impact upon poverty in this area. The development of this report takes account of this wider focus on addressing poverty and inequality.

This report has three sections. Section 1 sets out the context in which partners are working, providing a picture of poverty in Highland and our key strategic drivers. Section 2 summarises key actions that have been undertaken over the current year to address child poverty and contribute to meeting national targets. Section 3 sets out areas for action for 2019/20. Details of the range of priorities and actions are provided in Appendix 1.

Addressing child poverty is the responsibility of many agencies and bodies and the strength in our approach is collective and collaborative action. As a consequence, from a governance perspective, this report will be reported and monitored not only through the Highland Community Planning Partnership but through the two agencies tasked with delivering this report annually, namely, The Highland Council and NHS Highland.

## Section 1: Background and Context

### ***Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017***

In 2017, the Scottish Government introduced the [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act](#). This replaced the previous UK Child Poverty Act 2010 and included duties on both the Scottish Government and local partners to address child poverty. It also introduced income targets as a driver for reducing child poverty across Scotland.

Child poverty can have negative effects on the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of the children who experience it. It also has a wider cost for society<sup>1</sup>. By introducing a Child Poverty Act, which sets out clear targets for reducing the number of children living in poverty, progress can be monitored on meeting these targets.

The Act sets out ambitious headline targets for 2030:

- Four statutory income targets, to be met in the financial year beginning 01 April 2030
- Four interim targets, to be met in the financial year beginning 01 April 2023
- A statutory Poverty and Inequality Commission to be established from 01 July 2019, with functions related to the child poverty reduction targets.

The legislation requires:

- The Scottish Government to produce a Child Poverty Delivery Plan every four years highlighting how it intends to meet the child poverty targets laid out in the Act. It must also publish annual progress reports setting out progress towards meeting the child poverty targets. The Scottish Government's first Delivery Plan – [Every Child, Every Chance](#) sets out policies and proposal to help reach the child poverty targets set for 2030.
- Local authorities and health boards to jointly prepare annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports which set out activities that have been undertaken in the local authority area during the previous year to reduce child poverty and contribute to the delivery of the national targets and any planned future activities that are planned.

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<sup>1</sup> A 2013 study found that child poverty in the UK was costing at least £29 billion a year – [http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/Cost%20of%20child%20poverty%20research%20update%20\(2013\).0.pdf](http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/Cost%20of%20child%20poverty%20research%20update%20(2013).0.pdf)

## Poverty in Highland

*“Poverty is when your resources are well below your minimum needs.”<sup>2</sup>*  
*Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

*“Poverty is growing up in families without the resources to ‘obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities’ which are the norm in 21st century Scotland.”<sup>3</sup> CPAG Scotland*

*“A minimum standard of living in Britain today includes, but is more than just, food, clothes and shelter. It is about having what you need in order to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society.”<sup>4</sup>*  
*Loughborough University Centre for Research in Social Policy, 2016*

*“Poverty is not only about a lack of employment or opportunity but about having no margin for error while living in constant stress and emotional unpredictability.”<sup>5</sup>*  
*McGarvey, 2017*

Poverty is multi-faceted and many of the contributory factors are interdependent and therefore cannot be addressed in isolation. Whilst traditional definitions have focused on income levels, a broader understanding now exists of the factors influencing poverty and that inequality of opportunity is also a contributing factor. In addition to this, social inequality, resulting from an imbalance of power and opportunities as well as discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics such as gender, disability, race, age, or religion, can also widen the gap.

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<sup>2</sup> Poverty in the United Kingdom; Peter Townsend; 1979

<sup>3</sup> Add reference - CPAG

<sup>4</sup> A Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland; HIE; 2016

<sup>5</sup> As Poverty Rises Affluent Won’t be able to Escape its Effects; Darren McGarvey; 2017

### ***Income and employment***

Economic drivers strongly influence an individual's or household's level of poverty. While households in which no-one is in paid employment are most likely to experience poverty - 73% of children in workless households in the UK experience poverty<sup>6</sup> - in-work poverty is increasing. In 2018, two-thirds of children in poverty in Scotland live in working households.<sup>7</sup> In-work poverty has shown a long-term rising trend since 2009/10. This is explained by changes in the employment market with many low-income households working part-time. For working families who also receive benefit income, especially families with children, increases in earnings were balanced against withdrawal of certain benefit income.

People in Highland are more likely to be economically active than across Scotland as a whole; 81.2% of people are economically active in Highland compared to 74.1% across Scotland.<sup>8</sup> Within Highland though, there are particular economic challenges as a result of the predominantly rural area. Average incomes in Highland are lower than the Scottish average, largely influenced by the dominant tourism and catering industries which are traditionally lower paid. Average annual income in Highland is £28,960 compared to £29,260k<sup>9</sup> nationally.

Employees are also less likely to be in receipt of the living wage with 20.8% of employees earning less than the living wage in 2018.<sup>10</sup> The seasonal and part time nature of employment are also contributing factors. In 2017, 39.4% of jobs in Highland were part time in nature, compared to 33.9% across Scotland.<sup>11</sup> Employment by sector in figure 1 illustrates the sectoral nature of employment.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 2016/17 Households Below Average Income (HBAI) Table 4.5 db: Percentage of Children in low income groups by various family and household characteristics, detailed breakdowns

UK [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hbai-199495-to-201617-children-data-tab...](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hbai-199495-to-201617-children-data-tab...)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/2187/child-poverty-scales-trends-oct2018.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> ONS annual population survey 2017

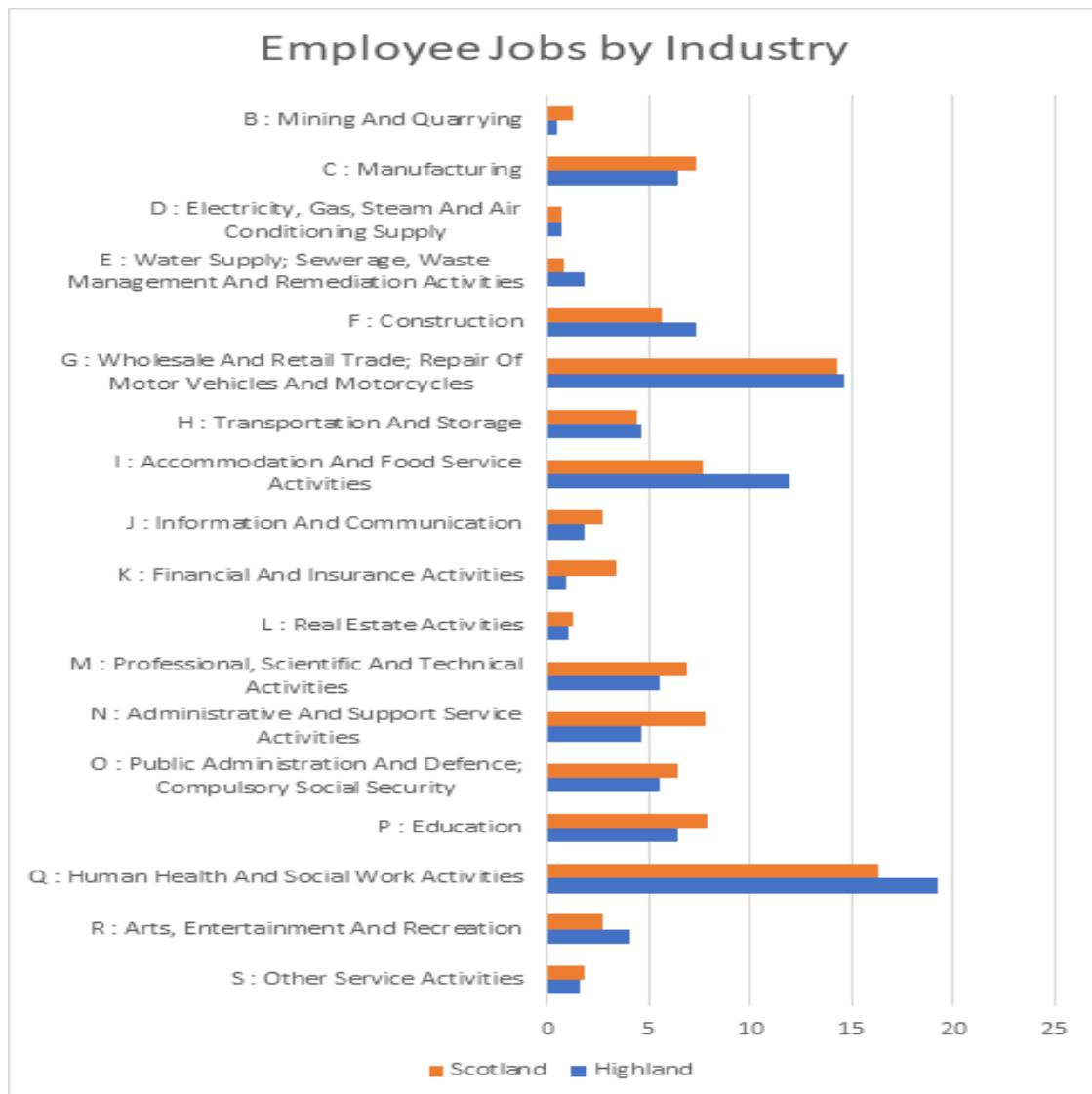
<sup>9</sup> ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2018

<sup>10</sup> GET NOTE

<sup>11</sup> ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2017

<sup>12</sup> ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2017

**Figure 1: Employee Jobs by industry in Highland and Scotland**



ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2017

### **Place Based Poverty**

Social factors also have a strong impact on experiences of poverty. Availability and cost of housing, cost of fuel for heating and transport, cost and availability of goods, and social isolation as a result of being unable to access services or leisure activities can all contribute to the experience of poverty.

Living in rural, coastal and/or areas of deprivation can increase the cost of living and reduce the prospects of a good and sustainable standard of living. 6% of Highland's datazones fall within Scotland's 15% most deprived areas. However, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as a measure for deprivation presents challenges within a rural setting, as rural areas tend to be less homogenous than urban areas in terms of deprivation and numbers involved tending to be smaller. Deprived households in rural areas are therefore unlikely to make statistical impact on an area

basis making rural disadvantage less visible. Data from the income and employment domains of the SIMD illustrates this, with 83.4% of income deprived people and 83.8% employment deprived living outwith the 15% most deprived areas.<sup>13</sup>

While not all children living in deprived areas are living in poverty, there is a clear association between income and area poverty: more than a third of children in the most deprived SIMD quintile live in low-income households compared to fewer than one in 20 in the least deprived quintile.<sup>14</sup>

Evidence from the literature highlights that people living in rural areas experience deprivation differently from those living in towns and cities. Particular issues in rural areas include:

- Less accessible key services including health and social care, childcare and high speed digital networks
- Higher consumption of fuel for heating and transport
- Reduced opportunities to earn adequate income
- Higher cost of living impacted by prices to for basic essential supplies
- Limited frequency and coverage of public transport

These factors can work as a compound, with the low incomes of people in remote rural areas being exacerbated by additional costs. This includes more expensive food and clothing, more expensive household goods, increased home energy costs and the costs of transport as shown in work on the Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland.<sup>15</sup> This highlights that for people living in rural areas of Scotland, a minimum acceptable standard of living typically requires between a tenth and a third more household spending than in urban parts of the UK. Figure 2 demonstrates the additional costs faced by different households in remote rural Scotland and Scottish islands when compared with urban UK households.<sup>16</sup>

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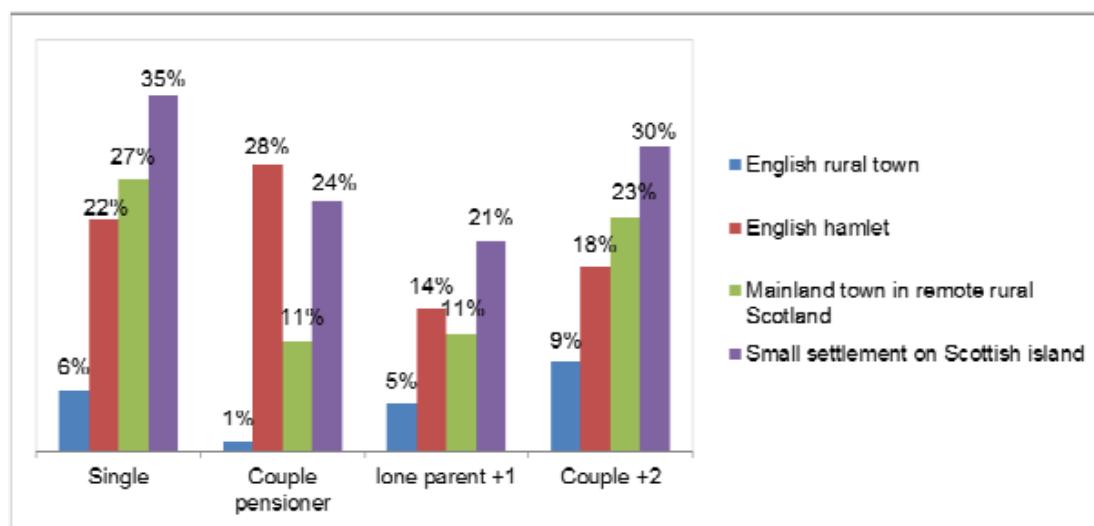
<sup>13</sup> SIMD 2016

<sup>14</sup> Giles and Richardson. *Children and Young People's Profile: Scotland overview report*. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland; 2017. [www.scotpho.org.uk/media/1568/cyp-profile-overview-report-sept17.pdf](http://www.scotpho.org.uk/media/1568/cyp-profile-overview-report-sept17.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Minimum income standard for Remote Rural Scotland – Policy update 2016, Loughborough University <http://www.hie.co.uk/common/handlers/download-document.ashx?id=90d6c2f6-a461-4ff8-9902-49f073765e39>

<sup>16</sup> P14 Minimum income standard for Remote Rural Scotland – Policy update 2016, Loughborough University

**Figure 2: Additional costs facing households in remote rural Scotland compared to urban UK households**



### ***Health Inequalities***

Health inequalities are the unjust and avoidable differences in people's health across the population and between specific population groups. Health inequalities go against the principles of social justice because they are avoidable. They do not occur randomly or by chance. They are socially determined by circumstances largely beyond an individual's control. These circumstances disadvantage people and limit their chance to live longer, healthier lives. The existence of health inequalities in Scotland means that the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is not being enjoyed equally across the population.

The fundamental causes of health inequalities are an unequal distribution of income, power and wealth. This can lead to poverty and marginalisation of individuals and groups.

These fundamental causes also influence the distribution of wider environmental influences on health, such as the availability of:

- work
- education
- good quality housing.

They can also influence access to services and social and cultural opportunities in an area and in society. The wider environment in which people live and work then shapes their individual experiences of:

- low income
- poor housing

- discrimination
- access to health services.

This environment then shapes individual experiences across the population and leads to the inequalities in health outcomes.

Important foundations of adult health are laid in early childhood and before birth. We know that living in poverty, relative deprivation and social exclusion are particularly harmful during pregnancy, to babies and children with consequent increases in the risks for poor health and for premature death in later years.<sup>17</sup>

The disadvantages associated with poverty that limit life chances tend to concentrate in the same people and often among people who live in the same areas. The consequences are that systematic differences in the health of people can be observed across social dimensions related to income, geography, ethnicity, disability, gender and social class.<sup>18</sup>

In Scotland, socio-economic inequalities in health, measured by indicators such as life expectancy and mortality rates, explain why overall levels of population health are among the worst in Western Europe.<sup>19</sup>

Across Highland, similar long-term differences in the health of people in poorer and more affluent areas can be evidenced.

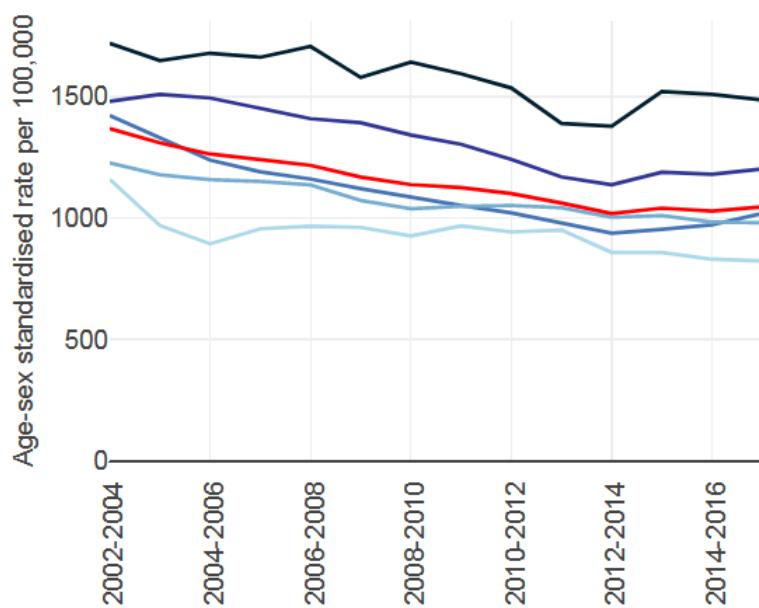
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<sup>17</sup> WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health. [Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health](#). World Health Organization, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> ScotPHO Public Health Information for Scotland: Health Inequalities. ScotPHO, 2019 [Accessed online] <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/comparative-health/health-inequalities/introduction/>

<sup>19</sup> Scottish Government. Long-term monitoring of health inequalities: December 2018 report. [Accessed online] <https://www.gov.scot/publications/long-term-monitoring-health-inequalities-december-2018-report/>

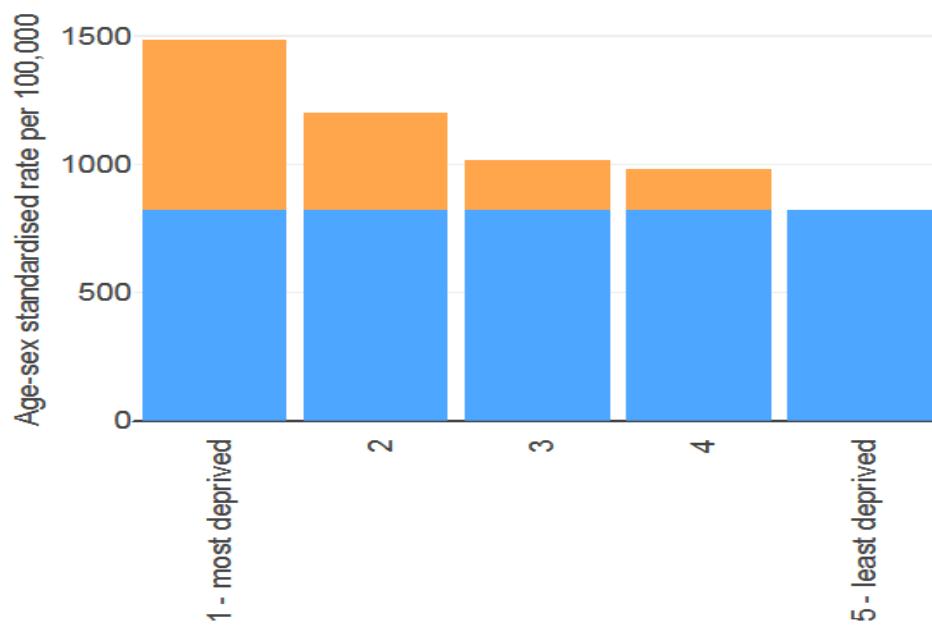
**Figure 3: Change over time in deaths all ages between deprivation groups in Highland**



Source: ScotPHO Community Profiles by national quintile of deprivation (SIMD)

Deaths all ages would be 22 percent lower if the levels of the least deprived area were experienced across the whole population. Figure 4 shows the part of deaths all ages that can be attributed to socioeconomic inequalities in Highland in 2015-2017.

**Figure 4: Deaths all ages attributable to socio-economic inequalities in 2015-2017 in Highland**



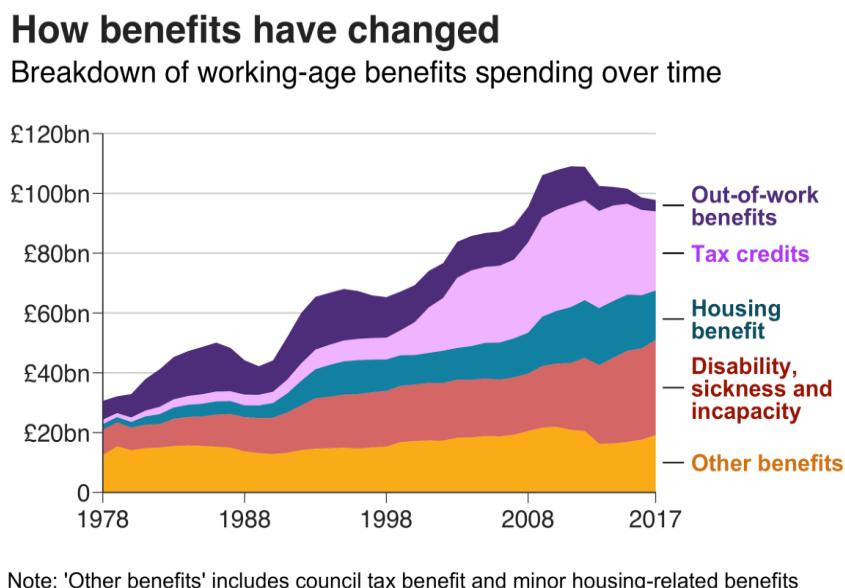
## **Welfare Reform**

The UK Government spends roughly £1 in every £8, or about **£100bn** a year on welfare benefits. This is in addition to the **£120bn** that is spent on financial support for pensioners. There are about 1.8 million households of working age who receive at least 80% of their income from benefits. However, it should be noted the welfare system supports a substantially greater number of households, for example:

- many more households get smaller income top-ups from the benefits system;
- About half of all working-age households currently receive some benefits. Even excluding child benefit - which all but the highest-income households are entitled to receive - the figure is about one in three.

Working-age benefits are not simply supporting an unchanging group. The majority of households will require support at some point for a variety of reasons including during periods of low income, parenthood or ill health. The following graph produced by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) illustrates the changing expenditure of benefits:

**Figure 5:**



The Welfare Reform Act 2012 was enacted by the UK Parliament on 8 March 2012. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) stated that these reforms were aiming to:

- make the benefit system fairer and more affordable;
- reduce poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency; and
- reduce levels of fraud and error.

The Scottish Government's 2018 annual report on the UK Government's reforms of the welfare system and the effects of these reforms on people in Scotland concluded

*“.... We estimate that the welfare reform policies of successive UK governments since 2010 mean that welfare spending in Scotland in 2020/21 will be £3.7 billion lower than had they not been introduced.”*

The Council's Welfare Support team and Citizens Advice have reported an increased need for their services from customers seeking advice and assistance. In the past 3 financial years (2016/17 to 2018/19) customer numbers have risen by 30% overall. Universal Credit and Personal Independent Payments continue to present significant challenges for customers across Highland and has resulted in additional demand for complex advice.

This includes supporting customers with the application process, drafting and submitting appeals against adverse decisions and representing clients at appeal tribunals. In addition, households encounter a variety of issues including benefit delays and errors and to challenge adverse benefit decisions especially in relation to Employment and Support allowance. The need for continuing and often intensive support for vulnerable customers claiming Universal Credit to maintain their claim continues to be one of the main presenting features.

These can be attributed to the wider welfare reform measures all of which are having detrimental impacts for households in Highland. Some are impacted simultaneously by multiple welfare reform reductions/changes, thereby placing increased pressures on for example, their finances, family life, health, relationships and participation in society.

### ***Educational Outcomes***

One of the drivers of future poverty is poor educational outcomes which can impact on future employment outcomes and earnings. Higher levels of educational qualifications are likely to mean families are better able to find employment and more secure and better paid work. National research show that pupils with additional support needs have lower educational attainment levels than those without additional support needs. Disabled young people have a substantially lower rate of participation in education, training or employment than those who are not disabled.<sup>20</sup> Closing the attainment gap is therefore a key policy driver and focus nationally and locally.

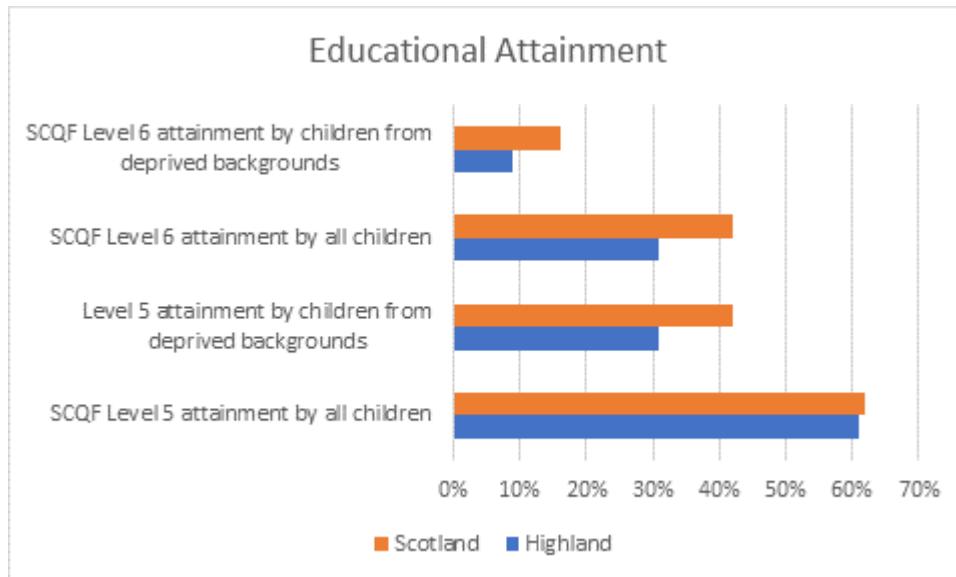
In Highland, pupils entering positive destinations has been a consistently high and improving picture with 96.5% entering positive destinations in 2017/18. For certain measures, overall attainment compares well nationally, however, attainment of pupils

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<sup>20</sup> Scottish Government (2017) [The life chances of young people in Scotland: an evidence review for the First Minister's Independent advisor on Poverty and Inequality](#)

from deprived backgrounds is consistently lower than the national average.<sup>21</sup> A new approach to school improvement in Highland commenced in April 2019 which will focus on improving outcomes for all pupils and increasing the support and challenge for schools. This is a strategic priority area for the Council.

**Figure 6: SCQF Attainment 2017/18 for Highland and Scotland**



### **Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Children who have experienced abuse and trauma may be at risk of performing less well than their peers. The term adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) is used to describe a wide range of stressful or traumatic experiences that babies, children and young people can be exposed to whilst growing up. Our understanding of ACEs is growing and the social context in which families live is a key risk factor for adverse childhood experiences and there is a strong association between low family income, unemployment, social isolation and increased risk of adverse childhood experiences.

### **Protected Characteristics**

Deprivation works in combinations of factors, the barriers and opportunities available to families will differ by local area. They will also differ by protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act) and there are certain groups where the evidence shows us that prevalence of child poverty is higher<sup>22</sup>.

Older people in remote rural areas are vulnerable to low income exacerbated by problems of isolation and access to services. Younger people can experience combination of disadvantage relating to housing, transport and employment

<sup>21</sup> SCQF attainment 2017/18

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/74987/item\\_10\\_local\\_and\\_national\\_statutory\\_performance\\_indicators\\_2017-18](https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/74987/item_10_local_and_national_statutory_performance_indicators_2017-18)

<sup>22</sup> Scottish Government, Child Poverty Development Plan, [Equality Impact Assessment](#)

opportunities. As a group, they are more likely to move out of remote rural areas than other age groups.

In 2018, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published Poverty in Scotland<sup>23</sup>, looking at poverty trends for families with children in Scotland. The report highlights gender and disability as barriers to work being intrinsically and persistently linked with poverty. Lone parents, who are predominantly women, are at particular risk of being in poverty. Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, Equally Safe, notes that tackling poverty amongst women is key to reducing gender power imbalances, and that financial dependence is one pressure that may increase vulnerability to abuse and keep women and girls trapped.

It is well documented (eg Scope<sup>24</sup>) that disabled people are less likely to be economically active, and that life costs more for disabled people and their families, spending more on essential goods and services like; heating, insurance, equipment and therapies; and that this 'cost of disability' can be exacerbated in rural areas. There is some national evidence that poverty is higher among black and minority ethnic groups than among the majority white population, however there are limitations on available data in Highland.

### ***Fuel Poverty***

Fuel poverty is a particular challenge for rural communities. Increased costs of fuel in rural areas, the lack of choice in heating sources and the condition and type of housing, all contribute to higher levels of fuel poverty within rural areas. The highest levels of fuel poverty experienced in Scotland, are all within predominantly rural and island authorities.

In Highland, just under half of households are said to be living in fuel poverty, almost double the national average. 27% of households with children are said to be fuel poor, compared to 13% across Scotland as a whole.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 7 illustrates the scale of fuel poverty within Highland by considering fuel poverty by datazone. This demonstrates the high levels of fuel poverty experienced in the majority of the most rural and remote areas.

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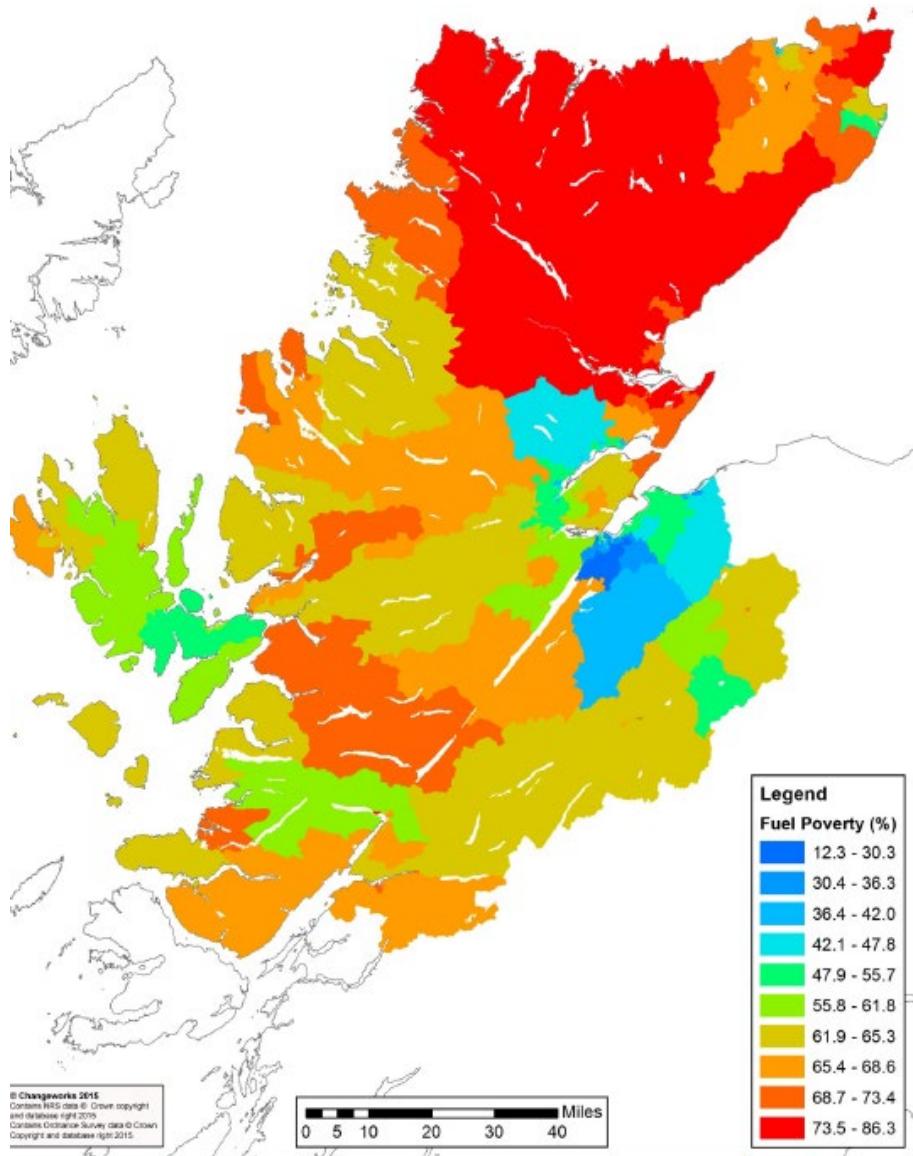
<sup>23</sup> JRF [Poverty in Scotland](#)

<sup>24</sup> SCOPE, [Disability Price Tag](#)

<sup>25</sup> Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analysis 2015-2017

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SHCS/keyanalyses/LATables1517>

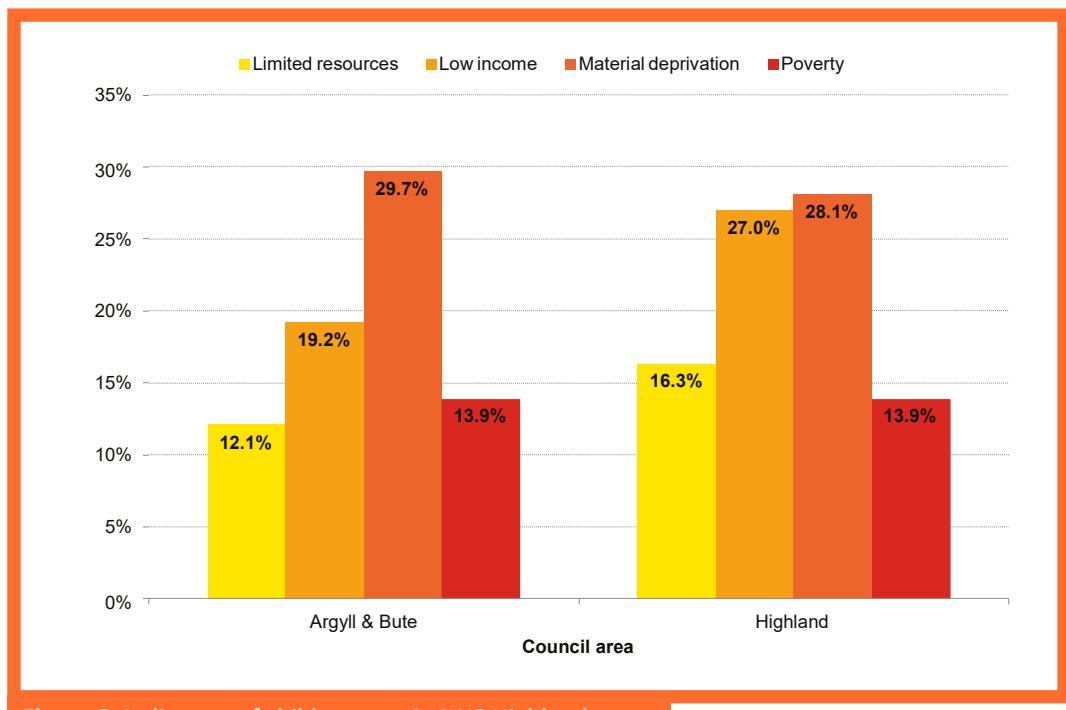
**Figure 7: % of Fuel Poverty in Highland by datazone**



### ***Children in Poverty***

Children are considered to be living in poverty if they live in households with less than 60% of median UK household income (before housing costs). The latest child poverty estimates show that 16.6% of children in Highland are living in poverty. This equates to 8,239 children across Highland at increased risk of experiencing adversity through the social context in which they are growing up.

Statistics developed by the Scottish Government, albeit based on a small sample, also show that up to a third of children are living in circumstances of material deprivation.<sup>26</sup> A family lives in material deprivation when they cannot afford three or more items from a list of 22 key items, such as participating in family activities, day trips or having money for unexpected but necessary expenses (Figure 8).



**Figure 8:** Indicators of child poverty in NHS Highland

**Source:** Scottish Government<sup>17</sup>, HMRC<sup>16</sup>

- *Poverty: living in families in receipt of Child Tax Credit (income <60% of median income), Income Support or Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance.*
- *Material deprivation: living in material deprivation (being unable to afford basic necessities).*
- *Low income: living on a low income (<70% of Scottish median incomes after housing costs).*
- *Limited resources: both living on a low income and living in material deprivation.*

The latest child poverty figures were published in May 2019 by the End Child Poverty Coalition (ECPC). ECPC also produce estimated figures for levels of child poverty within Local Authority areas. The figures were compiled by the Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP). It is important to note that the numbers listed are not exact representations of the number of actual children

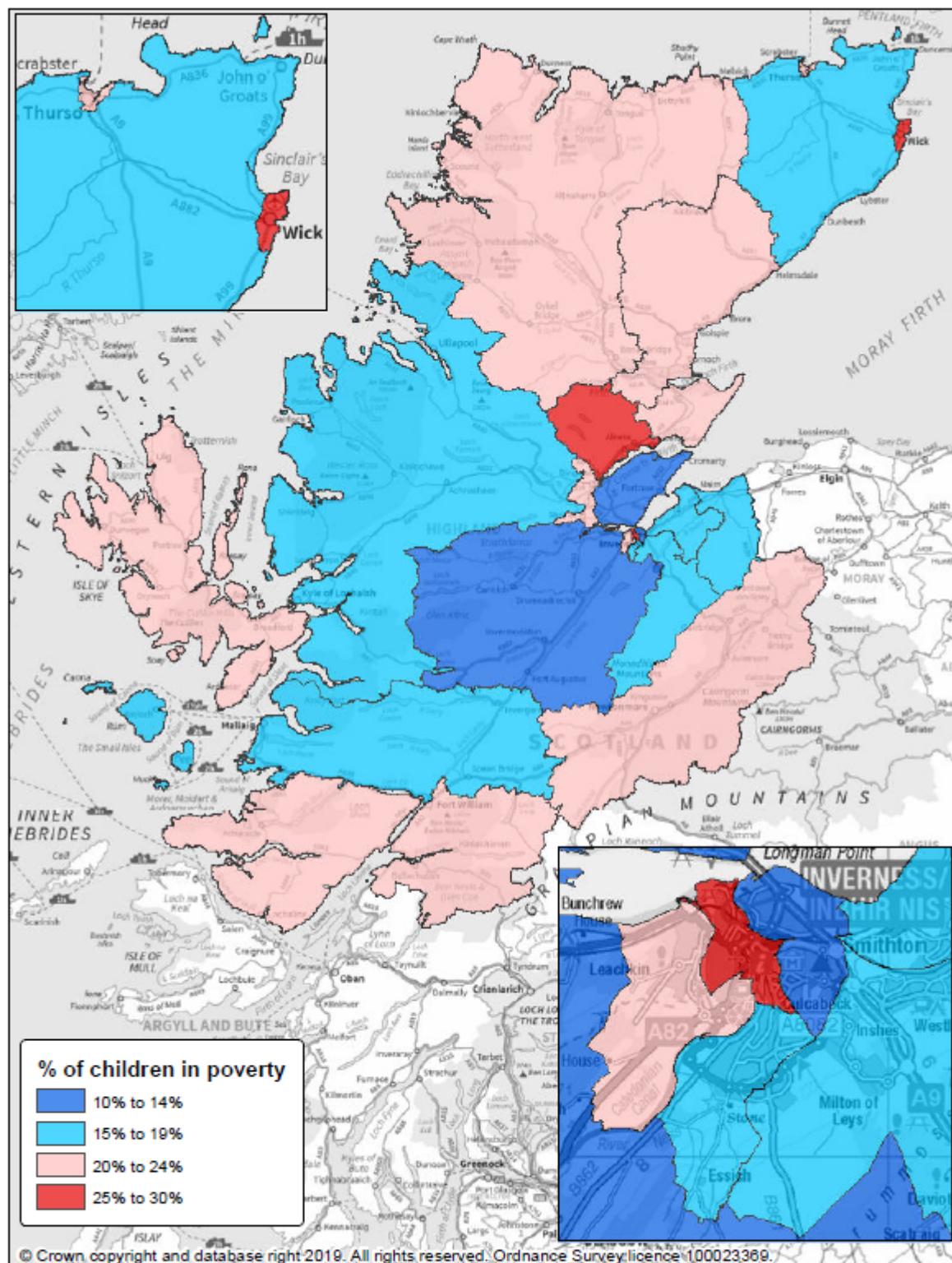
<sup>26</sup> Scottish Government. Children in families with limited resources across Scotland 2014-2016. The Scottish Government: Edinburgh; 2017. Available from: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/11/9758>

living in poverty, but rather using the best local data available, the CRSP provides an indication of where child poverty is highest.

The map below (figure 9) details the percentage of children living in poverty in each Council ward. The Highland wards are represented by the ward boundaries of 2013, since then, “Landward Caithness” has been split into “Thurso and Northwest Caithness” and “Wick and East Caithness” however the analysis is still based on the previous ward boundary arrangements. Whilst the figures identify higher levels of poverty in areas of known deprivation, they also illustrate that poverty is experienced across Highland, in both rural and remote wards but also within some of the most affluent wards.

A table detailing the individual numbers and percentages of children living in poverty before and after housing costs can be found at appendix 2.

Figure 9: % of Children Living in Poverty (After Housing Costs) in Highland by Ward<sup>27</sup>



## Child Poverty in Highland Wards

Ref: gis2267  
Date: 22/07/2019



<sup>27</sup> End Child Poverty Coalition (ECPC) May 2019 <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Regional-Estimates-LAD-Scotland-with-summary.xlsx>

## **Key Local Plans and Strategic Drivers**

It is important to view the Highland Child Poverty Action Report within the wider strategic priority context across Highland. All Local Authorities and Health Boards have their own Strategic/Corporate plans containing organisation priorities. In addition, Community Planning Partners have a duty under the Community Empowerment Act to address socio-economic inequality through outcome improvement plans and locality plans. The Highland Council and NHS Highland have a duty under the Children's and Young People's (Scotland) Act (2014) to prepare an Integrated Children's Services Plan and there are also new duties on public bodies to consider socio-economic inequality through their planning as part of the Fairer Scotland Duty. All these plans and duties contribute to addressing Child Poverty. A summary of key activity is included below.

### ***Highland Outcome Improvement Plan***

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, commits Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) to working more closely with communities to ensure that the outcomes delivered reflect the needs of the communities each partnership represents. Each CPP is tasked with ensuring communities are engaged and involved in developing and defining the priorities of the Partnership. These priorities should be set out within an Outcome Improvement Plan.

The Highland partnership agreed that the focus for the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) would focus on addressing inequality and prevention. This document sets out the vision, purpose and focus for the Highland CPP from 2017- 2027 in order to reduce inequalities in Highland. The HOIP has five core outcomes:

- More people in Highland will live a life free from the experience of poverty
- People in Highland will be more involved in the decisions that affect their lives
- Fewer people in Highland experience transport or digital connectivity as a barrier to accessing opportunities
- People in Highland will benefit from living in stronger, safer and more resilient communities
- People in Highland will benefit from good mental health and wellbeing

The five core outcomes have been chosen and agreed upon with communities. We believe working towards these will have a significant impact on reducing inequalities in Highland and ultimately addressing some of the core drivers of poverty experienced within communities. Key priorities focused on address poverty and socio-economic inequality include:

- Improving financial education and advice
- Reducing fuel poverty

- Exploring investment and support for community transport
- Developing approaches to affordable childcare
- Addressing seasonal employment and in-work poverty

### ***Highland Council Corporate Plan and Strategic Priorities***

The Council's Corporate plan set out the strategic and operational priorities of the organisation along with the key improvement priorities. The Corporate Plan also reflects the key outcome areas for the HOIP.

The overarching strategic aims for the Council are:

- A Council that Champions the Highlands
- A Place to Live
- A Place to Thrive
- A Place to Prosper
- A Welcoming Place
- Your Highland Council

Within the Corporate Plan, there are several key priorities to address poverty and inequality. These include:

- We will improve educational attainment across all groups and reduce the attainment gap for young people from deprived areas
- We will improve outcomes for Looked After Children and young people and achieve better value from the resources to support them
- We will ensure that every eligible child in Highland is able to access their funded early learning and childcare entitlement
- We will develop and implement a Rapid Rehousing Action Plan top prevent homelessness and reduce the time people spend in temporary accommodation
- We will attract more people to make the Highlands their home and younger residents to stay here
- We will support economic growth and create and protect jobs

### ***For Highlands Children 4***

For Highland's Children is the partnership's children's services plan. The vision is that all Highland's Children have the best possible start in life, enjoy being young, and are supported to develop as confident, capable and resilient, to fully maximise their potential.

The plan incorporates and builds upon outcomes identified within existing policy commitments of Highland Council, and on the Performance Management Framework developed as part of the partnership agreement with NHS Highland, which established Highland Council as the Lead Agency for delivering services to children.

The achievement of better outcomes for Highlands's children, their families and the communities in which they live is the overarching objective for all children's services

The plan identifies 14 key outcomes for children and their families. The 14 key outcomes are focused on ensuring children are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected & responsible and included.

The outcomes are designed to consider the ways in which:

- Children and young people receive the help and support they need to optimise their well-being at every stage
- Children and young people get the best start in life and enjoy positive, rewarding experiences growing up
- Children and young people benefit from clear protocols, procedures and effective systems for recording observations and concerns which take account of best practice in information-sharing

Of the fourteen outcomes outlined within the plan the following have a particular relevance in relation to addressing child poverty.

- Children and young people are supported to achieve their potential in all areas of development
- Children and young people thrive as a result of nurturing relationships and stable environments
- Families receive support, advice and guidance which is well-matched to their needs and available in ways which helps them to prepare for the various developmental stages
- Children and young people are physically active
- Children, young people and their families are supported well to develop the strengths and resilience needed to overcome any inequalities they experience Children, young people and families are enabled to tell us what they think about services and the community in which they live, and improvement is determined with their involvement and by understanding their views, wishes, and expectations

### ***Regional Improvement Collaborative Plan***

The Northern Alliance is the Regional Improvement Collaborative between eight local authorities, across the north of Scotland: Orkney, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Western Isles, Highland, Moray, and Shetland. The Alliance came into being in 2014.

The Scottish Government's Review of Educational Governance determined that Local Authorities across Scotland group themselves in this way to promote collaboration.

Each Regional Improvement Collaborative has its own Regional Improvement Plan. The Northern Alliance Plan has four priority areas:

- Priority 1 Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
- Priority 2 Closing the outcome gap between most and least disadvantaged children
- Priority 3 Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Priority 4 Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

### ***Highland Economic Forum and Collaborative Action Plan***

The Highland Economic Forum forms part of the Highland Community Planning Partnership with a specific focus on priority issues and associated actions which require to be addressed through collective working by the Highland Economic Forum partners. The strategy has four strategic objectives:

- A. A growing, more productive economy
- B. A good supply of skilled productive workers
- C. Infrastructure supporting increased productivity and a growing, sustainable population
- D. "Place" sits as an overarching strategic objective *above* the other three objectives and one to which those objectives contribute - i.e. Maximise the potential of Highland as a place to live, work, study, visit and invest.

### **The Fairer Scotland Duty and the Public Sector Equality Duty**

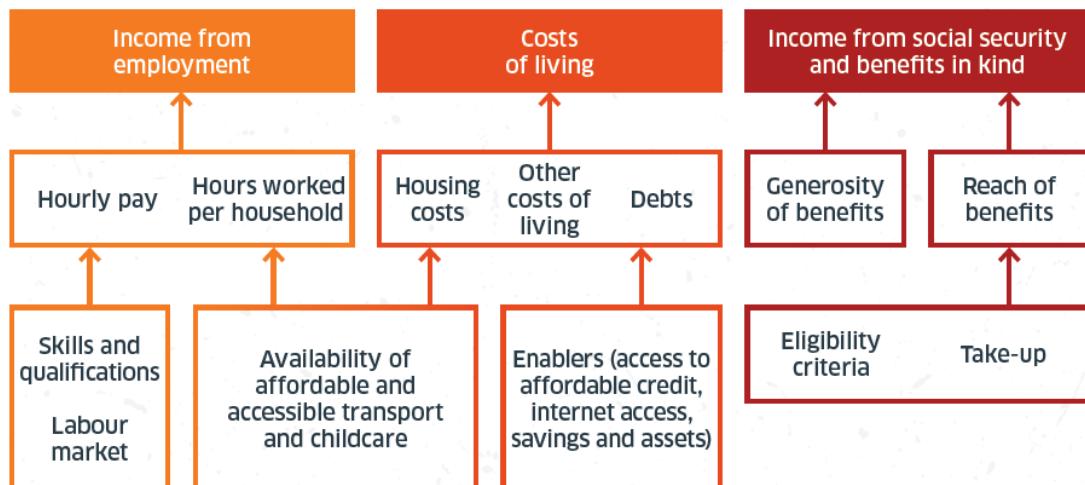
The socio-economic duty is set out under Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, as the 'public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities'. The commitment to enact the duty was set out in the Scottish Government's Fairer Scotland Action Plan, where the government pledged that it would introduce the duty as it recognises that the public sector is key to delivering a fairer Scotland. The duty is now known as the Fairer Scotland Duty.

The duty was introduced in Scotland in April 2018 and its intention is to help make sure that the public sector takes full account of poverty and disadvantage when key strategic decisions are being made.

The Equality Act also places a duty on public sector bodies to have due regard in carrying out public functions to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations; and covers people protected by the Act.

## Section 2: Action in Highland

Evidence suggests that there are three key drivers which influence the experience of child poverty. These are income from employment, costs of living and income from social security and benefits. These drivers are set out in figure 1<sup>28</sup> below.



Increasing incomes and reducing costs of living are mechanisms for reducing child poverty but there are many other actions that take place to improve children's quality of life and life chances.

## What have we done to address Child Poverty in 2018/19

Work to address child poverty in Highland is undertaken through a range of core business and specific project or time-limited activity. Some of the activity is direct intervention, the core aim to address child poverty, whilst others have broader outcomes including addressing child poverty. Activity is undertaken by individual public sector agencies, by third sector organisations and through partnerships.

Appendix 1 sets out the actions taken during 2018/19 to address child poverty in Highland and contribute to addressing the Scottish Government's income targets. A summary of the activity and action is set out below, summarised under the key drivers of income from employment, costs of living and income from social security and benefits. Case studies to illustrate aspects of the work are included in these summaries.

<sup>28</sup> Scottish Government, Local Child Poverty Action Report Guidance 2018

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-action-report-guidance/>

## **Income from employment**

There has been a wide range of work undertaken by partners during 2018/9 which would contribute to maximising income from employment and ultimately support addressing child poverty.

**Supporting people into employment:** There is a focus across partners on supporting key vulnerable groups back into employment. This includes care experienced young people, disengaged young people and parents with dependent children. Work is supported through core agency provision and also project based work supported through European Social Fund (ESF).

**Supporting people to access work:** Further areas include support for families to be able to return to work by providing access to affordable childcare. The increase in childcare hours from 600 – 1140 is a core Scottish Government policy which is currently being implemented through the Council and partners across Highland. A core feature of this is the different approaches being taken to provide provision dependent upon the nature of the local community.

### ***Closing the attainment gap:***

Schools, teachers and policy makers in Highland help address the poverty-related attainment gap by better understanding the geography and profile of poverty in Highland recognising that:

- Most Highland children in poverty do not live in ‘poor’ areas. Directing all resources at schools with ‘poor’ catchment areas will not impact on all children and young people living in poverty. In Highland, poverty is an issue that every school faces
- Addressing attainment in the early years is necessary but not sufficient. A good early years education does not inoculate children against low attainment in their post-nursery stages. We are developing interventions to poverty-proof schooling against low attainment at every age and stage – nursery, primary, secondary and college/university
- In Highland most children in poverty have a parent in work. However, the work is low paid and often part-time and / or intermittent
- Poor families do not lack high aspirations for their children. What they lack is the networks to help them navigate and overcome barriers as and when they arise
- Political and professional leadership is vital. Professionals need reliable data on pupil attainment and they need it in a form that allows them to track the progress of low-income pupils to ensure the system is serving these children and young people well. Professional conversations prompted by the data need to be informed by advice about the interventions that are most likely to

work at pre-school, early years, primary, secondary and college / university levels. The intervention ‘mix’ needs to fit the context, be applied persistently and consistently, and its impact tracked and adapted as necessary

In addition, Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is provided directly to schools to support closing the attainment gap. The aim is to have a direct impact on learning and prospects for individuals in the future. Schools across Highland have utilised funding creatively. Collating the impact of this funding is currently underway and will form part of an ongoing evaluation for this plan in future years.

***Developing Skills and opportunities:***

The Highland Council has its own dedicated Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme and now have over 135 MAs in employment, with up to 200 anticipated by the middle of 2020. All apprentices are paid Scottish Living Wage and have a recognised development plan leading to permanent employment if they wish to stay beyond their apprenticeship.

As well as working closely with schools, DYW groups and SDS to provide awareness and preparation for work with learning interventions around applications and interviews; the team also works closely with employability, the Youth Trainee programme, Family Firm and Social work colleagues to examine and improve pathways for 16+ Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) into MAs. Although, a new initiative, the intention is to utilise corporate training resource to provide training events under our corporate parenting role to help prepare young people for employment and explore options to support CEYP through to Modern Apprenticeships. Work continues to develop this pathway to provide support and access to training, placements, modern apprenticeships and employment.

***Case Study: Supporting parents with dependent children progress to employment  
Poverty Driver: Income from Employment***

The Highland Council works in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus to engage with unemployed parents and deliver employability support services to assist them to prepare for, secure and sustain employment.

The Council engages third sector organisations to work with parents to undertake an assessment of their skills, needs and the barriers which prevent them from moving towards employment. A tailored programme around the individual’s Action Plan can then be developed and includes activities such as Motivation and Confidence Building, IT Skills, CV Preparation and Job Search. Mentoring support from a key worker will be available throughout the process to assist parents to access the relevant services they need at different stages of their journey towards employment.

The Highland Employability Service partners aim to align service provision to enable parents to access seamlessly the various support services they require. The range of programmes currently on offer includes Family Firm, Activity Agreements, Work It Out, Employability Fund, Youth Trainee Work Experience Placements and access to an Employer Recruitment Offer to encourage employers to create job opportunities. Once parents have secured a job, aftercare will also be available to support parents to sustain their employment.”

***Case Study: Closing the attainment gap  
Poverty Driver: Income from employment***

Since 2016 Highland children and young people affected by varying aspects of poverty outlined in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation have benefitted from targeted support in school. Funded by the Scottish Government and supported by an Attainment Advisor the Attainment Challenge has sought to address inequity caused by income, health, employment, housing, access to services, crime and education.

In closing the equity gap schools are addressing literacy and numeracy attainment of children and young people most affected by poverty and deprivation. Interventions have included increasing management time to support practitioner practice and literacy and numeracy development, the appointment of literacy and numeracy development officers to provide bespoke advice, guidance and training for senior managers, teachers and support staff and the identification of programmes and resources that schools can use to reduce the attainment gap. Schools are able to show positive progress through measuring attainment levels for all aspects of literacy and numeracy for targeted cohorts of pupils.

188 PEF plans are in place across Highland schools and all have different interventions based on identified needs. Health and wellbeing is an important factor in most of the plans, and go hand in hand with improving literacy and numeracy skills. Some schools have provided targeted support by bringing in additional manpower and this represents about 60% of the funding. The remainder is focused on partner services or additional learning resources, with some schools providing clothing (such as wellies and outdoor clothing), one school looking at providing High Life Highland (HLH) membership and others paying for school trips to give all children the opportunity to take part in experiences that they may not have had the opportunity to attend normally.

## **Costs of living**

During 2018/19, a range of activity can be identified which would support children and families by providing support around the costs of living. This is across a range of areas including maximising incomes through access to specific funds for those on low income, through specific schemes to support families with childcare and food hunger and through provision to support families access work and leisure through improved transport.

**Maximising support:** agencies across Highland have been promoting access to a range of entitlements for families such as the Healthy Start Vitamin roll out which aims to improve health, education maintenance allowance to enable young people to remain in full time education and access to and take up of free school meals. A scheme is also in place to provide leisure activities through low or no costs to families on low incomes in order to promote access. There are also specific funds in place to support families in crisis through both the Scottish Welfare Fund, and through a specific hardship fund to support childcare.

**Money +:** this ESF funded project reaches out to families through school, early years or community settings and provides money management, financial inclusion and income maximisation advice and support to families with children who are identified as being at risk of or experiencing poverty across Highland.

**Affordable childcare and food:** third sector groups across Highland are being supported to develop a range of holiday provision and playschemes and others that focus on providing food during the holidays. Community food stops, for the whole community, are also being developed in certain communities. The Young Scot attainment project has targeted specific vulnerable communities across Highland and supported young people with a range of measures from free targeted school breakfasts, leisure membership, to spending credit for sportswear and equipment and food outwith schools.

**Fuel Poverty:** fuel poverty is one of the greatest challenges facing many homes across Highland. Under the new definition, a third of households across Highland are classed as being in fuel poverty. The partnership Affordable Warmth group has a range of targeted actions to mitigate the impact of fuel poverty including delivering national schemes to improve energy efficiency of housing and deliver support and advice services to vulnerable households to make homes warmer, reduce bills, debt and maximise income.

**Case Study: Money + Project**  
**Poverty Driver: Cost of Living**

An ESF funded project, Highland Council's Money+ Project offers financial inclusion, money management and debt support to families with children in nursery or primary school. Provided through a network of dedicated CAB workers based in Caithness, Lochaber, Nairn, Ross & Cromarty and Inverness, this is a preventative service promotion through schools and early years settings in order to normalise the provision of this type of advice and reduce stigma. However Money + also targets promotion in areas of deprivation to maximise benefit to families in need.

Money+ workers assist families with all aspects of financial health. This can include helping families to source the best deals in energy, carrying out benefit checks to see if they would be better off working different hours, ensuring they have applied for all benefits and entitlements they can such as Free School Meals and Clothing Grants, supporting them to access debt management or debt relief options or assisting them to apply for assistance with childcare costs.

The project also raises awareness of the pressures facing low income families currently and to promote a culture of routine enquiry about money and referrals for support. Families with young children who are in poverty or are materially deprived are a target group for Money+ as are lone parents. This directly supports the target groups set out in the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Guidance.

**Case Study: Young Scot Attainment Project**  
**Poverty driver – Cost of living**

A partnership project between Young Scot, Highland Council and High Life Highland, the Young Scot Attainment Project began in August 2018. The project is funded by the Scottish Government Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund and works with the four attainment challenge schools in Highland: Inverness High, Alness Academy, Invergordon Academy and Wick High School.

The schools and High Life Highland Youth Development Officers work together to target young people in S1-3 who would benefit from support and were;

- In receipt of free school meals
- Living in an area of high deprivation
- Facing significant barriers to good health and wellbeing
- Facing significant barriers to accessing leisure activities
- Care experienced OR young carer OR young offender OR disengaged with education (low attendance at school)

- Or a sibling of young person with the above criteria

Selected young people were offered access to free entitlements loaded onto digital cards. The project employed 4 (2 FTE) fixed Modern Apprentices as Assistant Youth Workers in these areas to support young people to access these free services with any barriers they may have to taking up these entitlements. Free entitlements provided included:

- Free school breakfasts
- Free High Life Highland Membership
- Credit on digital cards to purchase food outside school hours in Wick and Inverness at High Life Highland venues
- Credit to purchase sportswear and equipment

It is expected that in addition to providing young people with access to food and leisure costs alleviating financial pressure this project will also have an impact on attainment through improved attendance and health and wellbeing for the young people involved.

## **Income from social security and benefits in kind**

Maximising family incomes by ensuring they are receiving all benefits and funds they are entitled to is one of the ways identified as mitigating the effects of poverty. There are core services across Highland, specifically through the Council and CAB network, which aim to support families to do this.

**Maximising income:** the CAB network and Council's welfare team provide an income maximisation service to support people to receive all entitlements. In addition, specific schemes are delivered in Highland to increase household incomes including increasing the clothing grant to £140 per year, above the national recommended amount, and the Inverness winter fuel payment scheme for low income households in the Inverness area. The Council has introduced the Apply Once scheme, which enables families to apply only once but that they will be checked for 11 possible entitlements.

### ***Case Study: Clothing Grants***

### ***Poverty driver – Income from social security and benefits in kind, cost of living***

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 gives the education authority a duty to make provision for the clothing of pupils who would, otherwise, be unable to take full advantage of the education provided at schools under its management. Local

authorities are responsible for setting the criteria for assessing school clothing grants, for deciding on the grant amount and for the application process.

During 2018/19 the Council awarded over 4,000 school clothing grants (£140 per grant) with an overall budget of £565,000.

The Council's decision to increase the grants by the maximum subsidy given by the Scottish Government from £90 to £140 per grant reflects our commitment to supporting families on the lowest income. This measure will directly improve income for families with children on a low income and supports families who may otherwise struggle to obtain school uniforms and participate fully in the child's school day.

### ***Case Study: Apply Once***

#### ***Poverty driver – Income from social security and benefits in kind***

The Council introduced a high quality, accessible, customer-centric model, creating a generic gateway to all council entitlements, whilst also reducing cost and generating additional income. In tandem with a modern digital first agenda, the model is complemented by a strong commitment to localism, retaining the traditional contact channels and offering the customer choice. The delivery model has improved service for customers, whilst also contributing over £1million to the council's savings target and generating additional income of over £2.14million. A single application to any Council administered benefit provides a customer 'health check', ensuring they receive all they are entitled to.

Apply Once will have a direct benefit to families with children on a low income as when they make an enquiry or an application for one benefit such as for council tax reduction they will be automatically assessed for free school meals, clothing grants, housing benefit, single adult rebate and education maintenance allowance. Repeat applications for benefit for free school meals will not be necessary so long as the family remain on the qualifying benefit. This helps to ensure that all Highland Council entitlements are maximised for families on a low income.

## **Targeting support**

Many of the actions and services provided across Highland aim to reduce poverty across all groups affected. However, there is recognition that certain groups are more vulnerable some of which relate to one or more protected characteristic such as gender and age. Therefore targeted approaches and schemes have been developed in order to provide specific support to key groups. This includes:

- supporting parents with dependent children to prepare for, secure and progress in employment
- through the Money + scheme, target lone parents, who are mostly women, to provide financial advice, money management and maximisation of incomes
- through the Move On project, supporting families who may face barriers to the labour market due to disability, ill health and childcare responsibilities
- supporting care experienced young people to access employment and employability advice. This has included community benefits identified through the Furnishing Service framework agreement including sustainable work experience programme relating to furniture installation and warehousing.
- through midwives and Citizens Advice, supporting pregnant women to maximise entitlements through a mixture of self and direct referral. This was mainstreamed in the last Advice and information contract and midwives refer to both the CABx providers and Council's Welfare Support Team
- Family Teams refer young people they are engaged with to Welfare Support Team for support to claim benefits

### **Section 3: What are we planning to do to address Child Poverty in 2019/20**

Having reviewed the wide range of interventions and actions currently being undertaken across Highland to reduce child poverty, the partnership has recognised the need to develop an outcomes framework which is centred on the needs and experiences of children, young people and their families. This framework will be developed around three key outcomes:

#### **Outcome 1**

Families with children have access to services, support and advice required to ensure their household income is maximised and quality of their lives are improved

#### **Outcome 2**

Children, young people and their families have the knowledge, skills and opportunity to maximise their potential

#### **Outcome 3**

Highland has strong and resilient communities that are supported to develop local approaches to address poverty

Performance management with clearly articulated measures will be developed for each of the key outcomes.

This framework will form the basis of a review of both the integrated children's service plan (For Highlands Children 5) and the HOIP poverty delivery plan. The actions and activities identified in Appendix 1, where appropriate, will feature in these plans.

The following areas for action have been identified for addressing child poverty during 2019/20. These are grouped under the key outcomes identified above.

## **Outcome 1**

**Families with children have access to services, support and advice required to ensure their household income is maximised and quality of their lives are improved**

### ***Implementation of early learning and childcare 1140 hours***

An area for targeted action during 2019/20 is the implementation of 1140 hours of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds and vulnerable two year olds. This will include:

- a review of early years' services to support the programme to ensure that every 2, 3 and 4 year old in Highland can access their entitlement of 1140 hours of funded childcare August 2020
- ensuring that the principles of quality, flexibility, affordability and accessibility are met, the Council with partners will deliver a more efficient and effective service, including specialist support, and ensure that savings can be generated as a result
- a further action will consider flexible models of childcare, particularly for rural areas

### ***Cost of the school day***

A key action for 2019/20 is to support schools to better understand the implications of the cost of the school day. This will support schools to better understand the challenges and impact upon families and consider this within school life. This links to the wider action about promoting awareness and understanding of child poverty within professional and community groups. Further detail on this action is presented below.

### ***Embedding referral pathways***

Further embedding referral pathways is a core activity targeted for further action during 2019/20. This builds on work already in place led by the Council's Welfare team which has supported referral paths between NHS staff, the Council's Welfare Support Team and the DWP. 2019/20 will see a focus on:

- embedding financial referral pathways into school practices. A referral pathway toolkit is intended to be produced as part of a suite of resources for teachers and school staff alongside Cost of the School Day and poverty awareness training.
- THC and NHSH continuing to work together to engage with individuals through a range health settings. Monthly, fortnightly or weekly patient welfare and money sessions are beginning in 6 GP practices across Highland with a view to evaluating before developing further.

- developing links with community mental health teams with a view to ensuring those accessing their services are signposted
- recognising that in-work poverty may affect staff in any organisation. A pilot awareness session is planned in a large NHSH setting to identify if staff and patients are likely to engage within this setting. The partnership includes NHS Highland, The Highland Council, Citizens Advice Bureau and Home Energy Scotland. The findings from the pilot will be reviewed before further developing the work

### ***Impact of Disability related Child Poverty***

A key action is to better understand disability related poverty in Highland, including households with disabled children and those with disabled parents/carers. We will work with Highland Children's Forum and Inclusion Scotland on this.

### ***For Highland's Children 5***

Develop a refreshed integrated children's services plan which develops a number of revised themes, one of which is 'Child poverty and inequality'. This will focus on families on low income, children 0-5, parents /carers, families on a low income or families who are out of work or struggling with unexpected debt or changes such as loss of work/illness and people seeking training and employment opportunities.

### **Outcome 2**

**Children, young people and their families have the knowledge, skills and opportunity to maximise their potential**

### ***Addressing the poverty related attainment gap***

A series of actions are planned to address the poverty related attainment gap.

These include:

- Implementation of a new educational improvement approach with the aim of improving educational outcomes for children. A core focus on leadership, collaborative learning, training and peer support in key areas including inclusion, rights and equalities, ASN and early intervention
- Scoping opportunities for working with the Northern Alliance on understanding the poverty related attainment gap
- A review of spend and outcomes in order to understand the impacts of the Pupil Equity Funding

### **Rapid rehousing**

Highland Council has developed a 5 year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP). The plan incorporates intended measures the Highland Council will take to make significant changes to our approach to homelessness and Temporary Homeless Accommodation in line with the recommendations of the Scottish Government's Homeless and Rough Sleeping Action Group.

The Action Plan commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and builds upon much of the Council's previous work around Homeless Prevention. Key themes of the Plan include: development and implementation of a Housing First approach; transformation of Temporary Homeless Accommodation to reduce use of Private Rented Sector HMO accommodation; development of a closer working relationship with the Private Rented Sector and a review of The Highland Housing Register Allocations Policy.

Implementation of the plan is partly determined on the extent to which Highland is successful in receiving funding from the Scottish Government's *Ending Homelessness Together Fund* however delivery of the Plan will have a positive impact on the cost of living for individuals and families through lower cost but better quality temporary accommodation provision and a reduced duration of stay in temporary accommodation by homeless households. The Plan will also allow faster access to good quality affordable settled accommodation for homeless households.

### **Living Wage**

NHS Highland and the Council are Living Wage employers. Since April 2015 the Council has applied the Local Government Scottish Living Wage rate to all Highland Council employees including apprentices. The real Living Wage is an hourly rate which is set independently by the Living Wage Foundation, on an annual basis and calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. NHS Scotland is a Living Wage employer, and as such, the lowest available wage of £17,944 translates into an hourly rate of £9.17 per hour which is above the Scottish Living Wage rate of £9.00 per hour.

The Poverty Alliance highlights the importance of paying the living wage in terms of its impact on increasing the wages of the lowest paid employees and reducing the level of in-work poverty. Given the challenges in Highland regarding low wages compounded by seasonal employment and the higher costs of food, fuel, housing and transport, payment of the real living wage can have a positive impact.

The Council is working towards becoming an Accredited Living Wage employer. This involves making a commitment to pay all directly employed staff the real living wage rate and to ensure that all contracted staff who work regularly on the Council premises are paid the living wage and undertake to encourage contractors to pay the real Living Wage through our procurement processes. Work is ongoing check

contractor and subcontract staff pay rates to satisfy the accreditation and the aim is to become accredited during 2019/20.

### ***Children's rights approach to understanding poverty***

During 2019 integrated children's service planning will be developed to incorporate a rights led approach to understanding and responding to the needs of children and young people. Combined with embedding trauma informed relationship based approaches across services there will be opportunities to understand how psychological wellbeing and an internal sense of safety underpins learning.

The Highland Council currently uses the child wellbeing indicators set out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 20142014 Act – Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included (SHANARRI) and which are recognised to support the implementation of children's rights in practice. Children's Services within the Council are reviewing a recently revised Scottish Governments Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) template and guidance produced by the Scottish Government with the intention of implementing the process in the future.

### **Outcome 3**

#### **Highland has strong and resilient communities that are supported to develop local approaches to address poverty**

### ***Food insecurity***

An area for development during 2019/20 is the focus on food insecurity and holiday hunger. This includes:

- Exploring holiday provision linked to childcare and food – a pilot programme, Milton Holiday Hub, will operate over the summer of 2019, with the aim of providing food to children who are likely to be experiencing food insecurity. The Hub will provide hot meals, childcare and activities for up to 24 children per day between the ages of 3 and 12 years old. The pilot provides a practical response to food insecurity in the holiday periods in an area of rural deprivation but is also being used as a test of change to explore better co-ordination of childcare, holiday hunger clubs and out of school care during holiday periods. The pilot's concept was founded on the recommendations of the Poverty and Inequality Commissions advice on poverty in the school holidays. The pilot seeks to use a place-based approach to tackling the issues many in this area experience around rural isolation and deprivation for families with children and the wider community.

- Implementation of Food+ project which aims to support local communities to provide food plus an activity that a family can engage. Further detail on this action is presented below.

### ***Organisational and community awareness raising of poverty***

During 2019/20 the CPP will work with the Poverty Alliance as Get Heard partners in order to better understand lived experience of child poverty. This will help to inform the partnership child poverty action report for 2020.

Raising awareness of poverty and inequality across our communities and organisations is essential to support community-based action and approaches to overcoming stigma and addressing poverty. The CPP will take part of Challenge Poverty week to help support this approach.

Whilst a range of organisations have contributed to the 2019 child poverty action report, a further action will be to broaden and strengthen partnership working in this area across a range of organisations and community groups.

#### ***Action Case Study***

##### ***Food insecurity & holiday hunger – Food+***

##### ***Poverty driver – Cost of living, Income from social security and benefits in kind***

Highland Council has applied to the European Social Funds Poverty and Social Inclusion Fund to continue and develop the work of our two streams currently; Money+ and Move On.

The phase two application specifically focuses on provision to address food insecurity. The aim is provide grant funds to small community led groups or community led services who wish to provide food to families with children outside of school term time hours in areas of identified need.

Holiday hunger and the absence of free school meals for many families on a low income causes financial and emotional strain and impacts on children's overall health and wellbeing. It is intended to support local communities to provide food plus an activity that a family can engage in also. Food+ activities will be free, inclusive and open to anyone in the particular community.

Providing food and free activities for families with children will have a direct impact on cost of living for families on a low income. The aim is also to ensure these groups are offered support with income maximisation and financial health through Money+ which in turn will impact on income from social security drivers also.

### **Action Case Study**

#### ***Cost of the School Day: Raising awareness of poverty in schools***

##### ***Poverty driver – Cost of living***

A key focus for 2019/20 is on the cost of the school day. Highland Council is preparing to ensure that all schools in Highland will have access to the Cost of the School Day toolkit and support from the beginning of the Autumn term 2019. Meeting school costs such as activities, equipment and trips can place pressures on low income families and mean that some children are unable to participate fully in the school day causing exclusion and stigma for these children.

Support through online resources will assist schools to:

- Ensure equal access to opportunities at school and remove barriers to learning and participation for children and young people from low income households
- Minimise opportunities for poverty stigma and exclusion amongst children and young people
- Reduce the pressures which school costs place on low family incomes and support families to access financial entitlements and maximise their incomes

## ***Monitoring and Reporting***

The legislation requires that Local Authorities and Health Boards jointly prepare an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report which sets out activities that have been undertaken in the local authority area during the previous year to reduce child poverty and contribute to the delivery of the national targets and any planned future activities that are planned.

Addressing child poverty is the responsibility of a wide range of agencies and bodies across Highland and the strength in our approach is collective and collaborative action. For effective governance of this plan, this report will be reported and monitored through the Highland Community Planning Partnership and the two agencies tasked with delivering this report annually, namely, The Highland Council and NHS Highland.

This plan will be monitored and reported taking regard of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC,) is the most complete statement of children's rights and the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history. The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status. The Convention must be seen as a whole; all the rights are linked and no right is more important than another.

There are four articles that underpin our approach to monitoring this plan they are;

### **Article 3 (best interests of the child)**

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

### **Article 6 (life, survival and development)**

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

### **Article 26 (social security)**

Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

### **Article 27 (adequate standard of living)**

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

The actions contained in this report are monitored through a range of individual organisational and partnership plans. Many of the actions from this plan will be driven forward through the revised Integrated Children's Service Plan (For Highland's Children 5) which from 2019 will have a specific theme on poverty and inequality but also the Council's Poverty and Inequality Working Group plan and the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan Delivery Group on Reducing Poverty. As noted at the start of section 3, areas for action will focus on the achieving the delivery of the 3 key outcomes identified.

This report will be refreshed annually and reflect the areas identified for action along with the ongoing activity to address child poverty in Highland.

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**Appendix 1**

**Actions Taken to Address Child Poverty 2018/19**

Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
<p>Money + Project</p> <p>New service to parents and carers with children in Early Years and Primary School across Highland.</p> <p>Provision provided in partnership with schools, Citizens Advice and Community settings and works to promote financial inclusion and reduce stigma in accessing services related to money.</p>	HC, Care & Learning, Citizens Advice Bureau in Highland	Project funded by, ESF Poverty and Social Inclusion and matched funded by Highland Council	Cost of living, Income from social security and benefits in kind.	No of families registered on the project and outcomes achieved such as individuals with improved money management skills.	Began August 2017 - to end June 2019 and possibly extended dependant on funding	Lone parents (primarily women), families on a low income or families who are out of work.
Tenancy management – assisting households to access financial advice, support & benefits	Highland council , RSLs	Scottish Government funding; loans, tenants rents.	Cost of living, income from social security	No. of households in arrears & level of arrears	Service Plan 2019	Low income households

Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Move On Project  A new project which targets disadvantaged individuals and families who may be facing a number of life challenges and as a result have difficulties engaging with public or third sector services.	Highland Council & NHS	Project funded by, ESF Poverty and Social Inclusion and matched funded by Highland Council	Cost of living, income from employment, social security and benefits in kind.	No of registered individuals who obtain improved outcomes such as commencing vocational training, removal of debt as a barrier, and better money management	Project start up was July 2018 with an end date of August 2020, with project run down to be extended until 2021 depending on funding.	Workless, Lone Parent or Low Income (Employed)
Homelessness / Housing Options Service	Highland Council RSLs, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector, Health, PRS	Existing HC Homeless Resources	Cost of Living	-No of homeless households -Temp Accom Use -Time taken to discharge homeless duty -Levels of rent arrears in temp accommodation.	Service Plan	Homeless / threatened with homeless households

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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Highland Affordable Warmth Action Plan  HAWPG Members  Highland Council Home Energy Scotland Energy Saving Trust Changeworks East Sutherland Energy Advice Service (Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust) , NHS Highland Energy Action Scotland Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association Citizens Advice Scotland	Highland Affordable Warmth Partners Group (HAWPG)	From existing of Highland Affordable Warmth Partners Group (HAWPG)	Cost of Living	Delivery of services to help make homes warmer, reduce bills, reduce debt and maximise income.  Delivery of national schemes to improve the energy efficiency of housing, and support those who struggle to keep warm who worry about their fuel bills.	Ongoing	Vulnerable households and households on a low income
			Cost of living,		Ongoing	

Supporting community groups to provide out of school clubs, holiday play schemes etc. by providing training, funding advice	Tenant Participation Officers	Tenants rents, external funding	income from employment (childcare access)	No. of children attending		Open to all but highest uptake from low income households
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Increase in funded ELC hours from 600 to 1140 hours for all eligible 2s and 3 and 4 year olds from August 2020	HC Care and Learning, Estates, Finance, Partner providers. (Private and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector) incl. commissioned childminders.	Funded by the Scottish Government	Cost of living, Income from employment (availability of vc childcare)	No's of eligible children projected rolls, no's of places available, where the places are available, where settings are expanding prior to August 2020.	August 2020. Early implementer sites currently. Began August 2018, more planned for August 2019/ January 2020	2 year old funding is specifically aimed at families on certain benefits. All families will be able to access the 3 and 4 year old entitlement but those on low income will benefit the most.
Young Scot Attainment Project  Free (targeted) school breakfasts, HLH leisure membership, spending credit	Young Scot Attainment Team and Highland Council	Project funded by SG SAC fund	Cost of living	Ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Uptake, usage, feedback . Use of Young Scot	Entitlements began Aug 2018 – to continue until June 2019.	Target groups of young people inc S1-S3 FSM, those living in areas of high deprivation, those disengaged with

for sportswear and equip, food outside school (Wick)	Four attainment challenge schools in Highland	Entitlements to continue until 30 June 2019		National Entitlement Card		education and facing barriers to attainment.
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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Increase the number of Care Experienced Young People in the workforce	Highland Council, Economy and Regeneration (Employability) team.	Highland Council revenue (plus Scot Govt. and ESF if/as appropriate)	Income from employment	Number of Care Experienced Young People progressing from negative to positive destinations (i.e. either work, training, education).  Baseline: 2019/20	New approach to Family Firm function, April 2019	Care Experienced Young People (Looked After and Accommodated)
Support parents to prepare for, secure and progress in employment	Highland Council, Economy and Regeneration	Highland Council revenue (plus UK Govt., Scot	Income from employment	Number of parents with dependent	Linked to new Local Employability Model	Families on low income and in receipt of qualifying benefits

	(Employability) team and external partners	Govt. , ESF if/as appropriate)		children supported	being developed/rolled out in collaboration with Scot Govt and local partners	
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Support disengaged young people to prepare for and access employment	HC Economy & Regeneration team and external partners	HC revenue (plus UK Govt., Scot Govt. , ESF if/as appropriate)	Income from employment	Number of disengaged young people supported	As above.	Young people who have left school but who are disengaged from work, education or training
Provide Stepping Stones parenting group	CEYP's from Early Years team	Resourced within existing team provision	Cost of living, income from employment (childcare)	Attendance and ongoing enrolment at local nurseries / take up of early nursery provision	Ongoing	Delivered within area of high deprivation (top 5% in Scotland)
Healthy Start Vitamin roll out	Highland Council and NHS Early Years Team	Within existing team provision Healthy Start is a UK-wide	Cost of living	Improvement in health of low income families Uptake of vitamins	Commenced October 2018	Scheme to improve the health of low-income pregnant women and families

		government scheme				on benefits and tax credits.
Free School Meals (P4-S6)	Highland Council Revenues & Customer Services	Resourced Scottish Government	Cost of living	Policy development and operational delivery	Current – ongoing	Households on a low income, out of work or in receipt of UK, SG or THC administered benefits.

Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Development of integrated (or aligned) impact assessment incorporating Fairer Scotland Duty	HC Policy team	From existing HC resource	Income from employment , Cost of living, Income from social security	Integrated (or aligned) impact assessment will help identify likely socio-economic impacts, inequalities of outcome and potential measures of change on deprived areas or community groups	By end 2019	Strategic approach to plans and decisions rather specific service or project
Increase of School Clothing Grant	Highland Council	Resourced from HC	Cost of living,	Measurement of no of families in	Increase implemente	

From £90 to £140 per academic year per pupil.	Revenue & Customer Services	Revenue Budget plus Scottish Government additional funding.	income from social security	receipt of Clothing Grants since increase.  2017/18: = 3,744 awards at £90	for academic year 2018 / 2019.	Families on a low income & in receipt of qualifying benefits.
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
External Advice and Information Services	Highland Council Revenue & Customer Services	HC Service Funded from Revenue Budget.	Cost of living, Income from social security and benefits in kind.	Number of customers reached in 2017/18 for benefit and debt advice: 13,877	Current – ongoing Provided via a Highland-wide contract with Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).	Households on a low income, out of work or in receipt of UK, SG or THC administered benefits.
Education Maintenance Allowance	Highland Council		Cost of living	Measurement of no of	Current – ongoing	

	Revenues & Customer Services	Resourced Scottish Government		households in receipt of EMA.  2017/18: = 827 awards		Eligible young people 16-19 yrs. Old in low income households.
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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Inverness Winter Fuel Payments	HC, Benefits & Welfare Manager	Funded from Inverness Common Good Fund	Cost of living, income from social security	Those eligible receive a single annual payment of £81 to assist with fuel costs during the winter months.  2017/18: 1,387 households received payments.	19/20 scheme opens Dec 19	Households on a low income, out of work or in receipt of UK, SG or THC administered benefits.
Scottish Welfare Fund	Highland Council Revenues & Customer Services	Programme spend for customers funded by Scottish Government.	Cost of living.	A framework is in place for the supply, delivery, installation and disposal of second hand	Current – ongoing	Households on a low income, out of work or in receipt of UK, SG or THC administered benefits.

		Administration part funded by Scottish Government / HC		and recycled domestic furniture.  SWF 2017/18: Crisis Grants: Awarded 3,287 Community Care Grants: Awarded 1,718		
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Apply Once	Highland Council Revenues & Customer Services	Service funded	Income from social security and benefits in kind.	The council's online form. Customers enter basic personal details once only to establish 11 possible available entitlements.  In 2017/18, 52% of applications for council entitlements were made online.	Current – ongoing	Households on a low income, out of work or in receipt of UK, SG or THC administered benefits.

Easter Playscheme  Provision of free meals to tackle holiday hunger.	Coulhill Primary School with support from Highlife Highland Youth Team.	Project funded by MFR – Cash for kids and Alness Community Windfarm Trust	Cost of living	Feedback from parents and children. No of beneficiaries.	This Easter Holidays 2019  Application for further funding pending.	The Playscheme was open to all pupils from Primary 1 – 7 at Coulhill Primary. All families were therefore supported.
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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Highland Council Welfare Support Team:  Ongoing administration of benefits, provision of advice and information, income maximisation and welfare policy.	Highland Council Revenues & Customer Services	HC Service Funded from Revenue budget– in 2017/18	Income from social security and benefits in kind.	Number of customers reached in 2017/18: 3,713  Activities include lobbying on behalf of Highland; e.g. the increased SWF resource from the SG and partnerships such as with NHS, providing Income Maximisation	Current – ongoing	Households on a low income, out of work or in receipt of UK, SG or THC administered benefits.

				advice to people experiencing addictions.		
MFR Cash4Kids  Provision of free uniform packs, funding for holiday hunger clubs, support for costs for families with additional needs on a low income.	MFR Cash4 Kids (Moray Firth Radio)	MFR Cash4kids	Cost of living	No of referrals from trusted professionals	Ongoing	All Highland families by referral and on a low income.
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Provision of low or no cost family leisure and learning opportunities	High Life Highland (HLH) archives, museums and arts services	Core service delivery funded	Cost of living	Number of service users	Current and ongoing	Families
Provision of training and work placement opportunities, supporting people into or back into employment	HLH archives, museums and arts services in conjunction with third sector partner organisations	Core service delivery funded	Income from employment	Number of participants; tracking where possible destinations	Current and ongoing	Those struggling to enter or re-enter the workplace
#Openingdoors	CALA Family Nurse Partnership	Previous funding from Young Start for 3 years	Income from employment	We report at the end of every year on the exit pathways of	Currently applying for new funding source.	Young people, adults and their dependants/families.

Young people aged 16-24 and adult returners to work or career changers	SDS DYW DWP Shirlie ProjectBarnardos THC Activity Agreements	established the project but we have self funded this year in order to deliver provision for mentees aged 25+.		each mentee and track the progress of those who join our staffbank.		
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Hardship fund for Families struggling to pay childcare bills	CALA (Care and Learning Alliance)	Using own reserves or surplus	Cost of living, Income from employment (Childcare)	Evidence of families ability to continue to access childcare enabling employment etc. and repayment plans and signposted assistance for debts etc.	Ongoing	Families on a low income or families who are out of work or struggling with unexpected debt or changes such as loss of work/illness etc.
HM Prison Inverness – Peep Progression Pathway qualifications for fathers (and their partners)	CALA/THC and Inverness prison, Community Justice	Highland Community Justice partnership –	Income from employment	Completion the qualification unit guarantees the fathers an interview at the	Funding has ended but are actively seeking	Fathers who are or have been in prison

		Small Change for justice fund		local college when they leave.	further funding	
Support for Travelling Community –  Play opportunities for children who do not access any other type of learning opportunities such as toddler groups, ELC.	CALA, Interrupted Learning Teacher HC	HC SLA Funding	Cost of living, income from employment (childcare)	Number of children accessing opportunities.	Ongoing through SLA Funding.	Families on low income, Children 0-5, Parents /Carers
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
CALA Family Support Service –  Visits into the family home, support / referrals for finances, cooking etc.	CALA	HC SLA Funding	Cost of living	Number of parents accessing the services	Ongoing Funding through SLA	Families on low income, Children 0-5, Parents /Carers Families on a low income or families who are out of work or struggling with unexpected debt or changes such as loss of work/illness etc.
Sutherland Community Planning Partnership –	Sutherland CPP, transport sub group, 3 <sup>rd</sup>	HC, Police Scotland, Community Councils,	Cost of living, Income from	No of people accessing community transport, no of	2018 to present	Children and families on a low income, people seeking training and

Planned activities to coordinate, strengthen and improve access to community transport.	sector and CC's	Bradbury Centre	employment (transport)	volunteer minibus drivers trained.		employment opportunities.
Community Food Stop Project	Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, CALA, Volunteers, Keep Active Together	Scottish Government Fair Food Transformation Fund	Cost of living	No of families accessing food and play opportunities during term time and holiday periods.	Ongoing through Scottish Government funding	Families on a low income, in receipt of qualifying benefit and those identified in need.
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
TYKES (The Young Karers East Sutherland)	Sutherland CPP, Moray Firth Radio, HC, Sutherland CPP and others	Moray Firth Radio, HC, Sutherland CPP and others	Cost of living	No's supported with budgeting, food, vouchers and trips	Ongoing	Families in identified need locally.
NHS Outcome Focussed plan –	Welfare Reform – NHS Outcome Focused Plan	NHS Board,	Income from social security and benefits in kind	Self reporting, through Highland Outcome Improvement Plan of actions and impacts	Ongoing	Raises awareness of families on a low income.

Living Wage commitment for public sector workers in Highland	NHS, Highland Council and CP Partners across Highland	Funded from existing resources	Income from employment	Reported through Highland Outcome Improvement Plan	Ongoing	Lower paid workers in public and third sectors many of which are working families with children on a low income
Flexible working commitment  Aimed at supporting people into work with commitments to caring for children or others or those experiencing health inequalities.	NHS (Pin Policy) and Highland Council (Flexible working policy)	Support for flexible working and normalised flexible working / homeworking.	Cost of living (childcare) income from employment	No's of staff taking up opportunities	Ongoing	Staff with caring commitment, often families with children.
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Increase in Modern Apprenticeships offered	Highland Council, NHS & equivalent CPP Partners	Funded from existing resources –	Income from employment	No of modern apprenticeships offered across CPP	Ongoing	Aimed at low paid or low skilled workers, many of whom are young people with young families to improve employment and future opportunities for progression into better paid employment
Cross Highland partnership action –	NHS, Highland Council		Income from social	Increased referrals through	Ongoing	Aimed to low income families, particularly

<p>Strengthen referral pathways and imbed income maximisation into universal services such as GP Practices, schools and community settings.</p> <p>Development of routine enquiry around money and financial health by health, education and community staff.</p>	<p>(Welfare Support, Money+, early Years), CPP partners &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, DWP</p>	<p>Funded from existing resources</p>	<p>security and benefits in kind</p>	<p>NHS, HC, Heath Visitor routine enquiry changes, Money+ schools development.</p> <p>Development of referral pathway toolkits for universal services.</p>	<p>those affected by welfare reform, with children or experiencing health inequalities and low paid workers.</p>
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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Help to Claim Project	CABx service – over all 8 Highland CAB help to claim and support to first payment for first claims of Universal Credit. Free public WiFi in all CABx.	DWP funded	Cost of living; income from social security and benefits in kind.	No. of applications – including successful at first attempt and those requiring appeal. CFGs	Project 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019 to end March 2020 – hoping for extension for UC migration	Working age individuals and families who require to make a UC Claim
Financial Health Check Project	Available at all 8 Highland CABx – Clients offered income	SG funded	Cost of living, Income from social	Savings from switching suppliers/energy	Ongoing to September 2019 –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lone parent families</li> <li>• Families which include a disabled adult or child</li> </ul>

	maximisation; energy advice and benefit checks F2F or via phone.	security and benefits in kind	efficient actions – re Energy  Benefit Check CFGs Profile of Clients	possible extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger families</li> <li>• Minority ethnic families</li> <li>• Families with a child under one year old</li> <li>• Families where the mother is under 25 years of age</li> <li>• Older people and those approaching pension age</li> </ul>
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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
EU Settlement Project	Based at IBS CAB but available to all 8 Highland CABx – EU settlement adviser available to advise on level 1 OISC queries including re settlement for EU migrants	SG funded	Cost of living, income from social security and benefits in kind, income from employment	No. of applications for permanent residence made	1 year project to end March 2020 at present	EU migrants and their families

ASAP	Nairn and Inverness CAB have access to a holistic adviser to assist members of armed forces and their families (and formerly serving)	Poppy Scotland and Partners	Cost of living, income from social security and benefits in kind	Relevant stats via CASTLE case recording	Ongoing	Members of armed forces and their families (and formerly serving)
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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Promotion of HI Scot Credit Union  Increased access to affordable / fair credit and reduce the costs of debt	NHS, HC Welfare Support Team and CPP	From existing	Cost of living (enablers, access to credit, debts)	Increase in membership of HIScot credit union & accessing welfare advice services	Ongoing	Low income individuals and families who require access to affordable credit
Fuel poverty action – Highland Outcome Improvement Plan priorities	HC, NHS and CPP Planning Partners, Home Energy	From existing	Cost of living	Increased numbers of people accessing	Ongoing	Aimed at low income households and those in identified areas experiencing fuel poverty in Highland.

Cross Highland action by Community Planning Partners to tackle fuel poverty, costs of fuel and provide advice and support to families on a low income	Scotland, 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector advice			advice and support		
Food insecurity – emergency provisions	HC Welfare Support Team, NHS Highland Family Nurse Partnership	From existing (NHS) and HC Scottish Government resourced	Cost of living	No of families assisted	Ongoing	Any household experiencing food insecurity in Highland.
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Baby boxes Highland wide rollout	NHS, Family Nurse Partnership	From existing and Scottish Government	Cost of living	No of families assisted	Ongoing	Universal provision to families with children
Provision of poverty awareness training to staff across Highland CPP.  Through face to face training with schools, community staff by HC, NHS & online eLearning.	NHS, HC (Welfare Support team and Money+) NHS health Scotland VLE training	From existing	Cost of living, income from employment , social security and benefits in kind.	No of participants on training No of eLearning modules completed (NHS health Scotland VLE training)	Ongoing	Targeted at staff who deal with families who will be experiencing effects on poverty and welfare reform.

Training on understanding benefit changes, to managing finances and welfare reform.						
Promotion of Best Start Grant	HC (Welfare Support team, Early Years team and Money+), NHS Highland and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector advice providers. DWP and SG	From existing	Income from social security and benefits in kind.	Feedback and partnership working with SG.	Ongoing	Families with infants and young children in receipt of qualifying benefits.
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Promotion of Fair Start Scotland  Intensive employment support for parents	Calman Trust, Newstart Highland, NHS Highland	Existing	Income from employment	No of families using service	Ongoing	Parents on a low income.
<b>Attainment Gap</b>  • Pupil Equity Funding – Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap.	Head Teachers, Various Partner Services and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector, Highland	Scottish Government	Cost of Living	PEF plans, School Improvement plans, Local Authority	Ongoing	Children and young people affected by poverty. Although PEF funding is allocated on the basis of Free School meals, Head Teachers are to

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC funding)</li> </ul> <p>Other activities including: School Trips, Outdoor clothing, Access to Music Tuition, HLH activity programmes, Duke of Edinburgh Fees and Equipment, Travel/Transport to Activities, HLH membership, Breakfast Clubs, Summer/Easter Clubs. Creating Opportunities. Funding of Children's Services Workers</p>	<p>Council (Care &amp; Learning)</p> <p>Attainment Advisor (Highland)</p>			<p>National Improvement report.</p> <p>Scottish Attainment Challenge activity through partners, HC and SG</p> <p>Attainment Advisor &amp; Childrens Services Workers working with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners.</p>		<p>use their professional judgement to bring additional children into the interventions and approaches if they see fit.</p> <p>Attainment challenge Schools in Highland</p>
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Achieve sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people by collaborating across RIC to improve employability skills	Northern Alliance (RIC)	Described within Northern Alliance (RIC) improvement plan	Income from employment	As articulated in the Northern Alliance (RIC) plan	Updated in August 2020	Children and families on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Include actions articulated within 'Every child, every chance', The tackling Child Poverty Delivery plan 2018 – 2022 within Improvement Group Plans.	ASN improvement Group	As articulated in the ASN improvement group plan	Costs of living	As articulated in the ASN improvement group plan	By December 2019	Children and young people with protected characteristics

Ensure outcomes for children and young people with protected characteristics will be monitored and reported on regularly to inform best practice in providing support to them. This will include a number of specific actions themed around reducing inequalities including mitigating the poverty related adversity experienced by children and their families where there is disability in family.					
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Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Improve the transition for LAC in through-care and aftercare into adulthood.	Looked after children Improvement group	As articulated in Looked after children Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in Looked after children Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Improve educational outcomes for Care experienced Children & Young People	Looked after children Improvement group	As articulated in Looked after children Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in Looked after children Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Develop greater awareness of the needs of Young Carers,	Young Carers Improvement group	As articulated in Young Carers	Cost of living	As articulated in Young Carers	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and

across Highland, especially across schools.		Improvement group plan		Improvement group plan		employment opportunities.
Ensure ongoing consultation & engagement with young carers	Young Carers Improvement group	As articulated in Young Carers Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in Young Carers Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Ensure Child's Plans are used effectively to note both strengths and vulnerabilities in relation to young carers	Young Carers Improvement group	As articulated in Young Carers Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in Young Carers Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Reducing the number of children/young people with ASN, not in school or preschool full time.	ASN Improvement group	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
<b>Action</b>	<b>Who action is carried out by</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Poverty driver</b>	<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Timescale for action</b>	<b>Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.</b>
Ensuring better integrated working for children with complex health needs, especially those with exceptional health needs	ASN Improvement group	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Working with others to ensure effective transitions for pupils with ASN at all levels and particularly in the school-post school phase	ASN Improvement group	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.

Ensuring children/young people with ASN have good quality child's plans that support positive outcomes	ASN Improvement group	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in ASN Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Reduce attainment and achievement gaps in pupils with protected characteristics, including gender, sexual orientation, disability, race (deprivation, LAC and Young Carers)	Inequalities Improvement group	As articulated in Inequalities Improvement group plan	Income from employment	As articulated in Inequalities Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
We will meet the needs of children and families who have experienced interrupted learning. This includes Gypsy/Traveller and Roma Children, young carers, Children with ASN and children from military families	Inequalities Improvement group	As articulated in Inequalities Improvement group plan	Cost of living	As articulated in Inequalities Improvement group plan	Update May 2020	Young people on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Action	Who action is carried out by	Resources	Poverty driver	Measurement	Timescale for action	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst.
Online Resource to support Schools and ELC meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller children and families across Scotland.	HC – Care and Learning. STEP – Edinburgh University. Education representatives from small group of	Equalities funding via STEP	Pathways to employment	Schools will address and meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller children. Children and young people will have increased	Began April 2019 – ongoing depending on funding.	Gypsy and Traveller children and families.

	Scottish authorities.			attendance, attainment and positive destinations.		
Working towards the aspirations of the National improvement framework Improve employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.	Schools Improvement group	As articulated in Schools improvement plan	Income from employment	As articulated in Schools improvement plan	Update by May 2020	Children and families on a low income, people seeking training and employment opportunities.
Highland Violence Against Women Action Plan includes a range of activities intended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide interventions that promote safety &amp; wellbeing for women and children affected by VAWG</li> <li>Support parents &amp; carers to prevent VAWG</li> </ul>	Highland Violence Against Women Partnership	Partner resources	Cost of living, income from employment social security and benefits	Various	2018-21	Women and children, including lone parents (primarily women), families on a low income or women who are out of work.

**Child Poverty in Highland - by Ward**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Before Housing Costs</b>		<b>After Housing Costs</b>	
	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>% of children</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>% of children</b>
Highland	8239	16.6%	9773	20%
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>% of children</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>% of children</b>
Cromarty Firth Ward	612	21.4%	814	28%
Wick Ward	347	23.1%	411	27%
Inverness Central Ward	678	22.8%	785	26%
Tain and Easter Ross Ward	406	19.1%	510	24%
Fort William and Ardnamurchan Ward	421	18.5%	536	24%
Thurso Ward	244	16.7%	341	23%
East Sutherland and Edderton Ward	196	15.4%	275	22%
Eilean a'Cheo Ward	329	16.8%	415	21%
Dingwall and Seaforth Ward	509	15.7%	679	21%
Inverness West Ward	278	15.1%	373	20%
Badenoch and Strathspey Ward	376	13.7%	545	20%
North, West and Central Sutherland Ward	160	15.1%	208	20%
Landward Caithness Ward	390	16.7%	455	19%
Caol and Mallaig Ward	258	12.8%	377	19%
Inverness South Ward	795	21.4%	662	18%
Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward	276	13.9%	350	18%
Culloden and Ardersier Ward	457	15.1%	519	17%
Nairn Ward	315	14.5%	360	17%
Inverness Ness-Side Ward	368	14.6%	368	15%
Aird and Loch Ness Ward	377	14.2%	374	14%
Inverness Millburn Ward	238	13.7%	214	12%
Black Isle Ward	287	13.4%	235	11%