

Orkney Local Child Poverty Action Report 2019-2020

*Getting it right, for every child:
no child left out; no child left behind*



Foreword

Life in Orkney is often seen as a rural idyll. In January 2019, the annual Halifax Quality of Life survey reported Orkney as the best place to live in the UK, citing “cheap houses, low crime, good schools and a population who are among the happiest and healthiest in the country”. This perception, and the lack of visible poverty, can make it difficult to evaluate the true nature of the challenges which affect children and families living in Orkney, and put into effect the policy and practice necessary to address them.

Rural and island poverty has its own set of characteristics and presents its own set of unique challenges that may not be the uniform experience of poverty across Scotland. Rural households face an increased cost of living of between 10% to 30% more than children and families living in urban Scotland, and this premium is even higher in the smaller isles. However, struggling families are often less visible than in urban areas.

Some of the key issues in Orkney around the drivers of poverty are very specific to the islands and require targeted approaches based on this local context. In order to do this effectively the Local Authority and the NHS have needed a full complement of staff and the capacity to fully evaluate, determine and implement a holistic approach to tackling child poverty. Unfortunately, over the last two years, this has not been the case. It is hoped that recent recruitment will help stabilise this situation and allow partnership working to fully implement successful measures to tackle child poverty outcomes in the future.

Nevertheless, much has been done during 2019-20 to support children and families experiencing or at risk of poverty, both by the statutory agencies and by the many third sector agencies working in this field. In this report, we capture some of that activity and try to put into context the experiences of those for whom life in Orkney is sometimes less than idyllic.

Orkney Child Poverty Task Force
January 2021

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Introduction

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation defines poverty as:

“when a person’s resources are well below their minimum needs, including the need to take part in society.”

Measuring poverty accurately is difficult due to the factors that can impact on individual circumstances. A commonly used definition in Scottish and UK government policy is:

“someone is living in poverty when they live in a household with less than 60% of median income, adjusted for household size and type.”¹

Rates of poverty vary between different groups and there are some segments of the population that are more vulnerable than others. In Scotland, poverty is significantly highest among families with children. Mitigating the impacts of this and improving long term outcomes for these children, particularly in respect of educational attainment, is critical in addressing future levels of poverty. Within this, certain families will be more at risk of poverty, such as families with a disabled child or adult, lone parents, young mothers, larger families, and/or minority ethnic families.

The risk of poverty is much higher among people living in workless households than those where one or more adults are in work. Paying for housing, whether rent or mortgage payments, is the single biggest cost for many households. The cost of housing therefore has a significant impact on the resources that people have left over to meet their other needs.

Being in work is, however, no guarantee of protection from poverty. Many families in poverty are working, the issue being the scope to access employment which offers income to meet the needs of the family. Almost 1 in 4 children in Scotland (24%) were living in relative poverty in 2017/18. While the risk of poverty is higher for children who live in families where no adult is in paid employment, two thirds of children in relative poverty in Scotland live in families where at least one parent is working

While economic factors are often the primary determinant of individual or household poverty, these can also be underpinned or exacerbated by other dimensions of social inequality, such as differences in power and opportunities, as well as discrimination on the basis of gender, race, disability, age, sexuality or religion.

There are also complex but clear links between poverty and poor health outcomes. Health inequalities exist to varying degrees throughout Scotland. They are defined as unfair and avoidable differences in people’s health; across social groups and between different population groups (NHS Health Scotland 2015)². They represent thousands of unnecessary premature deaths every year in Scotland. The gaps between those with the best and worst health and wellbeing in Scotland still persist. A report published by the Joseph Roundtree Foundation in 2016³ told us that, across

¹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/poverty-costs-uk-£78-billion-year—jrf-report>

² <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1086/health-inequalities-what-are-they-how-do-we-reduce-them-mar16.pdf>

³ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/counting-cost-uk-poverty>

the UK, £29 billion is spent every year treating health conditions associated with poverty. This makes up 25% of all health spending.

For many people good health is difficult to achieve due to a range of factors. Some of these are outwith their control, with experiences and deprivation in early years persisting into adulthood. Nonetheless, behaviour change interventions, aligned to local interventions and supported by policy, can impact upon population health; for example, smoking interventions. Many of these programmes operate across the whole population but, where appropriate, the scale or intensity of those actions should be proportionate to need or disadvantage.

During 2019-20, Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland conducted a Critical Review of Rural Poverty & Social Exclusion with a focus on children and young people. CNS is a partnership which takes a place-based approach to improving outcomes for children, young people and their communities. The review report⁴ was published in November 2020 and will inform future national child poverty priorities.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

The intention of the Child Poverty Act is to 'set targets relating to the eradication of child poverty' as well as making provision for plans and reporting relating to achievement of these targets. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires the Scottish Government to meet four income based child poverty targets by 2030 and four interim income targets by 2023, and report on the actions they will take to meet those targets. In addition the Act places a duty on local authorities and health boards to report annually on what they are doing to contribute to reducing child poverty.

The targets state that by 2030, of children living in Scottish households:

- less than 10% should be living in relative poverty (how many families are on low incomes compared with middle income households)
- less than 5% should be living in absolute poverty (how many low income families are not seeing their living standards improving over time)
- less than 5% should be living with combined low income and material deprivation (how many lower income families cannot afford basic necessities)
- less than 5% should be living in persistent poverty (how many families live on low incomes three years out of four)

During 2013-2017, 17% of children in Scotland were living in persistent poverty, meaning they had lived in poverty for at least three out of the four years. Children within certain groups have been identified as being at higher risk of poverty, and these have been identified as 'priority groups' within the Scottish Government Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan; Every Child, Every Chance (2018-2022)⁵. The Delivery Plan focuses on three main drivers of poverty, which Local Authorities and Health Boards are required to take action against and report on each year.

⁴ <https://childrensneighbourhoods.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CYP-Rural-Review-02112020.pdf>

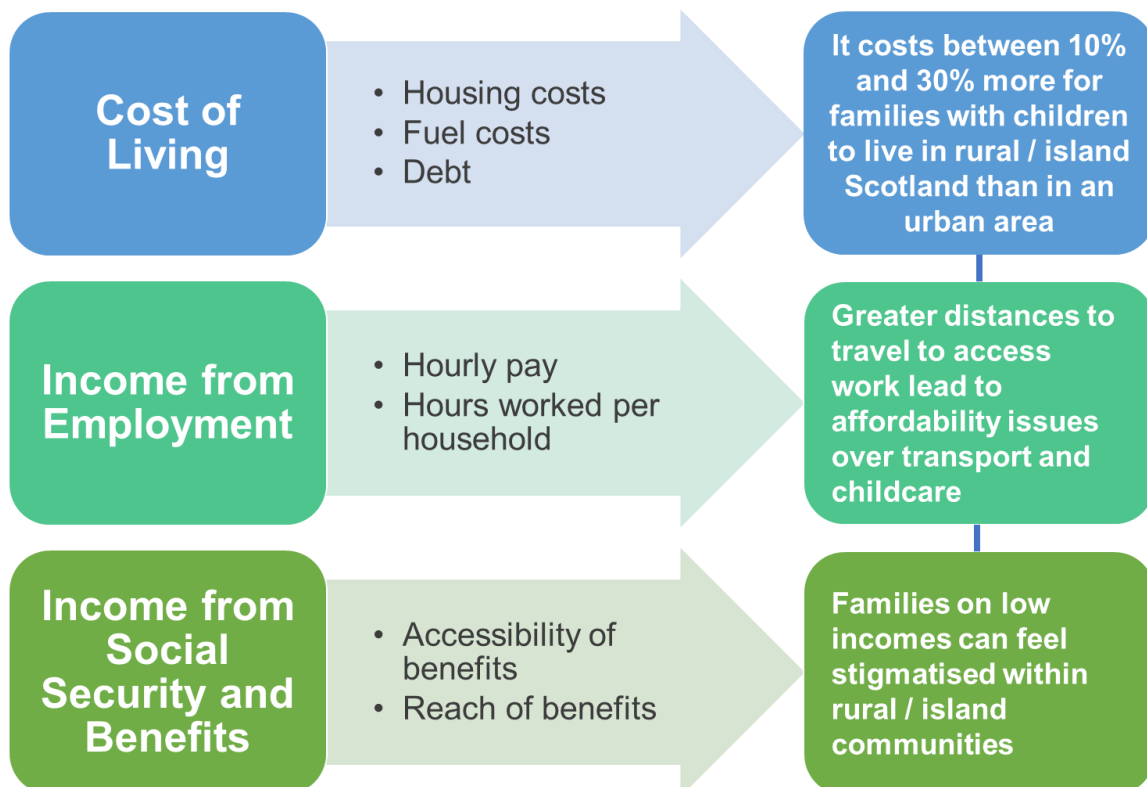
⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22>

The local child poverty action report must set out a range of commitments to address the key drivers of poverty:

- Increasing income through employment
- Maximise income from the social security system
- Reducing household costs

It is important while addressing these commitments to take into account the rural/island nature of Orkney and the specific issues that are therefore relevant to our local context, illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



Our approach has been to:

- Mitigate the barriers created by the additional cost of living
- Ensure that travel opportunities meet the needs of the whole community
- Work towards the expansion of Early Years Year's childcare from 600 to 1140 hours.
- Work in partnership with the community to reduce the perceived stigma of poverty
- Increase community participation and agency of children and young people

Priority groups

Nationally identified priority groups:

- Lone Parents
- Families where a member of the household is disabled
- Families with 3 or more children
- Minority ethnic families
- Families where the youngest child is under 1
- Mothers aged under 25

Locally identified priority groups:

In addition to the nationally identified priority groups, local partnership working has emphasised the need to include in our plans:

- Families and children with experience of the care system
- Families with children residing on the isles

Covid-19

As this report and future action plans are being written, we are in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic which is having an unprecedented impact on our country. The essential measures taken to mitigate against the risk of Covid-19 mean that families, children and young people at times in Orkney have not been as visible as usual to the people and services who would normally have a role in supporting them.

Many families are experiencing extensive challenges. These may include a loss of employment and financial insecurity and/or less support and protection with regard to pre-existing vulnerabilities such as domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use, and/or physical or mental health difficulties. This will undoubtedly place an additional strain on the families affected.

We know that these challenges will have a long term impact on families in Orkney. There have of course been some short term policy initiatives, such as money that was given to families to overcome food and fuel poverty as an immediate measure during the pandemic. These policy and multi-agency measures will be captured in our 2020-21 LCPAR.

The Joseph Roundtree Foundation, at the start of the first lockdown in March 2020, highlighted five essential actions to be taken by governments and other bodies if poverty were not to be severely exacerbated by Covid-19⁶:

- Fast and effective social security support
- Support for people in rented accommodation
- Increased local welfare assistance
- Help coping with utility bills
- Employer support for workers

We will monitor the effectiveness of these measures as implemented in Orkney and will use emerging data to inform our collaborative future action in response to tackling child poverty exacerbated by the pandemic.

⁶ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/what-does-covid-19-mean-people-restricted-poverty>

The impact of poverty on children and families in Orkney

Orkney and its islands are often seen as a rural idyll and much of the available data backs up this view, with consistently high satisfaction rates whenever people are interviewed regarding their quality of life on the islands. The lack of visible poverty can make it more difficult to evaluate the true nature of the problem and therefore the policy and practice necessary to mitigate effectively against its effects.

Rural and island poverty has its own set of characteristics and presents its own set of unique challenges that may not be the uniform experience of poverty across Scotland. Rural households face an increased cost of living between 10% to 30% more than children and families living in urban Scotland, and for those living on islands the premium can exceed 40%.⁷ This poverty is often less visible than in urban areas.

Some of the key issues in Orkney around the drivers of poverty are very specific to the islands and require targeted approaches based on this local context. In this section we look at some of the available data and interpret what it means for those living in Orkney. Much of this data is taken from the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) data bank and data definitions etc are available from that source.⁸

Judging by Figure 2 below, the number of children in low income families appears to be much lower than in the rest of Scotland. An important caveat is that figure 2 uses tax credit claims as a proxy for low income, but not every family on a low income will be claiming them. Orkney has high rates of self-employment and small business ownership, while agriculture and fishing make up a larger proportion of the economy than in most of Scotland. It is the nature of these businesses that household income can be uneven and unpredictable, making it more difficult for families to claim the benefits to which they might be entitled.

This data only goes up until 2016 and does not take housing costs into account, but given that housing costs in Orkney are lower than in much of Scotland, this would not account for the gap. Orkney's unemployment rate as of September 2019 was 1.3%, which was substantially lower than the rest of Highlands and Islands at 2.3% and the rest of Scotland at 3.2%. This is reflected in analysis of the economically active population in Orkney. The percentage of Orkney's population who are economically active, i.e. either in employment or actively seeking employment, tends to be consistently higher than the Scottish average. Additionally, whereas the Scottish trend appears to be on a gradual, slow decline, Orkney's is steadier by comparison.

Perhaps the key message to be drawn from Figure 2 is that poverty in Orkney may be less prevalent than in many parts of Scotland but that does not make it any less real for the families concerned. Where 11 out of 12 of your neighbours are doing OK, it is doubly difficult to be the only household struggling to get by.

⁷<https://www.hie.co.uk/media/6441/aplusminimumplusincomeplusstandardplusforplusremotepusruralplusscotlandplus-plusapolicyplusupdateplus2016.pdf>

⁸ https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/

Figure 2⁹

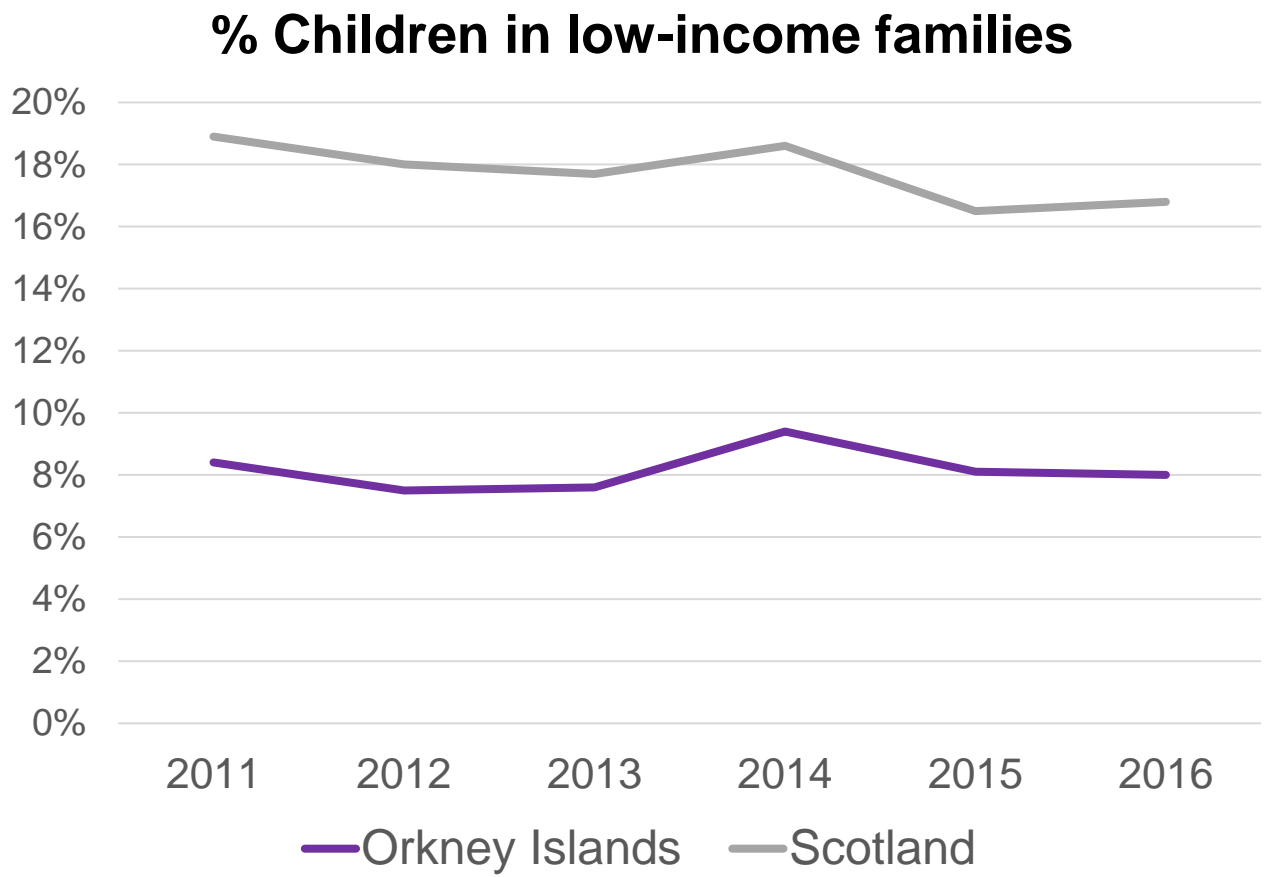
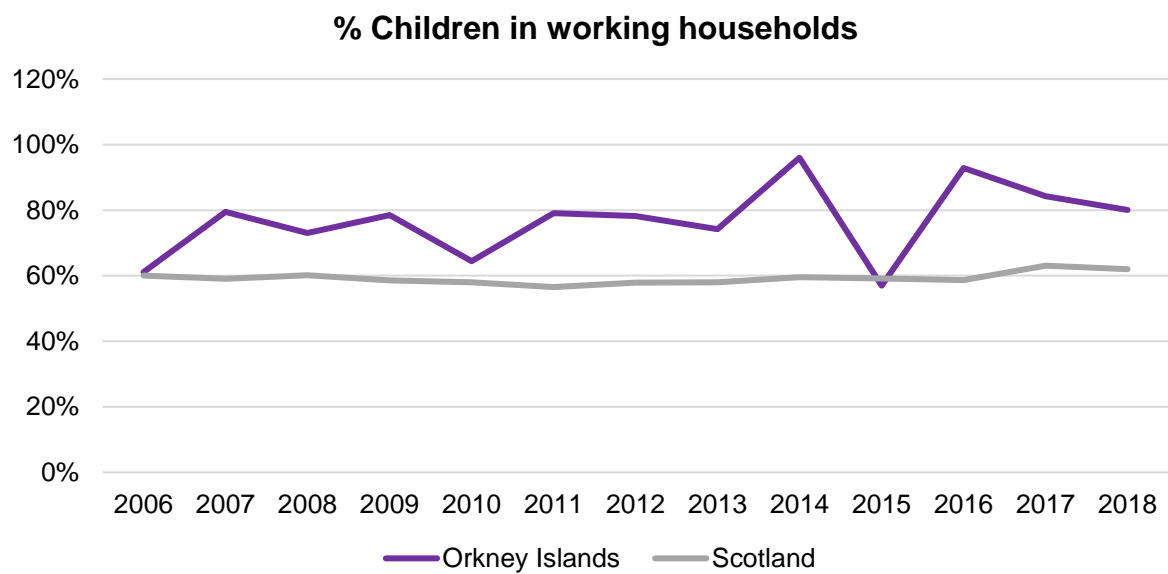


Figure 3



⁹ Figures 2-6, 10: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-statistics-december-2019/>

Figure 3 demonstrates a similar ambiguity as the percentage of children in working households is much higher than the Scottish average, but this masks the reality that many of these households will be on low incomes. A key issue in Orkney, notably on the smaller isles, is that people often have to hold down a number of jobs to attain a reasonable income, let alone compensate for the high cost of living on the isles.

Orkney has a shortage of affordable housing, with a lack of both social housing and affordable private housing in the main towns. The link between rural housing, the labour market and educational opportunities is significant in that many families due to the nature of employment in Orkney (seasonal, low paid, multiple jobs) are not able to earn enough to have housing to meet their needs. They may also be unable to move to gain better opportunities in terms of transport links and proximity to increased job and educational opportunities. The housing shortage impacts especially on young adults, with significant waiting lists in Kirkwall for single person dwellings. This impacts on young people moving into adulthood and makes it more difficult to retain them in Orkney when they have the option of moving to the UK mainland for better opportunities.

Figure 4

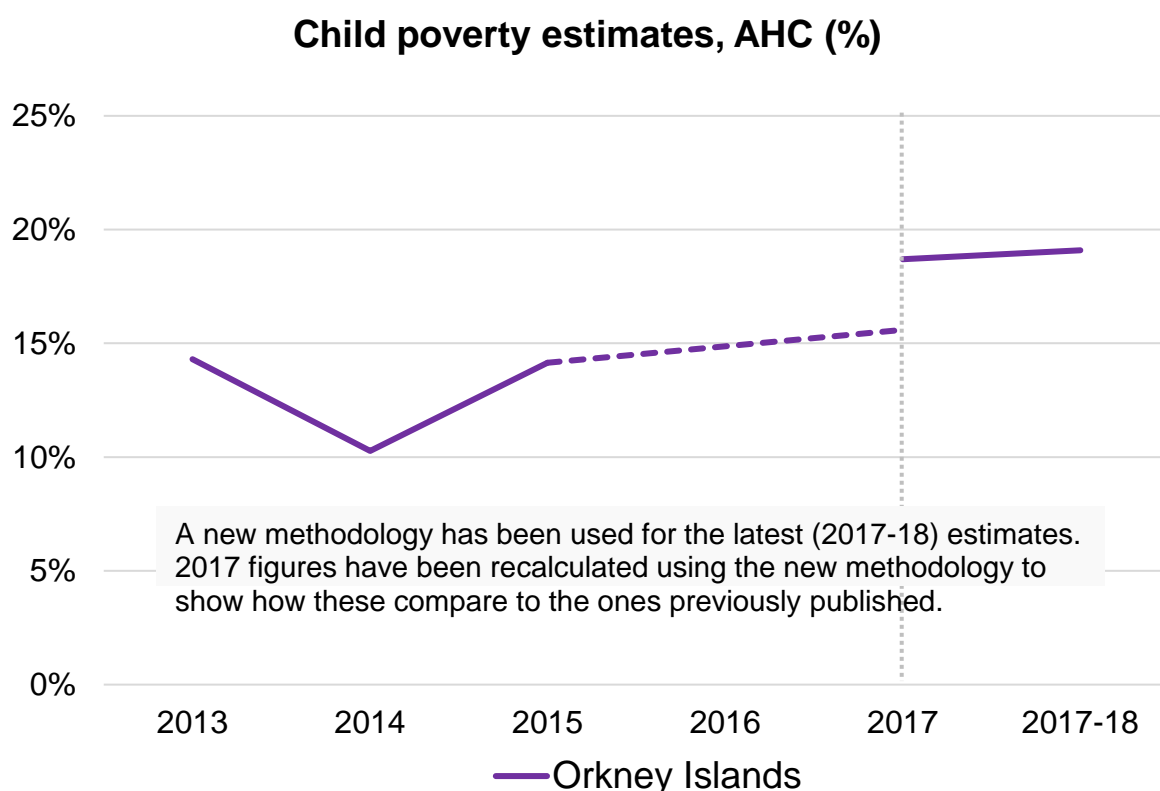


Figure 4 demonstrates that the number of children in poverty (after housing costs) is increasing. Although the way in which the data has been gathered has changed, there is a significant increase from 2014 when it was at its lowest 10% to the 2017-2018 figure of 18%. This is in part because of the increasing cost of living in Orkney which as already stated is much more than in mainland urban Scotland and the seasonal, low paid nature of many of the jobs in Orkney.

Figure 5

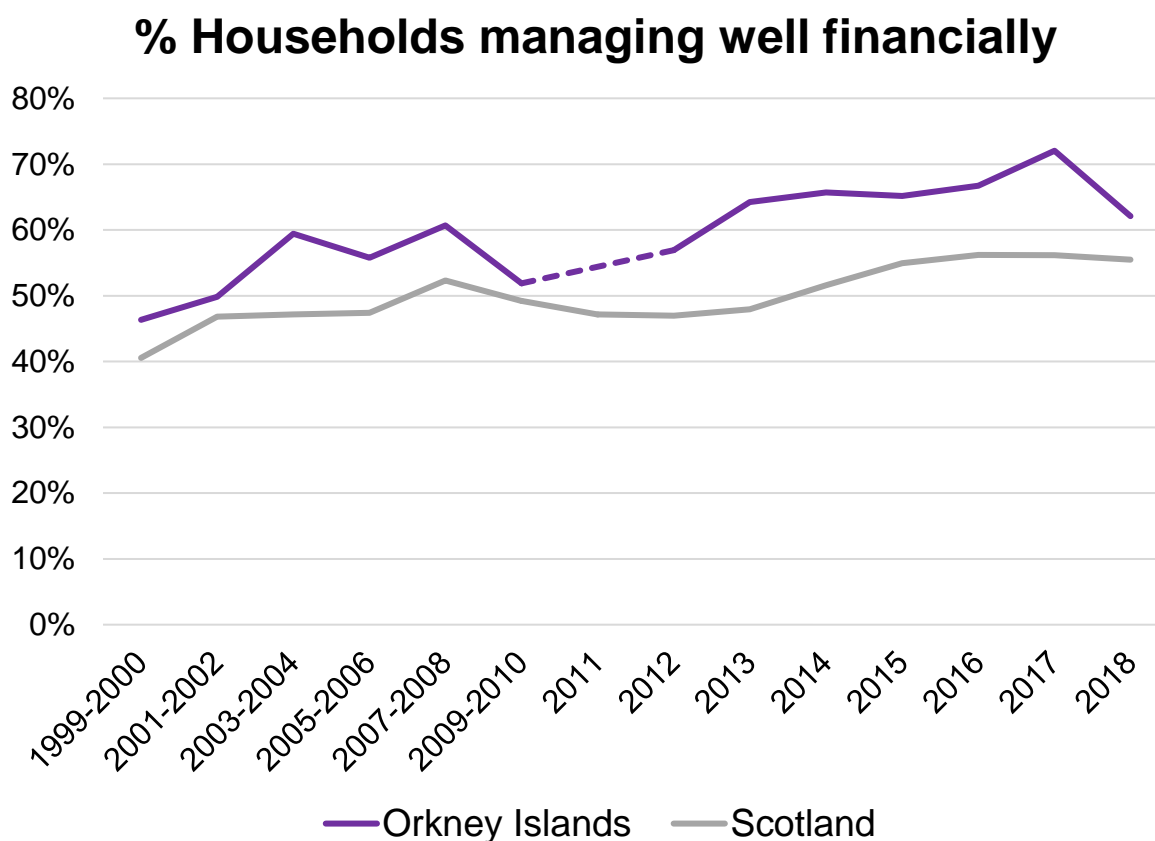


Figure 5 shows that the number of families in Orkney who are managing financially has decreased in recent years. This can be attributed to the increase in cost of living on the islands in comparison to rises in income from wages and benefits. The cost of living in some parts of Orkney in terms of food, fuel and transport can be almost double that on the mainland. More than 50% of households in Orkney live in fuel poverty. The number of residents stating they have access to good public transport facilities is approximately 55% compared with 91% in the rest of Scotland.

The Orkney Foodbank opened in 2013 and has since provided a large number of food parcels and other essential items to the community. In 2019-20, the Foodbank issued 427 vouchers, supporting 538 adults and 394 children. This compares with 430 adults and 185 children in 2015-16, an increase of 34% overall but breaking down into a 20% increase for adults and a 53% increase for children. Lone parents accounted for more than twice as many referrals as other types of family (112 compared with 47).

The most common crisis cited as a reason for referral to the Orkney Foodbank in 2019-20 was 'Low income' (34%) something which in Orkney is more likely to be a long term rather than short term situation for households. 'Benefit delays' was the second most common reason in Orkney during 2019-20 (17%) followed by 'Benefit changes' (12%). Domestic violence, sickness and homelessness were also significant causes of crisis.

Many of the Isles Development Trusts assist families on the isles with essential travel costs. Orkney Charitable Trust supports families' travel expenses where children need to travel to mainland hospitals for treatment.

Figure 6 shows the number of lone parents which, although lower than the Scottish average, has risen over the past five years. Lone parents in Orkney are vulnerable due to the nature of the island economy. Poor transport links lead to isolation and are a barrier to employment.

Figure 6

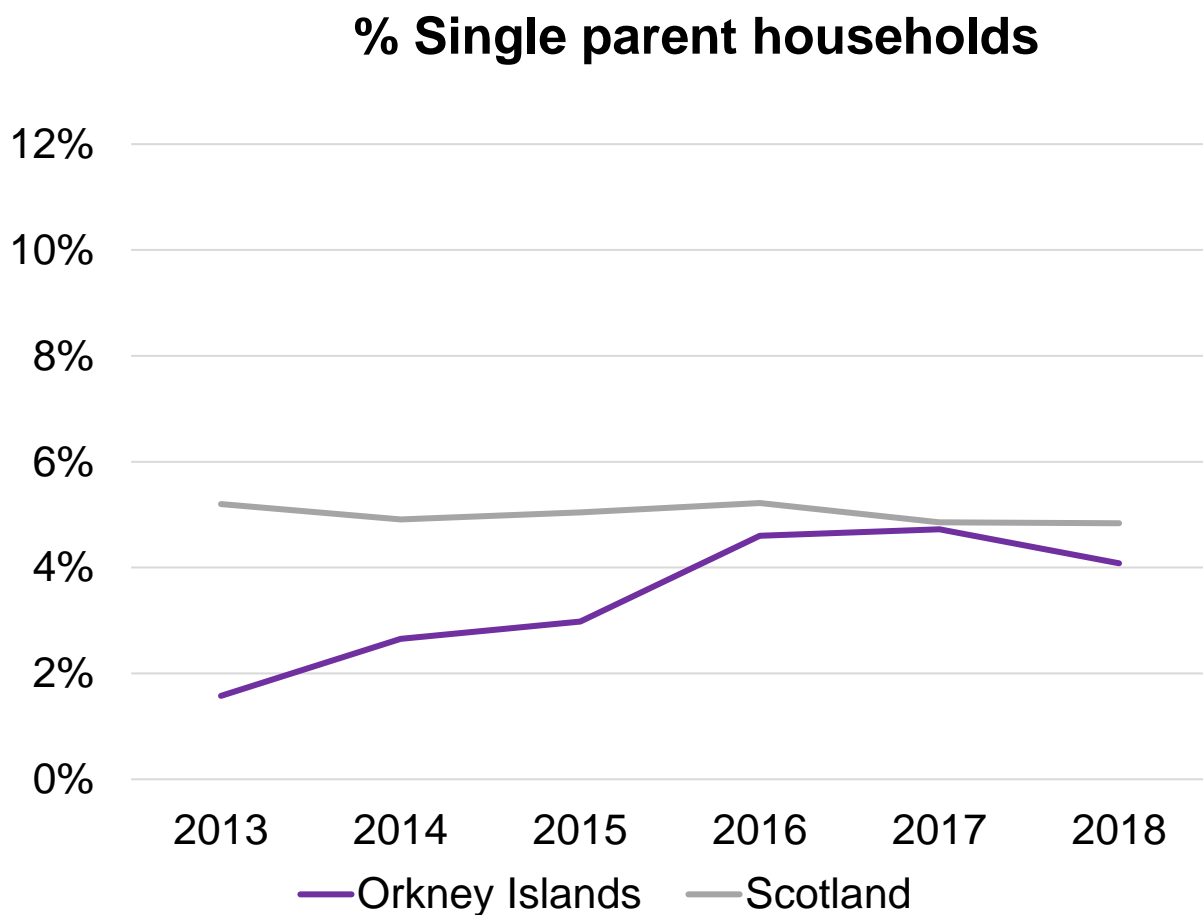


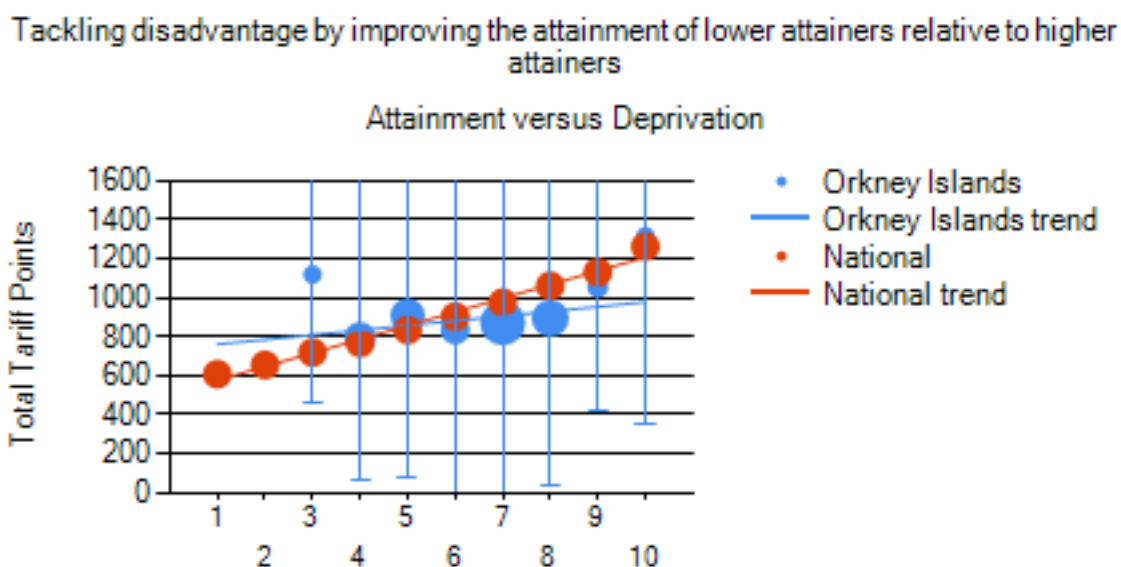
Figure 7

| Curriculum for Excellence Levels | Most children and young people are expected to achieve this level by the end of: |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Early | P1 |
| First | P4 |
| Second | P7 |
| Third and Fourth | S3 |

The Scottish Government conducts an annual survey of Achievement of Curriculum of Excellence Levels (the ACL survey) by pupils in all publicly funded schools in Scotland. Curriculum for Excellence sets out 5 levels of achievement through which children and young people are expected to progress in their learning journey, starting from their early (pre-school) years. Most children and young people will achieve the CfE Levels by the stages set out in the above table.

The 2019-2020 ACL survey for Orkney demonstrates some improvement in stabilising the judgements at all stages, and the picture is much more positive in terms of identifying the gap in Orkney and implementing policy and practice that mitigates the barriers created by poverty.

Figure 8



National attainment figures for 2018/2019 show that further consideration is perhaps needed to link more relevant measures of deprivation in Orkney to attainment due to the rural nature of poverty on the islands. In Orkney, there appears to be no significant relationship between the Scottish Index of multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and attainment, as the national profile and the gap in Orkney is low giving a near horizontal line which shows that the attainment gap is not as closely linked to SMID as it is in other places.

Overall, Orkney leavers have a consistently high record in moving into positive leavers' destinations. The percentage of leavers in a positive destination is in the top three in Scotland, and much greater than our Virtual Comparator¹⁰ in 2017-2018. The initial leaver destination profile does not follow our comparator trends, with many more leavers going directly into employment, fewer moving into further education and slightly fewer going into Higher Education. The majority of S4 and S5 leavers (67%) move into employment, which is an increasing trend.

¹⁰ The virtual comparator consists of a sample group of school leavers from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the school leavers from the school in question.

Figure 9

| ScotPHO Health indicator | | Orkney | Scotland | Period | Measure |
|---|--|---------------------|----------|----------------------|--|
| Healthy birth weight | | 77.2 | 83.8 | 2016-17 to 2018-19 | 3 year rolling average % |
| Child healthy weight in Primary 1 | | 66.0 | 76.6 | 2018-19 | % |
| Drug-related hospital admissions, age 11-25 | | 127.5 | 142.9 | 2016-17 to 2018-19 | 3 year rolling average age/sex standardised rate per 100,000 |
| Alcohol-related hospital admissions, age 11-25 | | 523.2 | 271.9 | 2017-18 to 2019-20 | 3 year rolling average age/sex standardised rate per 100,000 |
| Households with children in homes that fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard | | 35.0 | 38.0 | 2015-17 | 3 year rolling average % |
| Households with children living in fuel poverty | | 27.0 | 16.7 | 2014-16 | 3 year rolling average % |
| Children in low income families | | 8.2 | 16.7 | 2016 | % |
| Children registered for free school meals | | 4.6 | 15.6 | 2016 | % |
| Teenage pregnancies | | 11.7 | 30.5 | 2016-18 | 3 year rolling average per 1000 females age 15-19 |
| How Orkney compares with Scotland (not all differences are statistically significant) | | | | | |
| | | Worse than Scotland | | | |
| | | | | Better than Scotland | |

Health/wellbeing and poverty are often closely connected. It is useful to consider some health markers to paint the picture of health in Orkney, compared to the national levels. Figure 9 shows a selection of indicators from Public Health Information Scotland¹¹, comparing Orkney with the Scottish national average. It shows that in Orkney there are some distinctive challenges compared with the national picture. Orkney has fewer children of a healthy weight, both at birth and in Primary 1, than the Scottish average. Alcohol-related hospital admissions are nearly twice the national average, while drug-related hospital admissions are not far below the national average, with the caveat that both of these measures may be skewed by small numbers. While Orkney has only half as many children living in low income families, there are many more families in fuel poverty. The impact on children living in these households is significant and is part of the ongoing planning work within Children's Services.

¹¹ https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/

Figure 10

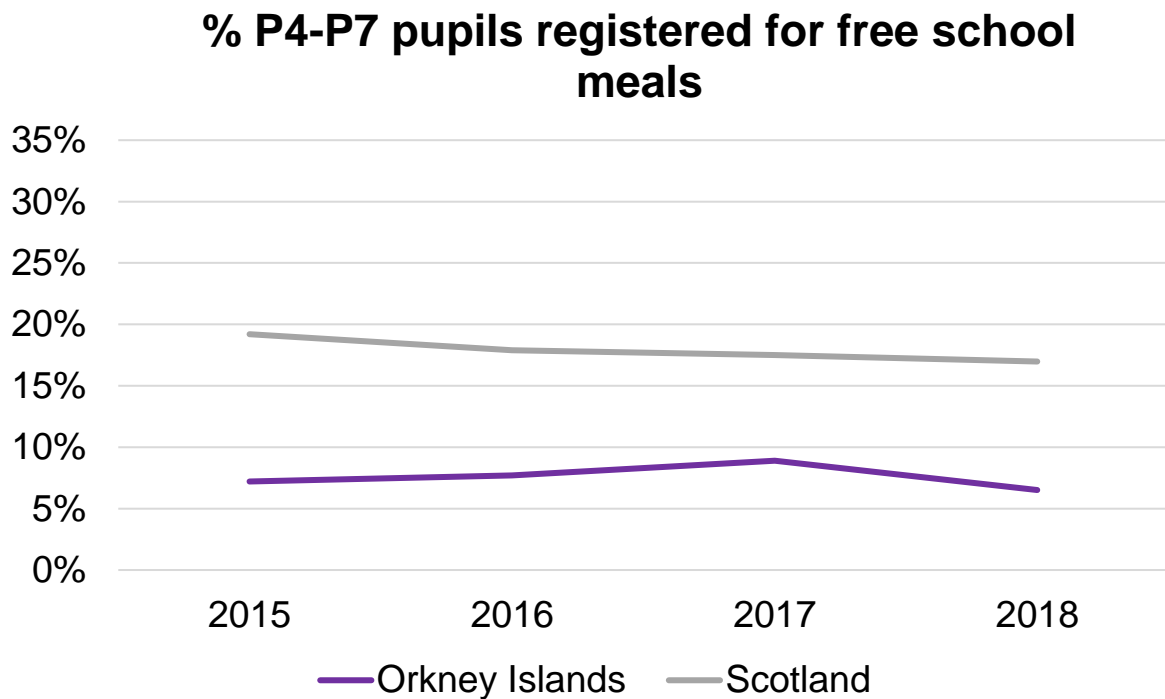


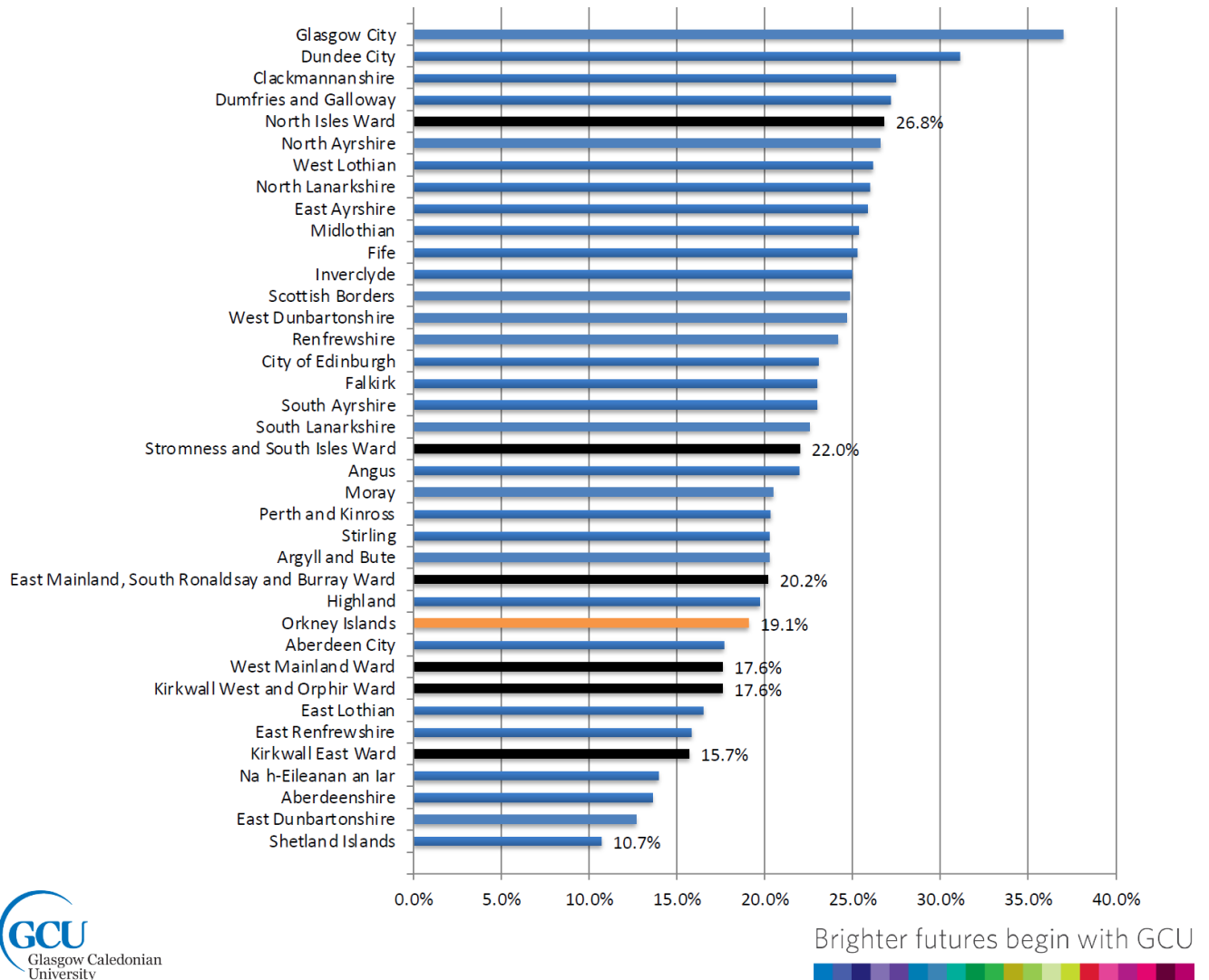
Figure 10 shows lower than Scottish average levels of free school meals take-up. This is much lower than the rest of Scotland and much lower than it should be in Orkney in terms of the levels of family and child poverty. This could be related to the stigma attached to poverty which is often more pronounced in rural and island communities and is part of the partnership and multi-agency approaches that Orkney is working on.

Figure 11, supplied by Glasgow Caledonian University, shows the percentage of children who live in families with limited resources, defined as combined low income and material deprivation. Orkney's individual electoral wards are compared with Orkney as a whole, and with other local authorities in Scotland.

Figure 11

Percentage of children living in families with limited resources

Orkney electoral wards / Orkney / other local authorities in Scotland



Brighter futures begin with GCU



Figure 11 shows the striking disparity between Orkney’s most and least deprived wards. It is notable that the non-linked isles, both north and south, are the two most deprived wards. There is a strong correlation here with SIMD 2020 findings for relative deprivation by datazone, listed in Figure 12.

Figure 12

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020) rankings and corresponding household incomes for datazones in Orkney

| Data Zone | Location | Overall SIMD 2020 rank | Overall decile 2020 | Lower quartile household income | Mean household Income | Upper quartile household income |
|-----------|---|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| S01011821 | Kirkwall - Pickaquoy | 1,995 | 3 | £13,202 | £27,665 | £36,627 |
| S01011827 | Hoy, Walls & Flotta | 2,097 | 4 | £10,915 | £24,092 | £31,307 |
| S01011831 | Stronsay, Sanday & North Ronaldsay | 2,476 | 4 | £12,354 | £25,674 | £33,566 |
| S01011822 | Kirkwall - Town Centre | 2,679 | 4 | £14,125 | £29,352 | £38,940 |
| S01011830 | Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre | 2,710 | 4 | £15,161 | £30,587 | £40,254 |
| S01011824 | Kirkwall - The Meadows East | 2,749 | 4 | £13,943 | £30,876 | £41,800 |
| S01011820 | Kirkwall - Glaitness Road & Hornersquoy | 3,074 | 5 | £14,729 | £34,474 | £46,610 |
| S01011832 | Eday, Westray & Papay | 3,153 | 5 | £13,123 | £27,604 | £36,556 |
| S01011804 | Stromness - South | 3,187 | 5 | £15,239 | £32,734 | £43,753 |
| S01011808 | Firth | 3,402 | 5 | £18,273 | £37,753 | £50,105 |
| S01011828 | South Ronaldsay | 3,421 | 5 | £15,969 | £34,307 | £45,863 |
| S01011819 | Kirkwall - South | 4,336 | 7 | £14,788 | £30,833 | £41,204 |
| S01011829 | Burray | 4,356 | 7 | £20,895 | £41,094 | £54,104 |
| S01011813 | Holm | 4,373 | 7 | £21,412 | £42,433 | £56,600 |
| S01011823 | Kirkwall - KGS & Bignold Park | 4,412 | 7 | £17,039 | £36,474 | £48,449 |
| S01011810 | Harray | 4,434 | 7 | £18,945 | £38,175 | £50,365 |
| S01011809 | Orphir | 4,446 | 7 | £20,655 | £39,834 | £52,300 |
| S01011825 | Kirkwall - Papdale West | 4,471 | 7 | £17,314 | £35,743 | £47,441 |
| S01011814 | Holm East, Toab & Deerness | 4,607 | 7 | £21,139 | £40,849 | £53,943 |
| S01011812 | Evie, Rendall & Gairsay | 4,790 | 7 | £20,558 | £41,212 | £54,840 |
| S01011817 | St Ola - West | 4,836 | 7 | £20,719 | £41,422 | £54,711 |
| S01011826 | Kirkwall - Harbour and North | 4,851 | 7 | £19,226 | £38,188 | £49,974 |
| S01011811 | Birsay & Dounby | 4,902 | 8 | £20,168 | £39,741 | £52,667 |
| S01011806 | Stromness - Outer Town | 4,911 | 8 | £19,093 | £38,916 | £51,152 |
| S01011815 | Tankerness | 4,977 | 8 | £21,532 | £43,412 | £57,938 |
| S01011818 | Kirkwall - Holm Road | 5,263 | 8 | £18,129 | £38,884 | £52,062 |
| S01011807 | Sandwick and Stenness | 5,424 | 8 | £21,943 | £43,139 | £57,183 |
| S01011805 | Stromness - North | 5,566 | 8 | £16,724 | £35,085 | £46,288 |
| S01011816 | St Ola - East | 5,616 | 9 | £26,740 | £50,836 | £66,972 |

Table 12 shows the correlation between SIMD 2020v2¹² data and household incomes¹³, supplied by CACI Paycheck data.

There are 6,976 datazones in SIMD 2020, with the most deprived being no. 1 and the least deprived no. 6976. A decile corresponds to 10% of datazones. Orkney does not have any datazones in the most deprived 20% in Scotland but due to the

¹² Corrected release see <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>

¹³ The applicable copyright notices for CACI data can be found at https://www.caci.co.uk/sites/default/files/imce/Copyright_and_Third_Party_Notices.pdf

disseminated pattern of poverty in Orkney, there will be individuals and families in all areas experiencing multiple deprivation.

Income reflected by CACI Paycheck is gross household income from all sources including earnings, benefits and investments. The table shows average (mean) household income overall for each datazone, and average (mean) household incomes for households in the bottom quartile and top quartile, a quartile being a quarter or 25% of households.

Orkney's most deprived datazones are heavily skewed towards the non-linked isles and certain areas of Kirkwall, and this is reflected in the income data. The Orkney Partnership selected the non-linked isles for its first Locality Plan 2018-21¹⁴, addressing socio-economic inequality.

Looking at individual domains within the SIMD, no fewer than 14 of Orkney's 29 datazones are among the most deprived 10% in Scotland for 'Access' (to services) with a score of 698 or less, with Hoy, Walls & Flotta scoring only 12. This measure evidences the poverty drivers illustrated in Figure 1.

¹⁴ <http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/communityplanning/index.asp?pageid=681664>

What we did in 2019-2020 to combat child poverty

| What is the action that is taking place or has taken place? | Who is carrying out the action? | Which poverty driver(s) is it addressing? |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Income maximisation information and advice evening. Publicity in the local community encouraged women to come along. There is a plan to repeat the event.</p> | <p>Maternity unit at The Balfour Hospital, NHS Orkney</p> <p>Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau attended to provide advice.</p> | <p>Income from employment</p> <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>CAB referrals for income maximisation & money advice. Council frontline Housing and Homelessness and Finance staff work with CAB to ensure a joined up approach.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council working with Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau</p> | <p>Income from employment</p> <p>Income from social security</p> |
| <p>Addressing poor housing and providing social housing with appropriate standards. Provision of advice to tenants / landlords in the private sector. Landlord registration advice is provided via Housing</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council Housing service</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Funding of Restart Orkney - referral for essential furniture for homeless clients who are moving into permanent accommodation. Used when the homeless client is not eligible for a Community Care Grant and has no other available funds</p> | <p>Funding provided by OIC Housing Service. Homelessness advice staff provide referrals.</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Funding for starter-packs of Orkney essential household items. Funding is provided by the Housing Service, while Homelessness advice staff provide referrals.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Housing and Homelessness Service</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Support with the completion of Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant applications for essential furniture, for people setting up home after a period of homelessness or living in an institution or care setting.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Homelessness advice staff</p> | <p>Income from social security</p> <p>Cost of living</p> |

| What is the action that is taking place or has taken place? | Who is carrying out the action? | Which poverty driver(s) is it addressing? |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Housing support for vulnerable families to help them maintain their home. Budgeting advice, dealing with paperwork and managing household budgets.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Housing Support and Homelessness staff</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Young persons' Supported Accommodation for 16-25 year olds. Provides supported accommodation for homeless young people to assist them to develop the independent living skills they require to support a tenancy.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Housing and Homelessness Service</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>THAW Orkney provides support to householders in fuel poverty to heat their homes. Their mission is "To work for households in all Orkney communities to reduce levels of fuel poverty and achieve affordable warmth". Services provided include information and advice on energy efficiency, Tariff switching support, assistance with accessing grant funding, advocacy, income maximisation and budgeting support. THAW funds the electricity vouchers fulfilled by the Foodbank and directly provides Cosy Home Packs and small grants.</p> | <p>THAW Orkney</p> | <p>Cost of living Income from employment Income from social security</p> |
| <p>Referrals to THAW for clients experiencing fuel poverty.</p> | <p>OIC Frontline staff and Housing support staff</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Combating Fuel Poverty through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area based schemes (HEEPS:ABS). This scheme is a Scottish Government initiative.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Housing Services and appointed Managing Agent</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Provision of school uniform/toiletries/ laundry items for children and young people staying in Papdale halls of residence (due to isles residency) whose families do not have the means to provide their own.</p> | <p>Halls of Residence staff</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |

| What is the action that is taking place or has taken place? | Who is carrying out the action? | Which poverty driver(s) is it addressing? |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Holiday Hunger – Extensive scoping exercise done in terms of Foodbank use in each Parish to inform holiday provision. Orkney Foodbank is planning to work with OIC Education to set up Holiday Clubs for children, young people and families.</p> | Orkney Foodbank | Cost of living |
| <p>Child Poverty data gathering and analysis in Housing, with complementary mapping and data visualisation project to visualise the data over school catchment areas. Data collected includes fuel poverty. Work is ongoing with initial phase scheduled for completion in 2020.</p> | Orkney Islands Council, Housing Services | Cost of living Income from employment Income from social security |
| <p>Advocacy services - helping families with benefit claims, referrals to other agencies (Thaw, Foodbank) helping with homelessness applications, helping write letters to debt agencies. Priority groups are lone parents and families with either parents with a learning disability or a child with a disability.</p> | Advocacy Orkney | Cost of living Income from employment Income from social security |
| <p>Emergency food and fuel provision – Orkney Foodbank fulfilled 427 vouchers during 2019-20, for food and electricity. Other services included the provision of school holiday meals, £10 “Hungry Baby” vouchers and bonus Christmas boxes of food and goodies. Orkney Foodbank takes referrals from anyone involved with children and/or their families.</p> | Orkney Foodbank <i>Detailed report appended below.</i> | Cost of living |
| <p>Support for families on low incomes to access medical and play facilities, make grant applications, and access financial assistance and other services available to them. Includes provision of transport to leisure facilities and appointments, and facilitating children’s activity groups. An added benefit of this scheme is the opportunity it provides for peer support.</p> | Homestart Orkney <i>Detailed report appended below.</i> | Income from employment Income from social security |

| What is the action that is taking place or has taken place? | Who is carrying out the action? | Which poverty driver(s) is it addressing? |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Support for women and children affected by domestic abuse, either current or historical. This has included referrals to the Foodbank and direct provision of food, clothes, household goods, Christmas and birthday gifts for children and paying for activities and pantomime tickets. WAO also help women to attend the job centre for appointments and to apply for benefits.</p> | <p>Women's Aid Orkney</p> | <p>Income from employment Income from social security</p> |
| <p>Informal learning programme for young people transitioning out of school who need some extra support to get to their next step. Many of our young people have been or are affected by poverty and through our programme we aim to lessen the attainment gap and provide equality of opportunity compared to those of their peers not affected by poverty.</p> | <p>Connect Project (Voluntary Action Orkney) <i>Detailed report appended below.</i></p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Holistic advice service including income maximisation, assistance with debts, full benefit check, assistance to claim any relevant benefits identified, employment, tax etc. Full debt advice service if required. Representation of clients in court who are facing eviction action and assistance with Simple Procedure cases (Small Claims).</p> | <p>Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau <i>Detailed report appended below.</i></p> | <p>Income from employment Income from social security</p> |
| <p>Support for individuals and families to manage relationships and cope with day-to-day challenges associated with family separation, parenting, poor mental health and substance misuse. Family separation can cause or increase family poverty and lack of money is a major factor in relationship breakdown. Support includes help to improve relationships, to prevent family breakdown and to manage separation; counselling for individual adults and young people, and play therapy for younger children; also referrals to the Orkney Foodbank and to other local organisations (e.g. Women's Aid, CAB, Blide Trust).</p> | <p>Relationships Scotland - Orkney</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |

| What is the action that is taking place or has taken place? | Who is carrying out the action? | Which poverty driver(s) is it addressing? |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Island Wellbeing Project: One-to-one support to families on the isles is provided by Community Wellbeing Coordinators, who can, among other issues, support with food, fuel and digital poverty. They can provide information, support people to apply for benefits and non-financial support (e.g. energy top-ups) and signpost onto other services (e.g. CAB, Trussell Trust, Thaw). Coordinators also build capacity in the community, developing schemes such as Community Larder Boxes and clothes swaps.</p> | <p>Voluntary Action Orkney in liaison with Development Trusts on Hoy, Shapinsay, Stronsay, Sanday, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Support for pregnant women and families with children: Midwives and Health Visitors provide pregnant women and families with children with: a) information, advice and assistance about eligibility for financial support, such as Best Start grants, and b) assistance to apply for financial support. We are conscious that some groups at risk of poverty – including those with young children, may not be in regular contact with primary health care services and are more likely to be in contact with other parts of the NHS, such as Maternity and Health Visitors, which may be better placed to ensure access to advice. Families are offered referrals to other agencies where appropriate, including Citizens Advice Bureau Orkney, Orkney Charitable Trust, the Orkney Children’s Trust and Orkney Foodbank.</p> | <p>NHS Orkney, Maternity Services and Health Visitors</p> | <p>Income from social security Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Financial support for local children in need: Every Child Deserves a Christmas grant programme – 313 grants of £50 distributed across Orkney in December 2019. Help From Home – financial support for families’ travel costs where a child has to attend NHS on Mainland Scotland. Every Child Should be Warm in Bed – 120 Warm Bedding Bundles (£83 each) delivered in 2019. School holiday poverty – specific support to families struggling financially during school holidays.</p> | <p>Orkney Charitable Trust</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |

| What is the action that is taking place or has taken place? | Who is carrying out the action? | Which poverty driver(s) is it addressing? |
|---|---|---|
| Energy Advice and switching support for social housing tenants. | Orkney Housing Association Ltd | Cost of living |
| Young Scot cards provide discounts (for example in Co-op for families) and those aged 16-19 get 4 free ferry journeys. Although this is not targeted as everyone is entitled to this, CLD plan to build on this in future by identifying funding to provide more benefits to those who would benefit most. In 2019-20, young people in Orkney saved £5,308 by using their Young Scot card. | Orkney Islands Council, Community Learning and Development Team | Cost of living |
| Fireskills Employability Award – CLD worked with the Fire Service and schools (and received Pupil Equity Fund funding from schools) to run this award with young people identified who would benefit most to build on their teamwork and employability skills as well as also achieve wider accreditation in the form of a Dynamic Youth Award. | Orkney Islands Council, Community Learning and Development Team | Cost of living |
| Youth Achievement Groups – paid by CLD, young people complete volunteering in their community and receive accreditation in the form of a Dynamic Youth/Youth Achievement accredited award – targeted interventions within a universal provision to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. During 2019-2020, young people from Stromness Youth Achievement Group held a ‘Shop Clever, Live Better’ event to signpost people to services to help with financial support. | Orkney Islands Council, Community Learning and Development Team | Income from social security Cost of living |
| Orkney Youth Forum – CLD worked hard to increase the youth voice through representation from often more seldom heard groups of young people including those from lower income families. From this engagement young people who historically may have missed out on associated opportunities got to benefit with costs covered by CLD and externally sourced funding. | Orkney Islands Council, Community Learning and Development Team | Cost of living |

| What is the action that is taking place or has taken place? | Who is carrying out the action? | Which poverty driver(s) is it addressing? |
|--|--|---|
| <p>ActiveLife Budget Membership – ActiveLife is Orkneys inclusive, flexible and affordable leisure and fitness membership scheme giving individuals and families access to a large range of activities across 12 facilities. Anyone living in a household where someone receives a ‘means tested’ benefit payment, ie income support, pension guarantee credit, job seeker’s allowance, or employment support allowance, is eligible for Budget membership giving access to activities at any centre for 50p per activity. Individuals (but not households) receiving a war disability pension, disabled living allowance, personal independence payment, attendance allowance or carer’s allowance are also entitled to the Budget option.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Sport and Leisure Services in partnership with The Pickaquoy Centre Trust</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |
| <p>Active Schools is a national program dedicated to developing and supporting the delivery of quality sporting opportunities for children and young people. Orkney’s Active Schools Team has worked with schools and community groups for over 16 years providing opportunities for children and young people to get involved and stay involved in sport. Active Schools activities are delivered in all communities at no cost to participants. If there is a need for children to travel to participate in an activity, travel costs are covered.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Sport and Leisure Services</p> | <p>Cost of living</p> |

Appended below are more detailed reports from some of the Third Sector organisations in Orkney which are working with children and families in poverty.

Orkney Foodbank

Orkney Foodbank has provided food and support to pay for electricity (in order to be able to heat/cook the food) over 2019-20.

In 2019-20 we provided food and other provisions to:

- 47 vouchers for a family
- 112 vouchers for a single parent
- (total vouchers for period was 427)

Numbers/ages of children in these referred groups were:

- Children (0-4) - 111
- Children (5-11) - 167
- Children (12-16) - 116

We also provide child holiday meals – these are available to families who struggle in school holidays but don't count towards the 3 parcels in 6 months recommended allowance. In 2019-20 we issued 15 parcels , supporting 44 children (and 24 adults)

For children under 2 we offer a £10 "Hungry Baby" voucher to go to Boots and purchase additional items.

For every referral received in December we also issue a Christmas box with the contents of a Christmas meal and goodies (all non perishable items).

Orkney Foodbank links with THAW Orkney in terms of supporting those in poverty, as those in food poverty tend to also be experiencing fuel poverty. As a joint bid we secured funding to be able to offer top ups to those who need food parcels so they could cook/heat their food when they received it.

We take referrals from Health visitors, social work, YPeople, GPs, School Nursing, Schools – anyone involved with children and/or their families.

Figure 13 below shows the numbers of vouchers fulfilled by the Orkney Foodbank in 2019-20 and the numbers of adults and children supported, by electoral ward.



Figure 13**Orkney Foodbank vouchers fulfilled by electoral ward 2019-20**

| Ward | No. Vouchers fulfilled | Adults | Children | Total |
|---|------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray | 36 | 54 (60%) | 36 (40%) | 90 |
| Kirkwall East | 92 | 127 (59.07%) | 88 (40.93%) | 215 |
| Kirkwall West and Orphir | 197 | 225 (60.81%) | 145 (39.19%) | 370 |
| NFA | 1 | 1 (100%) | 0 | 1 |
| North Isles | 23 | 31 (59.62%) | 21 (40.38%) | 52 |
| Stromness and South Isles | 41 | 44 (41.51%) | 62 (58.49%) | 106 |
| Unknown | 1 | 2 (66.67%) | 1 (33.33%) | 3 |
| West Mainland | 36 | 54 (56.84%) | 41 (43.16%) | 95 |
| Totals | 427 | 538 | 394 | 932 |

Figure 14 below shows the numbers of vouchers fulfilled by the Orkney Foodbank in 2019-20 and the numbers of adults and children supported, by crisis type.

Figure 14

Orkney Foodbank vouchers fulfilled by crisis type 2019-20

| Crisis | No. Vouchers fulfilled | People Affected | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| | | Adults | Children | Total |
| Benefit Changes | 53 | 73 (54.07%) | 62 (45.93%) | 135 |
| Benefit Delays | 73 | 93 (68.89%) | 42 (31.11%) | 135 |
| Child Holiday Meals | 15 | 24 (35.29%) | 44 (64.71%) | 68 |
| Debt | 20 | 24 (57.14%) | 18 (42.86%) | 42 |
| Delayed Wages | 4 | 4 (80%) | 1 (20%) | 5 |
| Domestic Violence | 35 | 42 (47.19%) | 47 (52.81%) | 89 |
| Homeless | 23 | 24 (75%) | 8 (25%) | 32 |
| Low Income | 146 | 185 (58.73%) | 130 (41.27%) | 315 |
| No recourse to public funds | 6 | 6 (100%) | 0 | 6 |
| Other | 23 | 31 (52.54%) | 28 (47.46%) | 59 |
| Refused STBA | 2 | 2 (40%) | 3 (60%) | 5 |
| Sickness | 27 | 30 (73.17%) | 11 (26.83%) | 41 |
| Totals | 427 | 538 | 394 | 932 |

Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau

We offer a holistic advice service which includes income maximisation and assistance with debts. We offer a full benefit check and assistance to claim any relevant benefits identified by this check and we also provide a full debt advice service if required. If any other issues are identified – for example with employment, tax etc – we will also assist with that. We represent clients in court who are facing eviction action and assist with Simple Procedure cases (previously known as Small Claims).

Considering the poverty drivers, our main areas of work are around trying to increase benefit take up and assisting with debts. We encourage other agencies to refer clients to us for assistance and many clients also self refer.

In 2019-20 we ran a small training session for the Community Link Practitioners and this was also attended by two Health Visitors. We had hoped to roll out this session to the Health Visitor team as a whole but were unable to do so due to COVID. This will be considered again in the future.

THAW invited us to their AGM to talk about Child Poverty along with other agencies which we hope helped to raise awareness of the help available.

We also held some evening outreach sessions at the local Maternity Ward to offer benefit checks to new parents. Again this is something we would like to revisit once the pandemic allows.



In 2019-20 we recorded £1,575,170 in Client Financial Gain. £58,422 of this related directly to claims for Disability Living Allowance – a benefit for children under 16 with disabilities.

We have worked with all the groups identified in the priority categories, it is difficult to draw data from our system based on these indicators but we have made some improvements to this for 2020-21 which we hope will allow better reporting in the future.

In particular families where there is a disability is one of our key areas of work as we assist with a large number of disability benefit claims. In 2019-20 we recorded Client Financial Gain of £629,604.48 for ill health/disability benefit claims for those of working age. This total doesn't include all the additional hidden benefits that arise from these claims such as travel concessions etc.

Homestart Orkney

Many of the parents in the families supported by our service are either on a very low wage, or are not working: predominately due to health issues, but also there are those who are caught in a cycle of poverty, and there is a family history of unemployment.

During 2019-20, our volunteers supported those families who have very low incomes, or are dependent on social security payments by:

- Helping parents and children to access facilities such as soft play, swimming pools and other activities which have a cost to attend
- Transporting parents and children to these activities, and other local amenities, if they have no means of transport (some local areas are not served well by public transport, and for those areas that are, multiple trips can be costly)
- Advising on financial assistance from other sources eg Social Security Scotland
- Helping families to attend dental and doctor appointments

Additionally, our staff team supported families by:

- Applying for grants for specific, essential, household items, such as cookers, etc
- Applied for Every Child Deserves a Christmas grants from Orkney Charitable Trust for eligible children
- Applied for Warm Bedding Bundles for eligible children from Orkney Charitable Trust
- Assisted families in accessing other services, such as THAW Orkney, for further assistance and advice with heating
- Applied for food vouchers for those families who struggled to afford meals for their children
- Received and distributed donations of toys/books/clothes

We also provide weekly group support sessions, and prior to Covid-19 had developed a programme of activities: Bookbug, Music & Movement, Intergenerational (with residents at Eunson Kloss) and a freeplay session within our office premises. Many of those families we support would not be able to access these activities, for reasons including low finance, and these sessions provide an opportunity for peer support. The children have an opportunity to mix with peers, and to further develop their social, emotional, language and literacy skills.

The priority groups we work with include:

- Lone parents
- Families with a disability
- Families with 3+ children
- Minority ethnic families
- Families with the youngest child aged under 1
- Mothers who are under the age of 25



Voluntary Action Orkney's Connect Project

Connect's service provides an informal learning programme for young people transitioning out of school who need some extra support to get to their next step. Many of our young people have been or are affected by poverty and through our programme we aim to lessen the attainment gap and provide equality of opportunity compared to those of their peers not affected by poverty. We help them to develop skills and knowledge in order to lessen the impact that poverty has had or has on them. Our service also provides some immediate relief from financial difficulties faced by our young people/their families as outlined below.

The priority groups we worked with were children/young people 15-21, Lone Parents, families with a disability and families with 3+ children.

Activities in 2019-2020 (pre-Covid) included the following:

- Reimburse the ticket fare for young people who travel to and from any Connect activities via bus.
- Provided a breakfast club and a lunch club (at separate times based on assessment of what was best for young people attending at the time) with basic items for breakfast/sandwiches etc.
- Ran cooking sessions to give young people skills and knowledge of cooking nutritional meals with low cost items. Batch cooked in order for young people to have portion(s) to take home.
- Ran independent living sessions to give young people skills and knowledge in relation to budgeting.
- Secured funding from Hostelling Scotland for a planned trip to Glasgow for our young people, many of whom had rarely been on holiday – unfortunately this had to be cancelled due to Covid.
- Ran many activities that would have been cost-prohibitive for young people and their families if having to fund themselves eg. outdoor education, workshops with local artists etc.
- Regularly took young people out and about in Orkney for activities such as hikes, beachcombing, geocaching etc, many of whom haven't ever or have rarely had a chance to explore their local area because of lack of cars in the family, time, cost etc.
- Provided sports clothing, outdoor waterproofs, walking boots and wellies, warm jumpers, sock and gloves.
- Purchased tablet computers to loan out to young people with no or limited access to computers at home.
- Provided all materials for young people to carry out set activities at home (eg: baking ingredients, art supplies etc).

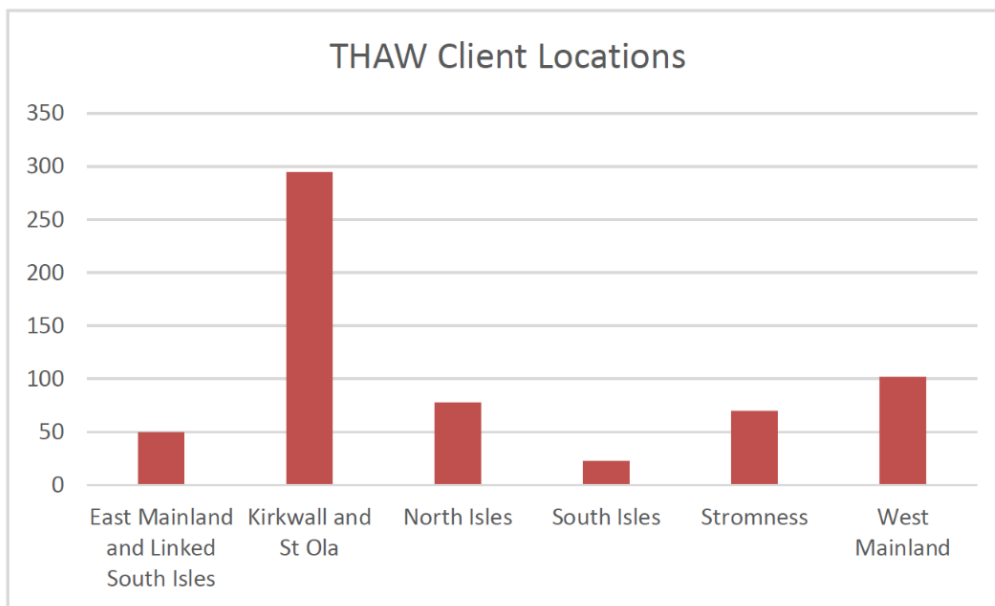


THAW Orkney

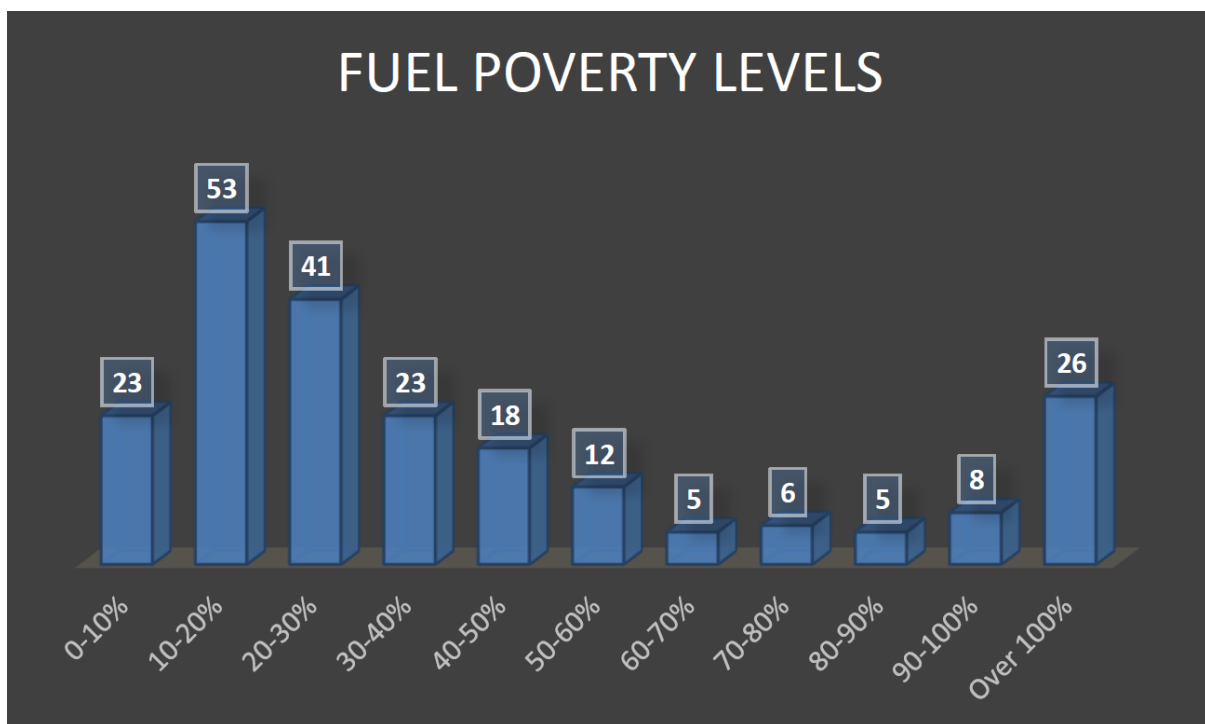
THAW's mission is "To work for households in all Orkney communities to reduce levels of fuel poverty and achieve affordable warmth". The year reported on here is from July 2019 to June 2020.



The graph below shows that the majority of THAW's clients are in Kirkwall but a significant number are in the isles, where fuel poverty rates are highest.



Around 83% of householders who approach THAW for assistance are experiencing fuel poverty, with the majority at extremely high levels, as illustrated below.



The Scottish Government changed its definition of fuel poverty in the Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019. The Scottish Household Condition Survey 2016-18 highlights that 30% of Orkney households are in fuel poverty (25% national average) and 22% are in extreme fuel poverty (12% national average). These figures are based on the new fuel poverty definition and it is worth noting that although the new definition has reduced the percentage of households in fuel poverty from 57% to 30%, those in extreme fuel poverty only came down by 1%, from 23% under the old definition to 22% under the new definition.

Under the old definition, of all of the householders advised by THAW:

- 3 in 4 householders (76%) are experiencing extreme fuel poverty
- 1 in 3 households (29%) are experiencing 40%+ fuel poverty (i.e. needing to spend more than £4 from every £10 of their income on fuel)

Whenever possible, THAW will provide services in a place that best suits their clients, although home visits and energy cafés have been on hold since the Covid-19 lockdown of March 2020. Prior to that, they undertook public drop-in Energy Cafés across Orkney Mainland and islands - in Stromness, Birsay, Sanday, St Margaret's Hope and Burray. THAW staff have given talks and presentations at CLAN and Age Scotland Orkney, and in addition, have been involved in the Community-Led Support initiative, hosting Peedie Blether events at the THAW office.

During 2019-20, THAW Orkney, working with The Orkney Foodbank and funded by Warmworks, was able to assist a further 213 client households with electricity vouchers to enable the heating and lighting to remain on. Money Advice and Welfare Rights services were also developed.

THAW's "Aiming Beyond Cancer" project commenced in September 2019 and enabled them to assist households with a cancer diagnosis through referrals made by MacMillan and CLAN Cancer Support services. The project was funded by Scottish and Southern Electric and coordinated between Orkney and the Western Isles by Energy Action Scotland. Following a home visit by THAW, a new heating system and white goods were installed for those eligible. The final totals will be 32 heating systems and 33 white goods, although 20 installations have been delayed by the pandemic and are currently awaiting completion.

THAW Orkney has embarked on further expansion of its service provision to include a Community Support Officer (CSO). Funded by the Robertson Trust and NHS Orkney, the CSO has been working with more vulnerable clients to provide support tailored to their specific needs and has assisted 29 clients since taking up the post in September 2019.

THAW Orkney continues to provide Cosy Home Packs (CHPs), which have proved very effective in assisting those households in fuel poverty. Despite funding issues, 123 CHPs have been distributed this year. Items currently in the pack include thermal socks, hat, gloves and, for children, a monkey wheat bag warmer.

Outline Action Plan for 2020-2021

Our combined action plan for 2020-21 has two components:

1. Continued actions from previous year
2. New actions in response to new policy drivers and opportunities, including emergency measures taken to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated socio-economic hardship

By the end of the last reporting year on 31 March 2020, it was apparent that 2020-21 was going to be very different from anything that any of us had planned. The national Covid-19 lockdown had only been in place for a week but already we were seeing signs of food insecurity as the Orkney mainland supermarkets ran out of essential foodstuffs and families on the isles found their budgets stretched beyond their means by the much higher prices necessarily charged by their local isles shops.

Public and third sector agencies acted quickly to provide an emergency response and to support those shielding. Support networks on the isles were co-ordinated variously by the Isles Development Trusts, Community Wellbeing Co-ordinators, the Orkney CV Mutual Aid Group (on Facebook) and other community associations. These organisations drew attention to the situation of families on the isles, hit by the double whammy of reduced income and increased food prices. In some cases these families were experiencing hardship for the first time and had no knowledge of how to access public or third sector support networks and services.

Our 2020-21 report will cover the pandemic response in full. At time of writing the situation is still evolving rapidly and new initiatives are being developed in days and weeks in response to emerging need. The outline action plan below includes early and planned mitigating actions taken by public and third sector agencies to combat child poverty in Orkney at the start of this challenging year.

In normal circumstances our outline plan would look further ahead than one year. We are not doing so this time for two reasons. Firstly, the pandemic means that it is difficult to predict when things will return to a “new normal”, and agencies working in the field of child poverty are fully occupied with immediate crisis response work. Secondly, the Orkney Partnership will be developing a new strategy and longer term plan to combat child poverty over the course of 2020-21, and this will set all of our planned actions from April 2021, including post-pandemic recovery work, into a coherent strategic framework. We will report against the new plan from 2021-22 onwards.

Continued actions from previous year

| | |
|--|--|
| Support to householders in fuel poverty to heat their homes | THAW Orkney |
| Referrals to THAW, CAB and other partner agencies Addressing poor housing Funding of Restart Orkney Funding for starter-packs of Orkney essential household items Support with Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant applications Housing support for vulnerable families Young persons' Supported Accommodation Combating Fuel Poverty through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland Child Poverty data gathering and analysis Provision of school uniform/toiletries/laundry items | Orkney Islands Council: Housing and Homelessness Services, Halls of Residence, and appointed agents |
| Advocacy services | Advocacy Orkney |
| Emergency food and fuel provision Holiday Hunger Project | Orkney Foodbank |
| Support for families on low incomes | Homestart Orkney |
| Support for women and children affected by domestic abuse | Women's Aid Orkney |
| Informal learning programme for young people transitioning out of school | Connect Project (Voluntary Action Orkney) |
| Support for individuals and families to manage relationships | Relationships Scotland - Orkney |
| Holistic advice service | Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau |
| Island Wellbeing Project | Voluntary Action Orkney in liaison with Development Trusts on Hoy, Shapinsay, Stronsay, Sanday, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre |

| | |
|--|---|
| Support for pregnant women and families with children | NHS Orkney Maternity Services and Health Visitors |
| Financial support for local children in need | Orkney Charitable Trust |
| Energy Advice and switching support | Orkney Housing Association Ltd |
| Young Scot cards Youth Achievement Groups Orkney Youth Forum | Orkney Islands Council: Community Learning and Development Team |
| ActiveLife Budget Membership Active Schools | Orkney Islands Council: Sport and Leisure Services |

New actions for 2020-21 as foreseen at April 2020

| | |
|--|---|
| Establish a Child Poverty Task Force as a multi-agency short life working group to co-ordinate the monitoring and reporting of work being undertaken to combat child poverty in Orkney, and to develop a future strategy. | The Orkney Partnership (Living Well Delivery Group) |
| Develop a long-term strategy and action plan to combat child poverty in Orkney, together with a sustainable framework for future planning, monitoring and reporting. | The Orkney Partnership (Child Poverty Task Force) |
| Covid-19 emergency response 1. Adopt new ways of working to engage with service users and deliver services safely, for example switching from face-to-face meetings to telephone and online interactions. Train and equip staff to work remotely. 2. Adapt, scale up and enhance services as far as possible to offer more support to families who are struggling with pressures exacerbated by the pandemic and associated economic and social issues. | All agencies |
| Food insecurity – resolve issues relating to the accessibility and affordability of food for children and families, including for families on the isles, during the pandemic lockdown periods and school closures. | Orkney Islands Council Orkney Health and Care Orkney Foodbank |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Adapt the Child Contact Centre to enable children to see a parent they don't live with face-to-face, safely and with social distancing.</p> | <p>Relationships Scotland Orkney</p> |
| <p>No One Left Behind and Employability – during 2020-21 CLD will take on responsibility for leading and taking forward these agendas for OIC, including the Parent Employability Support Fund.</p> | <p>Orkney Islands Council, Community Learning and Development Team</p> |
| <p>Island Wellbeing Project: Aspiring Communities funding has been awarded to extend this project and offer one-to-one support to families on the isles. Community Wellbeing Coordinators will assist with food, fuel, digital poverty, providing information, applying for grants and benefits and signposting to other services. Coordinators will also build capacity in the community, developing schemes such as Community Larder Boxes and clothes swaps.</p> | <p>Voluntary Action Orkney in liaison with Development Trusts on Hoy, Shapinsay, Stronsay, Sanday, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre</p> |