



# ANGUS JOINT CHILD POVERTY LOCAL ACTION PLAN 2020

April 2019 – July 2020



**ANGUS**  
COMMUNITY  
PLANNING  
PARTNERSHIP







## Contents

Foreword	4
Governance	7
Local Engagement - Customer Led Design	12
COVID-19 Implications	14
National Interventions	17
Drivers of Poverty	18
- Income from Employment	20
- Costs of Living	23
- Income from Social Security Benefits and Benefits in Kind	30
Targets/Performance	37
Shaping the Future - Angus Connect	39



## Foreword

Reducing Child Poverty is one of three priorities for Angus Community Planning Partnership. As such it is at the heart of the Partnership's work and is an objective through which all our work is viewed and considered.

This is the second Angus Child Poverty Action Report. It details the good progress that ACPP has made against this priority and highlights how we plan to move forward taking account of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Coronavirus, and the associated interventions that have been put in place to protect public health, have had a significant impact on our work to reduce child poverty and this cannot be overstated.

Planned initiatives have been suspended; for many months face-to-face work ceased or was restricted to digital contact; vulnerable children and families have been less visible and unable to access the support they need; and families are having to manage increased financial hardship, many for the first time.

The pandemic is not over, much evidence of its impact on child poverty is only starting to come to light and its legacy is likely to be felt for many years to come. In the short-to-medium-term we predict an increase in child poverty in Angus as household finances are put under increased strain and unemployment increases.

Coronavirus and how partners have worked together, initially to respond, and now to recover, reimagine and renew, is acting as a catalyst to enable a step-change in our collective efforts to reduce child poverty.

We are starting from a strong place and during 2019 many innovative and successful pieces of work were initiated. Examples include:

- Since its launch in May 2019, our online benefits calculator has confirmed current awards or identified unclaimed benefits of almost £7.5 million.
- Great progress has been made in delivering the ACPP pledge to eliminate Period Poverty by 2021.
- Our Hard Edges event gave a unique insight into the multiple barriers facing local people in poverty.
- Angus Connect is enhancing the coordinated efforts of our 3rd Sector.
- The My Views App has been co-developed with care experienced young people.
- New referral pathways from midwives to advice services resulted in over £130k in financial gains in the first 6 months of the pilot for Angus citizens.
- The Holiday Food and Fun collaboration received investment from the council enabling this successful pilot to be sustained long-term.

Building on this successful work we are committed to increase and improve our engagement with those with lived experience of poverty and to co-design services with them. 3rd Sector partners and community leaders will play a vital role in this work.

We are also actively joining up major initiatives and investments to maximise the contribution they can make to reducing child poverty in Angus e.g. No One Left Behind, our Local Housing Strategy and the Tay Cities Deal.

We are undeniably moving into uncharted waters as a result of Coronavirus but the partnership is stronger as a result of the pandemic and our commitment to tackling child poverty is equally stronger than ever.



**Margo Williamson**  
Chief Executive, Angus Council



**Grant Archibald**  
Chief Executive, NHS Tayside





# Governance

Poverty is a cross cutting theme throughout all local activity in Angus. The Angus Community Plan is the overarching strategy to influence and guide Community Planning partners towards the vision. The Community Plan has 3 high level priorities – Reducing Child Poverty, Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing and Improving Accessibility and Connectivity. The Tayside Children’s Services Plan is aimed at reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for all of Tayside’s children.

The Scottish Government priority diagram highlights that every strand either alleviates poverty or supports the Child Poverty Act targets, this report outlines the work underway in Angus in support of this.





For the 2019/20 return there have been three important policy developments – ‘No One Left Behind’ work, the Local Housing Strategy and the Tay Cities Deal developments. Key themes identified in NOLB include that:

- Services should be more flexible, and more clearly designed around the needs and capabilities of the people who use them.
- A more responsive, person-centred approach, with users having access to a trusted mentor who provides throughcare and aftercare support, would benefit both users and employers.
- A more consistent approach to defining and demonstrating success and impact needs to be developed.
- Fewer funding streams and longer-term funding arrangements enabling commissioners and providers to better plan, invest and innovate.

### **Local Housing Strategy**

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out the vision for housing in Angus across all tenures. It describes the housing system in Angus including key trends, local pressures and challenges and outlines how the Council and its partners will meet the vision over the period to 2022.

The LHS embodies the national strategic approach to make a fairer Scotland. Ensuring that every child has a safe, warm and secure home is high on the agenda and we have addressed the issue through a number of routes which are featured in the mapping:

- A new build programme to increase the supply of affordable housing in the right areas.
- Undertaking regeneration programmes to provide more desirable accommodation for families with new facilities and improved outdoor space including safe access routes for children.
- Improved the energy efficiency of both Council and private sector properties, helping reduce energy bills and improve comfort and wellbeing.
- Working alongside landlords to look at options to improve housing options and support in the private rented sector in Angus.
- Local delivery of Ending Homelessness Together and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to ensure homelessness is prevented where possible, and those who experience homelessness reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible.
- Developed initiatives to help improve the condition of properties, raising awareness of the issue and the impact of poor condition homes have on their occupants.



- Helping to tackle fuel poverty by raising awareness of the issue whilst providing advice, information and assistance to households, including reducing energy bills, improving energy efficiency, and maximising income.
- Improved working relationship between housing and health and social care services, developing a more holistic person-centred service contributing to help achieve the national health and wellbeing outcomes.

### Tay Cities Deal

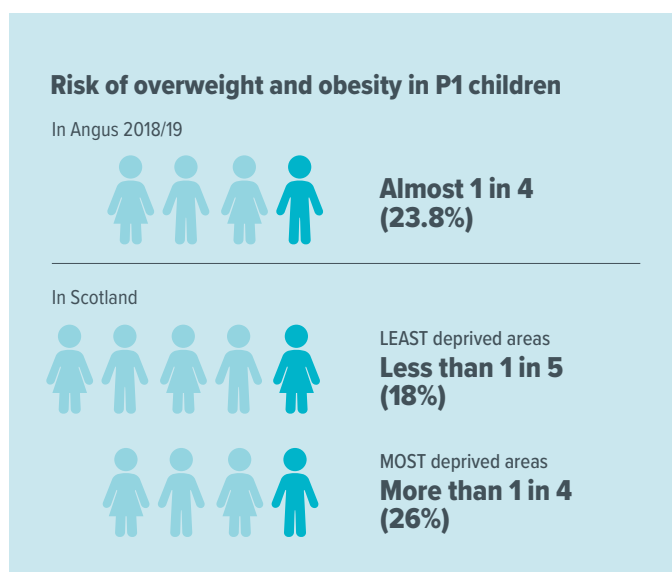
Underpinning a lot of the planned work and investment in the area is the Tay Cities Deal which is due to be signed off in 2020. This will mark a significant investment in the region focusing on inclusive growth, sectoral development, skills, innovation and business growth.

### Fairer Scotland Update

As part of the Councils ambition to be digital by 2020 a lot of work has been done throughout 2019 to digitise the Fairer Scotland Duty process. This includes the fairer Scotland philosophy at the very start of decision making be it large scale reviews or changes to budgets – this is putting poverty reduction at the heart of strategic decision making.

### 2020 - 2021: Angus Connect

Following the COVID-19 pandemic the work of the Child Poverty Action Group as part of the Community Planning Partnership is more relevant than ever. While face to face engagement has been delayed, significant effort has been put in to engage with local people to ensure that interventions make Angus a great place to live, work and visit.





Since 2017/18, Angus Council and partners have delivered

**308**

**new build affordable homes**

### Fuel Poverty

Rates in Angus are estimated



**Angus**  
(circa 11,000 households)



**National**  
(average)



Since 2017, the **Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS)** has enabled over

**£3.7m**

to be spent in Angus helping over **750 households** improve the energy efficiency of their home.

**Homeless applications** have continued to **reduce** in Angus.



**741** 2017/18      **653** 2019/20

**1,220**

**Angus residents**

received a total of **£344,140** in Best Start Grant payments for period 10/12/18 to 30/09/19.



**3,335**

**BABY BOXES**

distributed in Tayside in 2019



During 2019/20 the Welfare Rights Service dealt with **3643 enquiries**, represented at **270 benefit appeals** and secured **£6.2m** in financial gains for Angus residents

### The cost of a school day

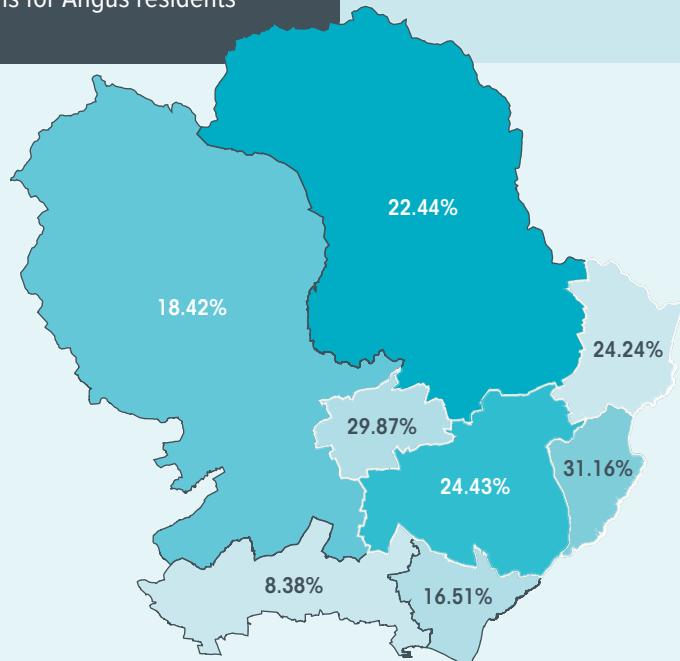
Child poverty estimate



**Angus**



**Scotland**









# Local Engagement – Customer Led Design



*People don't know they can get hardship payment.*

*Not enough information about foodbanks, help support.*

*Agencies aren't open at the weekend and times when you need them.*

*Isolation - when you've no money you begin to go into yourself and don't go anywhere. You lose your confidence.*

*Suicide - people feeling suicidal.*

Involving those local people with lived experience of accessing services is crucial to the development of local actions and activity. In Angus there has been significant work done to include service users and delivery organisations in designing local programmes, this has included:

- Collated issues raised in decoding sessions held with groups from the Arbroath Learning Shop, Havilah, Angus Gold, DEAP, Angus CAB, Arbroath Salvation Army which formed the basis of the case studies.
- **Hard Edges Event** – The Angus hard edges event gave a unique insight into the multiple barriers facing local people in poverty. 46 people attended which included a mix of service users and providers. Due to the impact it has been agreed to hold 2 more events in the other Angus deprived areas.
- **Angus Council Digital Enablement Team and Children's Service** developed and tested in partnership with staff and young people throughout 2019 an App which allows care experienced young people to share their views with professionals in a way and at a time that suits them. The My Views App was launched in April 2020 as one of many options for children and young people to get their views heard ensuring they influence decision making that impacts on them directly in line with Article 12, respect for the views of the child and have that view given due weight.
- **Arbroath Joint Health and Locality Session** – to reduce duplication and develop joint ideas a session was held with local people, health and community planning partners to focus on person centred projects for Arbroath. 57 people attended and follow up work is underway.
- **Service User Consultations** – The child poverty working group has been working closely with those people accessing our services to ensure they are fit for purpose. This has included work with criminal justice services that has supported those being liberated from prisons to access the services they need to reintegrate into local communities.





*CAB are now seeing problems with Universal Credit. People getting all their money at once - budgeting.*

*Documents that are sent to people are too difficult for people to understand – use of jargon, etc.*

*ADAPT (CAB) was to give people the skills to challenge issues such as debt management, etc. but this has now stopped.*

*... how to teach people how to handle money especially now with Universal Credit.*

*Going to be more problems when council tax goes up. No reduction on water and sewerage – lots of people come in with warrants regarding this.*

- **Period Poverty Creative Conversation** – A session was held with local providers and those with experience of period poverty. This session generated a pledge to eradicate period poverty in Angus by 2021.
- **Climate Change Event** – 24 people attended a specialist session on climate change which was held in partnership with NatureScot (formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage). While climate change was the key topic a lot of the proposed solutions and actions also reduced poverty in the area.
- **Wellbeing Services Session** – As part of the development of the new Wellbeing Network an event was held with local people (58 attendees) on the services they access for mental health challenges. This also included the support being rolled out in schools to build personal resilience.
- **Youth Engagement Session** – To follow up on the Youth Engagement strategy a session was held with partners and local young people. This provided local evidence of what key barriers are preventing young people learn, develop and attain.
- **Participatory Budgeting** – PB provides an excellent opportunity to empower our communities and work in a bottom up manner. Through the engagement with our localities a number of exciting projects have emerged which will support the child poverty priority.
- **Transforming Services Events** – Working with the third sector, 4 events have been held to date to co-produce a process for distributing grants and contracts from the Council and Health. This has allowed providers to put a real value on the services that they provide and has helped to get a better insight into those accessing critical services.
- In total since the initial publication of the Angus Local Child Poverty Action Report there has been significantly more engagement with those people accessing services. Where there is real value is from the variety of topics discussed – from Climate Change to Wellbeing. This has all been delayed and on HAART experience, a different approach is being developed.

# COVID 19 Implications

From 18 March frontline emergency support mechanisms were developed and implemented through real partnership work between Angus Council, Angus Health & Social Care Partnership and Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) which all stemmed from an initiative that was agreed by VAA and Angus Health and Social Care Partnership. The ability for all partners to embrace and understand the situation, trust and use each other's strengths to the benefit of delivering a service for vulnerable members of our community, has been key for this successful initiative and continuous partnership.

Systems were quickly identified and developed which enabled area coordinators (from both VAA and communities team working as one identity/team) to access and support the many volunteers to deliver prescriptions, provide shopping and/or emergency food parcels and befriending to those most in need. Within 3 weeks staff and volunteers were responding to up to 100 requests per day at the height of the pandemic. In addition to this, other organisations, including those within the third sector, adapted and responded quickly to the situation to continue to provide support.

The immediate flexibility to respond to these challenges was created through working with communities – removing barriers and supporting new forms of trans-disciplinary working between VAA and departments within Angus Council and Health and Social Care Partnership. The wider third sector had to adapt their way of delivering services at a rapid pace. A new initiative was started bringing all organisations under one banner – 'Angus Connect'.

“

*Angus client has been furloughed by employer, however, has not received any furlough pay to date. Client is concerned that the business will not pay the furlough pay that she is entitled to. Client supports partner and young child. Both are currently in receipt of Universal Credit, however they are struggling to pay all household bills due to unpaid furlough. Despite raising a grievance with the employer, client never received a response to this until the employer notified the client that she was now being made redundant. Client has now been put in a position to seek further guidance and pursue matters through approaching ACAS in order to receive backdated furlough pay whilst not having any employment to return to.*

”



“

*Montrose client advises that her employer has asked her to stay at home and not come into work due to business being slow due to COVID-19. Client has been laid off and will receive £29 per day as per lay-off rules. Client is in receipt of benefits at the moment and is concerned that she will now be unable to afford her rent due to loss of employed income. Client later returned to advise that her employer would not be paying her any wages at all and then advised that she would eventually be furloughed. This has been a very stressful and confusing time for the client. Client feels unable to return to work due to breakdown in relationship with employer.*

”

“

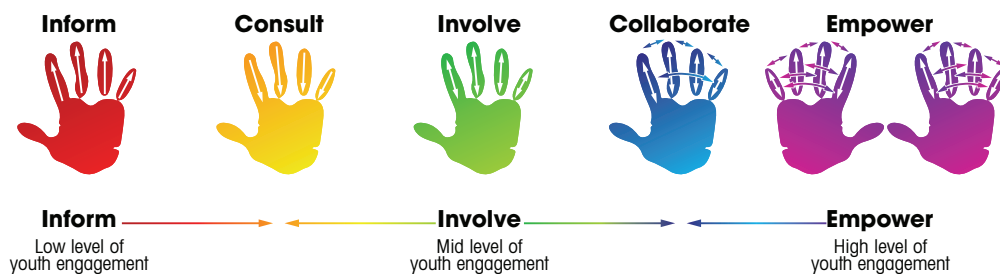
*Angus client reports that he normally works night shifts but has been off sick since the onset of COVID-19 but is now able to return to work but is finding it difficult to obtain childcare. Client is a single parent who cares for three children. Client's parents would usually take care of the children, but they are providing care for their elderly parents who are shielding so are unable to provide support. Client has approached Angus Council childcare hubs and is awaiting confirmation of a place but is concerned he will be unable to work nightshift as childcare is only offered during the day. Client has been offered to be furloughed by the employer due to the situation, but they have asked the client to provide evidence of exhausting all other childcare options which client is finding difficult to do.*

”

During this crisis we were working closer than ever to ensure everyone received the support they needed. As a partnership we were and are still delivering a range of services, but due to the current situation there are three main themes that are continuously arising - food, health and loneliness/isolation.

Angus Woman's Aid (AWA) used a significant proportion of money secured through COVID-19 response funds to purchase supermarket vouchers - a total of

£4000. The gift cards were completely anonymous thereby reducing stigma and could be used to top up pay as you go electricity and gas cards. As an additional support the vouchers could be used to purchase school uniforms for children returning to school.



### Cost of the School Day – COVID-19 Activity

The Cost of the School Day project has and continues to be extremely important in reducing child poverty. As part of the work to support young people through the COVID-19 recovery. The following considerations have been developed:

- **Learning from Lockdown and returning to school** – Cost of the School Day lockdown research with over 4,000 parents, children and young people has highlighted the support from schools which families say helped most during school closures and sets out poverty considerations for the new term and any future periods of home learning. 992 responses were received from children and young people in Angus.
- **‘How to...’ Cost of the School Day guide** – Details five straight forward steps to embedding a Cost of School Day approach in your school.
- **Poverty and Cost of the School Day awareness raising presentation** – Can be used during in service days, at meetings or smaller group sessions, and for individual reflection and professional development. This presentation should be used in conjunction with our supporting notes and local child poverty estimate slides.
- **‘Why Cost of the School Day Makes a Difference’ film** – Features staff and pupils in Dundee, South Lanarkshire, Inverclyde, Dumfries and Galloway and Moray schools talking about Cost of the School Day approaches and how they’ve made a positive difference to their school communities. The film can be used across the school community to raise awareness and promote change.
- **Cost of the School Day Working Group guidance** – Provides guidance on setting up an effective working group this year and the importance of drawing experiences and solutions from across the whole school community.



# National Interventions

At each stage of life we are taking a range of actions, to support children and families and to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

## Giving children the best start in life

- Health Visitor
- Family Nurse
- Baby Box
- Neonatal expenses fund
- Best Start Grant
- Expanded Early Learning and Childcare



## Supporting children to learn and grow

- Universal free school meals to P1-P3
- School Clothing Grant
- Attainment Scotland Fund including Pupil Equity Funding
- Education Maintenance Allowance
- Foundation level apprenticeships



- Funded University Tuition
- Apprenticeships
- Graduate Apprenticeships
- Fair Start Scotland
- Intensive employment support for parents

## Helping build skills and prepare for work



## Promoting fairer working lives



## Providing access to warm and affordable homes

- 50,000 affordable homes
- Home Energy Scotland – access to Warmer Homes Scotland programme
- Private Sector Tenancy
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme



- Real Living Wage
- Encouraging flexible work
- Flexible Workforce Development Fund
- Job Grant for eligible young people
- Workplace Equality Fund



We're also supporting families on their journey through:

Social Security Scotland

Scottish Welfare Fund

Free Prescriptions

Access to sanitary products

Financial Health Check



National Transport Strategy



# Drivers of Poverty

In line with the Scottish Government Act, Angus partners have been meeting regularly to further develop the actions and activity supporting the aim to reduce child poverty. As with the initial report the mapping has been updated with future activity also identified. To ensure this information is transparent and accessible it can be viewed online at <http://bit.ly/2T4V26l>

To better understand the challenges faced by local people the Angus Community Planning Partnership developed a series of 5 test personas – this complimented the engagement work with service users. The personas can be used by services and local organisations to test a service based on our populations challenges and the Scottish Government protected characteristics.

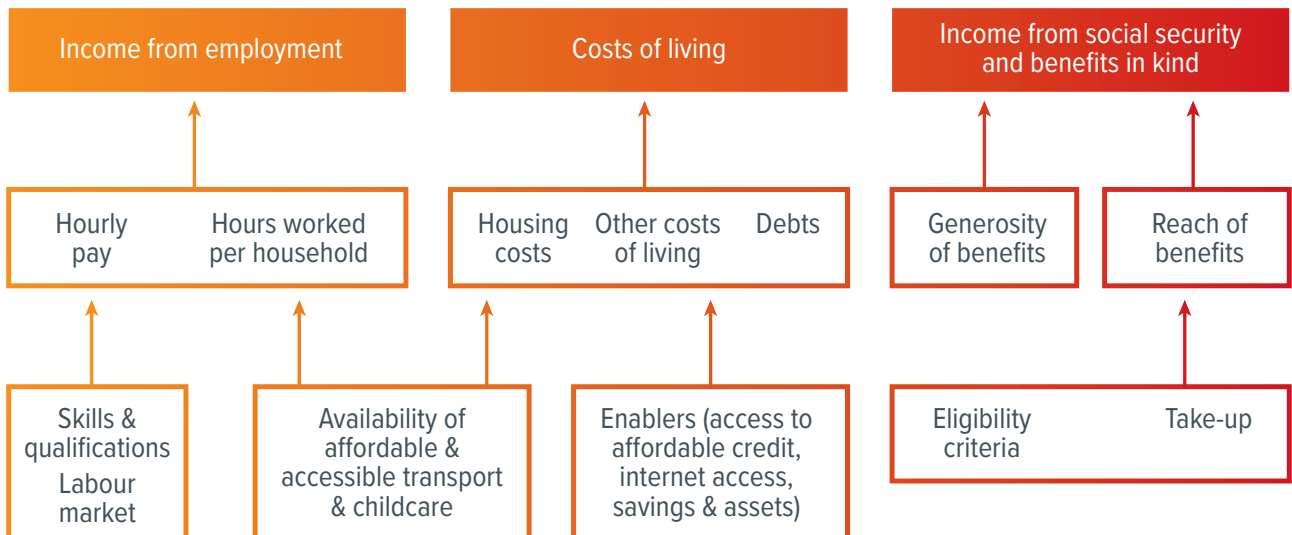


They were based on evidence, data and local facts. Data was drawn from local services, local communities and national data sources i.e. NOMIS, SNS and SPIRU. The personas included:

- Household with disabled child.
- Minority ethnic household.
- Large families.
- Lone parents.
- Mothers under 25.
- Single parent with child under 1.

Persona	Protected Characteristic	Challenges
55 year old Male	Redundant jobseeker	Up-skilling, isolation
35 year old Male	Sick/disabled	Incapacity claimant
18 year old Female	Single parent, young person	Early years
20 year old Female	Care experienced	Unskilled, zero hours contracts
30 year old Female	Seasonal worker/ethnic background	EU exit, ESOL

This section outlines the work achieved and case studies on the drivers of poverty:





# Income from Employment

Employability services have long played a vital role in supporting those experiencing or at risk of poverty into work. The current economic, political and legal context, however, necessitates a refreshing of efforts to ensure employability policy/delivery at local, regional and national level is maximising the opportunity to tackle child poverty and socio-economic inequality. Our shared aim through No One Left Behind (NOLB) is to ensure a person centred, flexible and responsive service enabling access to sustainable fair work helping individuals to achieve their full potential in an inclusive and fair economy.

Approximately 1 in 4 children currently live in poverty. Those at highest risk of child poverty include lone parents (36%), households in which someone is disabled (30%), minority ethnic households (37%), families with three or more children (30%), households with a baby under one (32%) and households where the mother is aged 25 or less (44%).

For 2020/21 a number of actions have been identified to support these target groups including:

- Local Employability programmes funded through PESF monies.
- Employability Academies.
- Shared Apprenticeship Programme.
- Online job search app launched.
- Volunteer initiatives.
- Dundee & Angus College Poverty Programme.
- No One Left Behind Learning Agreement/Action Plan. The individual will participate in a programme of tailored learning and activity based on an assessment of their immediate and future skills needs.
- Tay Cities Engineering Partnership.
- Menu of choices for schools in order to improve access for young people to engage in schools-based youth work programmes i.e. Employability skills, confidence building.
- Online training in financial literacy - managing household budgets and understanding the use of online resources to reduce living costs.
- SCVO Digital Champions training and will provide 1:1 digital literacy training.

# CASE STUDY

## Sonia's Story

Sonia is 34. She is single and lives in local authority rented accommodation. Sonia works in a local retail store. She has a zero hours contract but normally works for 20 hours each week.

Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, however, Sonia was enjoying working almost full time. Her Universal Credit stopped, and she became independent in her living expenses. When lockdown was announced, her employer reduced her hours to the twenty she had initially. This meant that Sonia did not have enough income to pay her rent and bills so she hoped Universal Credit would 'kick in'. Sonia's literacy difficulties make it hard for her to understand all the information on her Universal Credit account and prior to lockdown Sonia came to the Learning Shop for support with this. During lockdown Sonia has had no internet access and no family or friends who can help her to log into her Universal Credit account.

Sonia was also unable to see her payslip as it was only available online and, when she did not receive any Universal Credit in June, she was very worried about how she would manage. Learning Shop staff liaised with Sonia's employer and JC+ and were able to get authorisation to speak to the Universal Credit helpline on Sonia's behalf.

Sonia's Universal Credit account had been set up to pay her housing costs as a priority which meant that any benefit, she was entitled to would first be used to pay her rent directly to the local authority.

Sonia's employer had been late with communicating Sonia's wage amount to Universal Credit in May which had led to Sonia receiving no Universal Credit payment in June. Sonia, therefore, fell into arrears with her rent.

Learning shop staff called housing to find out if Sonia had rent arrears and what payments had been made. Housing were able to say how much the arrears were, but they did not know how much the payment from universal credit would be so could not say how much her actual arrears were. This is an on-going situation.

Sonia still does not know how much she has to live on this month.

## Learning Points

When an employer pays varied hours to an employee the communication between universal credit/employer/landlord is not as streamlined as it needs to be. They each have their own systems and the person claiming

benefit does not have access to all of this information. This is compounded by literacy difficulties in a complex situation (and also no on-line access) and consequently the person has no control or knowledge about their income or expenditure (they don't know if the money in their bank account is actually theirs to spend).

Letters from housing agencies were sent out about an increase in rent on 1 April. Learners who do not have access to their Universal Credit account cannot inform Universal Credit, therefore, they will ALL currently be in arrears for the increased amount since April 2020.



# Costs of Living

There are several factors involved which level the playing field regardless of someone's wages/income. The 'true cost of living' which looks at everything from property prices, taxes, energy costs to grocery shopping have been explored by the partnership in terms of how best to support local people. Alongside the national funding packages in Angus a lot of work has been done to explore the barriers local people are facing. The Hard Edges research has been extremely useful in starting the conversation across all services and with service users. In October 2019 the partnership held an event to explore the barriers:



As with the Scottish Government diagram shown on page 4 a number of factors can link to poverty which was highlighted at the event. Through the learning from local people at these events, actions were co-produced to ensure that services increased service user involvement. Great examples of this work have been seen in the housing strategy and throughout COVID-19 in our community provision.

For 2020/21 a number of actions have been identified to support this work further including:

- Cost of the school day Guide for Angus Schools.
- Access to services through new Projects – funded through participatory budgeting.
- Reduced fees for leisure services.
- Free school lunches throughout COVID-19.
- Funding for membership at Angus's first social supermarket.
- Access to free digital devices – Connecting Scotland Funding.

- Programme of new affordable housing development in Angus, contributing to the Scottish Government's target to deliver 50,000 new affordable homes in the lifetime of this Parliament.
- Free period products available throughout Angus.
- School uniform swap shops and access to activity packs.
- Implementation of new minimum EPC standards, ensuring households live in warmer, energy efficient homes, thus reducing fuel costs for occupants.
- Angus Toy Appeal project – providing young people in hardship with activities.
- 34 ICT devices for those most at risk from COVID-19 and on low incomes.
- Participatory budgeting is a process of democratic decision-making, in which local people decide how to allocate part of the council's budget. In Angus this was badged as 'Choice for Angus'. In total 144 groups across Angus were involved in developing projects/proposals for a share of £200,000.

# CASE STUDY

## Income maximisation referral pathways from NHS Midwives to Welfare Rights Service

NHS Tayside were allocated approx. £19k from the Scottish Government's 'Every Child Every Chance' funding, the money was to be used to create referral pathways from midwives to the advice sector. A pilot project commenced in December 2019 which provides a direct referral system allowing midwives to refer clients into the Welfare Rights Service. The additional money has been used to temporarily increase a staff members hour to help administer and deal with the incoming referrals.

For the first 6 months of the pilot, there were 23 referrals made by wives, contact was established with 18 families and financial gains totalling £130,171.01 were identified. Planned Poverty Sensitivity sessions with the midwife team have been delayed due to Covid-19 however initial sessions have helped local people:-

### Case Study 1

Client was referred by a midwife for an entitlement check and advice regarding benefits. Client (pregnant - less than 24 weeks), lives with partner and their three children in a private rented property. All household members are in good health. The client is self-employed, and the partner was recently made redundant. They are in receipt of Universal Credit, Child Benefit (x3) and a small amount of Council Tax Reduction. Welfare Rights contacted the client and advised that she would be entitled to a Best Start Grant (Pregnancy & Baby Payment) award of £300 when she reached 24 weeks, we also advised she is eligible for Best Start Food vouchers (£17 every four weeks, these increase to £34 every 4 weeks from the birth of the baby until they turn 1, then £17 every 4 weeks from age 1 to 3). We also identified that she would be entitled to claim a Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment of £250 in respect of her 2-year-old daughter. We also discussed Statutory Maternity Pay for self-employed people and she met the criteria for this and was therefore entitled to up to £151.20 per week for 39 weeks. She will also receive an additional £13.95 pw of child benefit after the baby arrives. The client will also be entitled to free dental care until the baby turns one year old.

### Case Study 2

Client was referred by a midwife for an entitlement check and advice regarding benefits. Client (pregnant - less than 24 weeks), single parent, lives with her 3-year-old son in a council property, they are both in good health. Client is a carer for her disabled father, she is in receipt of Carers



Allowance, Universal Credit, Council Tax Reduction and Child Benefit (x1). Welfare Rights contacted the client and advised her Universal Credit would increase by £235.83 per month when the baby arrives, her Child Benefit will increase by £13.95 per week. Advised that she will qualify for a Best Start Grant (Pregnancy & Baby Payment) award of £300 when she reaches 24 weeks and she will qualify for a Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment of £250 in respect of her 3-year-old son. Advised her about the Best Food Vouchers amounting to £17 per four weeks (increase to £34 per 4 weeks when baby born up to age one, and £17 every 4 weeks from age 1 to 3) and also advised she is now entitled to free dental care until the baby turns one year old.

This pilot was very much developed in partnership and demand led, the service user consultations and engagement has been incredibly useful to ensure that we are delivering services that will make an impact on people's lives.

# CASE STUDY

## Holiday Food and Fun @ The Cross

Parents and children were invited to attend free 'Holiday Food & Fun' drop-in sessions during October 2019. Partners including VAA, Education and Lifelong Learning, Community Planning Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau, Home Start, Scottish Fire Service, Welfare Rights, ADHD Support worked together to provide an opportunity for families to access a free and healthy lunch whilst being able to engage with and take advice from the staff of partner agencies.

Soup, sandwiches and fresh fruit were available free of charge along with period poverty products. The atmosphere was warm and inviting, children and parents could access toys, books and games, giving them a pleasant environment in which to spend their time during the holiday periods. This is a model which could be used successfully in other localities, however there is a need for staff, co-ordination and funding.

<https://youtu.be/WRsnoKLKqXE>

All the provision was paused due to COVID-19 and identified families have been receiving food only voucher support/direct payments for free school meals. The vouchers allocated to date are £35,650. Links were also made with the newly formed Social Supermarket where 150 members have joined to date and the partnership have agreed to fund the application from families entitled to Free School Meals at a cost of £5 per application. £3,000 has been set aside for this work.

It is evident that the support families have received not only from the Food Voucher Scheme, but the Toy Bags and Food Hubs has made a huge difference to their health and wellbeing. It was encouraging to hear that relationships were maintained/improved and barriers were broken down as a result of the support staff were able to offer; the positive impact of this work is evident in the quotes from parents/carers, some of which I have noted below.

- Vouchers have taken pressure off me, when going for weekly shop, knowing that I have this extra money to pay for what is needed to give my children decent meals.
- Vouchers helped loads, able to buy extra fruit and vegetables for my son.
- Thank you so much for the lovely treats!! We started straight away hunting for mini beasts and butterflies with the nets and then went down to the rock pools.

- The vouchers came in handy with four hungry children and with noticing an increase in food prices due to Covid-19. It also helped me make sure I stayed on top of my finances and allowed me to buy healthy foods. With four energetic girls who were constantly on the go and hungry I managed to stick to healthy foods and keep them busy throughout lockdown (praying we don't go back into isolation). I am so grateful thank you very much.

Partnership working continues to thrive due to the hard work and commitment from all involved, helping to meet the needs of many parent/carers and children.

### **Outcomes**

- 8 different support agencies were on hand to give advice.
- 143 attendees enjoyed a free healthy lunch.
- 32 families were able to enjoy games/read in a supportive environment.
- 9 home fire safety checks were carried out (post event).
- 3 volunteers were identified - developing skills for life and work.
- 27 benefit investigations identified £9,198 of unclaimed entitlements.
- 9 parents and children participated in basic cookery classes.
- £150 Period Poverty products were accessed.



# CASE STUDY

## Jim's Story

Jim is 47 years old. He is single and has been unemployed for 12 years. He has some learning disabilities, but they are not considered severe enough to need agency support. Jim can read but has difficulty writing. Jim claims Universal Credit. Prior to claiming Universal Credit, he had no history of debt. An initial 8-week delay in transfer from Job Seekers allowance to Universal Credit caused difficulties.

Jim continues to struggle with rent arrears because payment of arrears means he does not have enough to live on. Through a partnership approach he was recently supported to read and check his housing costs in Universal Credit as he was still struggling with rent arrears. Jim was unable to read and understand all the information re housing payments and deductions on his Universal Credit account. The housing costs on his account were incorrect – it is the claimant's responsibility to make sure this is updated if their rent increases.

Jim was supported to question his housing costs and they were checked, found to be incorrect and updated and the learner later received a back-dated payment. Jim was supported to make a Scottish Welfare Fund application and to contact their rent officer to discuss paying less for the next few months so they could manage.

Jim was also helped to understand the other deductions being taken from their UC for Council Tax (water & sewerage) arrears. Staff at the learning shop contacted the Council Tax Revenues department but they were unable to make changes to deductions once they had been set up.

### Learning Points

People who have literacies difficulties are finding themselves powerless and dependent on others to support them in an increasingly complex, online form filling world. More and more, complex capabilities are required in order to carry out, what were, common living tasks such as paying rent.

Water and sewerage charges must be paid by everyone – there is no rebate for them, and everyone pays no matter what their income. The community does not understand this, and the system of payment is inflexible.

# Income from Social Security Benefits and Benefits in Kind

Supporting local people in Angus to improve their quality of life by claiming their entitlements has led to a significant outcome over the past 12 months. From the actions identified an online benefits calculator was developed and embedded into the Angus Council website so residents could access this free tool at any time. It can be used for a variety of reasons, for example, to check:

- If residents are missing out on any entitlements.
- If a resident's current entitlements are correct.
- What impact a change in circumstances can have on entitlements.

The calculator is free to use, available 24/7 and no personal details are stored which gives the user confidence that any details they provide for the benefit entitlement check are not passed onto a third party. The calculator was invaluable in the early stages of Covid-19 when it was used 1200 times in one week alone and helped identify entitlements totalling £3.4m in that period. The online calculator is in addition to the entitlement checks which are carried out by the welfare rights team as online digital tools are not suitable for all residents and the partnership wanted to be inclusive. [www.angus.gov.uk/news/online\\_benefits\\_calculator\\_helps\\_angus\\_residents\\_during\\_coronavirus\\_crisis](http://www.angus.gov.uk/news/online_benefits_calculator_helps_angus_residents_during_coronavirus_crisis)

For 2020/21 a number of actions have been identified to support this work further including:

- Housing and child poverty study to inform new Housing Strategy.
- Temporary accommodation standards will be reviewed in line with recommendations from Ending Homelessness Together and new statutory requirements.
- New policy on Intentionality when assessing homeless applications.
- Community Cookit - providing participants with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to run an effective cooking group.
- Nutrition Volunteer Training.
- Get Nourished, NHS Tayside Advice Line – minimising the impact of malnutrition.
- Direct referrals for income maximisation checks and debt advice from NHS midwives.
- Pilot welfare rights advice provision within primary school settings. Provision of income maximisation and debt advice to parents at 4 different primary schools across Angus.
- Family learning at 3 primary schools delivering financial education sessions.

# CASE STUDY

## Evie's Story

Evie is 61 years old. She is originally from an EU country and has no relatives here or in her birth country. Evie initially worked on a farm and has lived in Scotland for 14 years. When Evie's partner left her, she lost her home but was able to get a council house and a job as a cleaner in a bank. When the bank closed its local branch, Evie was made redundant and found herself with no income. She was refused job seekers allowance and, as an EU national, was not entitled to Universal Credit.

Evie applied for many, many local jobs but her poor skills in spoken English held her back at interview (Evie probably has dyslexia in her first language). Evie's situation of having no income continued for over two years. During this time, she survived the winters in her home without electricity or gas. Her rent and water arrears mounted up and she was cited with an eviction notice.

Through a partnership response - Arbroath Learning Shop, AHSCP homelessness team, CAB, and RSABI aimed to produce a positive outcome for a learner in a long-term crises' situation. Other agency involvement from Shelter, Welfare Rights, JCP, local GP and Angus Foodbanks ensured a collaborative wrap around service was given.

The partnership ensured that Evie was kept 'afloat' with foodbank vouchers, welfare fund crises grants and RSABI charity awards while she was supported to apply for and was awarded settled status.

Evie successfully appealed a decision not to be awarded Universal Credit and ultimately receive her UC entitlement. Evie successfully appealed a court summons for eviction over her housing arrears and case was dismissed. The full impact of this collaborative work is that Evie has remained well (at one point she was referred to a GP over concerns for her mental well-being). She has been able to retain her home and has since secured a permanent position with an established local company. The two-year journey has, however, been very painful.

### Learning Points

Some partner agencies are working against each other. For example, one agency trying to evict while the other tries to secure funding to keep the person in their home.

Utility companies charge customers for the hire of a meter even when they are not using electricity (customers tend not to know that they must



notify them). Customers must pay a percentage of arrears off (plus have a minimum of £5 in their meter) before they can use any electricity. In Evie's case it was £11 a month for two years.

Utility companies will not provide meter users with a statement about their charges or arrears. People in arrears must rely on the word of the utility company and continue to put money blindly in their meter.

People with no income do not have credit in their phones and are unable to make calls to agencies.

People with no income have no personal access to internet and cannot access email, statements such as bank/housing or universal credit decisions.

# CASE STUDY

## Community Café at Dundee & Angus College

Following on from the success of the Arbroath Healthy Living Initiative Community Café model in the Strathairlie area of Arbroath, D&A College and the Communities Team agreed to pilot a new café in the college's Enterprise Centre.

This is a community development approach to health which aims to empower local people to give them greater control over their own health and what's important to them. The café approach encourages:

- Positive learning experiences which empower people and promote the right to self determination.
- Social connection with people and community from all backgrounds.
- Contributing to the community through volunteering.
- Integration of generations.

To grow interest and momentum, the partnership decided to increase the café to once per week. The partnership approach has delivered multiple benefits for the young people engaged in the RCPP as well as the wider community:

- D&A college students would benefit from H&W activities that the AHLI model could provide.
- D&A College has resources which could allow the AHLI to extend its provision to another part of Arbroath.
- Students will be involved in providing some activity as part of the community café or associated H&W activities. This will add value to their studies by adding real life experience. Examples of this are – cooking, hospitality, horticulture, H&S and sports etc.
- Young people engaged through our 16-24 year child poverty project can attend the café and activities, offering an informal engagement into the project, college and wider community offerings.

The café launched on 1st October 2019 and has run once per month engaging over 60 people, ranging from 15 – 60+ years. Support and attendance have come from various organisations including DEAP, Penumbra, Police Scotland, and Arbroath Academy.

At each café, a healthy lunch is offered to our visitors; made and served by volunteers. The partnership has run various, successful activities including nail bars (run by our Beauty students to gain practical experience), Christmas card/craft sessions and orienteering around the college campus. In the coming weeks, Police Scotland will deliver a session on Cyber Safety and Penumbra on mental health and wellbeing.



# CASE STUDY

## Research project – support needs and outcomes for homeless households

Homelessness can negatively impact the future outcomes of children. The research has shown that people who experience homelessness as children are more likely to experience homelessness as an adult. Work is underway to implement the actions identified in Year 1 of Angus' Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP). The principle aim of the RRTP is to ensure, where homelessness cannot be prevented, the negative impacts of homelessness on families and their children are reduced and those who experience homelessness reach a settled housing outcome as quickly as possible.

To help inform the ongoing development of Angus' RRTP, Indigo House Group were commissioned to complete independent research to better understand the support needs and outcomes of homeless households in Angus. The research was undertaken through a mixed method partnership approach involving: data analysis (reviewing existing data and research); service user research (qualitative interviews with 32 people who have experienced homelessness in Angus); and service provider research (qualitative individual and small group interviews with 24 representatives from service providers working in homelessness and related services).

In line with the Hard Edges Scotland research, the accounts from many of the participants with experience of homelessness demonstrate the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Twelve opened up about their past trauma as children and how it affected them, and the service user interviews highlighted that current and past issues were all against a backdrop of enduring poverty.

The research concluded that most households that have experienced homelessness need little support other than good customer service to access an affordable home. Critical for all the different responses is an understanding that an inadequate, poor service will continue to result individual households limited life chances and will continue to cost the public purse through repeated crises.

A number of recommendations were made and are being considered by Angus Council, the Health & Social Care Partnership and third sector stakeholders and will be addressed in the revised Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and other work streams:

- Develop a multi-disciplinary approach to address severe and multiple deprivation homelessness – so that those with complex needs (ill-health, criminal justice and homelessness experiences) are collectively

considered and addressed through effective joint working, communication and information sharing.

- Review the scale and purpose of supported accommodation.
- Consider the level of resources for transition to independent living.
- Embed a housing support culture within the housing service and ensure approaches are trauma informed so that staff understand and have methods for coping with complex needs.
- Review the Community Care Grant processes - to enable households to access the resources required to get the basics to set up home as quickly as possible.
- Consider how vulnerable households can better access public transport to maximise access to services and minimise social isolation.

# Targets/Performance

The child Poverty Act sets out interim targets, to be met in the financial year beginning on 1 April 2023 – which is the halfway point between the position at the time the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act was passed and the 2030 target date for the meeting of the targets:

- Less than 18% of children are in relative poverty.
- Less than 14% of children are in absolute poverty.
- Less than 8% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation.
- Less than 8% of children are in persistent poverty.

The partnership identified a range of indicators under each driver of poverty. This is used to inform activity and shows some key areas of development and progress. Challenges around employment from the pandemic have affected the statistics however through increased partnership working there have been some improvements around homelessness, supporting people through employability skills and the reduction in children on the register which are all things to build on throughout the next 12 months.

The Angus Child Poverty working Group compiled a set of indicators to track progress:

	19/20	Baseline 2018/19
<b>Income from Employment</b>		
Underemployment of (16+) population	9.6%	9.2%
Employment Rate	61.9%	75.7%
% Employees (18+) earning less than the Living Wage	29.1%	26.5%
Median paid hours per week	36.2 hours	36.2 hours
Gross median hourly pay (£)	12.69	12.77
Proportion of population with no qualifications (16-64)	7.4%	10.6%
<b>Costs of Living</b>		
2 bedroom properties - average (mean) monthly rents (£)	582	562
Workless households with children	10.6%	12.6%
Total early learning and childcare services per 10,000 children	53.4%	54.7%
Population reported that public transport was easy to access	73% (2018)	70.7% (2017)
New social housing applicants	1,770	2,156
<b>Income from Social security benefits and benefits in kind</b>		
P4-7 pupils are free school meal registered	14.4%	13.4%
% of all children living in families are in receipt of child tax credit	14.1%	14.5%
Number on Child Protection Register	59	68
Working/mixed households with children	84.6%	87.4%
Homeless applications	653	741

Sources: Annual Population Survey, NOMIS Time Series, Scottish Government Economy and Labour Market Regional Employment Patterns, Citizens Survey

# Shaping the Future – Angus Connect

At the Community Planning Joint meeting on 1 July 2020 the representatives agreed that to best address the priorities, we needed to review how we work and more importantly how we work together. The determining factor in how we work should be ensuring the right service reaches the right citizen when and where they need it and helping people to help themselves.

We have recently experienced a test of change in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant amount of assessment of this response has already been undertaken. The workshop programme set out below built on this and developed the evaluation into what our potential every day could look like:-

**Evaluate** - Selected attendees from partner organisations who have been working on the front line provided feedback, this work complimented the Social Renewal Advisory Board Listening events. Key areas for discussion included:

- why we achieved success.
- whether we could have done this within our “normal” working practices (if not, why not?).
- what the barriers were that we may encounter moving forward.

**Evolve** - Based on the output from the Evaluate workshops the Evolve session allowed key partners to participate in a session to build a proposal that would form the new approach to Community Planning and Partnership working in Angus. Key areas of discussion included:

- Considering the Partnership priorities from the citizen point of view.
- Clarifying barriers in our current working practice that could stop us achieving that, and identifying what could and could not be changed. This could include National working practice of organisations, Governance restrictions, Performance reporting, Organisation policies and Behaviours.

The third workshop ‘**Establish**’ was an open invite developing the learning from the previous sessions. This included:

- Introduction to recovery streams (LRP, Angus Connect, Demand Management).
- Overview of work undertaken in workshops to date
- Discussion/challenge of proposals and recommendations on front line working in break out groups with facilitated questions
- Discussion on the resultant structure of CPP and reporting arrangements/performance measurement.
- Feedback and agreement on recommendations to be taken to Board.



