

**Dumfries and Galloway
Local Child Poverty
Action Report
2020-2021**

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1. Introduction

Across Dumfries and Galloway, local partners continue to be committed to and united in our determination to improve the lives of children and families living in or at risk of poverty. Though our work throughout the reporting period has been dominated by the immediate need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant achievements in ensuring that families hit the hardest have received help and support to meet their basic needs and respect their human rights.

As well as reporting on our planned work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts, this report also highlights the impact of the pandemic on children, young people and their families, focusing on those experiencing or at risk of child poverty. For some families, they are experiencing poverty for the first time as a direct result of the pandemic and our local services are seeing a significant increase in demand for advice and crisis help.

From March 2020, plans for all organisations changed considerably in response to the onset of the pandemic. Whilst all services, agencies and community groups have been doing their utmost to support children and families throughout the first year of the pandemic, many have been significantly stretched due to limitations on staffing and resources, not to mention the health protection restrictions requiring services to be delivered differently. This has also resulted in staff across services being deployed to support the response, often resulting in a halt in all but essential face to face work, and a complete shift in focus for many services.

Accordingly, the pandemic has delayed our annual reporting on actions to tackle child poverty which were delivered across the region between April 2020 and March 2021. This report seeks to ensure that capacity is maximised by focusing on the delivering of actions that will make a real and sustainable difference to the lives of children and families in Dumfries and Galloway who are experiencing financial hardship.

The pandemic has also delayed our plans to develop and begin to deliver on a fuller Action Plan for 2020 to 2023, as well as a delay in the production on the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP).

The report evidences that there has been significant work to tackle and mitigate child poverty, as reported on in Chapter 5.

In March 2021 our Community Planning Partnership agreed the first Poverty and Inequalities Strategy and to implement that Strategy, a new Partnership was also established. Four new Sub-Groups have been established, one of which being 'Developing our approach to Child Poverty'. This will support us to re-focus and progress our partnership approach to tackling child poverty through enhanced collaboration across the whole system.

2. Context for reporting on child poverty

2.1 Our duty to report on child poverty

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR). This Report for 2020-2021 is Dumfries and Galloway's third published Report with the dual purpose of reporting on progress over the year and intimating our forward plan.

The LCPAR is one of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board's key strategies and Plans that contribute to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and progress in the Action Plan is therefore reported there on a quarterly basis. In addition, this Plan is not only approved by the two statutory partners of Dumfries and Galloway Health Board and Dumfries and Galloway Council, but it is endorsed by the CPP Partnership.

Our previous Report in 2019-2020 is available here:

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s22461/Local%20Child%20Poverty%20Action%20Plan%20Appendix%20FINAL.pdf>. It included the following information and as such this is not repeated in this iteration:

- The national context and targets for reducing child poverty
- Links to other local plans and strategies including the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
- Links to our work to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Local partnership arrangement for reporting on child poverty
- Arrangements for engaging with stakeholders including those with lived experience of child poverty
- Links to the Public Health Priorities for Scotland.

Whilst the development and publication of this 2020-2021 Report has been delayed as a result of the leading organisations prioritising the pandemic response, we have ambitious plans to develop an improved partnership approach to child poverty, which in turn will ensure timely future reporting. Further details of the partnership approach can be found in Chapter 6.

2.2 Priority families

In Dumfries and Galloway from April 2020 to March 2021, we have continued to focus our work to target families in the nationally identified priority groups. Over 90% of children living in poverty in Scotland fall into one or more of these priority family groups.

Figure 1 – The Six Priority Family Groups



Lone parents

Nationally, 38% children in lone parent families are living in relative poverty and 35% in absolute poverty.

Families with a disabled member

Nationally, 29% of children in families with a disabled member are living in relative poverty and 26% in absolute poverty.

Ethnic minority families

Nationally, 38% of children in ethnic minority families are living in relative poverty and 34% in absolute poverty.

Families with 3 or more children

Nationally, 32% of children in families with 3 or more children are living in relative poverty and 29% in absolute poverty.

Families with children under 1 year

Nationally, 34% of children in families with a child under 1 are living in relative poverty and 30% in absolute poverty.

Mothers aged under 25

Nationally, 55% of children in families where the mother is aged under 25 are living in relative poverty and 49% in absolute poverty.

Working households

In Scotland, 68% of children in poverty live in a working household, re-emphasising the need for good quality, well paid, flexible jobs. Though this is not a nationally agreed priority group, in Dumfries and Galloway we are targeting working families through a number of projects and services which are detailed in the following chapter.

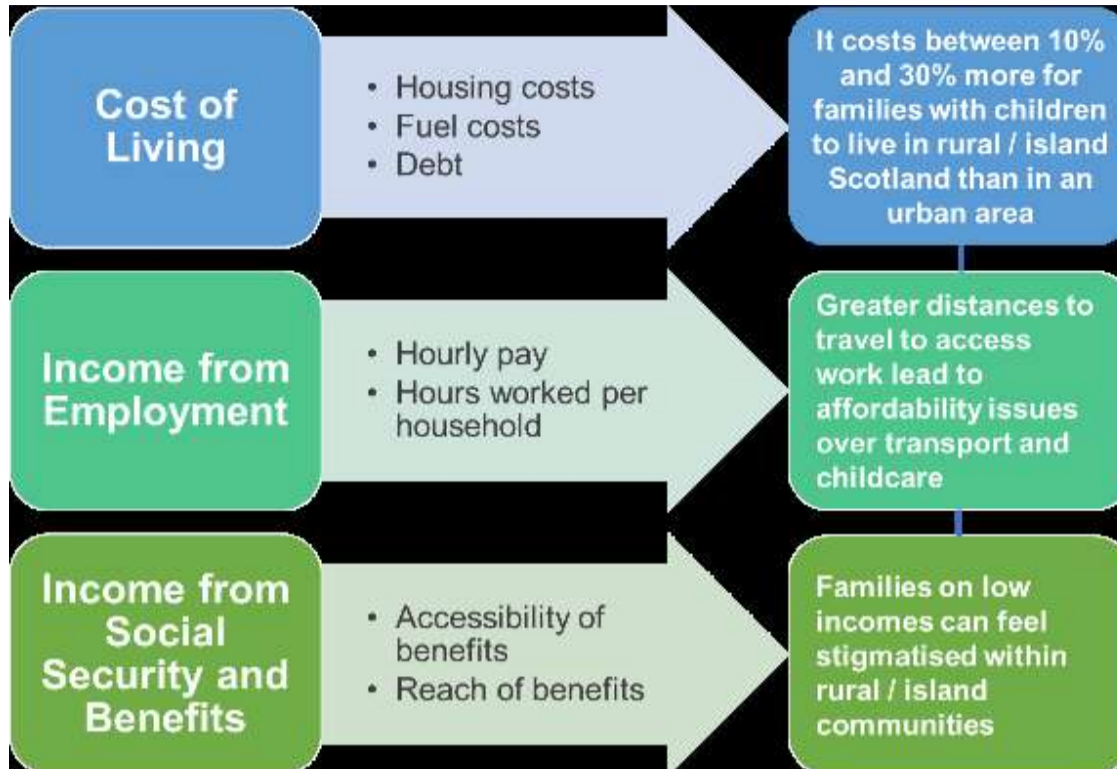
2.3 Key drivers of child poverty

Each 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 nature of Dumfries and Galloway and the specific issues that are therefore relevant to our local context which are illustrated in more detail in the diagram below:

Figure 2 – The Three Key Drivers of Action to Tackle Child Poverty



3. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Dumfries and Galloway

3.1 The impact of the pandemic on children and young people's health and wellbeing

Fortunately, relative to other age groups and other causes of childhood illness, the direct health impacts of COVID-19 on children and young people have been limited. However, the pandemic and the control measures required to reduce direct COVID-19 harm have substantially impacted the lives of our children and young people and their families. With significant disruption to how we interact with each other and the functioning of economic, education and health systems and services, the impacts are being felt most by those already at a disadvantage and experiencing inequality before the pandemic, and some of these impacts are likely to endure.

For children and families with pre-existing vulnerabilities such as domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use, physical health or mental health difficulties, accessing support and protection was more challenging than ever before, placing additional strains on the families affected.

We know that the quality of healthcare and education children receive, the income and resources their families have access to, and the climate and environment in which they grow up will have a lifelong impact. For children, critical and sensitive periods of growth and development alongside key social and educational transitions mean that disruption caused by the pandemic will be experienced differently to adults. The window of opportunity for intervention to address impacts can be short and time sensitive. The pandemic has required high levels of resilience among all families, both increasing stressors and reducing resources available to mitigate these.

One particular group among whom the impacts are likely to have been particularly acute are children and families living in poverty before the pandemic or who are now living in poverty as a result of the impacts of the pandemic. Mitigating the disruption caused by the pandemic will require more than a resumption of services but active recovery of missed opportunities and support to manage experiences of adversity and trauma from direct and indirect effects of COVID-19.

In particular, the pandemic impacted on our children and young people through the closure of all Primary and Secondary Schools within our Region. This immediately deprived those most in need of a safe space who live in vulnerable households and also the children and young people who rely on the many Breakfast Clubs running throughout our Region and their Free School Meals which are their only form of meal and nutrition each day.

3.2 The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on families

COVID-19 has exposed and amplified pre-existing levels of social and economic inequality and poverty (Marmot and Allen 2020). Many families experienced, and continue to experience, extensive challenges. The measures introduced to suppress the virus have disproportionately affected low-income families with young children (Whitehead et al 2021).

Some households have experienced financial hardship due to redundancy or furlough; others have been made unemployed or worked in precarious, low paid jobs. A recent analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2021a) highlights that while many across the UK have faced significant financial challenges throughout the pandemic, this has hit those in poorer quality jobs and those experiencing in-work poverty the hardest.

During the first lockdown period, people in poorly paid or insecure jobs were most likely to lose their job or experience reduced hours. Workers on zero-hours contracts or in temporary employment were four times more likely to lose their jobs, and lower-paid workers twice as likely to lose their jobs as the highest. In addition, self-employed workers were three times more likely to stop working than people on permanent contracts.

As with poverty, there is a gendered aspect with mothers, including single mothers, disproportionately responsible for the extra care responsibilities, including home-schooling and more likely to be interrupted in their paid work with those on lowest incomes at greater risk of losing their jobs (Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2021b).

Due to changes in income and employment, some households are struggling to meet their living costs with the burden of rent, mortgage and subsequent threat of eviction or repossession (Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2021c). The YouGov poll (Feb 2021) reported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that more renters were worried about being able to pay their rent than they had been in March 2020. Concerns were greater for private renters than social renters and mortgage owners. Young people aged 16-24 were more worried than they were last year about their ability to afford rent.

Nationally, there has been a 10% increase in households with children using food banks (increase in use by all households has increased by 5%). Within Dumfries and Galloway our Food Bank providers in each of our 12 Ward Areas have also noticed that they have experienced significant rises in request for support from the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic onwards.

Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway and all stakeholders and partners immediately implemented a range of essential measures and additional support mechanisms to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on all families and individuals within our Region. You can read more about this in Chapter 5.

As with all emergency situations, those on the lowest incomes and who are already suffering from any form of poverty or inequalities always suffer greater impact both in terms of financial and health and wellbeing scale. This is due to fact that they have no financial cushion to fall back on which any immediate change of financial circumstances would lessen and, in most cases, no financial supporting mechanisms from their family and friends networks.

The full social and economic impact of COVID-19 is still to be felt and the extent of that impact is still uncertain particularly in relation to the ending of the UK Governments Furlough Scheme in October 2021 and also the longer term mental and physical health impacts. In the short term, it has been mitigated by furlough and other policies, and by people relying on their own household financial buffers such as savings, although the latter will gradually erode.

During the pandemic, local organisations reported that more people are seeking their help than ever before as a result of reductions in their income, with many of those people new to experiencing poverty, unemployment, and to needing help. There has been increased demand for advice and increased demand for crisis help.

The Partnership COVID-19 Recovery Plan recognises that Dumfries and Galloway will be dealing with the fallout from COVID-19 for many years. Scottish Government's assessment of economic vulnerability indicates that Dumfries and Galloway is particularly vulnerable due to the sectors on which it relies such as hospitality and tourism. The loss of even smaller employers in some of our rural communities may be devastating.

There will be lasting ramifications of the economic crisis in terms of reduced employability and confidence amongst those who have lost work and a weaker Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) Sector on which to build recovery. Some young people may disengage from the systems that can support them, and it would be very difficult to bring back.

It is indicated that COVID-19 will mean that more people will experience poverty, and more of the people experiencing poverty will be in deeper poverty and will spend longer in poverty. That will have knock on effects across the range of issues faced by individuals, families, communities, and the services that support them.

COVID-19 has put those with the least under more pressure, put more people under pressure, and has more clearly identify the weaknesses and inequalities in our society, and our safety net. It has also pushed local public and third sector services to adapt to enormous challenges in ways that they might not previously have thought possible, and has generated a real response from local communities to the needs of their neighbours. Building back better, implementing our new Poverty and Inequalities Strategy and increasing our abilities to tackle both poverty and inequalities in the future, we will continue to make good use of all of those public, voluntary and community assets.

3.3 The impact of the pandemic on services

Within Dumfries and Galloway, a new Response, Restart and Recovery Service was immediately formed which was comprised of services and officers from all Directorates within our Council and which also developed joint working arrangements with our NHS Dumfries and Galloway Partners.

The Response, Restart and Recovery Service developed an effective approach to the restart of Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS services along with the strategic support for the economic and social recovery, while sustaining ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All activities and arrangements recognised that response, restart and recovery activity would be happening at the same time, and over an extended period, reflecting the requirement of the Scottish Government's Route Map and phasing plans and the capacity required to effectively and safely operate within Public Health guidance and the long term economic and social impacts forecast. Full details on the early response to the COVID-19 Pandemic are highlighted in the Report here:

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s22481/COVID-19%20Response%20Restart%20and%20Recovery%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

Services across the statutory, third and private sector were hugely impacted by the pandemic with many staff deployed to focus on the immediate threat to health and implementing control measures. With children, young people and their families much less visible to the service who would usually support them, due to lockdown and home learning, it became much more difficult for services to reach disadvantaged children and families and for those children and families to access the help they needed.

Despite the significant and unprecedented pressure faced by many services, staff across all sectors worked exceptionally hard to meet the needs of children and families at particular disadvantage as a result of the pandemic.

Across health and social care services, a range of actions were implemented to prevent the NHS from becoming overwhelmed. This included increasing capacity and readying hospitals and healthcare settings for treating COVID-19 positive patients, stopping non-urgent planned care, implementing protection measures and taking staff from their normal work to support the emergency response.

In following guidelines to mitigate transmission of the virus, services have had to adapt their models of service delivery. Public, private and third sector support services, such as Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service and the Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Service, adapted very quickly to delivering new online support mechanisms to ensure that our most vulnerable children and families were supported both to access digital services for the first time and to access the help and support which they required.

Across the NHS, many critical services adapted to ensure that health care was provided safely and effectively. Additionally, some Social Work and Youth Work services continued, ensuring that the most vulnerable individuals and families were supported.

Our Community Support Cell was a vital element of our response to the pandemic. Working alongside community groups and third sector organisations, responding to the basic needs and rights of the most vulnerable in our communities were met through a variety of mechanisms funded through the Scottish Government COVID-19 Hardship Funding.

Our COVID-19 Response, Restart and Recovery Report provides an overview of the response for all of our services along with NHS activities and the wider community response:

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s31612/RRR%20Update%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

4. Poverty and child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway

4.1 Rates of child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway has one of the highest rates of child poverty in Scotland, ranked 7th highest in 2019-2020 out of 32 Local Authority areas. The table below shows the levels of child poverty in each Local Authority Area in Scotland since 2014. It is worth noting that for every region in Scotland, including Dumfries and Galloway, the levels of poverty have risen.

Table 1 – Child Poverty in Scotland by Local Authority Area

Local Authority Area	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Aberdeen City	18.7%	19.5%	21.3%	22.3%	21.1%	21.3%
Aberdeenshire	15.6%	16.6%	17.4%	17.6%	15.7%	16.7%
Angus	21.1%	21.9%	23.6%	24.1%	23.3%	24.0%
Argyll and Bute	20.7%	22.2%	22.7%	23.9%	22.5%	23.3%
City of Edinburgh	18.6%	18.8%	20.7%	21.3%	18.9%	20.3%
Clackmannanshire	24.2%	25.5%	26.0%	27.3%	26.1%	27.3%
Dumfries and Galloway	23.3%	25.3%	24.8%	26.4%	25.0%	26.7%
Dundee City	23.8%	25.0%	26.4%	27.0%	26.2%	26.8%
East Ayrshire	24.4%	26.1%	25.8%	26.6%	26.8%	27.3%
East Dunbartonshire	15.2%	15.9%	16.9%	16.6%	14.8%	16.3%
East Lothian	21.9%	22.5%	23.4%	24.7%	22.7%	24.5%
East Renfrewshire	15.0%	15.6%	15.5%	15.5%	14.6%	15.8%
Falkirk	22.7%	23.2%	23.5%	24.3%	23.8%	24.8%
Fife	23.6%	25.0%	25.0%	26.0%	25.5%	26.4%
Glasgow City	27.1%	29.5%	29.6%	30.9%	31.0%	32.2%
Highland	21.4%	22.8%	22.8%	23.3%	22.6%	23.6%
Inverclyde	20.9%	23.0%	22.1%	23.3%	23.3%	23.8%
Midlothian	21.8%	21.1%	23.4%	23.8%	22.5%	23.9%
Moray	20.8%	22.0%	23.1%	23.2%	21.9%	23.4%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	17.5%	20.6%	20.8%	19.6%	18.7%	20.7%
North Ayrshire	24.8%	26.5%	26.2%	27.4%	27.1%	27.9%
North Lanarkshire	23.9%	25.5%	25.2%	26.3%	25.5%	26.5%
Orkney Islands	20.3%	20.7%	21.9%	22.4%	21.2%	22.7%
Perth and Kinross	19.9%	21.2%	21.4%	22.4%	21.1%	22.6%
Renfrewshire	19.3%	20.4%	21.3%	22.8%	21.9%	23.1%
Scottish Borders	20.9%	22.5%	23.2%	23.9%	22.5%	24.2%
Shetland Islands	13.3%	15.2%	16.0%	17.1%	14.4%	15.8%
South Ayrshire	22.7%	23.5%	24.2%	24.6%	24.6%	24.8%
South Lanarkshire	21.5%	22.4%	22.5%	23.5%	22.5%	23.1%
Stirling	19.6%	20.0%	20.1%	21.2%	20.2%	21.3%
West Dunbartonshire	23.4%	24.5%	25.1%	26.9%	26.3%	26.8%
West Lothian	21.3%	22.1%	23.0%	23.8%	22.9%	24.6%

Further information on the national picture can be found in the End Child Poverty Report here: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20/>

4.2 Deprivation in Dumfries and Galloway

One of the main sources of information on poverty in Scotland is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which assesses deprivation at local levels across a number of different themes.

Overall Dumfries and Galloway has 19 data zones considered to be in the 20% most deprived in Scotland. This represents just 1.4% of all data zones in Scotland, and 9.5% of those in the local authority. This places the local authority in 20th place, compared with an overall ranking of 19th in 2016.

Table 2 - Overall Local Authority Deprivation Figures

No.	Local Authority Name	Total Data Zones	No. of 20% Most Deprived Included within Area	% Local Share of Data zones within 20% Most Deprived	% National Share
1	Glasgow City	746	339	45.4	24.3
2	Inverclyde	114	51	44.7	3.7
3	North Ayrshire	186	74	39.8	5.3
4	West Dumbartonshire	121	48	39.7	3.4
5	Dundee City	188	70	37.2	5.0
6	North Lanarkshire	447	153	34.2	11.0
7	East Ayrshire	163	51	31.3	3.7
8	Clackmanonshire	72	18	25	1.3
9	Renfrewshire	225	56	24.9	4.0
10	South Lanarkshire	431	88	20.4	6.3
11	Fife	494	97	19.6	7.0
12	South Ayrshire	153	28	18.3	2.0
13	Falkirk	214	35	16.4	2.5
14	West Lothian	239	35	14.6	2.5
15	Stirling	121	15	12.4	1.1
16	City of Edinburgh	597	71	11.9	5.1
17	Argyll & Bute	125	13	10.4	0.9
18	Aberdeen City	283	29	10.2	2.1
19	Highland	312	30	9.6	2.2
20	Dumfries and Galloway	201	19	9.5	1.4
21	Midlothian	115	10	8.7	0.7
22	Angus	155	12	7.7	0.9
23	Scottish Borders	143	9	6.3	0.6
24	East Lothian	132	8	6.1	0.6
25	Perth and Kinross	186	11	5.9	0.8
26	East Renfrewshire	122	7	5.7	0.5
27	East Dumbratonshire	130	5	3.8	0.4
28	Moray	126	4	3.2	0.3
29	Aberdeenshire	340	9	2.6	0.6
30	Na-h-Elleanan An Sar	36	0	0	0
31	Orkney Islands	29	0	0	0
32	Shetland Islands	30	0	0	0

- Compared with its comparator authorities, Dumfries and Galloway has a lower national share of deprived data zones
- All 19 data zones considered to be in the 20% most deprived are located in just five Wards: North West Dumfries, Stranraer and the Rhins, Mid and Upper Nithsdale, Annandale South and Nith

- Earnings in Dumfries and Galloway were lower than the national average in 2019 at £480.80 per week compared with £577.70 nationally.
- Average earnings were also lower in Dumfries and Galloway against its comparator local authorities, and the rate of growth between 2015 to 2019 has been lower in the local authority compared with the average for Scotland
- Across most domains, with the exception of 'Access' and 'Housing', there has been an increase in the number of data zones in the 20% most deprived measure as well as a rise in the local share of deprived data zones

4.3 Dumfries and Galloway Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and latest Poverty and Deprivation Report

Dumfries and Galloway Council Anti-Poverty Strategy was a key contributor to the work on child poverty during 2020-2021 and its Action Plan included a number of projects and services that tackled and mitigated the impact of poverty on children and families.

Its final performance report was approved by the Council's Communities Committee in November 2020. An Evaluation of the Council's Strategy informed the development of new arrangements in early 2021 which are detailed in Chapter 7.

Dumfries and Galloway Council commissioned a new Report on the levels of Poverty and Deprivation within Dumfries and Galloway to show a direct comparison to the first Poverty and Deprivation Report in Dumfries and Galloway which was completed by the Crichton Institute in 2015.

The updated research report which was published and launched on 7th December 2020 and includes data on a wide range of poverty and deprivation within our region which was the most up to date at the time of the Report. The full report by North Star Consulting and Research for Dumfries and Galloway Council can be accessed here: <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/23800/Report-Poverty-and-Deprivation-in-Dumfries-and-Galloway-2020/pdf/Poverty-and-Deprivation-Position-Report.pdf?m=637424348890330000>

This Report enables all partners and stakeholders to measure levels of poverty and deprivation within our region.

A range of indicators of poverty and deprivation from a number of sources including the Scottish Index of Deprivation (SIMD), the 2011 Census and Dumfries and Galloway Council have been used to produce this Report. While the Scottish Index of Deprivation (SIMD) is one of the main sources of information on poverty, the indices used have been challenged on a number of grounds both conceptual and practical, with particular concerns about their applicability to rural areas. One of the potential problems occurring from using only SIMD to measure poverty is that 'not everyone living in a deprived area is deprived, and not all deprived people live in deprived areas. Especially in areas where people and communities are dispersed, SIMD might be unsuited to representing rural deprivation.

Detailed in the following section are the resulting figures for our region including information on the levels of each in comparison to identified local authority areas advised by the Improvement Service as comparators.

4.3.1 Digital connectivity

The Carnegie UK Trust defines 'adequate digital access' as: 'Having sustainable affordable access to a suitable digital device, an internet connection and an appropriate level of skills and abilities to navigate the digital world safely, securely and productively.'

'Digital exclusion is the inability to access online products or services or to use simple forms of digital technology.' The data presented in the table below illustrates the likelihood of digital exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway.

Table 3 – Likelihood of Digital Exclusion – 2017 Indicators

Digital Indicators	% of Households or Adults in Dumfries and Galloway
Infrastructure – Broadband	13% of households did not receive broadband speeds of at least 10 megabits per second (Mbps)
Infrastructure - 4G Mobile Data	49.26% of households did not receive 4G mobile data from all providers
Offline	13.7% of adults had not been online within the last 3 months.
Basic Digital Skills	73% of adults had all five Basic Digital Skills
Basic Digital Skills Used	40% of adults had used all five Basic Digital Skills in the last three months
Age	25.1% of adults were over 65.
Education	57.57% of adults had no qualifications and/or no Level 1 qualifications
Income	£20,800 was the average income per taxpayer
Health	29.6% of adults had long-term illness or disability

Digital connectivity summary

- The likelihood of overall digital exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway is high
- 13% of households did not receive broadband speeds of at least 10 megabits per second (Mbps)
- 49.26% of households did not receive 4G mobile data from all providers
- 13.7% of adults had not been online within the last 3 months
- Compared to its peers Dumfries and Galloway has the:
 - Highest percentage of low broadband speeds (13%);
 - Highest percentage of households that did not receive 4G mobile data from all providers (42.26%)
 - Highest percentage of adults who had not been online for the last three months (13.7%).

4.3.2 Education and skills

The detailed table within our Report on Poverty and Deprivation within Dumfries and Galloway provides a summary of how Dumfries and Galloway compares with other local authorities on the SIMD Education Domain. This looks at indicators such as qualifications, attainment and attendance. According to the SIMD Dumfries and Galloway ranks 22nd out of the 32 Scottish local authorities with 19 data zones falling within the 20% most deprived in Scotland. This represents 9.5% of all data zones in Dumfries and Galloway and just 1.4% of all Scottish data zones. Dumfries

and Galloway also ranked 22nd in the previous SIMD carried out in 2016, where 18 data zones were considered deprived.

Education and skills summary

- Dumfries and Galloway ranks 22nd out of the 32 Scottish local authorities with 19 data zones falling within the 20% most deprived in Scotland
- Dumfries and Galloway ranks highest (best) in its peer group
- At regional level, Wigtown has a noticeably higher percentage of the population with no qualifications across all age ranges (18.3%)
- At Ward level Stranraer and the Rhins has the highest number of residents with no qualifications at 19.2%, followed by 18.6% with no qualifications in North West Dumfries. Conversely, only 11.2% of residents in Castle Douglas and Crocketford have no qualifications.
- Those living in postcode DG4 covering Sanquhar, an area associated with traditional industries, have the highest percentage with no qualifications at 25.4% followed by those living in postcode area DG16 (21.6%).
- Those living in postcode area DG3 are the most educated with only 10.9% having no qualifications.
- 33% of people in Dumfries and Galloway aged 16+ do not have any formal qualifications. This is higher than the Scottish average of 27%.
- Wigtown has the highest proportion (37%) of people with no formal qualifications
- Annandale & Eskdale has the highest proportion (26%) of people with Level 1 Qualifications
- All 4 localities have 13% or 14% with Level 2 Qualifications
- All 4 localities have 7% or 8% with Level 3 Qualification
- Stewartry has the highest proportion (26%) of people with Level 4 Qualifications or above.

4.3.3 Employment

Employment summary

- Dumfries and Galloway ranks 19th out of the 32 Scottish local authorities, with 21 data zones featuring in the 20% most deprived in Scotland
- Next to comparable local authorities, Dumfries and Galloway has fewer employment deprived data zones
- Employment deprivation across Dumfries and Galloway ranges from a low of 7.3% of the working age population in Annandale and Eskdale to 11.1% in Wigtown
- Overall, 8.8% of the working age population in Dumfries and Galloway are considered employment deprived
- By Ward those areas where there are relatively low levels of employment deprivation, for example, 4.9% in Lochar through to 13.2% in North West Dumfries
- Employment deprivation by postcode shows a range from 5.6% in postcode area DG14 to 13% in postcode area DG4
- The highest rates of unemployment were in Annandale and Eskdale (7.6%) and Wigtown (6.7%)
- By Ward claimant count as a % of the working age population is lowest in Lochar (3.2%) and highest in North West Dumfries (8.5%)

- DG1 has the lowest rate of claimants at 4.2% while DG9, which covers Stranraer and the surrounding area has the highest proportion at 8%
- Full time workers in Dumfries and Galloway earned £96.60 less weekly than the Scottish average.
- Under the COVID-19 Virus Retention Scheme, 28.8% of working people were furloughed in Dumfries and Galloway.

4.3.4 Fuel poverty

A household is defined as being in fuel poverty when its occupants cannot afford to heat their home to an adequate temperature¹⁶. The new Fuel Poverty Act (2019) designates a household to be 'in fuel poverty if more than 10% of its net income (after housing costs) is required to heat the home and pay for fuel costs, and if after deducting fuel and childcare costs and disregarding the value of specified benefits which are received for care need or disability, the remaining net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living for the members of the household, defined as 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS)'. There is an MIS uplift for remote rural and island areas to take into account their higher cost of living. If more than 20% of net income is needed, the household is defined as being in extreme fuel poverty'. In order to draw a comparison between the whole of Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway, the Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analyses 2016-2018 has been used.

The percentage of fuel poverty in Dumfries and Galloway (28%) was higher than the average for Scotland as a whole (25%). Dumfries and Galloway had the highest fuel poverty rate (28%) of all the local authorities compared in Table 5.26 while West Lothian had the lowest fuel poverty rate (19%). South Ayrshire (20%) and South Lanarkshire (20%) had a significantly lower fuel poverty rate than the national average and Dumfries and Galloway.

Fuel poverty summary

- Fuel poverty in Dumfries and Galloway (28%) was higher than the average for Scotland as a whole (25%)
- Dumfries and Galloway has the highest fuel poverty rate (28%) of all the peer local authorities
- Between 2016-2018, Dumfries and Galloway had a significantly higher extreme fuel poverty rate (16%) than the national average (12%)
- Between 2016-2018, Dumfries and Galloway (£880) had a significantly higher median fuel poverty gap than the national average (£640)
- Dumfries and Galloway had a higher median fuel poverty gap than of all the peer local authorities
- Wigtown West, Mid Galloway and Mid and Upper Nithsdale Wards have the highest estimated overall levels of fuel poverty due to large rural areas, poor energy efficient households and use of expensive fuel types
- Dumfries and Galloway contains 20 data zones in the bottom 25% of the SIMD and a further 29 data zones in the bottom 25% of rural data zones
- Fuel poverty areas that also use expensive fuel types include: Wigtown West Ward, Castle Douglas and Glenkens Ward, The Machars (including Wigtown and Whithorn) and Mid Nithsdale (including Thornhill)

4.3.5 Food poverty

Food Insecurity is a term which is often spoken of and the definition of this is the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Dumfries and Galloway Council data on the main food bank providers in the area shows that during the financial year 2019/2020 a total of 11,803 food parcels and 20,649 vouchers were provided. We can compare this to the situation between May and August 2020 under COVID-19 pandemic conditions and the associated impact on employment. During this time a monthly average of between 9,863 and 18,127 food parcels have been delivered. The area in receipt of the greatest number of parcels is Nithsdale.

There was a significant increase of food parcels delivered monthly in the area of Dumfries and Galloway during COVID-19 compared to pre COVID-19 baseline. July and May were the months with highest number of delivered food parcels (18,127 and 16,858).

Food poverty summary

- During 2019/2020 a total of 11,803 food parcels and 20,649 vouchers were provided
- Between May and August 2020 under COVID-19 pandemic conditions a monthly average of between 15,943 and 18,127 food parcels were delivered
- The areas in receipt of the greatest number of parcels are Nithsdale followed by Dumfries and Lower Nithsdale
- During March 2020 across Dumfries and Galloway a total of 3,331 pupils were in receipt of Free School Meals, this accounts for 18% of all children in school
- Those areas with the highest percentage uptake of Free School Meals were North West Dumfries (29%), Mid and Upper Nithsdale (24%) and Stranraer and the Rhins (23%)
- The areas with the lowest uptake were Lochar (10%) and Nith (11%) both considerably below the Dumfries and Galloway average.
- The cheapest average supermarket basket was in Langholm (£8.96) and the most expensive was in Dalbeattie (£24.05)
- In Wigtown baskets ranged from £9.98 to £11.86, with an average price of £11.15
- In Stewartry baskets ranged from £17.16 to £24.05, with the average price £11.15
- In Nithsdale, baskets ranged from £13.26 to £21.70, with the average price £17.70
- In Annandale & Eskdale, baskets ranged from £8.96 to £14.25, with the average price £11.97.

4.3.6 Health and wellbeing

Information on health is again taken from the SIMD using their Health Domain measure which looks at standardised ratios for a number of indicators including drug and alcohol use, rates of depression and low birth rates as well as comparative illness factors.

Health and wellbeing summary

- Dumfries and Galloway ranks 18th out of 32 and has 19 data zones in the 20 most deprived in Scotland

- 2011 Census data indicates that there were 15,420 people in Dumfries and Galloway with health conditions which considerably limit their day-to-day activities
- Almost 12,000 have a physical disability.
- In 2017, Stranraer and the Rhins had the highest rate of early mortality (1953 deaths) and Annandale East and Eskdale had the lowest (455 deaths)

4.3.7 Housing

Data on housing is drawn from the SIMD Housing Domain which collects information on overcrowded households and those with no central heating and also the Scottish Household Survey for Dumfries and Galloway which provides comparable information regarding the composition, characteristics and behaviour of Scottish Households at a sub-national level.

Housing summary

- Dumfries and Galloway ranks 23 out of 32 on the housing domain rank.
- Dumfries and Galloway ranks higher than its peer authorities
- This equates to 6 data zones featuring in the 20% most deprived in Scotland, which represents only 0.4% of all data zones across Scotland
- Nithsdale has the highest % of the population living in overcrowded households (8.1%) with Stewartry having the lowest (5.6%)
- Stewartry has the highest % of the population in houses without central heating of all areas
- By Ward, North West Dumfries has the highest proportion of people living in overcrowded housing (11.6%) while Lochar has the fewest
- Dee and Glenkens has the highest proportion of households in houses with no central heating (3.3%).
- DG4 has the highest proportion of households that are overcrowded (10.9%) while DG14 has the fewest
- DG14 has the highest proportion of residents in households without central heating (3.8%)
- Dumfries and Galloway had 64% of owner-occupied properties; 21% social rented housing (compared to 23% for Scotland); 13% private rented tenure (compared to 14% for Scotland)
- Stranraer and the Rhins had the highest number of homelessness applications (16) while Annandale East and Eskdale had the lowest number (1) for April 2020
- North West Dumfries had the highest number of temporary accommodation tenancies (51) while Annandale East and Eskdale had none
- In total, Dumfries and Galloway had 78 homelessness applications and 162 temporary accommodation tenancies in April 2019

4.3.8 Income

For income poverty we have set out information from the SIMD using the Income Domain which gives a count and score for income deprivation. We also provide data on the Living Wage and Community Care and Crisis Grants.

Income summary

- Dumfries and Galloway has a rank of 18 out of all 32 Scottish local authorities

- 22 data zones fall within the 20% most deprived in Scotland, equal to a local share of 10.9% and a national share of 1.6%
- By region Wigtown has the highest proportion of the population that are classed as income deprived with 15.2%, this is followed by Nithsdale with 12% while Stewartry has the lowest proportion at 9.4%
- By Ward North West Dumfries has the highest proportion of the population, with 17.6% of the population considered income deprived. This compares with an overall rate of 11.5% across the local authority.
- By postcode, we can see the highest levels of income deprivation in DG4 where 16.8% of the population are considered income deprived
- DG1 has the lowest percentage income deprived
- During 2019/2020 there were 2,302 applications for Community Care Grants with the average award being £525.42
- During 2019/2020 there were 6,818 applications for Crisis Grants with the average award being £90.07.

4.3.9 Travel and access to services

Overall Dumfries and Galloway has relatively few data zones within the 20% most deprived in Scotland for most of the main indicators. However, on the Access to Services domain, which looks at travel times to services, we see far more data zones appearing in the 20% most deprived, reflecting the rural make-up of the local authority area.

Travel summary

- In the Access to Services domain, which looks at travel times to services, we see far more data zones appearing in the 20% most deprived, reflecting the rural make-up of the local authority area
- Dumfries and Galloway ranks 7th out of 32 local authorities with 79 data zones appearing in the 20% most deprived, this means that 39% of data zones in Dumfries and Galloway are considered Access Deprived, equating to 5.7% of Scottish data zones
- This is higher than all other peer authorities with the exception of Fife.
- Longest drive times to access services are found in Wigtown, where residents must travel almost an hour (53mins) to reach their nearest primary school by public transport
- The longest travel times are up to 53.8mins in Stranraer and the Rhins by public transport to primary school
- Public transport drive times are similarly lengthy by postcode areas where drive times are up to 54mins to a primary school in DG9.

4.3.10 Financial inclusion

People living in poverty in Dumfries and Galloway will often pay a 'poverty premium', which equates to higher costs, for basic goods and services than those on higher incomes. This includes, for example higher interest rates on loans and higher energy prices per unit due to the rural nature of our Region.

We estimate that between 14,260 and 16,650 high cost loans; home credit, high cost short term credit, rent to own and pawnbrokers; are taken out by local residents annually, with a value of between £5.38 million and £6.86million. In contrast:

- The largest local credit union issued an estimated 45 loans last year in the same market.
- There was some activity from CDFIs in the area; Fair for You made 131 loans to a value of £45,945 over the year to October 2019, Five Lamps/ Conduit made an estimated 17 loans to the value of £7,300 over the year to end of November 2019, and Scotcash has made 5 loans to an estimated value of £2,200 over the year to October 2020.

There is therefore a significant affordable credit gap in the area. We estimate, allowing for some other credit union activity in the area, that current affordable lending is equal to only between 1.4 and 1.6% of the high cost credit market.

Information on financial inclusion is available from the Scottish Household Survey, 2017. The survey, carried across Scotland, covers over 10,5000 responses.

Financial inclusion summary

- The vast majority of respondents to the SHS in Dumfries & Galloway have access to a bank account (98%). This is above the Scottish average (94%).
- Dumfries and Galloway has the highest score within the peer group
- 83% of households in Dumfries & Galloway have some level of savings, which is above the Scottish average (89%).
- Residents in Dumfries and Galloway have more savings than those in comparator areas.

4.4 Social Security Scotland data

4.4.1 The Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Child Payment was introduced for parents and carers on low incomes who have a child under 6. It is intended to provide additional financial support for families already in receipt of qualifying benefits to assist with the costs of caring for a child. It's a payment of £10 a week for each child under 6 and is paid every 4 weeks. The table below illustrates the number of applications made by parents and carers in Dumfries and Galloway.

Table 4 – Scottish Child Payments to Dumfries and Galloway Children - November 2020 to June 2021

Number of applications received	3225
Number of payments made	9614
Value of payments made	£480,130

4.4.2 Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods

The Best Start Grant consists of three different benefit payments for eligible families: Pregnancy and Baby Payment, Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment.

Best Start Foods is a recurring four weekly pre-paid card payment, which replaced Healthy Start Vouchers for new claims in Scotland from August 2019. It is available to pregnant women and families on certain low income benefits and introduces a

payment card that can be used to support the purchase of certain foods, liquid cow's milk and First Infant Formula for pregnant women and children under 3.

Table 5 – Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods for children and families in Dumfries and Galloway - April 2020 to March 2021

Total number of applications received	3090
Total number of applications for Best Start - Pregnancy and Baby Payment	855
Total number of applications for Best Start - Early Learning Payment	1095
Total number of applications for Best Start - School Age Payment	920
Total number of applications for Best Start Foods	2015

4.4.3 Child Winter Heating Assistance

Child Winter Heating Assistance was introduced in November 2020 and is an automatic payment of £200 for children and young people under 18 who get the highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance for children. There were 340 payments made to families within Dumfries and Galloway between November 2020 and March 2021, totalling £68,000.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented a significant amount of data and information from both a national and local perspective to illustrate the rates and impacts of child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway. Developing our understanding of child poverty through this data ensures that we prioritise action that has the greatest impact on our children and their families.

5. Report on our actions to tackle Child Poverty in 2020-2021

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting disadvantaged children and families the most, and services adapting to new ways of working to provide help and support, the work we have delivered between April 2020 to March 2021 to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts has had to differ from that planned. Whilst a number of actions we set out to deliver have been achieved in full or in part, we have also adapted our services to deliver in ways which aim to meet the increased demand for support and crisis help.

Appendix 1 presents a brief progress update on the 2020-2023 Actions that we planned to deliver in this reporting period, as set out in our 2019-2020 LCPAR. With many of the actions delayed by the pandemic response, or requiring revision, we are complimenting this by presenting a more comprehensive narration of our achievements over the reporting year. The next again chapter, Chapter 6, provides further detail of the impact of this work on children and their families through case studies and practice examples.

All of the actions we planned to deliver, as well as the additional actions that we developed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, were developed to address one or more of the key drivers of poverty (as detailed in Chapter 2). This has ensured that all of our actions and mitigations will ultimately reduce child poverty (and other forms of poverty and inequalities) throughout our region. Each activity listed below highlights the key drives of poverty which it has sought to address.

5.1 Financial wellbeing

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Employment*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

NHS Staff - Financial wellbeing and support

Through the NHS Staff Working Well programme, we continue to raise awareness of and promote sources of advice and support for financial wellbeing. Using regular communication methods such as weekly staff bulletins, seasonal newsletters and email distribution lists and we continue to target staff in lower paid roles across the health service.

Financial Wellbeing – Dumfries and Galloway Council and Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service

Within Dumfries and Galloway Council we continue to deliver dedicated services to all residents in need with specific support delivering dedicated support and guidance on Income and Benefit Maximisation, Debt Advice and Guidance and the specialist Housing Options and Homeless Service which provides detailed advice and guidance for families and individuals in complex need to ultimately avoid the loss of a tenancy or the family home.

In addition, Dumfries and Galloway Council have also commissioned an Advice and Information Services Commission with Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service to provide a complimentary range of financial advice and information services and support throughout our Region. This includes a range of income maximisation services including Benefit Maximisation and Debt Advice and Guidance. The resulting figures on the levels of support provided for an element of the service provision (Financial Gain) for 2020 – 2021 are detailed in the following table:

Table 6 – Financial Advice and Information

Service	Amount of Financial Gain for Clients
Dumfries and Galloway Council Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Services	£4,275,000
Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service	£7,206,753 (103% of AIS Commission Target)
Total	£11, 481, 753.00

The majority of this additional funding which has been received in from Dumfries and Galloway residents will be spent within the local Region which significantly increases our local economy in every ward of our Region.

5.2 Embedding financial inclusion referral pathways in health services

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Employment*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

Work continues to improve links between money advice services and health services across Dumfries and Galloway. This has resulted in an increased number of referrals to money advice services and substantial financial gains for local families,

NHS Dumfries and Galloway's Health Visiting service continues to enquire routinely about financial wellbeing and money worries at appropriate contacts with parents and carers of young children. We know that referring families for support and advice results in much greater financial and wellbeing gain than simple signposting. However, we are also aware that families may not be ready to be referred, in which case we signpost and enquire again at next contact.

Enhancing the approach which was developed with the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative, our referral pathway ensures that families facing financial hardship are referred, with consent, to Dumfries and Galloway Citizen's Advice Service for advice and support. Our e-referral system and arrangements for feedback to the referring service ensure continued support for the families identified.

With routine enquiry about money worries now embedded as part of the Universal Health Visiting Pathway in Dumfries and Galloway, referral rates from the Health Visiting service has continued to increase throughout the pandemic. Support to navigate the online systems is often an additional requirement, particularly when digital accessibility or skills are lacking.

Testing our pathway with just 3 Health Visitors over the initial 6 month period generated £13,000 of financial support. Between April 2020 and March 2021 almost £250,000 was gained by families through Health Visitor referrals, with the majority of this coming from benefit claims such as Disability Living Allowance, Best Start Grants and Housing Benefit. Families also report significant improvements in wellbeing as a result of the support they receive.

Our Maternity service continues to signpost expectant and new partners to the Citizens Advice Service and despite delays due to pandemic pressures, they are working to embed routine enquiry and online referral, building on the experience of the Health Visiting service.

Case Study Information and feedback on this project can be found in Chapter 6.

5.3 Family Nurse Partnership

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from employment*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

The Family Nurse Partnership was first established in Dumfries and Galloway in 2018 and rolled out across the whole region in January 2021. The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme begins in early pregnancy and is orientated to improving the future health and wellbeing of the child. The Family Nurse works with first time mothers under age 19, from early pregnancy until the infant is 2 years old, at which point the family returns to Health Visitors within Universal Services.

Through this licensed programme, specially trained nurses work with first-time young mothers to develop their parenting capacity and support them to make positive choices for themselves and their children. The programme also supports the families to achieve their short and long term goals and aspirations. It is delivered through a home visiting schedule as well as the Universal Health Visiting Pathway.

With one of the main aims of the programme being parents' economic self-sufficiency, it provides a real opportunity for families in two of the six priority groups (families with children under 1 and mothers under 25) to receive support and advice to break the poverty cycle and achieve study or career aspirations that can contribute to future financial wellbeing. In the reporting period, FNP worked with 37 first time mothers under age 19.

Case Study Information and feedback on this project can be found in Chapter 6.

5.4 The Winter Hardship Fund

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

With some services stalled or being delivered differently due to the impact of the pandemic, the Children and Families Social Work team became aware that some of the most vulnerable people in our communities were not accessing the support they needed. Through the Winter Hardship Fund (Scottish Government Winter Plan for Social Protection), Social Work teams were able to direct support to those areas with high numbers of children looked after at home, families with multi-agency plans and families in areas with high levels of free school meal uptake.

The approach to ensure we addressed the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the most disadvantaged children, young people and families, including disruptions to transitions out of care for care leavers, was to engage with all our children and families and identify gaps in basic essentials such as adequate food, clothing, household equipment and furniture.

Through this additional funding, 430 families encompassing 661 adults and 762 children were supported with an immense impact. The basic needs approach was developed to focus on our vulnerable families including families already experiencing or on the edge of financial hardship. The reported benefits and improved outcomes of this funding included providing immediate and emerging financial forms of support to our families at a time when they needed it most ensuring that every household met its basic needs.

In addition, allowing the family home to become a nurturing environment, reducing previously accumulated debt from heating costs and supporting families to remain out of debt due to increase in fuel costs are also reported as outcomes. Further to this, the approach also ensured that families were able to access food at a time when access to food banks and other emergency provision was challenging due to lockdown restrictions; digital exclusion through the provision of devices and internet access was reduced; social isolation and loneliness was reduced; and risks of family breakdowns due to increasing financial pressures were mitigated.

Case Study Information and feedback on this project can be found in Chapter 6.

5.5 Reducing digital exclusion

- *Costs of Living*

In conjunction with our Head Teachers, we identified vulnerable pupils and families across Dumfries and Galloway who would not have access to a suitable device at home in order to participate in digital learning from home. We re-purposed existing iPads from schools and distributed to all primary pupils who had been identified. Laptops were recovered from secondary schools, wiped and loaded with W10 image and distributed to all secondary pupils and staff who did not have access to a suitable device at home. To date, 1225 devices have been distributed and 153 pupils with no access to WiFi at home have been provided with a cellular iPad, an MiFi unit or a dongle

To further reduce digital exclusion, digital devices were provided for over 400 children, young people and families through the Connecting Scotland Programme and from the additional hardship funding agreed by the Council's Communities Committee. For families without access to digital devices, home learning, communication with family and friends and access to services was severely limited, particularly during the two periods of national lockdown and having a device which enabled this was a lifeline to many families experiencing financial hardship and isolation.

A further 60 devices were provided for families living in poverty through the Lifelong Learning Team during the reporting year, helping children and adults to access learning resources online.

Case Study Information and feedback on this project can be found in Chapter 6.

5.6 Lifelong Learning

- *Costs of Living*

The Parents Early Education Programme (PEEP), delivered by the Lifelong Learning Team in partnership with nurseries, continued throughout the reporting period in the form of virtual classes utilising Sway newsletter to enable children and families to continue learning at home, including through the two periods of school closure. Reaching over 700 families, this family learning based programme tackled all areas of development and learning, in particular literacy, numeracy, and speech development, helping with attainment levels. Partnership work with Dumfries and Galloway College and the Employability and Skills service has helped 11 parents who were unemployed or in receipt of the national minimum wage to access a college course to train to become Learning Assistants. This was funded through the Parent Employability Fund and has been rolled out for antenatal delivery as well as early learning from pre-nursery and nursery age.

Two virtual programmes of Save the Children Families Connect programmes were rolled out across the region during the reporting year. This engaged parents with children in Primary 1 to help with the transition stage from nursery to primary school. Families Connect focuses on supporting parents and children to learn together, helping parents to support their children's learning in three key areas: literacy and language development; numeracy; and emotional development. The eight-week programme provides a series of activities, techniques and games that parents and carers can do with their children to support their learning at home.

The Lifelong Learning team also delivered free Family Learning opportunities for 60 families across the region which enabled parents and carers to support their children in curriculum learning, for example in STEM and Literacy. The programmes aimed to reduce the attainment gap through the delivery of virtual after school Family Learning classes with all resources posted out to families prior to the classes commencing.

The Lifelong Learning team also delivered over 400 learning and play activity packs during the first year of the pandemic. These packs have helped families in poverty to have resources available for home learning during school closures and holiday periods.

In partnership with the Education Virtual Learning team, curriculum based virtual programmes were delivered to reach families during national lockdown holiday periods.

Case Study Information and feedback on this project can be found in Chapter 6.

5.7 Early Learning and Childcare – Expansion of 1140 hours

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

High quality early learning and childcare (ELC) plays an important role in improving children's outcomes and in closing the poverty related attainment gap. Cost, flexibility and availability of childcare, including for babies and disabled children, is important across all priority groups.

In advance of the expansion to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare becoming a statutory duty in August 2021, Dumfries and Galloway was one of sixteen councils already delivering 1140 hours in full from August 2020.

At May 2021 (just after the relevant reporting period), 92% of children were taking over 600 hours with 55% taking the full 1140 hours. The number of children and uptake of hours by provider is set out in the table below. Children accessing a blended placement with one or more providers are counted in the provider where they take the majority of their hours to avoid double counting.

Table 7 – ELC 1140 hours Take Up

Uptake of Hours	2-Year-olds			3- and 4-Year-olds			5-year-olds			Total number of children	% of children
	LA*	PVI	CM	LA	PVI	CM	LA	PVI	CM		
600 hours or less	11	15	2	134	77	1	3	3	0	246	8
>600 hours, <900 hours	6	19	3	239	145	7	9	11	0	439	15
>900 hours, <1140 hours	4	38	2	246	326	11	11	11	0	649	22
1140 hours	28	37	11	1032	370	36	82	27	1	1624	55

*LA: Local authority; PVI: Private, Voluntary and Independent Providers; CM: Childminding Services

The local authority delivers 61% and funded providers deliver 39% of Early Learning and Childcare provision across Dumfries and Galloway through 45 local authority nurseries, 39 private and voluntary providers and 40 childminders. High quality provision delivered by all of these services is underpinned by a National Standard that all settings will have to meet going forward.

Based on 30% of the two-year old population being eligible for funded Early Learning and Childcare around 45% are currently accessing their entitlement. Officers are exploring the reasons and potential barriers to families taking up their place with a view to improving the uptake of eligible children.

5.8 Education – Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap & Pupil Equity Funding 2020-2021

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

Dumfries and Galloway's Raising Attainment Strategy remains a key part of the improvement agenda in schools despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on aspects of its delivery. The Raising Attainment Strategy underpins the commitment to improving outcomes by aiming to provide the best start in life for all our children and young people and an equal chance to make the most of their potential.

With the latest evidence showing that the poverty related attainment gap has widened with more families affected by poverty than prior to COVID-19, there is awareness that the geographical and rural challenges have had a greater impact; such as digital connectivity during periods of remote learning.

Achieving equity by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap remains a key focus of implementing and delivering Curriculum for Excellence in our schools.

Officers from the Curriculum and School Improvement Team and the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor for Dumfries and Galloway continue to work closely with head teachers and school leaders on the effective use of Pupils Equity Funding and mitigations to identify and prioritise the use of this resource to facilitate recovery and measure the effectiveness and impact of interventions.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is a devolved budget provided by the Scottish Government and is additional to local authority funding streams. The funding is provided to each school based on the number of pupils who are registered to receive Free School Meals.

Dumfries and Galloway received £2,870,278 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) across 112 schools (2 Schools received no PEF allocation) with amounts received ranging from £1057 to £158,598. A carry forward of £1,567,093 was taken forward 1st April 2020 as committed spend for session 2019/2020.

PEF Planning sheets have been incorporated in the School Improvement Planning process to capture planned spend at an early stage and the impact of this budget spend is then reported through the School Improvement Progress Report to Dumfries and Galloway Council's Education and Skills Committee. Criteria have been established around carry forward budgets to meet the

national expectation that this is only in “exceptional circumstances”. In addition, a new procedure has been created to provide schools the opportunity to demonstrate where they should be allowed to carry forward funding into the next school year.

A summary of the key areas of PEF spending in 2020/2021 is provided below.

**Table 8 - Areas of Spend – Primary and Secondary
(as at end of financial year 31 March 2021)**

Primary and Secondary Allocation (including 2019/2020 carry forward)	£4,437,371	100%
Staffing: Teaching	£851,022.97	19.18%
Staffing: Non-Teaching	£980,749.22	22.10%
Professional Learning	£27,446.73	0.62%
Resources/Equipment	£351,943.61	7.93%
IT Equipment/Software	£119,622.78	2.70%
PVG Checks	£290.00	0.01%
Transport/Travel	£3,485.39	0.08%
Photocopying/Printing	£8,896.49	0.20%
Pupil Catering Provisions	£1,752.16	0.04%
Room Hire	£0	0.00%
Project Costs	£85,018.23	1.92%
Payment to Other Bodies	£110,009.76	2.48%
Balance	£1,897,134	42.75%

**Table 9 - Spend by Curricular Area – Primary and Secondary
(as at end of financial year 31 March 2021)**

Primary and Secondary Allocation (including 2019/2020 carry forward)	£4,437,371	100%
Allocation	£1,897,134	42.75%
Literacy	£610,876	13.77%
Numeracy	£495,758	11.17%
Health & Wellbeing	£683,095	15.39%
Unknown/Other	£750,508	16.91%
Balance	£4,437,371	100%

Impact of Pupil Equity Funding

All schools reported that PEF was used to reduce inequality of educational outcomes and improve experiences for identified children and young people. Schools allocated PEF to address areas such as; literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing needs, financial barriers, participation and parental engagement, in line with National Improvement Framework priorities and drivers. Additional

staffing was used to target individuals and small groups where evidence showed that the pace of progress could be improved.

These plans have suffered severe disruption due to the effects of the pandemic (even subsequent to lockdowns and school return) as staff and pupils continued to self-isolate sporadically, with several schools, some in already particularly disadvantaged areas, having to close or send whole year groups home. Children and staff also had to work in bubbles which meant additional staff and interventions could not be implemented. PEF funding was used more flexibly, for example by reducing the barriers in remote learning where SIM cards and devices were supplied to ensure learners had access to online learning, alongside the Local Authority digital support. In addition, basic resources such as pens, pencils, jotters, paper, art and sports equipment were made available, in some cases being hand delivered in line with COVID-19 guidelines. Resources continued to be supplied throughout the year ensuring that all children had access to everything they required to engage with their learning. Technology skills were increased through use of Teams, Microsoft forms for feedback, Nessy, Sumdog and Accelerated Reader and these new ways of working are being maintained by schools who are keen to develop learner and staff skills further.

Schools now demonstrate an embedded awareness of equity and the need to identify the most effective interventions for identified gaps through evidence-based research. This knowledge and understanding will benefit learners as we move through post-COVID-19. In addition, the Excellence and Equity Raising Attainment Groups have been continuing to highlight authority data evidence of areas for schools to address and advising on appropriate interventions. School visits and raising attainment discussions from Education Officers and Education Scotland's Attainment Advisor have had to cease due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, plans are in place to resume these as soon as Government regulations allow. These meetings will support teachers and schools to tackle under spend which occurred as a result of planned staffing being unavailable. The meetings will also support schools to access the best resources for recovery and to accelerate progress. The continuing need to empower schools to develop sustainable approaches to improvement and ensure lasting impact for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential is vital to address the impact of COVID-19 on learning. Head teachers have continued to create clear rationales for use of the funding and the impact of PEF on learners. This has been done based on a robust contextual analysis, including relevant data which identifies the poverty-related attainment gap in individual schools. School Improvement Plans and Standard and Quality reports allow the Authority to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of raising attainment for children affected by poverty.

Support is provided specific to an individual or group needs. For example: an S3 Literacy group, Employability input is helping targeted pupils to understand the varying career pathways available to them; Princes Trust registration is allowing learners, targeted for specific employability input to gain awards in ACHIEVE from the Princes Trust.

The Full Report can be found here:

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MIId=5252&Ver=4>

5.9 Education – Counselling in Schools

Since August 2020, every secondary school across the region has had an identified allocated Youth Information Worker available to support young people to overcome the challenges and barriers they face. Set up and overseen jointly by Educational Psychology and Youth Work the project aims to support young people who are: concerned about their wellbeing including mental and emotional health; considered vulnerable; at risk of offending; struggling with a loss, bereavement or significant change or; struggling with low self-esteem or confidence.

The project is aimed at closing the poverty related attainment gap by supporting young people's emotional, behavioural, and mental health through a non-judgemental and holistic approach offering with 1-2-1 or group support as well as issues based programmes.

The project is running at 95% capacity with many schools using 100% of their allocated time. Since August 2020, 350 young people have received in person support in school. 75% of the young people who engaged were in receipt of free school meals. 74% of the young people referred identify themselves as female and nearly half (48%) of the referrals have been from young people in S2 and S3. 50% of presenting issues relate to anxiety, stress and depression. Pre and post measures are used to measure the impact and since August 2020, 91% of young people have reported an improved outcome following access to a counsellor. There have been 18 onward referrals to more specialist services.

Over the course of its first year, the project saw an increase in self referrals for support and an increase in males being referred. Evaluation evidence illustrates that the project has had a significant impact on young people who have received support, improving their emotional, behavioural and mental health, young people have reported that they feel less anxious, feel a lot happier in themselves and more confident in managing their emotions.

The data from the counselling in school project is feeding back into and informing the strategic Mental Health in Schools group's (a Sub-Group of the Mental Health work stream of Children's Services Planning) ongoing priorities for improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Case Study Information and feedback on this project can be found in Chapter 6.

5.10 Arrangements for key worker childcare

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Employment*

To enable key workers across the region to continue with their critical roles during the first phase of the pandemic, Education provided childcare for school aged children of key workers and vulnerable children from the first week of lockdown in March 2020. Twelve Childcare Hubs were established in schools with arrangements for booking, staffing, meals and cleaning efficiently implemented with great support from partners in the Council and across the Local Rural Partnership.

For children under five, emergency childcare for key workers and vulnerable children was provided at four of the twelve local authority Childcare Hubs, at five private and voluntary providers and at 51 childminders. Provision was made available from 7 am until 8 pm Monday to Friday at the Hubs and at weekends where required. As well as implementing guidance to mitigate risks to children and staff in each of the settings, where this provision was within a school building the staff worked with the Care Inspectorate to ensure they were appropriately resourced for providing care to children under 2 years.

During the second national lockdown in January 2021, provision was available in all schools for vulnerable children and for children of families where all adults were key workers and no other childcare was available.

5.11 Increasing the numbers of children registered to receive free school meals

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

As part of our first Anti-Poverty Strategy (2015-2020), a dedicated project had been developed with our Dumfries and Galloway Council's Welfare and Benefits Team and our Education Services Team to ensure that we could increase the number of families registering their children for the Free School Meals Benefit.

This process was completed by cross referencing the families who were registered on our Welfare and Benefits Systems with those on our Education Systems and then contacting them to complete a Welfare and Benefit check to see if they would be eligible to receive this additional benefit.

The increase in the number of eligible school children also increases the amount of funding which is received in from the Scottish Government in Pupil Equity Funding. It therefore provides a real benefit to all families as well as our region on a whole. The figures which highlight the comparisons between April 2020 and March 2021 are detailed in the table below:

Table 10 - Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals

Dumfries and Galloway Council Ward Area	No. Of Pupils in Education April 2020	No Of Pupils in Receipt of Free School Meals in April 2020	No. of Pupils in Education March 2021	No of Pupils in Receipt of Free School Meals in March 2021	Increase In Numbers Per Ward
Stranraer and the Rhins	1989	463	1991	557	94
North West Dumfries	2072	600	2041	653	53
Mid Galloway and Wigtown West	1557	298	1536	310	12
Castle Douglas and Crocketford	1168	155	1169	163	8
Abbey	1234	155	1207	194	39
Dee and Glenkens	1141	168	1121	180	12
Annandale South	1778	302	1798	358	56
Mid and Upper Nithsdale	1293	305	1293	346	41
Nith	1470	168	1475	197	29
Lochar	1782	183	1790	219	36
Annandale North	1921	322	1913	356	34
Annandale East and Eskdale	1189	212	1214	249	37
Ward Unknown	78	8	206	7	-1
Total number of pupils	18672	3339	18754	3789	450
% of all pupils		17.88%		20.2%	

This increase in 450 of additional children who are in receipt of Free School Meals results in an additional £380 per year per family which makes a significant difference to each family who receive these payments. In addition to being registered for the Free School Meal Benefit, all children registered will also automatically receive the additional Holiday Hardship Payments of £100 for each of the School Holidays as well as the additional Holiday Food Fund Payments of £2.50 per day per child during each holiday period.

This ongoing work to increase the number of recipients for this benefit has significantly increased the incomes of all families who have benefitted from receiving this and will continue to make their lives easier by increasing their incomes for as long as they are eligible for these benefits.

5.12 Free School Meals provision during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- *Costs of Living*

For the families in receipt of Free School Meals our Support DG Team along with our COVID-19 Emergency Response Team developed a new model of

support with hot meals being available for collection from all of the School Hub Sites and also delivery to the home addresses of food supplies for every child who was in receipt of Free School Meals in unmarked boxes to prevent any stigma being applied to the families receiving this support directly to their own homes.

In March 2020, our Council's delivery model for Free School Meals (FSM) was adapted to ensure we could continue to provide support to families in receipt of this provision throughout the COVID-19 emergency. Initially, a two-option model was available:

- Receive a food pack delivered to the home twice per week
- Collect a food pack from the local Childcare Hub Both options provided lunch items for seven days per week for each child registered for FSM within the household; and were also made available during the Easter holiday period.

In April, this was expanded to include a third option:

- Receive a cash payment of £35 per fortnight (£17.50 per child, per week or £2.50 per day) via BACS payment or Pay Point voucher It was also agreed to extend FSM entitlement to families in receipt of a Council Tax reduction because of COVID-19.

This change equates to an additional 375 children being eligible for FSM. Families had to opt-in to the FSM provision and were not automatically registered to receive parcels or payment. The decision to move to a three-option model was made in line with our Council's commitment to promote choice and independence, and reduce stigma associated with this provision. Social Work Services carry out vulnerability checks prior to cash payments being paid and intervene where cash payments are not deemed in the best interest of a child.

The resulting Evaluation Report was used to communicate the views of families receiving FSM to Elected Members. Families were invited to share their views through surveys and telephone calls to influence and shape the FSM provisions available to them during the summer holiday period. In total 16% of FSM recipients responded.

The resulting decision by our Elected Members to the continuation of Direct Cash Payments for Holiday Food provision during the School Summer Holidays 2020, with the options for Home Delivery and Collection at the Community Hubs retained for those families who are unable to opt for the Direct Cash Payment Option resulted in Dumfries and Galloway Council being one of the first local authorities in Scotland to introduce Direct Cash Payments for the families during the Holiday periods. This provision continued by our Council until the announcement in October 2020 by the Scottish Government that they would cover the costs of all Holiday Food Fund provision from that time onwards as well as introducing the additional £100 per pupil Hardship Fund Payments for each holiday period. During Consultations on this provision with both CoSLA and the Scottish Government we have continued to support

the direct payment option for Free School Meals during all holiday period rather than by other methods such as voucher payments for certain stores.

The Direct Payment Option offers choice, flexibility and dignity to all of the parents by allowing them to choose the locations where they wish to shop for their supplies. This is particularly relevant in remote rural areas where the cost of travelling to other stores would be prohibitive and would actually result in additional costs to the parents to use vouchers for their children's food.

Payments continue to be made to all children registered for Free School Meals throughout all school holiday periods. As a result of the above, Dumfries and Galloway were one of the first local authorities in Scotland to introduce what become known as the Direct Payment System for Free School Meals. Following the success of this project and others in local authority areas in Scotland, the Scottish Government made the decision to fund all direct payments to all parents in receipt of Free School Meals during each Holiday Period.

We welcome this as a positive to all of these families as it gives them increased dignity, the choice to purchase the food they wish for their children and also the choice of locations from which to buy their supplies. We have engaged with later Consultations on this process and have reiterated at all times that the Direct Payment Option is the most beneficial to all families, especially in rural areas such as ours where the costs of food has been proven to vary greatly in rural and very rural communities. Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service completed a Report on the variation of food prices within our Region in 2018 which highlights this additional barrier to families in poverty and on low incomes.

The link to the above Report and all Appendix can be accessed on the below: <https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MIId=4940&Ver=4>

Case Study Information and feedback on this project can be found in Chapter 6.

5.13 Youth Work services within Dumfries and Galloway

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Employment*

Supporting young people with their broader needs is an essential element to raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Youth Workers are particularly skilled in engaging and supporting the hardest to reach young people. They use a trauma informed approach and a range of engagement and learning tools through which young people increase their social and emotional wellbeing.

Our award-winning Youth Work service continued to deliver its region wide support services throughout this year, immediately adapting all services to provide the urgent support and help needed to all young people between the

ages of 16 – 25 within our Region. It has been recognised that young people have been significantly impacted in many ways due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and further support is continuing to be delivered to all those in need.

Below are highlights of the range of supporting mechanisms which have been delivered and full details are due to be delivered to a forthcoming Dumfries and Galloway Council Communities Committee Report:

- 4,000 Isolation Packs delivered
- 578 activities delivered online
- 57% of young people who attended online groups were new to Youth Work
- 74 young people receiving formally recognised qualifications during COVID-19
- 313 Zoom Sessions were held with a Youth Worker Online
- 1774 sessions / activities / workshops were delivered online
- 312 young people were in receipt of weekly calls
- 5313 young people were supported
- 28 Weekly Groups were held online
- Online each 692,712
- 636 One to One with Young People
- 41 Training Sessions delivered for Staff
- 16 Partners Worker With
- 68 John Muir Awards
- 759 Young People engaged during Digital Work
- 60 Young Leaders Trained
- 312 Outdoor Youth Sessions delivered during the summer of 2020

5.14 Fuel poverty and COVID-19 Scottish Government Hardship Funding – Non-Food Projects

- *Costs of Living*

Our first Anti-Poverty Strategy delivered a range of Tackling Fuel Poverty Projects throughout its five year term and from April 2020 – March 2021; additional Fuel Poverty Projects were developed and delivered. These were specifically designed to help those individuals and families within our region to ensure they could heat their homes and not to have to make the heart-breaking decision to either eat or heat which many face in times of need.

New Fuel Poverty Projects were developed within our COVID 19 Community Support Cell within Dumfries and Galloway Council which was specifically set up to meet all of the needs of our most vulnerable families and individuals within our Region. This included funding of £50,000 which was offered to all of the Registered Social Landlords within our Region to deliver emergency support to their tenants to top up their fuel meters at any time in need.

A range of additional projects were developed to support our most vulnerable families within our Region and within the first tranche of Scottish Government

Hardship Funding the following funding was allocated for these specific projects:

Table 11 - COVID-19 - Non-Food Projects

Project	Amount Allocated	Lead Organisation
Rent Deposit Scheme Provide additional funding for low wage residents or those on benefits to assist them in obtaining or maintaining a private sector tenancy.	£5k	The Hub, Dumfries
Additional top up of Energy Cards Additional payments to people who are in debt and cannot make the repayments, on Benefits or just above the threshold or are at risk of being cut off	£50k	Registered Social Landlords: DGHP Loreburn Housing Association Irvine Housing Association Home Group
Winter Warmth for Older People Scheme Provide additional support for people over 60 years of age who are not in paid work, receiving Benefits or have extenuating circumstances to access traditional fuels and get advice and support for fuel debt write offs.	£5k	The Hub Dumfries
Mobile Phones and Wi-fi Provision to families & individuals in temporary accommodation and who are otherwise vulnerable with mobile phone / device (if they don't already have one) and/or some top up and/or Wi-Fi	£10k	DGHP
Complex Debt Advice Individual advice and support for people experiencing complex debt problems	£10k	DAGCAS
COVID-19 Emergency Information provided in different languages and formats This could be audio, large print etc for people with sensory impairments; easy read for those with Additional Support Needs; and in different languages.	£10k	£5k each to DGMA and DGVoice

Further subsequent Scottish Government Hardship Funding was also allocated during the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic and many of the projects are still being delivered. Full figures on the resulting outcomes are being gathered and Case Studies on a selection of these projects are included within this Report in Section 6.

5.15 Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Benefits

- Costs of Living
- Income from Social Security and Benefits

Our Dumfries and Galloway Council's Welfare and Benefits Team continually Monitor and Report on all of the welfare and benefits support which is provided to every individual and family in every Ward of our Region on a monthly basis. Our Teams are continually proactive in reaching those in need who may not realise that they are due to receive these benefits to increase their financial

wellbeing by increasing their incomes. This is completed through proactive partnership working with stakeholders throughout our Region including the third sector, public sector partners including Social Security Scotland who now deliver all devolved benefits and our Education and Benefits Teams within our Council.

Housing Benefit is one of many of the benefits which are reported on a monthly basis and the table below highlights the monthly figures for this Benefit from both April 2020 and March 2021.

Table 12 - Examples of Monthly Housing Benefit Claims

Month / Year	No. Of Housing Benefit Claims with Children in the Home	Value of Housing Benefit Claims with Children in the Home	No. Of Children in Housing Benefit Claims
April 2020	1,338	£113,295.13	2,598
March 2021	1,036	£89,916.45	2,024

The total amount of Housing Benefit Awarded between April 2020 and March 2021 was £4,753,765.64. As the continued roll out of Universal Credit which replaces Housing Benefit continues, the number of Housing Benefit Claims each month will continue to reduce.

The total amount of Council Tax Reduction Benefit Awarded between April 2020 and March 2021 was £2,084,664. Approximately 2,718 children per month were in households in receipt of this additional Benefit.

5.16 Food insecurity – Support and provision

- *Costs of Living*
- *Income from Social Security and Benefits*

The Council's first Anti-Poverty Strategy delivered projects in both increasing the availability of free food provision within our region as well as reducing food insecurity.

By working with our Dumfries and Galloway Council Welfare and Benefits Teams, Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service and all third sector partners and stakeholders and Food Bank Providers, we have been working towards ensuring that Food Banks and all partners are able to offer advice and guidance to anyone in need to help them to both increase their incomes through support to apply for any benefits which they may be eligible for as well as reducing their costs by providing high quality, nourishing and choices on the food which they wish to receive for their families.

FareShare in Dumfries and Galloway

FareShare is the Community Food Share Project managed by Move On throughout Scotland. Whatever the focus of a service, as long as they use food to make a difference in their community, they can sign up for this service. The food which is provided is surplus from the food industry and food can become surplus – which means that it is not going to be sold – for simple reasons such as over-production, labelling errors or short shelf life. It is good quality, in date and is usually pretty tasty! Surplus food occurs everywhere in the supply chain from field through to fork: it could be from a grower, a manufacturer or a retailer.

As well as giving organisations access to varied and nutritious food, a FareShare membership saves food providers money. FareShare food is worth on average £7,900 to each of our Community Food Members, leaving them with more money to put back into their essential services. The food provided can be used by the organisation in any way that they wish both through cooking the food into meals and providing this to those in need in the organisation's own premises, cooking and freezing the food for delivery or as hot meals depending on the organisational model and also through Food Parcels which can be handed out to those in need. The emphasis is on the organisation to decide on which delivery model best suits them and most complete a combination of all of the above to meet the needs of the individuals and families in need which they all support.

Through the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy Action Plan 2015-2020, we have encouraged organisations to become members over the last 4 years. The Council have also assisted with identifying funding opportunities including Area Committee Anti-Poverty Grant Funding and then since March last year, the Council has covered the costs of both the Membership Fees and also the delivery costs for each organisation. This was completed firstly through the Scottish Government COVID-19 Hardship Funding (2020–2021).

The number of organisations who are now members has increased to 15. At the current time, we have one of the highest levels of FareShare Membership by Local Authority Area in Scotland which highlights our proactive activities in helping to reduce the levels of food insecurity throughout our Region.

We are regularly in touch both with the FareShare Team in Glasgow and also the majority of the FareShare Members to ensure that the project is running to plan and that if any issues ever arise, we can feed these back to the FareShare Team.

The following provides the annual figures and levels of support provided to Dumfries and Galloway during 2020-2021. This level of support is exceptional especially when compared to the contracted level of supply which is also detailed.

Table 13 - FareShare Food Provided from 1st April 2020-31st March 2021

	Contracted provision	Actual provision
Value of food provided		£872,874.60
Tonnes of Food provided	91.8	244,402
Equivalent Number of Meal Portions	218,565	581,916

During April 2020 – March 2021, the way in which Food Bank provision figures were collated changed slightly from previous years figures which were maintained by the Council's Anti-Poverty Officer. Estimated figures of the provision of food from October 2020 – March 2021 are detailed below:

- Total number of food parcels distributed in the period = 28,984
- The food parcels contents are estimated to be equivalent to 310,958263
- In addition to this 66,113 pre-prepared meals were distributed.

Thus, the total number of meals distributed overall (Via parcels + prepared meals) = 377,923.

- The average number of people receiving food per week = 3322
- The number of new requests over the period = 2041.
- Number of active volunteers involved in food provision = 510
- Working for a total of 40.185 volunteer hours
- Estimated paid staff hours involved in food provision = 33,499
- Miles travelled in line with food distribution = 67,446

5.17 Period poverty

- *Costs of Living*

Dumfries and Galloway Council have continually supported the Scottish Government Period Poverty Bill which seeks to ensure that period products are available to anyone who needs them free of charge, therefore reducing the cost of living. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, every Primary and Secondary School within our Region had available supplies of a range of period products within all bathrooms. These were on display and no limit was made on the number of products which could be used by every pupil.

When the announcement was made in March 2020 that that all Schools were to close, our Poverty and Inequalities Team worked with colleagues in Education to ensure that all pupils were sent home with a supply of period products for their use over the months to come. The School Hubs also retained stocks of these essential supplies which could be collected at any time and pupils were informed of this additional service through the regular updates which were provided to parents and pupils throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In addition, a new Free Online Period Dignity Service was developed by the Council's Poverty and Inequalities Team and launched in October 2020. This new website allowed any resident in need within our region to log on and register for the free monthly home delivery service and to choose from a range of period products depending on their needs and those of their families.

This project has been very successful and has received positive feedback, especially in relation to the home deliveries which are completed in plain white boxes to ensure that no stigma is attached to the receipt of these items to home addresses. By the end of March 2021, there were 647 Home Deliveries completed each month with 1,056 individuals receiving this support and 2,461 products provided.

5.18 Free school clothing and warm winter clothes

- *Costs of Living*

Over 5,500 items of clothing have been donated and redistributed through the Free School Uniform Bank and Warm Winter Clothes Project which has been co-ordinated by the Council's Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Team working alongside a number of third sector partner organisations.

This project has been running since 2018 and is designed specifically to ensure that families, children and young people can receive school uniform items and warm winter clothing through collection points where anonymity is guaranteed. Over the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new online service was developed which allows for delivery of clothing direct to the doorstep. £250,000 of counterfeit clothing goods that were seized by Police Scotland and passed on to colleagues in the Dumfries and Galloway Trading Standards Team were also re-distributed onto partner organisations by the Poverty and Inequalities Team for onward distribution to individuals and families in need across the region. More similar activities are being planned for additional seized goods. This not only supports the families in most need within our region but also Dumfries and Galloway Council's Carbon Reduction Targets too as previously any clothing goods which were seized due to illegal activities was either destroyed or sent to landfill.

5.19 Family Support – Early and effective intervention

At Full Council on 30 July 2020, Elected Members agreed support for investment in early and effective intervention to fulfil the costs needed to deliver on our transformation change programme enabling us to work towards cost avoidance. The investment of £1,815,000 was agreed as set out: investment of £535,000 per annum for a period of 3 years to support Early and Effective Intervention family support work; and investment of £70,000 per annum for a period of 3 years to increase our commissioned service with our Third Sector providers.

As with most areas of activity, the focus of our approach and pace of change has had to change taking in to account the impact of COVID-19 on our children

and families. The Family Support Team was formed to lead and deliver on the Early and Effective Intervention as of 30 November 2020. The reasons for referral to the service include: neglect; poor home conditions and poverty; physical abuse; sexual abuse; poor parental mental health; domestic abuse; drug/alcohol misuse; parenting capacity; help with routines and boundaries; and managing challenging behaviour. In addition to these reasons, some children have been referred because of poor school attendance, children's mental health and isolation. We are also working with some families from pre-birth supporting them with early parenting.

We recognise that early and effective intervention could prevent a significant impact on our services and resources and provide a positive outcome for children, clearly set out and aligned to our GIRFEC arrangements. It is the intention of our Family Support Team to deliver on the following outcomes:

- Keep children safe within their own families and within their own communities
- Provide consistency of care and building relationships that support sustainable change in their home situation
- The ability to monitor progress that allows for early decision making
- Break cycles of poor parenting and reduce inappropriate admissions to care
- Reduce the length of time children remain in neglectful situations where there is no change
- Build a nurturing environment where children can thrive
- Reduce risk taking behaviour in young people
- Reduce the revolving door for children leaving care
- Evaluation of the project by the families and children who have been supported to inform improvements in future provision.

Processes have been developed in terms of capturing and measuring the long-term impact with families after referral closures with procedures currently being developed to support families sustain positive long-term changes.

COVID-19 has shown us how many of our third sector providers have changed their models of delivery, and as previously agreed at Social Work Services Committee we scoped out additional areas of work involving our third sector organisations. This includes:

- foodbank resources
- group work including virtual cooking classes
- household basic needs
- clothing.

From the investment of £70,000 per annum for a period of 3 years to increase our commissioned service with our Third Sector providers; £35,000 has currently been invested to Aberlour. This organisation currently delivers intensive family support work with families whose children are affected by their parent(s) substance use issues and compliments the work of the Family Support Service.

This investment to Aberlour has created additional funding for our Region through the Corra match funding principles. In addition to this, Aberlour have secured additional funding levered into the Community (£425,000) through:

- Successful bid to ScotGov Investing In Communities Fund - £180,000 over two years
- Successful bid to ScotGov Challenge Fund (in partnership with Dumfries Prison and ADP) - £140,000 over two years
- Successful bid to CORRA – Whole Family Approach – Systems Change - £105,000 over two years – to work with Children and Family Social Work Services, ADP and Collaborate with a commitment to look together at systems change and whole family support. This work is aligned to our Social Work Services Transformation Change Programme.

This is a three-year funded service with a specific focus on supporting those families at an early stage where poverty-related neglect has been identified. Support will be at the earliest possible stage to minimise the immediate impact on children and reduce the long term physical and emotional effects that neglect can have. Support is provided to families on a regular and sometimes intensive basis including evenings and weekends if needed. Feedback from families is very positive and evidence suggests positive outcomes in supporting families and avoiding child protection measures or statutory involvement.

Feedback included the following:

- *'Life changing'*
- *'Absolutely invaluable support to our family'*
- *'they worked with rather than against the family'*
- *'they were practical, honest and fair'*.

A Case Study highlighting this project can be found in Chapter 6.

6. Case Studies

Building on the previous chapter, this chapter aims to bring to life through Case Studies, the impact of our work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts. It also demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the voice of those with lived experience is heard in planning, delivering and evaluating our work. All Case Studies are shared with the permission of the families involved.

6.1 Case Study 1 - Health Visitor referral for money advice

When J's baby son was diagnosed with epilepsy and cerebral palsy, her Health Visitor enquired about any money worries she had. Knowing that she might need to take time off work for medical appointments and when her son was ill, plus the need for specialist equipment, J was concerned that the family's income wouldn't be enough to cover things.

With J's consent, the Health Visitor made a referral to Dumfries and Galloway's Citizen's Advice Service and the family soon received a phone call from a Money Advisor. J was supported through the process of applying for Disability Living Allowance and when the application was rejected, the Health Visitor and Money Advisor continued to support J through the challenging tribunal process. This eventually resulted in a Disability Living Allowance award of £80 per week.

J says if it hadn't been for the invaluable support of her incredible Health Visitor and the Money Advisor, not only would her family be £3120 per year less well off, her mental health and wellbeing would also be poorer.

6.2 Case Study 2 – Family Nurse Partnership

When S arrived in Dumfries from Europe, aged 17 and pregnant, and not speaking English, it was uncertain how far on in her pregnancy she was. At her first appointment with a midwife, S was referred to the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme due to her vulnerability. Permission was sought from the Scottish Government to offer S the FNP programme as though she was out with the criteria for the service due to being so far on in her pregnancy, it was clear that the programme would benefit her and her baby.

The Family Nurse arranged to visit S having organised an interpreter to enable them both to communicate fully about her pregnancy and the FNP programme and S opted to participate. It was identified that S's partner and his mother were the only supports available to her and she had no route into accessing financial support.

With S's consent, the Family Nurse made a referral to Dumfries and Galloway's Citizen's Advice Service and the family received a phone call from a Money Advisor. S was supported through the process of applying for financial support and a claim made for the family. The Family Nurse has also arranged English lessons for S and is helping her to prepare for her baby's

imminent arrival by linking her with local organisations that can provide baby clothing and equipment.

The support of her Family Nurse, the interpreter and the Money Advisor have been invaluable in assisting S to access information, services and support for herself, her baby and her family. This has improved her financial situation as well as reducing isolation for her and her family.

6.3 Case Study 3 – Family learning to employment

P's journey into adult learning began when she started going to family learning sessions when her children were babies, then when her youngest was in nursery, P attended the Peep group sessions with her, and at first it was more for her child but as the weeks went by she really started to enjoy it and had the chance to study for Peep accreditation. She then sat SCQF level 5 in literacy and numeracy, supported by the Lifelong Learning team. This really helped boost P's confidence as when she was learning new things about child development, she realised that she would love to work with children in a school setting. To apply for a job in school, P had to go to college to gain a core maths 3 certificate which she completed in just 8 weeks. P then successfully applied for a job as a learning assistant in her local school. Loving her new job and wishing she had made the move sooner, she realised that without going to the Peep group first she would never have been confident enough to do it. And her journey didn't end there. This year P was able to study for an HNC in childcare while working at the school, and can now start to look for a permanent position as an Early Childhood Practitioner.

6.4 Case Study 4 – Digital inclusion

E, a young mum living in foster care and isolated during the lockdowns with a new baby, has been able to undertake some online learning and explore college courses for the following year thanks to her Social Worker providing her with a digital device funded through the Connecting Scotland programme. Having ready access to the internet has also helped E to access trusted information about her baby's development and to link into online forums with other young mums.

6.5 Case Study 5 – Free School Meals

G, a single parent with 2 children aged 11 & 12, was referred by Department of Work & Pensions for Personal Budgeting Support. At an initial interview it was established that G had fled domestic violence and when located by ex-partner to the temporary homeless accommodation address, G and her children were required to move again to live with family and be supported by a Counsellor. Budgeting advice was given and G was supported to claim Universal Credit Housing costs. The Scottish Welfare Fund was accessed and a Community Care Grant provided goods to set up a new home. An application was made and G was awarded free school meals and Education Clothing Grants for the children.

G reported “I am on a low income and the Free School Meals really helps with the budgeting aspect as I know that I have the funds to buy food for the children. Originally, I was getting the boxes delivered but they weren’t really working for us and I found there were things being wasted from it so I changed to the money and this works much better for us as I know they will eat what we buy and the children can decide what they want.

It helps me budget on a low income and I know that I can afford to feed the children with the assistance that I receive. I can stretch the budget by shopping around for the best deals and planning meals in advance with no waste.

Myself and the 2 children are settled into the house now. Kids settled into the new schools. Difficult at this time because of COVID-19 and home-schooling – which is a nightmare - but I am really grateful for all the assistance that I had from Welfare and Housing Option Support Team to set this up. My main income is Universal Credit and I was struggling to work with the monthly payments so I changed to twice a month and that’s easier for me and has made a big difference. Support from your Team is assisting our family along with the youth justice worker and this is helping us a lot. I am managing fine at the moment but if this changes I will contact the council for assistance again”.

6.6 Case Study 6 – Hardship Funding COVID-19 Pandemic

N was a single parent with 2 young children living in rented accommodation. He had been self-employed for 9 months but due to COVID-19 he now had no Income and he didn’t know what he would be entitled to.

The Money Adviser at Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service explained that he would be able to claim Universal Credit and also Council Tax Reduction and talked N through the claim process and the information which he would require. N was also assisted with a food parcel and how to obtain an emergency top up for gas and electricity if necessary.

N made further contact at various stages of the claiming process and on each occasion the adviser was able to assist him. The adviser also arranged for a further emergency food parcel to be delivered to N and his family. A few weeks later N emailed to say thanks for the help that the adviser had given. He felt that she had gone above and beyond to assist him when he didn’t know what to do. The advice and assistance provided to this N prevented him from getting into debt during the difficult period of the pandemic when he had no income.

6.7 Case Study 7 – Hardship Funding: Digital Devices

B was living in homeless accommodation with a young daughter and only had pay as you go access to the internet so spent much of the time visiting family and friends. When the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a national lockdown B was very anxious about how she would manage. There was no internet package or access to data in the property and the TV they had only had access to basic channels.

The project has helped P by giving her access to the internet which has allowed them to keep in touch with family and friends and services at a vulnerable time in their life. P has been able to keep her daughter more entertained when outside activities were restricted too. It has eased the financial pressure on P worrying about topping up the phone to keep in touch. P has also been able to keep in touch with services such as Job Centre to apply for Universal Credit, and she has been able to track their housing application by keeping in touch with DGHP.

The project has also allowed P to keep in touch with her support worker for emotional and practical support during this time and she has also managed to keep in regular contact with the health visitor regarding her daughter's health and wellbeing.

6.8 Case Study 8 – Hardship Funding: DGHP fuel top-up cards

When C was struggling to pay rent, she found out about the Fuel Top-Up Service from an Income Officer who was helping with her case. C had struggled through the first part of lockdown including looking after her children when the schools were closed and her debt was rising.

C was struggling to budget for the kids returning to school, to pay rent and utilities. The Fuel To-Up Service has helped C to prioritise paying her rent which was also being inflated due to the pandemic. C was very grateful of the help with fuel costs and in particular because this support was available to all tenants, not just those in receipt of specific benefits.

6.9 Case Study 9 – Counselling in Schools 1-2-1 programme

R was referred to the 1-2-1 programme by their pupil support teacher. R was experiencing problems with peers in school which was causing them anxiety. They struggled with making friendships and managing their anger and became involved in fights at school. R was also struggling with low moods and transition into first year due to lockdown. R was offered eight 1-2-1 sessions, but this was extended to 14 sessions to meet their needs. The support from the Youth Information Worker continued throughout lockdown and was delivered through regular phone calls.

R did not miss a session and seemed happy to have this contact during such a difficult time. R spent the first couple of sessions discussing what support they needed, and they set a short-term goal to “feel less angry and feel happier” and their long-term goal was to “make friends and return home to their parents”. R recognised that they needed support with anger and help to cope with stressful situations. R also worked on anger and learning to recognise when they would begin to lose control, to stop and think before reacting and use alternative healthier and safer ways to manage these feelings in difficult situations. R began to understand the difference between being aggressive, passive, and assertive and how to implement assertiveness using the appropriate language and skills. R also identified breathing techniques that they could use before, during and after such incidents.

R engaged really well in the sessions and seemed to become more and more relaxed in each session, showing a more open and talkative person. They used their new skills in school when confronted with peers who were annoying them. They felt able to walk away from the situation using the techniques learned and commented on how good this felt, giving them a sense of achievement and growth in self-control.

It was also identified through the sessions that R did not have many clothes and was self-conscious of the way they looked. The Youth Information Worker was able to apply for support to provide basics and they received a clothes parcel. There had been a significant change in the way that R behaved which was observed by the Youth Information Worker, School Staff and their family but most importantly recognised by R themselves. At the end of the sessions the R seemed to become more confident and presented as a happier and calmer person. R spoke of feeling more in control and accepting that you cannot change certain things or other people but that you can control your behaviour and how you think and feel. R was signposted and encouraged to try new activities/groups, to build new relationships and gain new experiences, and now attends a Youth Group on a weekly basis. R has made new friendships meeting their long-term goal.

6.10 Case Study 10 – Family Support early and effective intervention

L has recently had her 5 younger children removed from her care and her 2 older children age 8 and 9 are now on the child protection register.

L has had a member of the Family Support team working with her for a number of months. So far has this has involved the worker observing current routines during both planned and unplanned visits. During these visits it became clear that there is a lot of work to do with L in assisting her to adhere to routines and boundaries. The worker's time with the family began by focusing on building positive, trusting relationships with the whole family to establish a foundation to move onto more intense support.

L was initially reluctant to recognise that there were any issues with how she parents and both children had stated that they would like L to be more involved in activities and spend more time with them. With L showing no emotional warmth towards her children and spending a lot of time sitting on the couch shouting orders, the worker spent time with L to make a plan to improve things.

This plan is to try and support L with basic parenting skills through role modelling. The worker goes in at key times through the week and initiates play, craft activities and cooking/baking activities and tries to get L involved in these. The idea is that once L see's the children enjoying these activities that she will willingly join in.

The worker also goes in while the children are at school and assists L with preparing wholesome meals as this has also been noted as a current issue with the children eating microwave burgers and noodles etc for dinners.

Intense work will be required with L and her family as L's aim is to have overnight stays with her younger five children. However, L needs to build on the relationships she has with the elder two children and improve her parenting skills for this to be an option. Through the building of a positive trusting relationship with L and her family, we now have the scaffolding in place for the more intense support which will enable L to work towards her aim being realised.

7. Planning for 2021-2022 and beyond

Our Local Child Poverty Action Report 2019-2020 set out a high-level summary of actions we planned to deliver for 2020-2023, to align the planning cycles with those of our Children's Services. Due to the need to respond to basic human needs and rights, it has not yet been possible to develop a detailed Action Plan for 2021-2022 and beyond. However, the following sections set out the context for and plans we have agreed to develop new actions for tackling child poverty and mitigating its impacts in Dumfries and Galloway.

7.1 Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Strategy and Partnership

7.1.1 Evaluation of the Poverty Strategy 2015-2020

In February 2021, the Council's Communities Committee considered the Evaluation of the Council's Anti-Poverty. It evidenced:

- Poverty has been placed on the political agenda in a way that it wasn't previously, and is ensuring that action on poverty is seen as essential across different political parties
- The Strategy has been the basis for challenging claims that there is little power to tackle poverty locally and has illustrated the sorts of activities that can have a positive impact
- The Strategy's focus on issues such as listening to the community, capacity building and challenging stigma have all been recognised and well received
- The Strategy helped to foster a culture of placing service users and those with lived experience at the heart of decision making.

View the Evaluation of Poverty Strategy 2015-2020 here:

https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/23922/Tackling-Poverty-strategy-Appendix-4-Evaluation-of-Poverty-Strategy-2015-2020/pdf/Appendix_4_-_Evaluation_of_Poverty_Strategy_2015-2020-Final.pdf?m=637475203360770000

The Communities Committee also considered recommendations for the future, which had been drawn from the Evaluation of the Council Strategy, the updated research Report and stakeholder engagement. The key recommendations were that a closer alignment with the wider inequalities agenda and stronger partnership working.

7.1.2 Poverty and Inequalities Strategy 2021-2026

So in March 2021, the Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership (CPP) agreed a Poverty and Inequalities Strategy for 2021-2026. The vision of the Partnership is 'A Dumfries and Galloway in which local action has driven poverty as low as possible, and has mitigated as far as possible the impact of poverty when experienced.

The Objectives of the Poverty and Inequalities Strategy are:

Outcome Objective 1: Tackle severe and persistent poverty and destitution
 Outcome Objective 2: Maximising income of people facing poverty
 Outcome Objective 3: Reducing the financial pressures on people in poverty
 Outcome Objective 4: Building individuals and communities' ability to deal with the effects of poverty
 Enabling Objective 1: Building organisational and system capacity
 Enabling Objective 2: Addressing barriers to access.

The Poverty and Inequalities Strategy is one of the key Strategies and Plans identified by the CPP Board as contributing to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and it will therefore present performance reports on its Action Plan on a quarterly basis to the Board.

7.1.3 Poverty and Inequalities Partnership

The CPP Board also agreed that the Tackling Poverty Co-ordination Group be replaced by a Poverty and Inequalities Partnership.

The remit of the Partnership is to:

- drive forward the Community Planning Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Strategy through a shared Action Plan.
- work on a develop collaborative projects that tackle poverty and inequalities
- share advice from a 'lived experience' perspective
- access expertise from other areas and at national level and share our work with them
- identify any hidden barriers to access and participation and ways of overcoming them
- create opportunities for engagement between partner organisations and people experiencing poverty
- act as a forum for consultation, engagement and information exchange
- take a partnership approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the share Action Plan reporting to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

The membership of the Partnership is public sector organisations; third sector partners, including from the Equality and Diversity Working Group to ensure alignment with that agenda; and volunteers with lived experience of poverty and inequality drawn from the Tackling Poverty Reference Group. The Partnership is supported by the Dumfries and Galloway Council Poverty and Inequalities Team. Following an open recruitment process, an independent Chair was appointed in July 2021 and since that time four Meetings of the new Partnership have been held.

The Partnership has agreed four Sub-Groups to develop the Strategy Action Plan:

1. Tackling severe and persistent poverty and destitution and building individuals' and communities' ability to deal with the effects of poverty
2. Maximising income and reducing debt of people facing poverty
3. Reducing financial pressures on people facing poverty
4. Developing our approach to child poverty.

There is also a short life Group developing the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Further information about the Strategy and Partnership are available here: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/poverty>.

7.2 Developing Our Approach to Child Poverty Sub-Group

At the time of writing (November 2021), the Developing Our Approach to Child Poverty Sub-Group of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership has planned to undertake a process of self-assessment, to be facilitated by the Improvement Service. This will support stakeholders to reflect on the local approach to Child Poverty work, consider any challenges or areas for improvement and then begin to plan collaboratively for future action across the whole system to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts.

Following this, the Sub-Group will be supported by Public Health Scotland, utilising a public health needs assessment approach, to build a picture of what the local child poverty 'system' looks like in Dumfries and Galloway. This will also enable the partnership to identify what data is currently being recorded, how that data is being used and to establish how the data can better inform the priorities for this work to support families locally.

It is critically important that this work leads to the development of clear measurable actions to make a difference to children and their families and it is anticipated that by undertaking these two processes, a more comprehensive and collaborative Action Plan for 2022 and beyond will be developed. We will report fully on this in the 2021-2022 iteration of the Dumfries and Galloway Local Child Poverty Action Report.

8. Conclusion

Whilst the reporting period from April 2020 to March 2021 has been a year overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, partners across Dumfries and Galloway have continued to deliver a very broad range of work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts on local families.

With a projected rise in poverty rates, child poverty targets will be even more challenging to achieve. However, our ambitious plans for the new Developing our Approach to Child Poverty Sub-Group of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership should ensure a more robust and action focused plan of activities across the whole system for 2022 and beyond, focusing our comprehensive support packages on priority family groups.

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Appendix 1: 2020-2023 Child Poverty Action Plan – Progress Update

The table below presents a progress update on the Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan for 2020-2023. More information regarding the work delivered between April 2020 and March 2021 can be found in Chapters 5 and 6.

Key













complete








in progress



delayed/to be reviewed

Action	Driver/Issue	Who/Partnership	RAG Status
1. Develop D&G Employability and Skills Plan	Employment/ Employability	D&G Employability and Skills Partnership	 In Progress
2. Develop 'Project 155' to increase the working age population	Employment/ Employability	DGC and NHSD&G	 In Progress
3. Contribute to the South of Scotland Regional Economic Plan	Employment/ Employability	DGC/ Regional Economic Partnership	 In Progress
4. Implement the 1140 hours of free childcare	Employment Cost of living	DGC (Skills, Education and Learning)	
5. Build on DGC Transformation Programme work, School Transport Policy and PSP model to address access and affordability of public transport for access to work and education	Employment Cost of Living	SWestrans, DGC, TSD&G Sector, PSP on community transport	 In Progress
6. Develop Equality Outcomes that support the High Priority Groups experiencing child Poverty	Employment Cost of Living Income	DGC; H&SCP; NHSD&G, SOSE; SDS, SWestrans	 Equality Outcomes published
7. Review financial inclusion pathways for health	Income	H&SCP; DGC (Financial Inclusion Assessment Team); and Financial Inclusion service providers (Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service	 Health Visiting pathway active and effective. Pathways from Maternity and other services in development
8. Develop approaches that reduce the 'Cost of the School Day',	Cost of Living	DGC (Skills, Education and Learning & Poverty and Inequalities Team)	 In Progress with new activities due to COVID-19 being implemented which were additional to those planned.
9. Implement approaches with RSLs to address homelessness	Cost of Living	Strategic Housing Forum and Homeless Forum including RSL partners	 In Progress
10. Direct support and funding to fuel poverty	Cost of Living Income maximisation	DGC, Strategic Housing Forum and RSL partners, <i>Poverty and Inequalities Team</i>	 In Progress with new activities due to COVID-19 being implemented which were additional to those planned.

Action	Driver/Issue	Who/Partnership	RAG Status
11. Explore opportunities to ensure food poverty and food insecurity is embedded within Public Health Priority 1 (Place) and Public Health Priority 6 (Eat well, healthy weight)	Cost of Living	Public Health Priority Implementation Groups with support from DGC, TSD&G and Community Food Providers Network. Poverty and Inequalities Team	 this action is to be amended
12. Explore opportunities to ensure culture, play, leisure and sport is embedded within Public Health Priority 6 (healthy weight, physically active)	Cost of Living	DG Unlimited (arts); Major Festivals and Events Partnership; Physical Activity Alliance with support from Play Scotland	 this action is to be amended
13. Partnership events to develop the Local Child Poverty Action Plan during 2020-2023	Communication and Engagement	Children's Services Executive Group, Poverty and Inequalities Team	 delayed due to pandemic
14. Partnership event(s) to establish opportunities and identify areas for data sharing across sectors	Data sharing and evidence base	H&SCP (Performance and Intelligence Team); DGC; TSD&G; supported by equalities groups; RSLs; and the Improvement Service, Poverty and Inequalities Team	 delayed due to pandemic
15. Develop a Communication and Engagement Plan	Communication and Engagement	DGC; NHS D&G; and H&SCP; Poverty and Inequalities Team	 delayed due to pandemic