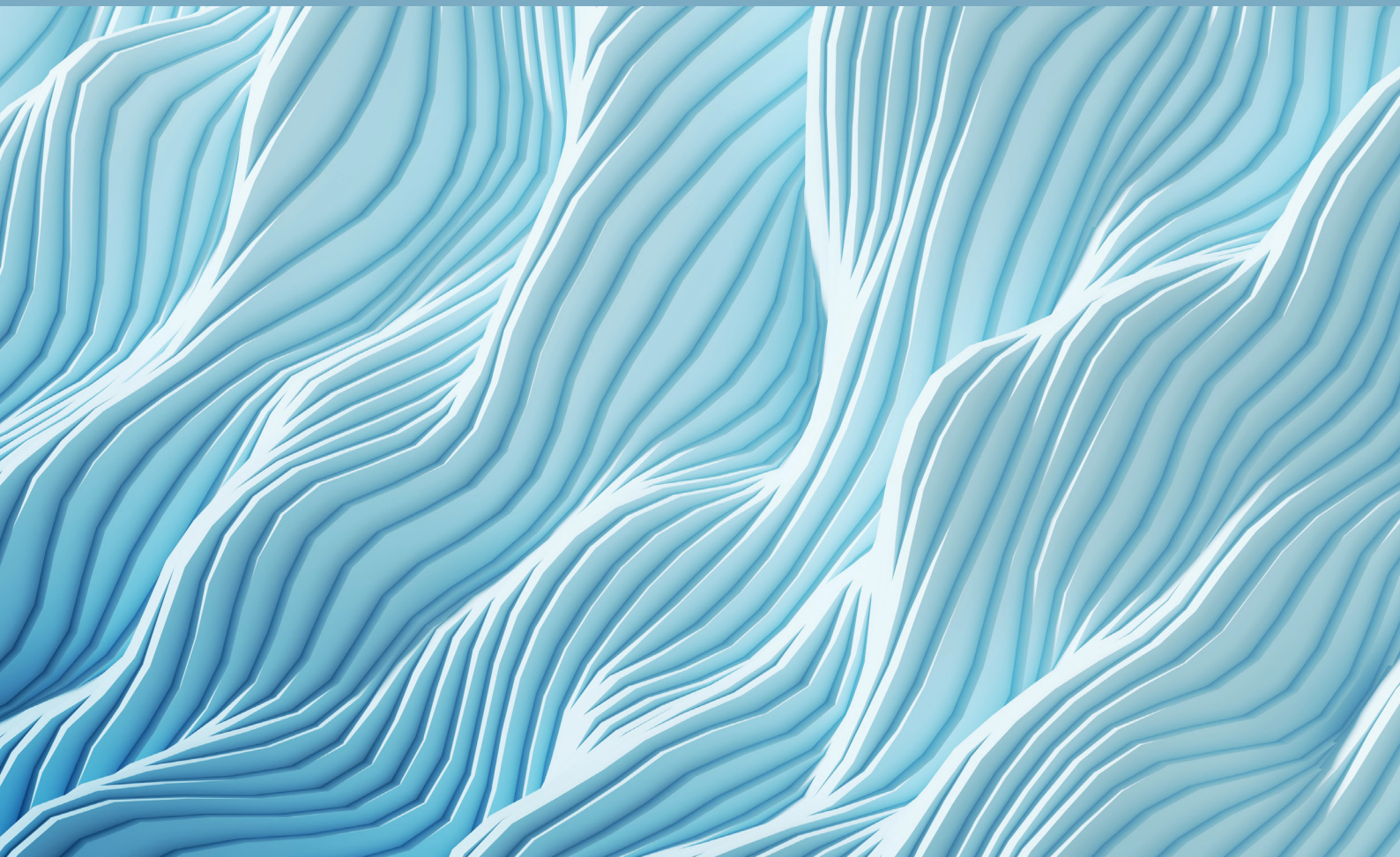




Glasgow Child Poverty Programme: Following the Evidence and Data Sharing Briefing



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Ingredients for success for Glasgow



Leadership

- ◆ Focusing on what data is needed, rather than what data is available.
- ◆ Using data and intelligence to take a place-based approach, rather than city-wide approach.
- ◆ Valuing different kinds of data and intelligence, from communities, practitioners and leaders, both qualitative and quantitative.
- ◆ Developing a hypothesis and testing approach.
- ◆ Accepting work around data sharing agreements will be lengthy and complex, but sticking with it, and taking an incremental approach.
- ◆ Clarity of purpose and direction from senior leadership.
- ◆ Investing in the right resources and capacity for the data work.

What challenges has the Data workstream been trying to address?

- ◆ **Historically, there has been lots of conflicting and confusing data around child poverty** (e.g., different sources, different definitions, etc). This risks leading to a reliance on local assumptions/ anecdotal knowledge and a lack of joined-up data sets that don't provide a robust picture of local child poverty or support evidence-based decision making.
- ◆ **There is a risk of relying on quantitative data**, which can "show the scale of poverty and inequality, but can't fully explain the experiences behind those barriers".
- ◆ **Data sharing to tackle child poverty remains a major challenge within Scotland and the UK.** Data silos are some "of the biggest silos we have". Many services/ organisations hold intelligence and insight that could help build a fuller picture to support people living in poverty, but "can't share it". Additionally, many services/ organisations hold data that tells us a lot about child poverty, but cannot proactively use this data beyond use for research, reports, etc.

What has the Data workstream focused on?

The Data workstream has built on the existing annual Child Poverty Reports and the Child Poverty Dashboard, and has used this to progress data sharing opportunities and the use of data to inform strategic, evidence-based decision making.

Annual Child Poverty Reports and the Child Poverty Dashboard

- ◆ The annual report was developed in response to the Financial Inclusion Team wanting to use data to evidence what they were trying to do around child poverty. The team wasn't sure where to go or how to gather evidence. Conflicting statistics across the data landscape made it difficult to know where to start given "we're all using different statistics to measure child poverty" (e.g., before/ after housing costs, different sources such as the Scottish Government, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), the UK government, etc.).
- ◆ Building on the annual Report, Glasgow developed a live Child Poverty Dashboard using locally-held data to provide a visual, data-informed overview of child poverty levels in the city. The Dashboard provides aggregated level data across the city, at ward level and at data zone level, and can be filtered by priority groups, age bands, housing type, etc.
- ◆ This deliberate approach to data has helped develop a much more precise understanding of child poverty. Glasgow uses its own locally-sourced data, which is a "really great stepping stone" that has helped secure political buy-in. "Our politicians in Glasgow were all over that because they loved the fact that Glasgow was doing it differently." The Dashboard supports exploring "pockets of child poverty across the city that could benefit from wider research and more intervention".

Data sharing

- ◆ The Programme was able to use the data held in the Dashboard for research purposes only. The Programme came up with a new solution to help gain permission to re-use existing DWP-derived data for proactive outreach, by the Council and the DWP, to households likely experiencing poverty. This involved a new partnership approach involving the Council's Legal Service, the DWP and the Council's Finance team. Internal and external processes were followed to seek approval for re-use of existing data. This included completing a DPIA, notifying the DWP LAPED and receiving approval from the DWP regarding a reuse request for data.
- ◆ The Programme is now able to facilitate contact to households likely experiencing poverty through the agreed Council/DWP joint letter process which involves re-use of name and addresses. The Programme's Data Scientist receives a monthly dataset in relation to DWP-derived data. Contact is made firstly by letter through the Council's Glasgow Helps Service to offer holistic support. Eligible households who wish to take up the offer can be assigned a link worker with whole family support. The target group for the Programme are households likely experiencing poverty with children aged 0-5
- ◆ The "razor-sharp focus" on child poverty across the organisation has enabled Elected

What is the impact of this work so far? Why is it important for tackling child poverty through progressing public service reform?

Provides evidence to shape the strategic direction of the Programme, and taking a targeted approach to interventions

Acts as a conversation starter with other teams/ services

Strengthens partnership working

Links families' experiences to systems change

Supports prevention and early intervention

- ◆ Provides the *evidence that shapes the strategic direction* of the Programme, including the identification of Booster Wards, which map “the 10 areas of the city with the highest levels of child poverty”, based on the “scale and depth of poverty” shown by analysis. This helps to remove the “guesswork” around which families need which kinds of support.
- ◆ The **Dashboard acts as a conversation starter**. Taking it to different teams, it “gets people thinking about their own data, how they might share it, and how poverty impacts our service”. For example: Glasgow HSCP are trying to understand repeat or frequent attendances at GPs and hospitals, and how poverty might be influencing that, so they can “intervene in other areas” and ease pressure on health services. As another example, exploring the data together with Glasgow’s social work services has helped identify potential crossovers and also “build a better trust” that shared data will be handled appropriately.
- ◆ This work has **strengthened partnership working** in the initial test Booster Ward, with the Council and third sector working together more closely as they reach out to families.

- ◆ This work helps tie the thread from engagement with families to public service reform and national policy shifts—to take micro interactions and transform them into macro-level changes at the city-wide scale. It has the capacity to be the “**connective tissue**” **between citizen voice and system change**, but the focus needs to continue to be on linking the wealth of data, learning and experiences from families, practitioners and leaders.
- ◆ While still in its infancy, the fundamental purpose of the data sharing agreement is that it will **enable proactive outreach**, so services can work with families in a more preventative way.

Key Learning



Data for precise decision making

- ◆ Intelligence supports a shift to evidence-based decision making. “We’ve been very deliberate...to make sure that we are discussing and aiming for what data we need, not what data we have.” This has been a “massive piece of public service reform work,” recognising that data drives knowledge and is a key driver of partnership working. “It’s not easy, but it’s got to be like that... Otherwise this is only superficial change”.
- ◆ Narrowing the focus from city-wide to a more targeted, precise place-based approach through data and intelligence. Building a picture through data “has allowed us to...defend who, where and what you’re going to start with”. Glasgow traditionally “has a tendency to think at scale”. The prevailing culture was “how can we be as big as possible,” but the Programme challenged this by going “right down to ward and sub-ward level,” which is a “a really powerful opportunity and a much better way for getting engaged”. This has resulted in a focus on ten “Booster Wards”, which helps “tie this back down into people and place”. Further, Glasgow chose to use their Dashboard not for a broad universal focus, but to specifically target families represented within it, which further narrowed the cohort (e.g., because the Dashboard is built on Council Tax Reduction data). However, “It’s quite hard to stick to the [zero] to five emphasis... people say, but what about 18 year olds?”

Each workstream within the Programme has a hypothesis—a “what if” question which helps frame the intended outcomes of the workstream. They then operationalise these hypotheses by trialling them in real world settings. “This is about lifting our head up and asking how we do things differently, and testing things that are scientifically-based and coming from the community. These are small tests of change, without trying to change the world...And if we manage to move the dial a bit, then we recognise that as learning to scale up and share”.



Valuing different kinds of data and intelligence

- ◆ The importance of different kinds of data and intelligence: “That triangulation between what it is the data is telling us..., the communities....and families...and what it is that the services [are telling us]...[and] you’ve got to listen to the local players as well”.

Glasgow articulate these different kinds of data as the following: quantitative data and evidence and formal reporting; officer insights and accrued intelligence, including long-term observations from professionals who have a deep knowledge of what works/ doesn’t work in practice; and community voice, with residents recognised as subject matter experts, who can articulate community challenges and what might help address them.

- ◆ Bringing this variety of data and intelligence together helps focus decision makers on “that doughnut of complexity that’s around a family,” and use it to shape how they share knowledge about families and the types of poverty they face. There is a deepening understanding of child poverty among partners, shaped by growing confidence and focus in learning about specific families. In particular, this learning has helped partners and decision makers better understand that poverty is “not about not having enough money, it’s about all sorts of things.” This complexity became clear during work in Govan, where initial assumptions were challenged: “We thought [one thing] was the issue... but when we actually started properly talking to community and talking to families, we understood that there’s about five or six things that are the issue.”



Taking an incremental approach to data sharing

- ◆ Doing the data work takes time. The Programme’s data workstream has focused on sharing data securely, developing data tools, exploring opportunities for data matching/ linkage, and enabling proactive outreach using existing datasets.
- ◆ Data sharing has required time and patience to help build relationships and trust between partners in the Programme. A strong relationship with the Council’s Finance team has been crucial and working together has allowed the Programme to achieve its objectives for data sharing. It has been key for organisations to shape the work together, recognising the need for all relevant skill sets and expertise in the room to achieve solutions (e.g., the Council’s Finance team and DWP). The cultural dimension of data sharing is vital to help build trust between partners.

Protected time and expertise for the data sharing work has been crucial, providing the ability to step back from day-to-day work and collectively work through the implications of each step.

- ◆ It is important to prototype ideas on a small scale within Demonstration of Change projects to develop understanding and concrete learning, evaluate what works and what needs improvement before scaling up to other areas of the city. The Programme is focused on its longer-term goal of trying to provide assistance to households across the city and understanding the system and policy changes required, rather than pursuing quick wins. This also required continually challenging internalised assumptions/ understandings around the “why” and “what” of this work.
- ◆ Patience around the impact and outcomes of the data sharing work in the long term is important. Even with the ability to start proactively engaging with small numbers of families, that engagement won’t happen overnight; it requires building relationships and gaining trust. It will take time to test what engagement approaches work best with families.

Future opportunities for this work

- ◆ There are many opportunities to progress the Data workstream. This includes better understanding the range of data requests other teams are submitting and what they’re doing with this data; better understanding the impact of proactive outreach for families but also for other organisations/ partners; accessing and reusing Health data; using the data collected for the Dashboard to follow a person’s journey after engagement and accessing interventions.
- ◆ An incremental approach is key to the data sharing work. Currently, the Programme can access names and addresses as part of the data sharing agreement. The Programme will need to show how they are using this information, explore engagement and impact, and then potentially make a case for more information, such as “lone parent status, number and ages of children, employment status, ethnicity, and relevant social work or housing information”.
- ◆ The Programme has not so far advocated for wider legislative change including amending the Digital Economy Act 2017, focusing instead on taking forward new approaches within current legal parameters with existing partners such as Social Security Scotland and the DWP.

Notes:

1. All quotes are from Glasgow Programme and Scottish Government colleagues.
2. This document is part of a wider briefing pack.

Contact us

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