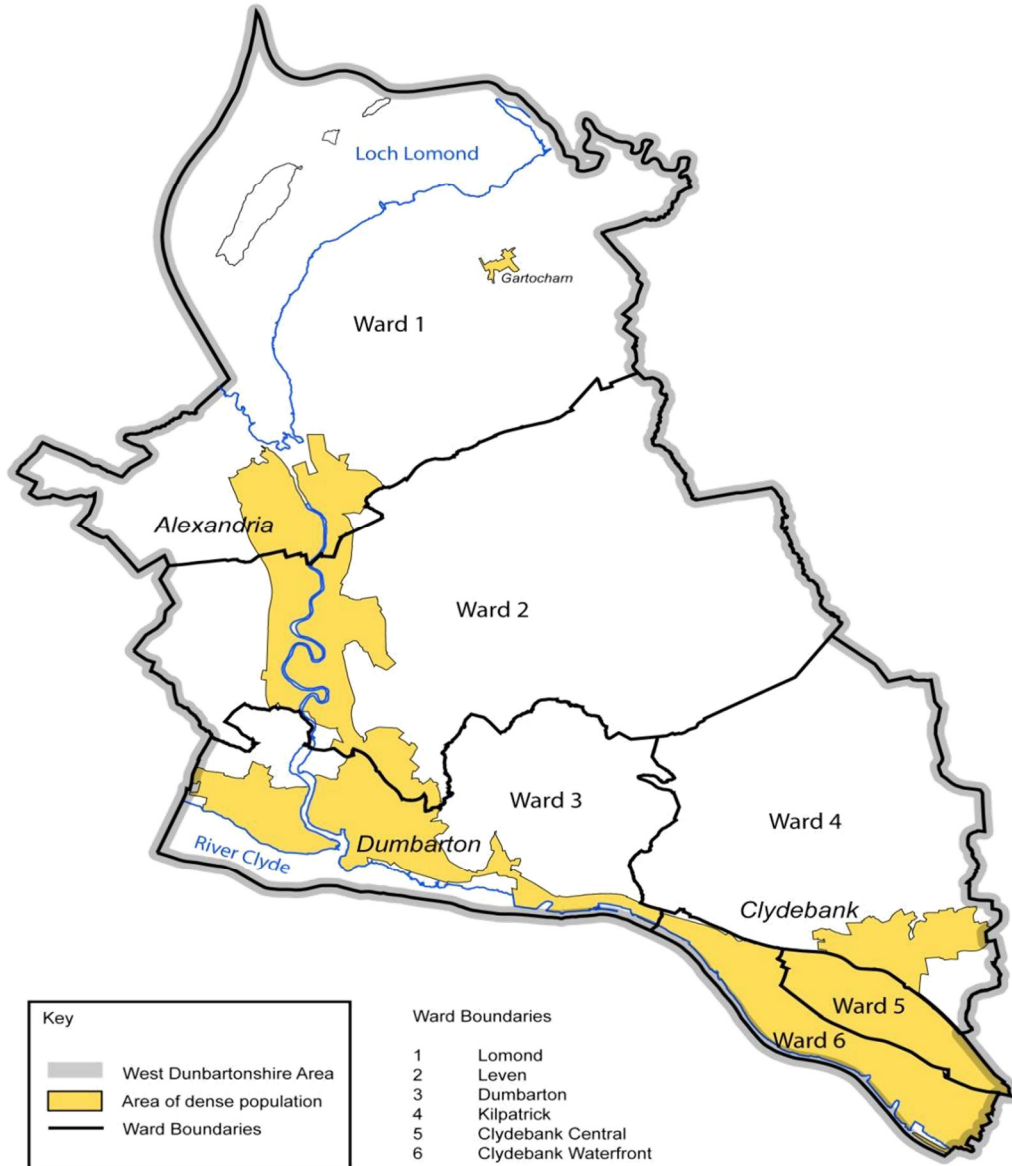


West Dunbartonshire: Local Child Poverty Action Annual Report 2021-2022.



West Dunbartonshire Multi Member Ward Map



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Foreword

We know people are poor if they are unable to achieve a standard of living that most others expect and take for granted. Children may have housing and food, but remain poor if their parents can't afford to put the heating on at home. Families and children may have mobile phones, mobile devices and computers, but remain poor if there isn't sufficient connectivity to use the equipment for everyday activity. Children can have clothes and footwear for school, but remain poor if there isn't enough money for them to go on the same school trips as their classmates. These contradictions are already a reality for some children in West Dunbartonshire.

We also know that people in West Dunbartonshire are facing an economic crisis on a scale that has not been experienced for decades. The price of petrol and power bills are reaching record highs; food prices are increasing almost daily as inflation hits its highest rate for 30 years; and years of cuts to social security have left many exposed to unexpected shocks. As was the case in the pandemic, this economic and cost of living crisis will affect everyone to some extent. Many, who have been able to get by until now, will be pushed into poverty, and those who are already struggling will be pushed into desperation.

While it is clear there will be significant challenges ahead and these will have an impact on household living standards, we know the worst effects are likely to be felt most severely by those already most disadvantaged; with children in disadvantaged families being the most vulnerable of all.

These are the things we know and these challenges are our motivation to take decisive action. Recently this has comprised of a number of pro-active cost of living measures. These include, for example, support for the most vulnerable to meet some of their most immediate fuel costs and emergency food needs. We have also supported families during the school summer holidays when additional demands are placed on their finances by children who simply want to take part in the same activities as their friends.

This report takes that action into account and reinforces our commitment to addressing child poverty. This is done by illustrating a broad range of activity that addresses the drivers of poverty and is set around: income maximisation; cost reduction; and help in other ways. All of which is designed to improve the quality of life for families living in West Dunbartonshire.

The report has been developed as a working document and the expectation is that by providing this as a key reference, we will raise awareness of available services and their aims and actions. As a result, our services are accessible for our residents.

More than accessible services, we want to develop actions and services that are based on a keen understanding of peoples lived experience and are non-judgemental. We also aim to deliver services that are insightful because they understand and respond to people's needs and aspirations. Furthermore, by drawing on the professionalism, knowledge and commitment of staff in the Council and beyond we aim to develop responsive and collaborative approaches that meet these needs. In effect we are seeking to establish services that are characterised by empathy, services that are insightful; and services, that above all, are kind. There are clear examples of that in this document. That is why I am happy to endorse this report and urge everyone to make use of it as a key resource for tackling child poverty in West Dunbartonshire.

Key Messages

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires the Scottish Government to meet four income based child poverty targets by 2030. Local Authorities in partnership with NHS Health Boards have a duty in this legislation to produce a local child poverty annual report that outlines what they are doing to contribute to national targets.

The headline measures of poverty are defined as:

Relative Poverty: This is the incidence of children living in households with an annual equivalised net income that is less than 60% of median income. While **Persistent Poverty** is the incidence of children that have lived in relative poverty for at least three years.

Combined Low Income and Material Deprivation is the incidence of children living in households whose equivalised annual net income is less than 70% of median equivalised net household income and experiences material deprivation in the year.

The evidence suggests that child poverty in Scotland is driven by structural or institutional factors. These factors include:

- (limited) Income from social security.
- (limited) Income from employment.
- (disparity between income and) Costs of living, including housing, food and fuel costs, the poverty premium, the costs of the school day, and the extra, unavoidable costs of disability.

Almost 90% of all children in poverty in Scotland live within these six priority family types, including:

- Lone Parent Families
- Disabled
- 3+ Children
- Minority Ethnic
- Youngest Child <1 year old
- Mothers Younger than 25 Years

In West Dunbartonshire we have added three additional family groupings to those we perceive to be most in need. These are family groups are those:

- With experience of the care system.
- With caring responsibilities.
- Living in areas of high material deprivation.

The latest figures show that 15,484 of the population (88,340) in West Dunbartonshire are children between the age of 0 and 15 years. Child poverty indicators state that:

- 3,549 of children in West Dunbartonshire are living in poverty (after housing costs);
- This represents approximately 23.4% of the children in West Dunbartonshire.

In 2020/2021 child poverty has decreased from the previous year by 3.4% and was equal to the level in 2014/15. Nevertheless the figure for West Dunbartonshire remains higher than the Scottish and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde average.

- The figure is 3.4% higher than the average in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Save the Children¹ provide some indication of the reason for the sudden improvement in child poverty rates throughout Scotland in their blog 'Child Poverty in Scotland: What the Numbers tell us'. They say:

'...although the number of children in poverty in 2020/21 was still unacceptably high, most local authority areas in Scotland did see a slight drop in child poverty rates as compared with 2014/15. It is roundly accepted that this was a result of the temporary £20 increase to Universal Credit payments – which has since been cut'.

In effect, child poverty remains a real cause for concern.

West Dunbartonshire Council through Community Planning West Dunbartonshire aims to develop, deliver and manage strategic and operational activities that will focus on reducing the average levels of child poverty after housing in West Dunbartonshire.

Our aspiration is to reduce the absolute number of children in poverty and close the gap with the comparable figure for child poverty after housing in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area.

We will do this by will focussing on activities that will:

- **Maximise income from work.** Supporting family members to seek and secure employment.
- **Maximise benefit entitlement.** Ensuring families secure full benefit entitlement, including passported benefits.
- **Reduce the cost of living for families.** Supporting families to manage debt and secure financial support at trigger points in their lives and manage their cost of living more effectively.
- **Provide help in other ways.** Providing access to opportunities and support that will help families to address the cause and effect of poverty. For example, dealing with, food and fuel insecurity, period poverty, digital exclusion.

These activities will be delivered either by West Dunbartonshire Council staff, staff in partnership organisations and by organisations contracted or grant-funded to deliver specialist services. Irrespective of the method and delivery organisation we will be committed to fair working practices that commit us to maintaining a positive and inclusive working environment and organisational culture where all the workforce have rights to fair treatment, respect and continuous professional development.

This is our fourth Local Child Poverty Annual Report. In it we provide details of the activity that is tackling child poverty and the contact details for those who want to find out more about the work that is going on.

We hope that the report will be used to access these resources and develop further actions and services that will lead to:

'Improved Life chances for all Children, Young People and Families' in West Dunbartonshire'.

¹ [Child Poverty in Scotland: What the Numbers Tell Us \(savethechildren.org.uk\)](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk) (accessed August 2021)

Introduction

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires the Scottish Government to meet four income based child poverty targets by 2030 and set out the actions they will take to meet those targets in an annual report.

Further details about the child poverty legislation can be found on the Scottish Government website at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/poverty-and-social-justice/child-poverty/>

In addition the Act places a duty on local authorities and health boards to report annually on what they are doing to contribute to reducing child poverty.

The 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; and
- Reducing household costs.

This is the West Dunbartonshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board's annual report. This is, however, subject to approval by the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board.

Child Poverty Defined

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 contains four headline income-based measures of poverty with two target milestones: the final target date of 2030, and an interim target date in 2023. Income-based measures of poverty are 'equivalised'. That means they are adjusted to take into account household need based on size and composition.

The headline measures of poverty are defined as:

Relative Poverty is the incidence of children living in households with an annual equivalised net income for the year that is less than 60% of median income.

Absolute Poverty is the incidence of children living in households whose equivalised net income is below 60% of income in a base year (2010/11). This is adjusted to take account of changes in the value of money since that financial year.

Combined Low Income and Material Deprivation is the incidence of children living in households whose equivalised annual, net income is less than 70% of median equivalised net household income and experiences material deprivation in the year. This includes families/parents that want, but can't afford specific goods or services for their children, for example, a holiday away from home once a year or bedrooms for every child aged 10+ years of a different gender.

Persistent Poverty is the incidence of children that have lived in absolute poverty for at least three years with a net annual income less than 60% of median equivalised net household income for three of the last four years.

The latest figures (2019-20) produced by the Child Poverty Action Group² state that a family is considered to be in poverty if, after housing costs, they are living on:

² Child Poverty Action Group: <https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/child-poverty/facts> (accessed 20/05/2022)

- Less than £333 a week or £17,400 a year for a single person with children aged 5 and 14 years;
- Less than £450 or £23,400 a year for a couple with children aged 5 and 14 years.

National Child Poverty Targets

The interim and 2030 targets published in: ‘Best Start, Bright Futures Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026’³ aim to ensure that:

- Fewer than 18% of children living in families in relative poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 10% by 2030.
- Fewer than 14% of children living in families in absolute poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030.
- Fewer than 8% of children living in families living in combined low income and material deprivation in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030.
- Fewer than 8% of children living in families in persistent poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030.

The Drivers of Poverty

The evidence suggests that child poverty in Scotland is driven by structural or institutional factors. These factors include:

- **Income from social security** and benefits in kind, influenced by: -
 - design and generosity of welfare benefits;
 - benefit sanctions and recovery of advance payments;
 - hardship payments and third-party debts;
 - barriers to accessing financial support (including child maintenance).
- **Income from employment**, influenced by the availability of jobs, hours and the level of earnings, and barriers to taking up that work, such as childcare responsibilities; plus qualifications and skills, which can influence both contemporary and future child poverty.
- **Costs of living**, including housing, food and fuel costs, the poverty premium, the costs of the school day, and the extra, unavoidable costs of disability or living in a rural area.

As such, the Local Child Poverty Action Report must set out a range of commitments to address these key drivers of poverty.

Who is Affected

Almost 90% of all children in poverty in Scotland live within these six priority family types.

These groups are set out below, with each more likely to experience poverty than all children in Scotland (24%) and households which do not have any of the priority family characteristics (10%).

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/> (Accessed June 2022)

Families Most Likely Affected by Poverty					
Lone Parent Families 38%	Disabled 29%	3+ Children 32%	Minority Ethnic 38%	Youngest Child <1 year old 34%	Mothers Younger than 25 Years 55%

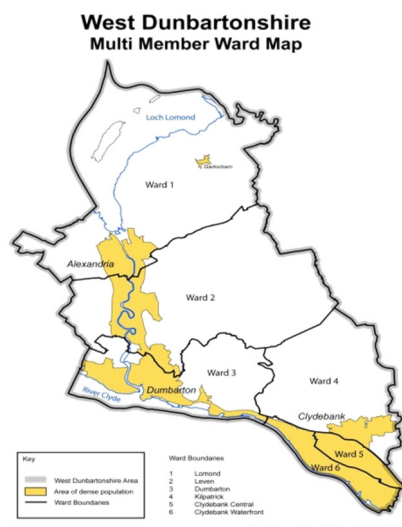
Living in West Dunbartonshire

West Dunbartonshire shares borders with Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Stirling, Renfrewshire and Glasgow.

West Dunbartonshire includes the towns of Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria and has a population estimate of 88,340 residents, 15,484 were in the 0-15 years age group⁴.

The local authority consists of 121 of Scotland's 6,978 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones and 17 Community Council areas. These are set within six 'multi-member' wards, illustrated in **Map 2**:

1. Lomond;
2. Leven;
3. Dumbarton;
4. Kilpatrick;
5. Clydebank Central;
6. Clydebank Waterfront.



Despite its strengths, West Dunbartonshire is one of the areas in Scotland most affected by post-industrial decline. Its three town centres, Alexandria, Clydebank and Dumbarton have experienced steady decline in their comparative economic performance with some areas affected by wide ranging deep rooted poverty and deprivation.

There are 121 Datazones in West Dunbartonshire:

- All multi-member wards in West Dunbartonshire have areas with comparatively high incidences of multiple deprivation.
- Approximately 35,000 (37%) of the resident population have first-hand experience of multiple deprivation.

Children in West Dunbartonshire

In [2020](#), 15,484 of the population (88,340) were children between the age of 0 and 15 years. 12,433 children were attending school:

- 6,658 pupils in the 32 primary schools in West Dunbartonshire.
- 5,548 pupils in the five secondary schools in West Dunbartonshire.
- 227 pupils in the three special need schools in West Dunbartonshire.

⁴ nrsscotland: Population Estimate: <https://www.nrsscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-dunbartonshire-council-profile.html#:~:text=In%20terms%20of%20overall%20size,out%20of%20age%20groups>.

The number of children ‘looked after’ in West Dunbartonshire decreased from 505 children in July 2019 to 334 in 2021.

West Dunbartonshire Drivers of Poverty

The key drivers of poverty identified in the legislation include income levels and the cost of living. Income is determined, to an extent, by levels of economic activity and employment.

While there are many sources of labour market information, examples provided by NOMIS⁵ (Office for National Statistics) will illustrate West Dunbartonshire’s comparative labour market profile to suggest the need for targeted employability support.

Employment and Economic Activity:

West Dunbartonshire has a comparatively higher rate of economic inactivity with 26.2% of the 16-64 years age group in employment. The comparative figure for Scotland is 23.8% and Great Britain’s figure is 21.6%.⁶

At 19%, West Dunbartonshire has a higher proportion of workless households than both Scotland (18.1%) and Great Britain (13.6%). Of those in employment, there is a higher proportion in West Dunbartonshire reliant on part-time work (35.5%). This is higher than the figure for Scotland (33.2%) and Great Britain (32.1%).

A review of the NOMIS statistics reveals that the job density⁷ in West Dunbartonshire is estimated at 0.61; this is much lower than the figure for Glasgow (1.04); Scotland (0.80) and Great Britain (0.84). In effect, although there are comparatively higher numbers of people out of work, there are also comparatively fewer opportunities available in West Dunbartonshire.

Addressing unemployment and underemployment is consistent with addressing the income drivers of poverty and will therefore feature extensively in our approach to addressing child poverty.

Benefits

The number of people in receipt of out of work benefits is a contributory factor to the level of child poverty. In West Dunbartonshire 4.5% of the population in the 16-64 years group is in receipt of out of work benefits. This is higher than the average in Scotland (3.2%) and Great Britain (3.8%) and represents 2,525 people.

18.4% of households in West Dunbartonshire are in receipt of the main benefits. This compares unfavourably with the figure for Scotland (13%) and Great Britain (11%)⁸.

In effect, comparatively more people in West Dunbartonshire rely on benefits for their income. Maximising their entitlement will feature strongly in our approach to maximising income.

⁵ NOMIS West Dunbartonshire Labour Market Profile [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://nomisweb.co.uk/labour-market-profile) (accessed June 2022)

⁶ NOMIS: West Dunbartonshire Labour Market Profile: [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://nomisweb.co.uk/labour-market-profile)

⁷ Density figures represent the ratio of total jobs to population 16 – 64 years

⁸ NOMIS: West Dunbartonshire Labour Market Profile: [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://nomisweb.co.uk/labour-market-profile)

Child Poverty in West Dunbartonshire

The Scottish Government states on-line⁹ that the main poverty data source, the Family Resources Survey, only provides information at national level. Some alternative data sources for Local Authorities addressing child poverty are available. However, these are at best only partially comparable to the national-level statistics produced in the annual publication. The other alternative sources are not directly comparable with the official poverty estimates.

Given these constraints on statistics we will provide an indication of the scale of child poverty in West Dunbartonshire by using the UK Government Local Child Poverty Indicators 2014/2020¹⁰.

The UK Government: '*Local Child Poverty Indicators 2019/20 – Estimates of Rates, after Housing Costs*'¹¹ will act as the baseline and, for consistency, will be used in the forthcoming years to illustrate changes in the level of child poverty in West Dunbartonshire.

These figures are most closely aligned with the Scottish Government's 2030 target for families living in comparative poverty; which is set at 10%. The equivalent interim figure which the Scottish Government aims to achieve by 2023 is 18%.

The Local Child Poverty Indicator figures are outlined below with comparative figures for local authorities in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Scotland.

⁹ Scottish Government, Child Poverty Statistics: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/child-poverty-statistics/>

¹⁰ UK Government: Local Child Poverty Indicators 2019/20 – Estimates of Rates, After Housing : <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics> (accessed June 2021)

¹¹ UK Government: Local Child Poverty Indicators 2019/20 – Estimates of Rates, After Housing : <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics> (accessed June 2021)

Table 1: Child Poverty Indicators 2014/2020, NHS GGC Area (Numbers)							
Estimates of Rates, after Housing Costs							
Local authority	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Glasgow City	26,223	28,785	29,230	30,643	31,027	32,480	28,909
West Dunbartonshire	3,685	3,836	3,968	4,246	4,122	4,189	3,549
North Lanarkshire	15,202	16,075	15,923	16,553	16,090	16,604	14,156
Inverclyde	2,757	2,980	2,852	2,957	2,934	3,003	2,213
Renfrewshire	5,768	6,099	6,413	6,848	6,589	6,997	5,759
South Lanarkshire	11,839	12,346	12,343	12,947	12,466	12,840	10,659
East Dunbartonshire	2,799	2,955	3,170	3,149	2,857	3,161	2,383
East Renfrewshire	2,713	2,860	2,904	2,931	2,811	3,064	2,453
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Total	70,986	75,936	76,803	80,274	78,896	82,338	70,081
Scotland (Thousands)	200	210	210	220	210	200	187

- By this measure 3,549 children in West Dunbartonshire are living in poverty;
- This figure has decreased by 640 from the previous year and is lower than the previous low of 3,685 in 2014/15.

Table 2: Child Poverty Indicators 2014/20, NHS GGC Area (%)								
Estimates of Rates, after Housing Costs (%)								
Local authority	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	change (14-21)
Glasgow City	27.1%	29.5%	29.6%	30.9%	31.0%	32.2%	29.4%	2.30%
West Dunbartonshire	23.4%	24.5%	25.1%	26.9%	26.3%	26.8%	23.4%	0.00%
North Lanarkshire	23.9%	25.5%	25.2%	26.3%	25.5%	26.5%	23.2%	-0.70%
Inverclyde	20.9%	23.0%	22.1%	23.3%	23.3%	23.8%	18.2%	-2.70%
Renfrewshire	19.3%	20.4%	21.3%	22.8%	21.9%	23.1%	19.5%	0.20%
South Lanarkshire	21.5%	22.4%	22.5%	23.5%	22.5%	23.1%	19.6%	-1.90%
East Dunbartonshire	15.2%	15.9%	16.9%	16.6%	14.8%	16.3%	12.5%	-2.70%
East Renfrewshire	15.0%	15.6%	15.5%	15.5%	14.6%	15.8%	12.8%	-2.20%
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	21%	22%	22%	23%	22%	23%	20%	-0.96%
Scotland	22%	23%	23%	24%	23%	24%	20%	-2%

- The trend of growth in child poverty was temporarily halted in 2018/19, however in 2020/2021 it has decreased to the level in 2014/15.
- Nevertheless the figure for West Dunbartonshire remains higher than the Scottish and NHS GG and Clyde average.

Save the Children¹² provide some indication of the reason for the sudden improvement in child poverty rates throughout Scotland in their blog, 'Child Poverty in Scotland: What the Numbers tell us'. They say: '*...although the number of children in poverty in 2020/21 was still unacceptably high, most local authority areas in Scotland did see a slight drop in child poverty rates as compared with 2014/15. It is roundly accepted that this was a result of the temporary £20 increase to Universal Credit payments – which has since been cut*'.

Getting closer to and below the Scottish and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde average remains a key step towards the 2030 targets.

¹² [Child Poverty in Scotland: What the Numbers Tell Us \(savethechildren.org.uk\)](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk) (accessed August 2021)

Lived Experience in West Dunbartonshire

The statistics and data analysis presented in the previous section of this report: *‘Living in West Dunbartonshire’* illustrate the prevalence and incidence of poverty and disadvantage in West Dunbartonshire. It also demonstrates trends and the prosperity gap between some people living in West Dunbartonshire and people living in other areas.

However, it doesn't provide any insight into people's lived experience. To redress this we have asked some families to tell us what it's like to live with limited resources. To do this we staged a series of 'Lived Experience' sessions inviting parents using a range of services in West Dunbartonshire. We will focus on a session that took place in the Concord Centre Main Hall in Dumbarton on the 17th of August 2021.

Parents using 'Alternatives' (<https://www.alternativeswd.org/>) services were invited to attend the session. The session was facilitated by staff from Working4U using the 'H Form Technique'¹³.

This is a participatory consultation method that is designed to explore participants' opinion of topic-based statements and the reason for their views.

In order to explore their lived experience of family life with limited resources and what, in their view, could be done about it we set three statements for exploration.

- 1. Our household income allows our family to meet the cost of living.**
- 2. Our household income allows our family to meet the cost of living and any unexpected costs that may arise.**
- 3. I know where to go to obtain good advice about welfare benefits and getting a job.**

The first task was to establish the extent to which participants agreed with the statements. They would do this by providing a score between 0 (totally disagree) and 10 (totally agree).

Participants were then asked to write down their reasons for not totally disagreeing (scoring 0) and not totally agreeing (scoring 10). These scores were aggregated to produce an indication of the group's level of agreement with the statements.

Participants were then asked to consider what would have to change if the score was to increase. In effect, what would have to change to improve their lived experience of the challenges associated with the cost of living?

The approach relies heavily on respondents recording their own views which are reproduced word for word. The full range of responses is reproduced in **Appendix 1**.

Lived Experience Summary

The participants found very little to agree with the statements about their family income matching the demands placed on them by the cost of living: scoring a level of 21% agreement with the statement: *‘Our household income allows our family to meet the cost of living’*.

This level of agreement deteriorated to 12% when asked to consider: *‘Our household income allows our family to meet the cost of living and any unexpected costs that may arise’*.

¹³ H Form Technique description <https://scottishparticipatoryinitiatives.co.uk/tools/h-form/#:~:text=%22The%20H%20Form%20is%20an%20evaluation%20method%20that,give%20every%20a%20chance%20to%20have%20their%20say.>

This very limited level of agreement was summed up well by one participant who stated they had a: *'Frightening worry about costs! Everything is going up.'*

There were clear indications that the challenges were becoming more intense with the worry and effect of unplanned expenditure such as broken televisions, car breakdown; the need for winter clothing and the purchase of socks: *'I see my kids at the week-end. My son is autistic and I can't afford to take him to activities, I couldn't even afford to buy him a pair of socks'.*

Even planned or known events, such as the need to purchase school uniforms; Christmas; school holidays and birthdays were a source of financial stress. This was summed up by a participant who stated: *'Anything money related gives most anxiety'.*

Anxiety, worry, struggle, mental challenge, pressure, fear and stress were commonly cited as a product of the participants' circumstances. This stood alongside the feelings of frustration, stigma, disrespect, degradation and low self-esteem associated with securing support.

One participant expressed their feelings about asking for help by saying they: *'Hate phoning up for a crisis grant –feel as though I'm begging for money as though they don't believe I am in crisis'.*

The complexity of how challenging circumstances interact to intensify the worry facing parents was summed up by one participant who stated: *'Constant fear of kids falling ill. If ambulance won't come. I have to get there (to hospital) dodging trains.'* In effect, some participants feeling that they may have to break the law simply to secure access to hospital appointments and health services.

Participants' Case for Change

We asked participants to identify what has to change in order to improve their circumstances. The changes identified by participants reflected their frustrations with every aspect of Government policy and their perception of Government values. This was summarised by the participants who stated: *'Tax people on higher incomes not lower incomes'; 'Stop hammering low income families'; 'Politicians make promises – need to keep them'; 'Westminster running money into the ground - Need a new Government'.*

In addition there were clear requests for access to fair work with participants suggesting there should be: *'Secure employment: not short time contract'; 'Secure employment – not zero hour contract'; 'Meaningful employment – progression opportunities'; 'Secure employment; 'More jobs paying a living wage; 'Work life balance – not top-up with other jobs' and 'raise the minimum wage'.*

This was reinforced with suggestions for support for those entering employment, such as: *'Free childcare for when in employment'; 'Out of pocket expenses to attend support – travel etc.'; and 'More help to ease you back into work (phasing you in)'.*

This went alongside practical suggestions for action: *'set up UB40 job clubs'; 'Help from staff in jobcentre. Advice from staff in jobcentre';* and perhaps the need to develop skills, aspirations, methods for presenting skills and influencing employer perceptions: *'I am not that qualified it would be a low income job- if I say I haven't worked since the 90's it's a stigma'.*

Lived Experience Considerations for Service Providers

In all of this there were clear messages from this group for those organisations adopting the principles set out in the Scottish Approach to Service Design¹⁴ who are seeking to ensure services are developed in an inclusive way.

Alongside the Scottish Approach to Service Design, there are 15 service design principles set out in ‘*Good Services: How to Design Services that Work*’¹⁵. The principles most relevant to our participants’ responses are set out below...

Services should be people centred to ensure people's dignity is maintained and they are treated with respect at all times:

- Foodbank-there is a stigma – needs to be more approachable.
- Hate phoning up for a crisis grant –feel as though I’m begging for money as though they don’t believe I am in crisis.
- Feels degrading being on the other end of the phone.
- Not approachable. Begging (it feels like) Already feel uncomfortable.

Services should be easy to find:

- More and better advertisements about what’s available out there.
- More information about agencies.
- Knowing what agency to call if in crisis.
- My mum works with the Council £140 warm home payment need to make people aware.
- Promote agencies who can help- credit unions and food shares.
- Knowing which service to go to can be confusing.

Services should clearly explain why a decision has been made:

- More than three payments from the Scottish Welfare Fund.
- Help from staff in jobcentre. Advice from staff in jobcentre.

Services should encourage the right behaviour from users and service providers:

- Scottish Welfare Fund needs to be more approachable- very cheeky when you phone them.

Services should quickly respond to change

- Time factor with policy changes – needs to be faster.
- More action – less talking do something.

Services should make it easy to get human assistance.

- More face to face – not phone.
- Hate phoning job centre can’t get through to them as getting through to answering machine.
- Easier way to contact these services.
- CAB hard to get an appointment.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/the-scottish-approach-to-service-design/>

¹⁵ Downe, L (2020): *Good Services: How to Design Services that Work*. BIS Publishers, Amsterdam.

The feedback from this and other participatory consultation sessions will be distributed to the partnership groups in West Dunbartonshire that are responsible for key services. This includes the Strategic Employability Partnership and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Employability Group; Community Learning and Development Partnerships (Adult Learning and Youth Alliance), Debt and Benefit Information and Advice Partnership.

These partnerships will be encouraged to take into consideration the issues emerging from the 'Lived Experience' consultation when reviewing and designing their services.

Managing the Child Poverty Report

Community Planning West Dunbartonshire and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will provide strategic oversight and scrutiny of the West Dunbartonshire Local Child Poverty Action Report.

This will ensure that the report not only complies with the statutory requirements within the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, but will also ensure that the aims of child poverty legislation and associated actions are considered in the wider strategic and policy context.

Our aim is to ensure our approach is consistent with Community Planning West Dunbartonshire's vision:

'To develop West Dunbartonshire as a place where people choose to live, work, explore, visit and invest'.

The Community Planning Partnership in West Dunbartonshire is based around five themes that aim to ensure West Dunbartonshire will be an area where all of our residents are: Flourishing, Independent, Nurtured, Empowered, Safe. Each theme has a Community Planning 'Delivery Improvement Group' driving forward partnership activity.

Each Delivery Improvement Group consists of representation from key strategic partners and has responsibility for specific policy and strategic areas. The majority of child poverty activity is set within the work of two Delivery Improvement Groups:

- Flourishing Delivery Improvement Group: aiming for a Flourishing West Dunbartonshire, where our economy is diverse and dynamic creating opportunities for everyone.
- Nurtured Delivery Improvement Group: A Nurtured West Dunbartonshire, where there are improved life chances for all children, young people and families.

The Nurtured DIG is also the lead group for the 'Integrated Children Services Plan' and the 'Community Learning and Development Plan'. As such the Nurtured DIG members will ensure that actions across these policy areas are fully co-ordinated; integrating action where appropriate.

The responsibility for compiling the Local Child Poverty Action Report lies with West Dunbartonshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Working4U staff members will take responsibility for compiling the annual report with support from staff at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the Poverty Leads Group.

West Dunbartonshire Priorities

At a local level Community Planning West Dunbartonshire has emphasised the need to focus efforts on:

- Families and children with experience of the care system (The Promise);
- Children with caring responsibilities; and
- Those living in areas of high material deprivation.

As such the focus of our attention when addressing child poverty will be placed on identifying, engaging with and supporting people from these families. This will be in addition to those identified within the child poverty legislation. As such the families in West Dunbartonshire that are considered to be priority groups include:

- Families where the mother is under 25 years of age;
- larger families (3+ children);
- families with either disabled parents or children;
- minority ethnic households;
- lone parent families;
- families with children under 1 year old;
- families with experience of the care system;
- families with caring responsibilities; and
- families living in areas of high material deprivation.

The Nurtured and Flourishing Delivery Improvement Group will ensure relevant partners, and associated sub-groups, will work together to:

- co-ordinate and integrate services that maximise the effectiveness of existing resources and avoid duplication of effort;
- use relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence to develop creative approaches for addressing child poverty;
- identify and, where appropriate, secure additional resources for addressing child poverty;
- support community-based resilience to address child poverty;
- gain insight into families' 'lived experience' and use this to design appropriate services.

West Dunbartonshire Child Poverty Objective

Our objective is to develop, deliver and manage strategic and operational activities that will focus on reducing the average levels of child poverty after housing in West Dunbartonshire¹⁶.

Our aspiration is to reduce the absolute number of children in poverty and strive towards and below the comparable figure for child poverty after housing in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area.

This will be a key step towards the 2030 targets set by the Scottish Government in the child poverty legislation.

The overarching aspiration and our success in addressing child poverty will be measured against prevailing comparative, average rates of poverty in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area and Scotland.

We have set the figures for 2019 as the baseline. We will record the figures as they are published¹⁷, while they remain available and consistent, and we will compare these to the broadly similar Scottish Government targets for comparative poverty.

Our aspiration is to reduce the absolute number of children in poverty from the 2019/20 baseline (4,189) and close the proportional gap between West Dunbartonshire and NHS

¹⁶ UK Government: Local Child Poverty Indicators 2019/20 – Estimates of Rates, After Housing : <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020>

¹⁷ UK Government: Local Child Poverty Indicators 2019/20 – Estimates of Rates, After Housing : <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020>

Greater Glasgow and Clyde. These will be key milestones in our aim to move towards the Scottish Government targets for 2030.

Table 3: Local Child Poverty Indicators National Targets¹⁸ / Local Aims						
Local authority	2019/20		2020/21		2023 Target	2030 Target
	n	%	n	%		
West Dunbartonshire	4,189	26.8%	3,549	23.4%	Close gap with region and Scottish average	Close gap with region and Scottish average
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	-	23%	70,081	20%	18%	Close gap with Scottish average
Scotland	-	24%	187,000	20%	18%	10%

Child Poverty Actions

Each of the key partners in West Dunbartonshire Council and Health and Social Care Services will contribute towards the child poverty objectives through the various local partnership structures/organisations.

These partnerships draw membership from public, private and third sector organisations and include, among others: the ‘Information and Advice Partnership’; the ‘Employability Partnership’, ‘Community Alliance’, ‘Adult Learning’ and ‘Youth Alliance’. Details of partnerships their remit and membership are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

The partners in these various groups, where appropriate to their remit, will focus on activities that:

- **Maximise income from work.** Supporting family members to seek and secure employment.
- **Maximise benefit entitlement.** Ensuring families secure full benefit entitlement, including passported benefits.
- **Reduce the cost of living for families.** Supporting families to manage debt and secure financial support at trigger points in their lives and manage their cost of living more effectively.
- **Provide help in other ways.** Providing access to opportunities and support that will help families to address the cause and effect of poverty. For example, dealing with transitions, food insecurity, period poverty, digital exclusion.

Each service, programme, project and activity will have its own specific key performance indicators that will be reported through the relevant channels.

¹⁸ Local Child Poverty Indicators 2019/20 – Estimates of Rates, after Housing Costs

What Have We Done?

COVID-19 – Respond, Re-Set, Recover

The COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the lockdown of society and services represented an unprecedented challenge for the delivery of council services. Furthermore, evidence produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation¹⁹ strongly suggests that those in poverty are likely to be hardest hit by the impact of COVID-19. This being the case the challenges facing families with children in poverty in West Dunbartonshire are likely to intensify; along with the need for support.

Four Harms

The Community Planning Partnership in West Dunbartonshire set out a position statement that aimed to ‘suppress the virus, while protecting people, our society, and our economy, we will take coordinated action to tackle the four harms of COVID-19’.

- Harm 1: Suppress the virus, protecting against the tragic harm to your health;
- Harm 2: Support broader health, protecting our health and social care services and your health and wellbeing – including actions to address violence against women and child protection;
- Harm 3: Mitigate social harms, protecting against broader harms to your way of life- with a focus on food insecurity (schools and within the community), rent arrears, homelessness, unemployment and the provision of crisis grants for vulnerable households/families;
- Harm 4: Support the economy, protecting against the devastating impact for business

In light of this in May 2021 West Dunbartonshire Council produced a review of additional action taken in response to the COVID-19; much of which was focussed on supporting families likely to be affected by poverty.

In 2021/22 there were a number of areas where additional investment to mitigate the effect of COVID-19 were made. The funds where there was a focus on child poverty are outlined in the Table below:

Table 4: Funding for Families in West Dunbartonshire to Address COVID-19	
Funding	WDC
Free School Meals – Easter Holidays 2021	£0.120m
Early Years - Childcare providers Temporary Restrictions Fund	£0.05m
Education – Additional resourcing – intended for 2021/22	£0.493m
Education – Education Recovery further funding to take into 2021/22	£0.897m
Financial Insecurity Funding additional funding – (announced 16 February 2021)	£0.481m
COVID Spring Hardship Payments – children in receipt of free school meals (announced 16 February 2021)	£0.391

¹⁹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/society/coronavirus>

Table 4: Funding for Families in West Dunbartonshire to Address COVID-19	
Support needs of children and young people for 2021/22 – announced 16 February 2021	£1.111m
Scottish Welfare Fund Top up	£0.2m
Discretionary Housing Payment Top-up	£0.136m

Crisis Support Priorities

The Crisis Support Team developed an holistic checklist to explore emerging needs with people from families affected by COVID-19. This approach allowed the Council to provide direct and speedy access to welfare rights (benefit maximisation); debt management, employment support (furloughed/redundancy support); and emergency food supplies while exploring other emerging issues.

In addition to the practical support the Crisis Team and Housing Services and Homelessness Teams administered a series of hardship funds. With additional funding provided, the Teams identified five specific target groups for financial support in a time of crisis.

1. Supporting households who are experiencing rent arrears as a consequence of COVID-19.
2. Supporting households who are experiencing additional cost as a consequence of moving home during COVID-19.
3. Supporting households who are experiencing additional fuel poverty as a consequence of COVID-19.
4. Addressing Digital Exclusion and support for access to digital service provision
5. Addressing Food insecurity.

From March 2021 until April 2022 the Working 4 U, Crisis Support Team with support from Housing Teams and the Communities Team has dealt with 621 referrals.

Table 5: West Dunbartonshire COVID-19 Response - Crisis Support Team	
Crisis Support Interventions	Number (Mar 21- Apr 22)
Total Referrals	621
Repeat Referrals	160
Total Number of Individuals Supported	461
Test and Protect	201
Follow Up Calls	761
Practical Support Provided (prescriptions, shopping)	35
Grant Allocations	
Remote Learning Grants	758

Table 5: West Dunbartonshire COVID-19 Response - Crisis Support Team	
Household Support Fund	201
Total Grant Allocations (£350)	960
Food Insecurity	
Emergency Food Referrals	405

The support provided through various funds and the development of the crisis support intervention, Crisis Support Team and Practical Support Team has made a positive contribution to the West Dunbartonshire response to COVID-19.

Going forward the teams will remain in place to ensure support is available for families that require assistance until the COVID-19 control measures are lifted.

What are We Doing?

Cost of Living Support 2022- 2023

Many of West Dunbartonshire's residents are struggling to make ends meet. This is in part due to the increased cost of living which has been driven by fuel and food price rises. Because of this the Council has launched a £5million campaign of support that is designed to help.

The actions centre on a number of key elements that are consistent with addressing the drivers of child poverty:

Table 6: WDC Cost of Living Actions Summarised

Key element (child poverty driver)	Action Cost	Progress
Funding to provide a foodbank supplement (Reduce costs)	£52,000 of £1,000 per week shared between West Dunbartonshire foodbanks	Status – Proposal is to split the £52,000 with 50% going to Clydebank based foodbanks and 50% to Dumbarton based foodbanks. Payments to start in October 2022 and to be paid quarterly. A light touch process of monitoring to be implemented to ensure funding is spent appropriately.
Antonine Sports Centre to support sports and leisure programme for local residents Reduce costs	£25,000	Contact has been made with the Antonine Sports Centre and the proposal is to process a one off payment to the centre in August 2022. This will cover the costs of participation for families with limited resources.
Free summer swim for school pupils initiative helping families with additional costs (Reduce costs)	£22,000	This initiative launched on 29 th of June to coincide with the start of the school summer. By the 25 th of July more than 3,000 free swimming sessions had been accessed across the three West Dunbartonshire Leisure Centres in Alexandria, Dumbarton and Clydebank.
Free all-inclusive family gym memberships from July to August for families identified by Working4U (Reduce costs)	12,500.	This initiative has been implemented in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust and Working4U. 80 family memberships have been issued with a total of 400 individuals benefiting from this scheme.
Free gym membership over the summer for 14 year to 18	5,000	This initiative was launched on the 29 th of June to coincide with the start of the summer holidays and to date over 2,000

Key element (child poverty driver)	Action Cost	Progress
year in West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust fitness suites (Reduce costs)		free gym visits have been accessed across the three West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust centres in the area.
Household Energy Support Fund (Reduce costs)	£250,000	Funds are currently earmarked. Lead officers will develop a process with a proposed criteria and controls to ensure the fund is managed appropriately.
Targeted community bulk uplifts, grass cutting where families do not have the funds to pay for these items. (Reduce costs)	£50,000	Skips will be sited from early morning to evening in different locations over four weekends, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Each day will be located at a different location.
Support community organisations with capital costs for cost of living initiatives. (Reduce Costs)	£1m	Funding application process to be established and implemented by September 2022.

In addition, a number of proposals to address the cost of living are being considered by the Health and Social Care Partnership. This includes:

- Employing additional welfare rights staff (4ftes) at a cost of approximately £150,000 to support an income maximisation campaign.
- Employing additional Children's services staff (4ftes) at a cost of approximately £120,000.
- Setting aside £300,000 for community based activities through Participatory budget.
- Providing support for kinship carers and foster carers; approximately £120,000.
- Providing Carers support; approximately £850,000.

As well as these new initiatives, work has been carried out to identify and publicise the range of support and advice that is available in West Dunbartonshire.

This 15-point guide, which is published on [Cost of Living | West Dunbartonshire Council \(west-dunbarton.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk), shares practical actions residents could take to support themselves, their families or their neighbours.

The 15 point guide is reproduced in **Appendix 3**.

Actions to Address the Drivers of Poverty

Fair Working Practices

West Dunbartonshire Council has adopted policies, statements and charters which support the development of a positive and inclusive working environment and organisational culture where all the workforce have rights to fair treatment, respect and continuous professional development. These include:

- The Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy;
- The Employee Wellbeing Charter and the Equal Pay Statement;
- Appropriate channels for an effective voice, such as trade union recognition;
- Supporting the real Living Wage by providing fair pay for all the workforce;
- Stability of employment and hours of work and avoiding exploitative employment practices, including no inappropriate use of zero-hours contracts;
- Creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace including flexible working arrangements;
- Investment in workforce training and development opportunities;
- Offering a range of workforce assistance schemes; and
- A commitment to Modern Apprenticeships and the development of Scotland's young workforce.

Further, the Council will aim to fulfil the objectives above by working with potential suppliers, sponsorship and other funding arrangements. This includes those organisations that are in receipt of grants such as: European Social Fund; No One Left Behind; Young Persons Guarantee; Parental Employability Support; and the emerging UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The approaches and actions in this report demonstrate some of the activity we have undertaken to address the drivers of poverty in West Dunbartonshire. This will include information about partnership working and practical approaches to addressing challenges associated with:

- maximising earning from work;
- maximising income from benefits;
- reducing costs; and
- providing help for families in other ways (circumstance and transitions).

In addition NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has established a number of regional actions to address child poverty. We have reproduced a summary of regional activity in **Appendix 5**.

Maximising Earnings from Work

Support to gain access to work and increase earnings is delivered through the provision of access to employability services. Employability encompasses all the things that enable people to increase their chances of getting a job, staying in a job, and progressing further in work.

'No One Left Behind' is the collective name given to the plans in West Dunbartonshire for the integration and alignment of employability support. The aim is to support people into fair, sustainable jobs and is central to priorities set out by Community Planning West Dunbartonshire. *'No One Left Behind'* will be supported by the alignment of a number of funds that will focus on local priorities in West Dunbartonshire.

In West Dunbartonshire the *'West Dunbartonshire Local Employability Partnership'* will take forward the *'No One Left Behind'* delivery plan and COVID -19 response actions to support parents from families vulnerable to poverty.

Key Employability Projects (Maximise Earnings from Work)

We have set out a summary of the key employability support projects that are working in West Dunbartonshire to address child poverty.

Table 7: WDC Key Employability Actions (Income from Work)	
Project/Programme	Activity
Employability Pipeline	<p>The employability support services are managed by Working 4 U and are delivered across the five stage employability pipeline; from unemployment to sustained employment.</p> <p>The employability support services at each stage of the employability pipeline are designed to meet the needs of West Dunbartonshire parents who wish to progress towards and into employment and improve their position within the labour market.</p> <p>Information about, and access to, Employability Pipeline services can be found at: https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/get-in-touch/</p>
Parental Employability Support	<p>The Parental Employability Fund investment has been developed in West Dunbartonshire to offer help by providing parents with access to an employability key worker who will help in two main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-centred help to address parents barriers to work, which might include health support, money advice or motivational support; and • Help to meet the increasing challenge of in-work poverty, targeting in-work support to help parents already in jobs to remain in the workplace and gain progression through a rewarding career. • financial awareness; debt management, benefit maximisation, fuel and food poverty initiatives support from health and social services and housing support services. <p>Information about Parental Employability Support can be obtained at: https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/get-in-touch/</p>

Table 7: WDC Key Employability Actions (Income from Work)	
Oot Scoot and Aboot	<p>‘Oot Scoot and Aboot’ aims to help young people to address barriers that prevent them from fully participating in community and social life. The approach centres on assisting personal and social development and is set within a learning agreement model that will encourage access to further learning, training and employment.</p> <p>This very intensive programme is delivered in a partnership between Working4U staff and Education Service’s Senior Phase Workers and targets support on young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are not in education, employment or training; • have low self-esteem and low aspirations; • have poor mental health. <p>The support will act as a gateway to ‘Parental Employability Support’; ‘No One Left Behind’, mainstream employability and National Training Programmes.</p> <p>Information about ‘Oot Scoot and Aboot’ can be obtained at: https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/get-in-touch/</p>
Apprenticeship Pathway	<p>West Dunbartonshire Council has created a £1million fund as a commitment to the Apprenticeship Pathway. This funding will be used to support apprenticeship recruitment, primarily school leavers, over four years (2022-26). Our efforts will be placed on supporting young people into a range of opportunities within Council services and the Private sector.</p> <p>The Apprenticeship Pathway will give young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have not engaged with the school curriculum the opportunity to gain confidence and progress towards work.</p> <p>Information about the Apprenticeship Pathway can be obtained at: https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/get-in-touch/</p>
Young Persons Guarantee	<p>Working4U will support the delivery of the Young Person’s Guarantee (YPG). This programme will be aligned to the principles of No-One Left Behind to ensure we are providing flexible, user-based employability support and</p>

Table 7: WDC Key Employability Actions (Income from Work)	
	<p>training to young people aged 16-24 years. The Young Person Guarantee is intended to provide young people with an opportunity to pursue their carer ambitions.</p> <p>Information about the Young Persons Guarantee can be obtained at: https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/work/young-persons-guarantee/young-persons-guarantee-programme/</p>
<p>Young Person's Guarantee – Pre Thrive FIRST STEPS programme</p>	<p>This programme aims to help young people to address barriers that prevent them from fully participating in community and social life and it targeted at young people who have barriers that prevent from them from engaging with support services. The approach centres on assisting personal and social development and involves weekly home visits to encourage young people to engage with a view to progressing the young person to meet out in the community and reduce isolation.</p> <p>This programme focuses on young people at stage 1 of the employability pipeline;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socially isolated • are not in education, employment or training; • have low self-esteem and low aspirations; • have poor mental health • have ASN <p>The support will act as a gateway to the stage two provision of the 'THRIVE' employability project as well as 'Parental Employability Support'; 'No One Left Behind', mainstream employability and National Training Programmes.</p>
<p>Young Persons Guarantee – THRIVE</p>	<p>Working4U Thrive programme supports young people taking their first steps into employment by focusing on personal development, learning new skills and gaining confidence.</p> <p>The programme is open to any young person aged between 16 and 24. They will receive one to one support to ensure they have the basic tools, including internet access and a bank account, required to begin seeking employment. They will then participate in group work for eight hours per week, building on skills for life and work including communication skills, team work and confidence exercises.</p> <p>The course will be tailored to suit the needs of the participants, ensuring they have the time and appropriate opportunities to work towards their next positive destination. Progression routes from the course will be in line with</p>

Table 7: WDC Key Employability Actions (Income from Work)	
	<p>the young person’s aspirations, but could include further training with one of our partner organisations, an Apprenticeship, volunteering, college or employment.</p> <p>Participants will have access to additional expertise from partners including Skills Development Scotland during the course, as well as the potential for volunteering opportunities.</p>
Young Persons Guarantee (DSYW)	<p>Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce/Education Services Senior Phase aims to give all young people, aged 16-24 in Scotland, and the chance to succeed through the opportunity of a job, apprenticeship, education, training or volunteering. For employers, it offers help to develop a future pipeline of skills and experience. DYW regional groups have been tasked by the Scottish Government to get employers of all sizes and across all sectors involved with the Young Person’s Guarantee.</p> <p>In addition, DYW West (the regional group for the area hosted by West College Scotland) receive additional funds for DYW School coordinators. The Senior Phase DYW School Coordinators deliver the Schools Employability Skills Programme which is a targeted approach for pupils who are in their final year of school who would benefit from an employability experience that will support their transition into work, training or further/higher education.</p> <p>To find out more about DYW West visit www.dywwest.co.uk</p>
Social Benefit	<p>West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to maximising local social value from our procurement activity. This will be achieved through the inclusion of specific clauses within procurement contracts known as Social Benefit clauses. Social Benefit clauses go beyond the core purpose of a contract to deliver wider benefits to the local community. These clauses can be used to build a range of economic, social or environmental benefits into the delivery of Council contracts.</p> <p>During 2021/2022 we have worked with a number of contractors including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers attending careers and apprenticeship events; Apprenticeships and job opportunities; and Work experience placements; • Employability skills development - Mock interviews, Site visits and tours • Support from volunteers;

Table 7: WDC Key Employability Actions (Income from Work)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and equipment donations.
NHSGGC Community Benefits	<p>NHSGGC is working with a national ‘Once for All’ approach to procurement and community benefits clauses which covers poverty and child poverty. This activity has been led by the NHSGGC Procurement team and Community Benefits were considered in all contracts over the value of £50,000. In addition, the Team has established processes which ensured real Living Wage is paid to contracted staff in future contracts as part of NHSGGC Living Wage accreditation which was achieved in Nov 2020</p> <p>The Team has also developed a local West Dunbartonshire pathway to ensure appropriate Community Benefits requests, aligned to local needs, are added to the National Community Benefits Marketplace Portal.</p>
Skills Development Scotland (SDS).	<p>Skills Development Scotland provides Career Information, Advice and Guidance services to people of all ages with a particular focus on young people at risk of failing to progress into positive destinations. All services are equality assessed and poverty is considered as part of this process.</p> <p>SDS also manages a range of Scottish Government training and employability programmes including the Apprenticeship Family of Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships which provide high level on-the-job training and qualifications to the Scottish population.</p> <p>In 2022/23 SDS will continue to deliver a universal and targeted service in all local schools to develop pupil’s Career Management Skills and support their career decision making.</p> <p>In addition, the ‘Next Steps’ service will support the most vulnerable post school young people to overcome barriers to progression and will be delivered through a blended approach of face-to-face and remote approaches.</p> <p>Further details of support provided by Skills Development Scotland can be found at: https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/local-national-work/west-dunbartonshire/</p>
NHSGGC Employability Programmes	<p>Progress has been made in the implementation of the NHS GGC Widening Access to Employment (WATE) Strategy. Most notably in our modern apprenticeships, the academy model and careers and other employment opportunities.</p>

Table 7: WDC Key Employability Actions (Income from Work)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our NHSGGC Apprenticeship Programme was targeted at excluded and vulnerable groups including young parents and has employability outreach programmes to schools and colleges. • Outreach to schools has utilised online options as placement activity paused. • Continued implementation of NHSGGC family friendly and flexible working policies and procedures • NHSGGC Employability team has led on continuation of NHSGGGC learning and education programmes and bursary scheme to enhance career development; and • Liaison with LCPAR local authority leads on the Parental Support Fund. <p>The WATE plan will continue in to 2022/23 through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing recruitment of modern apprentices and support existing apprentice cohorts; • delivery of sector based work academies and development of other pathways into employment; • revised provision of careers awareness activity; • consider feasibility of developing ‘Academy approach’ within HSCPs recruitment.

Measuring Success

While the Employability Partnership agencies deliver a range of programmes as part of their service delivery, the Scottish Government has complemented this by providing funding for No One Left Behind and Parental employability Support activities. Table 7 summarises the achievements secured since April 2020 as well as providing an indication of our anticipated outcomes in the period from April 2022 to March 2023.

Table 8: West Dunbartonshire No One Left Behind Progress Indicators

Indicator	*A Achieved between April 2020 - March 2022	*B Anticipate between Apr 2022 March 2023
Number of people registered and supported through No One Left Behind	897	492
Number of people entered Employment or self-employment through No One Left Behind	278	197
Number of people commencing a Modern Apprenticeship	56	32
Number of people achieving a qualification	177	266
Number of people supported by an Employer Recruitment Incentive	151	90
Number of people entered training	97	77

Notes on statistics:

Column *A represents the statistics reported for No One Left Behind in the two year period April 2020 to March 2022. This was based on the developing approach and introduction of funding for the purpose.

Column *B includes anticipated use of a higher level of funds that include former employability grants funds.

Income Maximisation (Benefits and Debt)

Around 30million people in the UK receive income from at least one of the range of social security benefits and tax credits that are available. These benefits are vital to the wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society. However, because of the complexity of the system, claimants do not always secure the benefits they are entitled to. There is a number of reasons for this:

Table 9: Reasons for Unclaimed Benefits

Reasons	Impact
Take-up. People don't always claim what they are entitled to...	<p>The Department of Work and Pensions estimate that in 2020 only 7 out of 10 of those in the UK entitled to Pension Credit claimed the benefit; £1.7 billion unclaimed.</p> <p>86% of Housing Benefit (for pensioners) that could have been claimed was claimed; 1.1billion unclaimed.</p> <p>£12.3billion went unclaimed in 2009/10. If claimed this could have improved the living standards for many people</p> <p><i>DWP. (2012). Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up in 2019 to 2020.</i></p> <p>Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
Complexity. The benefit system can be difficult to understand...	<p>Claimants need different levels of support to understand their entitlement, or to complete the appropriate forms with full and accurate information.</p>
Claim Errors. The claiming process can involve both official and claimant error...	<p>The DWP estimates that £8.4 billion are overpaid in error, and £2.5billion are underpaid. The consequences in either situation can be devastating for households with limited resources.</p> <p><i>DWP. (2020). Fraud and Error in the Benefit System for the financial year ending 2021.</i></p> <p>Fraud and error in the benefit system for financial year ending 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
Appeals: Without help, people are unsure when it's right to appeal and how to go about it...	<p>Claimants need support to understand whether there are grounds to challenge a decision on benefit entitlements.</p>
Welfare Reform: The rules for accessing benefits are constantly changing...	<p>Claimants require specialist support to assist them with the transitions and legislation changes.</p>

These factors are part of the rationale for the provision of welfare and debt management services.

The West Dunbartonshire Information and Advice Partnership is set within the context of strategic planning within West Dunbartonshire. The partnership aims to deliver advice and information services in West Dunbartonshire where:

‘Anyone who wants to improve their life circumstances, wellbeing, independence and resilience is able to obtain the information and advice and support they need, when they need it and in the way they need it’.

The partnership in West Dunbartonshire consists of:

- West Dunbartonshire Council (Working 4 U);
- West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Clydebank Asbestos Group.

The partnership draws on input from key agencies when required. This will include representation from DWP and the Scottish Social Security Agency.

All members and additional support providers will contribute to the partnership with the specific aim of:

- promoting social justice and the rights of the individual by delivering information, advice and support services that make a positive impact on the well-being of individuals; and
- playing a full and productive part in tackling poverty in our communities through a responsive partnership approach that delivers free, high quality independent information, advice and advocacy services.

The services in West Dunbartonshire are designed to assist people to manage their expectations about the outcome of the service they receive and provide them with a better understanding of the options, rights and responsibilities and assistance they will receive and action required to resolve their issues.

The partnership will demonstrate progress towards its vision by contributing to:

- reducing the proportion of children in West Dunbartonshire who are in poverty;
- increasing the numbers with sustained or increased resources through debt management and income maximisation;
- reducing the proportion of households who are in fuel poverty.

The partner organisations, depending on their own specific mission, provide access to all three types of advice (Active Information, Case Management and Advocacy). In addition the partners have played an instrumental role in developing a range of interventions to alleviate poverty including:

- the development of West Dunbartonshire COVID-19 Crisis Support Service;
- the development of fuel poverty project (led by West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau);
- establishing approaches to food insecurity (Working4U and local foodbanks);
- addressing Period Poverty (Working4U and community-based organisations); and
- Improving the Cancer Journey (Working4U/ Macmillan Cancer).

Measuring and Reporting Progress

Using figures reported to the ‘Improvement Service’ (COSLA local authority support service) we can illustrate the levels of benefit maximised and debts managed through the use of funds provided by the local authority.

Table 10: WDC Information and Advice Partnership Key Statistics	21/22
Funding invested by West Dunbartonshire Council for Welfare Rights Services Delivery	£1.038m
Total Number of Clients (ongoing and new)	7,150
Debt Managed	
*Type 1 –Debt – onward referral	491
**Type 2/3 – Debt – case management	254
**Total Debt Managed	£2.36million
Income Maximisation (Benefit)	
*Type 1 Benefit (People supported)	4,318
*Type 2/3 Benefits Casework/Advocacy Representation	3,566
Benefit Maximisation/Financial Gain	£7.88million
*Family Types (Child Poverty Groups)	
Single parent families	437
Families which include a disabled adult or child	1,813
Families with 3+ children	117
Minority ethnic families	4
Families with a child under one year old	116
Families where the mother is under 25 years of age	45

* Working4U only

** Working4U and CAB statistics

Contact with the Information and Advice Partnership can be made at: <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/contact-us/other-council-services/welfare-rights-money-advice/>

Maximise Income from Benefits

Scottish Social Security in West Dunbartonshire

Social Security Scotland is responsible for administering a number of benefits that have been devolved to Scotland. Currently, Social Security Scotland administers eight benefits and is working in close partnership with organisations across West Dunbartonshire to maximise the uptake of these benefits.

The available benefits with a link to further information are:

- [Carer's Allowance Supplement](#) – an extra payment for people in Scotland who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance.
- [Best Start Grant - Pregnancy and Baby Payment](#) – a package of three payments that provide families with extra money during the early years of a child's life. Families can apply for the Pregnancy and Baby Payment from the 24th week of pregnancy and the grant will remain available up to the day your baby is 6 months old. This is increased to one year if the parent has care responsibility for a child, for example through adoption.
- [Best Start Grant - Early Learning Payment](#) – Families can apply for the Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment when their child is aged between two years old and three years, six months old.
- [Best Start Grant - School Age Payment](#) – a one off payment made to eligible families around the time a child normally starts Primary One.
- [Best Start Foods](#) - a new payment for low income families in receipt of benefits or tax credits. This replaces UK Government's Healthy Start Vouchers in Scotland. Families can apply for Best Start Foods from pregnancy, or any time up to the third birthday.
- [Funeral Support Payment](#) - a payment available to people in Scotland, who are in receipt of specific benefits or tax credits, and require support to meet the costs of a funeral.
- [Young Carer Grant](#) - a new yearly payment for young carers aged 16 to 18 years who live in Scotland.
- [Job Start Payment](#) – is a one off payment is available to young people in Scotland in receipt of specific benefits, and need help with the costs of starting a new job. If the household has children, the payment may increase to £404.

Further information about Scottish Social Security Payments can be found on the Scottish Government website:

[Social Security Scotland - Homepage](#)

Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Welfare Fund managed by West Dunbartonshire Council replaced the discretionary Social Fund provided by the Department for Works and Pensions and offers access to two grants: Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants.

Crisis Grants

A grant may be available if residents need help with costs that have arisen as a result of a disaster or emergency or to keep their family safe from harm. This includes, for example: fire or flood; emergencies such as loss of money; or the need to visit a child in hospital.

Welfare Grants are not a regular source of income. As such additional checks are included as part of the application process to ensure applicants, where appropriate, can be considered for a DWP Hardship Payment, has an application pending for a Short Term Benefit Advance, or is eligible for a Universal Credit (UC) advance.

Community Care Grants

Community care grants may be available for residents if they:

- are about to leave care to live on their own in the community;
- face going into care because they don't have the things you need to continue living at home;
- are struggling to provide a safe and secure home for their family;
- need help to get essential household items like a cooker or washing machine

Welfare Grants can provide an immediate source of funding to support people with limited resources to overcome difficult circumstances at trigger points that challenge their resilience.

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/rent-arrears-benefits-and-debt-advice/>

Table 11: Scottish Welfare Fund Spend on White Goods in West Dunbartonshire			
Year	Budget	Spend	Proportion on White Goods
2018/19	£797,732	£814,825	22%
2019/20	£807,732	£829,519	22%
2020/2021	£1.38million	£1.35million	19%
2021/22	£1,058,592	£987,374	23%

Further details of the grants, eligibility and the application process can be found at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/welfarefund>

NHSGGC Staff Money and Fuel Cost Worries Clinics

The project provides money advice services to staff recognising the potential for financial problems, including in work poverty, across staff groups. The programme is primarily targeted to low paid workers.

In addition Home Energy and Money Worries support has been provided to all staff from December 2020. Initially the service was targeting low paid workers using a clinic model. This model was revised to telephone/email contact and widened due to the impact of COVID-19. Home Energy Scotland provides information on effective ways people can reduce energy bills, support individuals to check they have the best energy supplier, how to make savings and provide practical hints and tips on all aspects of energy saving.

Promotional materials in the form of posters, business cards sent to all of the main NHSGGC buildings through facilities. Advertised on Staff Net (NHS GGC Staff Intranet) and information available on 'A *Healthier Place to Work*' webpages. Staff can telephone or email the service and are asked to use a code identifying themselves as NHSGGC workers (for monitoring purposes). There have been two evening online information sessions and finally staff can participate in a quiz.

Going forward it's anticipated the service will continue throughout the year, COVID 19 permitting using a targeted approach to support approximately 300 low paid workers.

More Information can be found at:

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/working-with-us/staff-health/>

Costs of Living

Housing and Support

The cost of housing has a significant bearing on levels of poverty as such activity around housing provision and management and associated services are important weapons for reducing poverty. The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners plan to address the housing and housing related opportunities and challenges over the five year period from 2017/18 to 2021/2022.

The Local Housing Strategy not only represents West Dunbartonshire's approach to housing, homelessness; housing support services and fuel poverty, it also contains an action plan which outlines the projects/activities to be implemented to achieve the aims of the Local Housing Strategy for the period 2017 - 2022.

The Local Housing Strategy has a 10-point success plan. Some of which have a direct impact on the drivers of poverty. These include, for example:

- Maximise the delivery of new affordable housing through the 'More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire' initiative;
- Reduce the impacts of climate change and fuel poverty by supporting energy efficiency measures across all housing sectors;
- Introduce a Housing Options approach to prevent homelessness;
- Work with partners to reduce repeat homelessness and increase tenancy sustainment in the social rented sector;
- Adopt a more holistic joined up approach to improving standards in the Private Rented Sector;
- Improve education, training and job opportunities for West Dunbartonshire residents by building on existing strong links through Working 4 U.

Within the context of promoting good quality housing, West Dunbartonshire has introduced a **Scheme of Assistance** to help home owners with information and advice and practical assistance about improving, repairing and maintaining their homes.

In addition, the Housing team has facilitated the feasibility assessment to develop **district heating schemes** in some or all of the 19 multi-storey blocks in West Dunbartonshire. The aim is to provide alternative heating options that will, among other outcomes, reduce heating costs for tenants and owners.

The Housing Team at West Dunbartonshire Council along with partners from the social rented housing sector have established a **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan**.

Rapid Rehousing is about taking a housing led approach for people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, Rapid Rehousing means:

- A settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;
- Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better; and
- When temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.

The aim is to stabilise family life and circumstances at a particularly traumatic time. This will improve children's life chances in ways not about current income or reducing cost of living – potentially relevant to future child poverty and address the threat of persistent poverty.

This is part of the general approach to 'Housing Options' that will minimise homelessness through prevention and early intervention. The aims and objectives are clear and include proactive action to address local issues, including for example:

- Strengthen partnerships with West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership and employability services (maximise income from work);
- Mitigate the potential negative effect emerging from welfare reform (maximise benefit entitlement);
- Increase the number of people who use the housing deposit scheme in the private sector (reducing costs);
- Develop an education package that can be rolled out across the local authority (other help to prevent poverty in future years); and
- Work in partnership to ensure children are not adversely affected by homelessness (targeted interventions).

In addition, West Dunbartonshire's Leaving Care Housing Protocol promotes the principle that care leavers will be provided with the securest form of tenancy available to them, including pilot Young Care Leavers Rental Exemption Scheme, and young people from this group will not routinely be provided with homeless accommodation.

This Young Care Rental Exemption Scheme supports those care leavers who wish to attend full time education by covering the rental payments of those eligible. This enables these students to fully focus on their studies and not have financial worries during this time. It also encourages more young Care Leavers to aim to further their education by undertaking further or higher studies at college or university.

Fuel Poverty

Although the Local Energy Awareness Project (LEAP) ceased in the early stages of lockdown, West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau (WDCAB) continues to provide advice and assistance to residents experiencing difficulty with paying their fuel bills, experiencing fuel poverty or having issues with energy suppliers. The Citizens Advice Bureau also works to raise awareness of energy efficiency issues with the wider community. During lockdown WDCAB was able to access funding for energy vouchers from the Hardship Fund and Energy Redress Fund.

In 2021/2022 the WDCAB worked closely with Working4U teams, housing associations, local third sector organisations to raise awareness of rising energy costs and the likely consequences. Information regarding these issues is publicised by the use of social media and press releases.

In addition the Project engaged with a number of national organisations and campaigns to feed into policy consultations and reporting on the prevalence and effects of Fuel Poverty.

Casework

In the period April 2021 to March 2022, WDCAB assisted residents with 1,955 fuel related issues. During this period WDCAB issued 365 energy vouchers totalling £13,895 and helped

36 households access Home Heating Support Fund grants with a financial benefit to those households totalling £24,166.

Moving Forward

WDCAB recently secured funding for Safe and Warm project which will carry on much of the work initiated by LEAP. Funding for this project has been supplemented by a grant from West Dunbartonshire Council.

This funding will enable WDCAB to assist the increasing number of residents seeking advice with issues such as, maintaining fuel supply, fuel debt and supplier disputes. There will be a campaign to raise awareness and empower residents with ways to cut costs and save money. These additional resources will mean we can strengthen links with partner organisations

<http://www.wdcab.co.uk/publications-news/>

Cost of the School Day

School costs can put pressure on low-income families and put children and young people at risk of missing out on opportunities and feeling different, ashamed and stigmatised. An evaluation led by NHS Health Scotland²⁰ has found that action to reduce school-related costs is effective in helping more schools to be sensitive to poverty and more children to participate in school.

A working group consisting of staff from West Dunbartonshire Education Services has been established to consult parents; conduct research; identify actions and develop resources to assist schools to understand and address issues related to the cost of the school day.

The working party has produced guidance and support materials to increase staff knowledge and raise awareness of the challenges facing families and on-line resources have been developed to act as a conduit to support. The current focus is on ensuring all schools have key COSD supports in place, such as Uniform Banks, Seasonal clothing/resource Banks, access to homework resources, access to digital supports and a range of family engagement events ‘beyond the bell’.

In addition, West Dunbartonshire Education Services has set out some of the key interventions available for pupils from families likely to be affected by disadvantage. These include:

- financial support is available to support families living more than two miles from the school;
- Free breakfast clubs have been established and Early Learning Centre’s provide a free snack. In addition ‘holiday hunger’ actions are set within school holiday programmes that are delivered in partnership with a wide range of community partners.

Schools are working hard to further reduce costs for families by:

- Making washing products available in school;
- Providing access to sanitary products;
- Providing oral hygiene products; and
- Ensuring free school meals remain available to pupils unable to access lunch in school.

²⁰ <http://www.healthscotland.scot/publications/evaluation-of-the-cost-of-the-school-day-programme> (accessed 22/07/20)

The approach to reducing the cost of the school day encourages schools to:

- Ensure all children participate and assist those with barriers to participation;
- Provide access to free activities at lunchtime and afterschool;
- Provide PE kits where necessary;
- Encourage the development of sports academies; and
- Use Pupil Equity Funding to plan wide ranging interventions and supports to narrow the poverty related attainment gap and support wellbeing.

In addition, children living in poverty are often unable to join in with popular culture and trends; they may not have access to the same resources as their peers, and therefore miss out on valuable bonding and social experiences. These children are at risk of isolation when they appear not to conform to peer group expectations, with a uniform not of the perceived required standard or, indeed no uniform at all.

To combat this, clear referral pathways and information about financial support have been established. This includes links to Citizens Advice, Child Poverty Action Line and Working 4U debt and money advice support. The aim is to ensure that families are receiving all the support they are entitled to.

Psychological Services are set within education venues across West Dunbartonshire Council area have increased the awareness of the principles of nurture. This will be reinforced by the aim to become a trauma informed staff to ensure social emotional development support underpins all activities.

Supports provided by a range of Education and third sector partners include:

- Pupil and family Support and Outreach worker Support;
- Care Connections;
- PPP – Parents, Pamper, Patter
- FFF Food, Families, Future; and
- Support for addressing debt, benefits and employability.

Other actions being pursued by Education Services to mitigate the cost of the school day reduce costs and encourage access to opportunity include

- Referring parents to Employability and Adult Learning Support Services;
- Promoting the Educational Support Allowance; and
- Working with the third sector to develop support services, such as Y Sort-It Young Carers Support.

Finally, schools have been encouraged to be aware of the cost of representing the school at sporting/music events, engaging in local authority or even national competitions, participating in school clubs and excursions to the local and wider area. This includes consideration of:

- Limiting the number of fundraising events during the year and provide sufficient notice where costumes are required;
- Establishing fund raising activities for trips (bag packing);
- Raise awareness of poverty issues among staff and parents using external resources such as Poverty Truth Commission films.

Early Learning and Childcare

Childcare costs are substantial and can add a substantial burden to family income. However, support is available. Children who are three years old are entitled to a place within an Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting.

From August 2020 the Scottish Government increased the number of funded hours available to families in early learning and childcare from 600 hours to 1,140 hours.

As well as an increase in hours West Dunbartonshire Council will introduce an approach where the 'funding follows the child'. In effect this will mean families will be able to access the entitlement and use this within different types of setting and using different patterns of provision. This will include provision in local authority settings; partnership childcare settings and childminders.

As a result there is more flexibility with longer days and different patterns of attendance available in new Early Learning Childcare facilities at: Our Lady of Loretto, Braehead, Dalreoch and Carleith. Further access is provided in re-furnished Early Learning Childcare facilities at: Brucehill, Whitecreek, Ladyton, Auchnacraig, Kilbowie and Linnvale' All providing choice and flexibility for parents and carers.

Access to the service is dependent on the child's date of birth. Generally if their birthdate is between:

- 1st March and 31st August, they start in autumn term.
- 1st September and 31st December, they start in January for the spring term.
- 1st January and 28th February, they start in April for the summer term.

Nursery places for children younger than three are provided at full cost by private nurseries, unless the family is eligible for free early learning and childcare for two year olds. Eligible children are entitled to 600 hours free childcare when they become two years of age.

Local authority funded providers, funded private provider nurseries in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council including Childminders all offer early learning and childcare for eligible two year olds. Admission is the month after your child is two years or from the term after parents receive the qualifying benefit.

Further information is available in the <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/early-years/elc-places/> and

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/early-years/elc-expansion/entitlement-to-1140-hours/>

Education Maintenance Allowance Payments

An Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a Scottish Government initiative aimed at helping young people stay on in education. The EMA is a weekly allowance of £30 payable to young people who have achieved 100% attendance each week at school. West Dunbartonshire Council will also increase the EMA by applying a £5 additional payment each week for every young person with 100% attendance. The cumulative bonus amounts being paid twice per year, usually in December and July.

To qualify, households with one dependent child who attends school in West Dunbartonshire for a minimum of 21 hours must be earning £24,421 per year or less. Households with more than one dependent child must be earning £26,884 or less, before tax.

West Dunbartonshire Council will continue to review the numbers in receipt of EMA's, ensuring it is accessible to all who require it. Our intention is to ensure that all pupils who are eligible receive the full entitlement.

Where appropriate we will ensure families who are in receipt of EMAs also have access to full benefit entitlement through support from our colleagues in the Working4U benefits and debt team.

In 2021/22 expenditure in West Dunbartonshire was £354,821. £54,005 of this were additional payments above the statutory amount of £30 per week. In total we made payments to 333 pupils.

More information about Education Maintenance Allowances in West Dunbartonshire can be found at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-and-educational-grants/education-maintenance-allowance/>

Free School Meals and Clothing Grants

Free nursery/school meals and the footwear and clothing grant are available for parents on low income in West Dunbartonshire and all children in Primary 1-5 are automatically entitled to free school meals and therefore do not have to apply for access.

Families in West Dunbartonshire are eligible for free nursery/school meals and a school clothing grant if they are in receipt of one or some of a number of benefits and school clothing grant if they receive Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit; and Working Tax Credit with a gross annual income of £16,860.

Families in receipt of Child Tax Credit only (but not Working Tax Credit) with income less than £17,500 are eligible for free nursery/school meals. In addition, free school meals are available to children who are:

- Looked after by the authority concerned or any local authority; or,
- The subject of a kinship care order or a child falling within section 71(3) (f) of the Act (referred to here as a child having a parent appointed guardian).

In 2021/2022 the total value of awards for clothing grants was £680,090 which equates to 4,534 awards.

For school year 2022/23 the clothing grant payment is being increased to £300 per child.

This will be paid in two £150 instalments over the academic year with the first payment being made on receipt of applications and a second payment being made around the end of December 2022.

Further Information about free school meals and clothing grants can be found at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-and-educational-grants/free-school-meals-and-clothing-grant/>

Young Scot Card

Young Scot is the national youth information and citizenship charity providing young people aged 11-26 years with a mixture of information, ideas and incentives to help them become confident, informed and active citizens.

The Youth Scot National Entitlement Card (NEC) is one of the benefits offered and is accredited by the Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS). The National Entitlement Card provides access to discounts that are designed to help young people make the most of their money and increase awareness and use of local services.

As a partnership between 32 Local Authorities and the Scottish Government, managed by Young Scot, the NEC is a free smart card available to all young people aged 11–26 years. There are over 1,500 discounts available, including, for example:

- Free bus travel for those aged between 5 – 21 years;
- Discount on the ‘Euro 26’ network and therefore offering young people access to discounts across 42 countries;
- National concessionary travel scheme, in partnership with Transport Scotland. Young people aged 16-18 and full-time volunteers under 26 can receive discounted travel on buses, trains and ferries each year; and
- Retail discounts - National participants include the Co-operative Food and Scotmid, Topshop and BSM Driving.

The card is promoted by Education Services and youth support teams in order to ensure that we maximise the possible benefits for young people. In addition, the NEC is issued to all S1 pupils who are living in West Dunbartonshire at the beginning of each academic year.

Through negotiations with Young Scot, we have agreed that organisations in West Dunbartonshire can now create local rewards and provide entitlements for young people. Working4U Youth Learning, along with the West Dunbartonshire Youth Council, has recently worked with the Young Scot team to develop and implement a new Young Scot Action Plan.

In West Dunbartonshire the uptake levels are at:

- 53% for all 5 – 21 year olds;
- 5-11 years 75% uptake;
- 12 – 21 years 39% uptake.

The aim is to establish a more comprehensive and targeted approach locally and ensure young people receive the full programme of opportunities available through Young Scot. Further Information about the Young Scot card in West Dunbartonshire can be found here:

<https://young.scot/the-young-scot-card/west-dunbartonshire>

Ending Period Poverty in the Community

In order to tackle period poverty in the community, West Dunbartonshire Council developed a new project #EndPeriodPoverty. This effort has been aided by grant funding from the Scottish Government.

The aim of the project is to end period poverty and associated stigma by ensuring that those needing sanitary products can obtain them for free, without question at accessible locations. Information about the project can be found at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/health-social-care/period-poverty/>

We are being supported in these efforts by ‘Hey Girls’, a well-respected social enterprise. Hey Girls are not only providing a range of products that go beyond environmental regulations, for every box distributed, ‘Hey Girls’ is also donating the equivalent to community-based projects.

West Dunbartonshire Council continues to work in community and health service venues in West Dunbartonshire to maintain access points. We have also worked with four local food insecurity groups to ensure that those requiring emergency food supplies can also obtain products.

In addition, we have engaged with midwifery staff and a health visitor to raise awareness of the project and provide care packages for their mums, families and patients.

We will continue to work with public sector services and community-based organisations to maintain supply of products allowing them to distribute products to their service user.

In the forthcoming year we will continue to distribute products, and we will place a focus on education/awareness to eradicate the stigma of periods, and the impact of period poverty.

More information about our commitment to 'period Positive action can be found at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/community/period-positive/>

Food Insecurity in the Community

Food insecurity is a common experience throughout Scotland influenced by insufficient weekly income, low pay and unpredictable income. It is concentrated by higher costs of living, lack of family and food knowledge and access issues. In recognition of the prevalence of these circumstances and the growing use of local food banks among residents, West Dunbartonshire Council has taken wider action to address this situation in a number of ways, for example:

- Extending the provision of free school meals;
- Supporting programmes to address holiday hunger during school holidays;
- Addressing community-based food insecurity by providing financial support for the established foodbanks operating in West Dunbartonshire,

This work is being complemented by a further additional £52,000 being made available to community-based organisations addressing food insecurity.

In addition to local food insecurity support, NHS GGC Support and Information Services have partnerships in place to provide emergency food packages for people in need being discharged from hospital. This support also includes a money advice pilot for patients being discharged from Stobhill Mental Health inpatient Unit.

Helping Families in Other Ways (Circumstances and Transitions)

The Promise

The Promise is a 10 year transformational change programme, designed to overhaul the care system in Scotland. It is based on the findings of The Independent Care Review, and places relationships, love and children and young people's voices at the heart of services.

The findings and recommendations were wide ranging, including the significance of preventative, early intervention in family support as well as changing and reframing the language and narrative we use around the care system. The review found that poverty is a huge issue impacting on families throughout Scotland:

'There must be significant, ongoing and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for Scotland's children, families and communities.' (The Promise, page 18).

The Care Review consistently heard from children and families that financial support was one of their greatest concerns. They also heard that the stress of living in poverty can make family life much harder for children and their parents.

The Promise calls on more support to be given to families living in poverty to tackle the pressures it causes and mitigate its impact. This includes providing non-stigmatising, community based support to families, ensuring this support is easily accessible. The Promise also calls for more open discussion around the impact of poverty for families, addressing bias and stigma that exists around poverty.

The Promise in West Dunbartonshire

In West Dunbartonshire there are proactive steps being taken to mitigate the impact of poverty for children and their families, as evidenced throughout this Child Poverty report. The Lead Officer for The Promise came into post in May 2022, and has the remit of leading and supporting on the implementation of The Promise within West Dunbartonshire.

A sub-group, 'Keeping the Promise', has been created with multi-agency representation and will help drive forward the priorities identified within the Plan 21-24, of which Poverty is one of the five fundamentals that runs throughout.

There are a number of anti-poverty measures in place within West Dunbartonshire to support our care experienced young people. There is council tax exemption for care leavers up to the age of 26 years, and rent abatement for care leavers in ongoing further education (which now also includes modern apprentice posts), allowing for full access to the Care Experienced bursary.

There is a payment of £2,000 available to Care Leavers for setting up their own first tenancy. There is also the Care Leavers Housing Protocol, which provides care leavers with access to affordable, permanent housing, hopefully resulting in fewer house moves for them.

In recognition of the cost of living and fuel crisis West Dunbartonshire has planned winter fuel payments for Care Leavers. This is in addition to the payments that will be provided by the Scottish Government. Winter fund payments from the Scottish Government for care leavers will be administered through 'Who Cares Scotland?'

There have also been simple steps taken to make small differences, for example an agreement with the Homeless Housing Team that all temporary accommodation should have low energy/LED lightbulbs.

To tackle digital exclusion for care experienced young people, the Through Care and After Care team have been providing devices and phones to young people, and more recently have secured three Connecting Scotland awards to provide devices and wifi access to care experienced young people.

West Dunbartonshire Promise Plans

The priorities around poverty for the coming year within the implementation of The Promise will be around supporting the re-design of our whole family support services, and ensuring that anti-poverty strategies and approaches are integral to how these supports operate. Ensuring that people with lived experience are at the heart of how services develop is also a priority within how The Promise is implemented.

Care Connections

The **Care Connections** programme supports young people who are looked after at home, where there is a Compulsory Supervision order in place, and young carers specifically those young people who have disengaged from education.

The programme offers support that is customised to the needs of the individual and their families/carers and aims to close the poverty-related attainment gap by supporting young people to engage with and return to education.

The programme has been designed with the support of participants and is delivered by a partnership consisting of the Care Experienced Champions Board; Working4U; and Ysortit.

Activity focuses on three key school stages providing continuous support for targeted young people across their school life. The provision typically includes:

- **P1 to P3 (prior to and beyond if required)** - Out of School Hours Learning/ Homework Clubs;
- **P4 to S6 (and beyond up to age 18)** - Intandem Youth Mentoring;
- **S4 to S6** Access to the Apprenticeship Pathway.

A key element of the support being the provision of a designated Care Connect Worker supporting each young person to address any issues in their School, Community and Family life. At primary school this Care Connect worker role will be managed by Ysortit and at Secondary Working 4 U will manage the Care Connect worker

In addition the support may also include a range of interventions that are delivered either one to one or in group sessions. These support measures cover a number of general areas and are customised to suit the needs of individual children and families.

More information about 'Care Connectors' and a range of youth based support can be found at: <https://padlet.com/working4u/youth>

Community Learning and Development

Community Learning and Development (CLD) plays a central part in ensuring individuals, families and communities across West Dunbartonshire reach their potential through lifelong learning, mutual self-help and community organisation - and that the available support and opportunities are community-led and built around people's aspirations.

The Community Learning and Development Teams, along with the Communities Team have developed comprehensive plans based around the development of skills for life and work and skills to empower communities by supporting them to develop resilience within communities throughout West Dunbartonshire.

CLD Activity

Many of the activities delivered by the Community Learning and Development Teams and Communities Team in West Dunbartonshire have been consistent with the specific aims of addressing child poverty. This includes action to maximise income, reduce costs and understand the lived experience of people living in disadvantaged communities.

Youth Alliance

- Secured funding to provide seasonal holiday programmes for young people.
- Secured funding from Education Services to provide food for all participants on seasonal holiday programmes as well as providing family meal packs.
- Developed a pathway to provide schools with additional support and resources.
- Supported young people to develop their skills and provide them with structured opportunities.
- Established the link to apprenticeship opportunities and positive destinations for school leavers.

Communities Team

- Progressed and delivered Year One priority projects as detailed in the WD Community Empowerment Strategy delivery Plan
- Simplified and coordinated access to funding for Community Groups and Third Sector organisations supporting vulnerable families through the development of the Community Funding Bulletin.
- Completed the 5th Phase of Community Budgeting (CB) with participation levels remaining high
- Developed and delivered the innovative Community Soup model to increase engagement and to develop small community-based projects that will improve the quality of life in our communities
- Transitioned from the Community Alliance to develop a community led approach for communication, focusing on unheard voices.
- Launched a new Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils to support their growth and development, in consultation with Tenants and Residents Associations, Youth and Equalities groups – Stronger Voices
- Deliver Community Transport provision targeting vulnerable families and individuals

Adult Learning and Literacies

The Working4U Adult Learning and Literacies Team, as a strand of Community learning and Development, works with people who are marginalised, who experience barriers to opportunity and who are more likely to be affected by poverty. This is achieved through targeting our provision and designing a curriculum around learners' needs.

In terms of targeting, we undertake outreach and engagement work with organisations including schools in high SIMD areas, Community Drug projects, Criminal Justice, the Homeless Team, Mental Health organisations, Social Work and NHS in order to recruit learners. We also work alongside organisations to deliver courses in partnership, including the Refugee Resettlement Team, Primary Schools, Unity Empower, and the Phoenix Centre.

Reducing Isolation

Over the past year, we have been working on COVID Recovery. Mindful of the disproportionate effect of COVID on those living in poverty, we have prioritised re-engaging

the most isolated and providing a space for them to establish social connections with other learners.

This has been aided by Scottish Government Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL) Recovery Funds, which enabled us to: update our IT equipment for community classes; pay for hall hire in community venues, so that courses are accessible; pay for taster sessions and learning materials to re-engage with learners; purchase bus tokens to enable financially excluded learners to access classes.

We continued to support learners to access Connecting Scotland equipment, identifying adults and families that had little or no access to digital devices and accessing new Chromebooks and iPads. As well as a means of reducing isolation, it also meant they could take part in the online courses available.

Our courses such as Inspire, STEPS to Excellence, Wellbeing, Literacies, ESOL and Digital Friends are designed to engage with learners to give them confidence to progress in their learning and help with their health and wellbeing.

At our Literacies groups, learning is designed around the needs of the individual. We also deliver group work with the learners and in the past year have done a substantial amount of numeracy work with them. Taking a social practice approach, means learners gain skills which are relevant to their everyday needs:

“I am more confident when paying for my train ticket. I can now count out my money when I pay for things.” Literacies Learner

As well as gaining new skills, making new friends and gaining in confidence, we encourage learners to access other activities and support that is available to them. This includes support to progress to our certificated programme, to college and to other strands of the service, such as the Working4U Work team.

The Illegal Money Lending (IML) Development Officer and Working4U Money staff are invited to groups to support learners with financial advice, which can make a real difference to their income. For instance, the IML input to literacy groups resulted in learners accessing disability benefits and bus passes. We also work with other community organisations, for example, we helped learners with additional needs into a Neighbourhood Network project to enhance support and reduce isolation.

Adult Learning and Child Poverty

The Recently published Adult learning Strategy for Scotland (May 2022) states that:

Adults who participate in learning are more likely to engage in their children's education, improving outcomes.

In terms of Family Learning, the Strategy states that:

Adults supporting their children's learning can help impact on raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Family Learning

As we emerged from COVID restrictions, we re-engaged with Primary Schools to deliver Family Learning programmes. As well as encouraging the family to learn together, the programmes are often based on food, which means that the participants have access to a warm free meal which they have cooked together while learning about quick, easy low cost ways to save money and feed the family for less.

The adults are also encouraged to take up other opportunities. In the Academic Year 21-22, these included:

- Linnvale Primary: short programme cooking cheap, healthy one pot winter warmer meals that the family could prepare and cook quickly together and take home to eat, incorporating numeracy activities.
- Carleith Primary: family cooking project, where families prepared and cooked cheap healthy meals, enabling them to learn together in school and offering them some quality one to one time with their child with additional needs.
- St Mary's Primary: family cooking project using the table top cookers which were purchased as part of the CBAL recovery fund, which enabled families to fully engage and learn more about the actual cooking process from start to finish.
- St. Michael's Primary: various activities including arts, crafts, den building and cookery. In addition families could prepare and enjoy some food together and when there were non-cookery sessions, snacks were provided.
- West Dunbartonshire Discovers: this was a Maths Week Scotland funded, Family Learning Project. The aim was to work with families to promote positive family interactions through the medium of science and maths
- Phoenix Centre: Family Learning activities around cooking and arts and crafts as a way to engage with families with the easing of COVID restrictions.

"It has been lovely to spend some quality time with xxxxx, doing something fun and seeing him come out his comfort zone and try new foods" Family Learner

Community Based Certificated Programme

In Academic Year 21-22, we increased our certificated programme, run in partnership with West College Scotland, which had been reduced during COVID restrictions. This partnership won a prestigious College Community Learning Award at Colleges Development Network (CDN) Awards 2021 and also won the Judges' Award, which recognises the very best overall submission voted by the judges.

We were able to use CBAL Recovery funds to return to in-person courses in the community as well as continuing with the online offer.

Since Sept 2021 we have delivered 40 courses, subjects were across a range of Faculties and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

- Level 3 SQA Units in: Getting Started in IT; Allotment Gardening;
- Level 4 Units in: Early Education and Child Care; Play in Early Years; Fashion and Textile Technology; Fashion and Textiles: Item Development; Gardening: an Introduction; British Sign Language (BSL); Social Issues in the UK; Sociology: Criminology and Crime Scenes; Digital Forensics; International Studies;
- Level 5 Units in: Cyber Security Fundamentals; IT Solutions for Administrators; Spreadsheets for Administrators; Databases for Administrators; Coping Strategies and Building Resilience; Psychology: Individual Behaviour; Psychology: Social Behaviour; Crime and Law; Counselling: an Introduction; Human Behaviour and Development in Care; Cookery Processes; English Creation and Production; Fashion and Textile Technology; Fashion and Textiles: Item Development; Language and Literacy in Early Years; Development and Wellbeing of Children and Young People; Literature 1;
- Unlevelled Introductory courses in BSL and Vehicle Maintenance

These courses enable participants to take a step back into learning, and gain qualifications, thereby increasing their employability and, hopefully, earning power.

I have started a new job in a school this week after being a stay-at-home mum for 6 years! The two courses I have completed have helped me build my confidence and I have really enjoyed both of them. The course tutors were brilliant and so supportive and helpful. I have learned so much and believe doing the courses really helped me in the process of getting back to work (Learner on a partnership course)

More information about CLD and Empowerment plans and activities can be found on line at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/cld-plan-2018-2021/>

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/community-planning-west-dunbartonshire/community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015/>

Family Nurse Partnership

Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is a preventive licensed voluntary programme for first time mothers aged 19 years and under. It offers intensive and structured home visiting, delivered by specially trained nurses (Family Nurses), from early pregnancy until the child is two years old.

It is an intensive, structured intervention for young first time mothers and their children to maximise their potential. The programme aims to modify behavioural risk factors and enhance protective factors through regular home visits, using motivational interviewing techniques and strengths based approach.

Table 12: Family Nurse Partnership Service Users

West Dunbartonshire Family Nurse Partnership	West Dunbartonshire	Greater Glasgow and Clyde
No. of Clients Enrolled on FNP	136	1229
Average Age @ Enrolment	18	18
Age Range of Clients *Age range up to 22 reflects data relating to a refugee who had her age classified by the home office.	15-19	12-22*
SIMD Q1 and Q2	163	1509
Attrition – disengaged clients only	6	83
Total Number of Births	123	1112
Graduated Clients	63	512
No. of Notifications to FNP	198	1844

*All figures shown are based on our new concurrent model since the expansion of FNP Greater Glasgow and Clyde from September 2017 to end December 2021.

FNP has continued to deliver the programme in West Dunbartonshire in accordance with NHS GGC board and Scottish Government guidance. This includes not only face to face home visiting, but also telehealth contacts using both Attend Anywhere/Near Me and WhatsApp video calling.

A key focus on the impact of poverty and financial inclusion has resulted in ongoing Financial Inclusion training. This training has been accessed through Queens Nurse Catalyst for Change Project enabling Greater Easterhouse Money Advice project (GEMAP) money

advice organisation to provide Financial Inclusion training for FNP. In addition, FNP staff are trained in Home Energy training to alleviate fuel poverty implications.

The team is closely aligned to Working4U and has developed excellent relationships with local foodbanks to alleviate impact of poverty. Implications of poor and inadequate housing has resulted in Communication Pathways Developed for young people. This includes established links to Shelter Scotland Project.

As such, the Family Nurse Partnership works with a range of organisations and agencies to facilitate access to support. This includes support that is set out within the context of the West Dunbartonshire Integrated Services. More information about integrated children's services needs can be found at:

<http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/useful-information/children-and-young-people/>

More Information about Family Nurse Partnerships can be obtained at:

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/about-us/professional-support-sites/information-for-gps/referral-clinical-guidelines-and-ggc-drug-formulary/temporary-COVID-19-guidelines-and-referral-pathways/family-nurse-partnership/#>

Domestic Abuse Partnership

West Dunbartonshire has a higher than average incidence of domestic abuse. This has the potential to have devastating consequences on families with children. As such West Dunbartonshire Council has established a Domestic Abuse Partnership that aims to fully support victims and create a culture of challenge zero tolerance to all forms of abuse.

In addition, we have established a procedure to tackle domestic abuse set around the theme of 'No Home for Domestic Abuse'. This procedure follows two main routes of action and is based on the consent of the victim(s).

These two action points are:

- Offering the victim and any dependant/s legal claim back to the matrimonial home via Matrimonial Homes Act (Scotland) 1981; and
- Identifying and pursuing appropriate legal restriction to tackle behaviour of the offender.

The procedure is designed to protect victims and change the behaviour of perpetrators by the combined use of Multi Agency Risk and Communications Committee' model (MARAC) and a Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination (MATAC) process.

The MARAC model involves a thorough risk assessment in all reported cases of domestic abuse to identify those at highest risk and to establish the foundation for a multi-agency approach.

This is complemented by the MATAC process that aims to identify and target the most harmful perpetrators through analysis of incidents, their frequency and gravity of offending. Identified perpetrators will be referred into the MATAC process where a bespoke set of interventions will be established using a '*Domestic Abuse Toolkit for West Dunbartonshire*'.

The No Home for Domestic Abuse service, whether MARAC or MATAC offers

- a comprehensive, confidential assessment of accommodation and support needs;
- advice, assistance and housing options as well as advice on rights as a homeless person;
- temporary or permanent accommodation as appropriate or where required;

- access to specialists support services such as Women’s Aid and Cara Project;
- access to benefits and debt and money advice to maximise income and reduce the burden of debt.

The Council’s No Home for Domestic Abuse service also has access to our Tenant Liaison Officers as part of the service to help support those in need.

More details about the ‘No Home for Domestic Abuse’ programme can be found at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/no-home-for-domestic-abuse/>

Family Opportunity Hubs

The West Dunbartonshire Family Opportunities Hub is a collaborative effort between West Dunbartonshire Council, ‘Housing and Employability Service’ (Working 4 U) and West Dunbartonshire, ‘Education Services’ which is partly funded through European Social Funds and Scottish Attainment Challenge Funds. The aim is to provide support for families, particularly those on the verge of crisis, to stabilise their family circumstances and help their children to meet the demands of the school day.

The Hubs are located in three secondary schools in West Dunbartonshire (‘Our Lady and St Patrick’s’, ‘Clydebank High School’ and most recently ‘Vale of Leven Academy’. The Hub in the Vale of Leven was launched in February 2020). Hub support is extended to local primary schools and early education and childcare centres.

The Hubs are delivered by staff with experience of employability and welfare rights services. The team uses of a broad assessment tool and work on a 1:2:1 basis with parents to identify and address issues they face in their daily lives. This self-assessment explores issues such as:

- **‘Pockets’**, - maximising household resources/income from benefits and addressing debt;
- **‘Prospects’** - tackling the underlying barriers that prevent people from capitalising on opportunity, for example issues related to health and wellbeing, numeracy/literacy, confidence, skills;
- **‘Place’** - addressing place based issues that act as a barrier to inclusion and progression, for example, cost of living, energy efficiency housing and community based issues.

Support generally consists of money, welfare, fuel and financial services as well as improving financial capability, access to affordable products. As a result parents will improve financial inclusion and improve their financial capability.

In addition we also support training and learning that will focus on language skills, literacy, numeracy and vocational and non-vocational skills. This will allow participants to make a positive contribution to their families’ development needs; assist them to contribute to their local community; and secure employment.

The Family Opportunity Hubs in West Dunbartonshire will be operational from bases in three secondary schools. This will allow us to provide more support in each geographical area to parents of children attending all educational establishments, including primary schools and early education and childcare centres. We will also increase capacity to deal with referrals from other services such as Housing, Social Work and NHS.

In addition, the team will work with colleagues delivering the Connecting Scotland project to maximise access to digital equipment and provide support for families through our Digital Champion.

More information about the Family Opportunity Hub can be found at:

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/work/adult/family-opportunity-hubs/>

West Dunbartonshire Improving the Cancer Journey Service

Cancer doesn't just affect your physical wellbeing, it can affect every aspect of your life, from your emotions to your finances. However, people often don't know where to turn for support. That's why West Dunbartonshire Council and Macmillan Cancer Support have launched the Improving the Cancer Journey Service. Our Service is here to help people affected by cancer get the support they need, whether it's financial, emotional, medical or practical.

Improving the Cancer Journey is a service available to all cancer patients within the West Dunbartonshire Council area; however, while we prioritise everyone, our focus is places on those already experiencing disadvantage, including those affected by family poverty.

The initiative is funded and supported by Macmillan Cancer Support (Scotland). The team includes an ICJ manager, two ICJ Link Workers and an admin support worker. The service sets out to:

- Invite all with a cancer diagnosis in West Dunbartonshire to complete a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) and develop an individual care plan that includes carers and family members;
- Provide the dedicated support of a named 'link Worker' to everyone in West Dunbartonshire with a cancer diagnosis, and to his or her carer or family; and
- Facilitate the delivery of effective Health and Social Care support solutions, based on their needs.

The service provision has been affected by the onset of COVID-19 and associated restrictions, however, we have developed a blended service and we will continue to focus on people affected by cancer, their wider families, and the wider community within the West Dunbartonshire boundary.

Furthermore, we will contribute to the development of integrated referral pathways between council, HSCP and third sector organisations across the local authority area, to meet the needs of those affected by cancer, and to help families in poverty.

Further information about 'Improving the Cancer Journey in West Dunbartonshire can be found at: www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/money-advice/cancer-journey-service/, calling the Macmillan Support Line on 08009809070 or

emailing improving.cancerjourney@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Understanding Credit (Illicit Money Lending)

The illicit and high interest lending project was developed on the basis of a number of key objectives including raising awareness in West Dunbartonshire to ensure residents will be more aware of:

- the dangers and consequence of illegal money lending;
- methods for avoiding the use of money lenders and high interest lending; and
- The support available to help them to extricate themselves from difficult circumstances and manage debt.

Our objectives for the project are to:

- educate residents on the issue of illegal money lending;
- increase and improve budgeting skills among vulnerable groups and individuals;
- support transition of clients to bank accounts;
- support exploration of savings opportunities;
- raise awareness of the issue and the support and referral routes among staff within intermediary organisations, health, social care, housing, education services;
- develop a group of volunteer community champions;
- disseminate project learning beyond West Dunbartonshire.

Our project will not only engage with families that are most at risk of illegal money lending or engaging in high interest loans, we will also engage with children and young people in a school setting to take an early intervention approach.

The project is aimed at adults and young people who identify as being financially excluded. Work started in October 2020 and outcomes achieved so far include:

- Established a referrals network and key links with housing associations, social work, W4U money advisors, community-learning outreach teams, local foodbanks and Homeless support agencies.
- Engaged 164 residents and provided 1-2-1 support.
- Supported 63 people to open bank accounts.
- Supported 14 families to establish savings accounts.
- Delivered an introductory lesson on Financial Education and Illegal Money Lending to 397 pupils in schools.
- Delivered virtual and in person Illegal Money Lending and Financial Education sessions for 315 members of the community
- Providing 58 young people with Illegal Money Lending Awareness in a non-school environment.
- Established a stand-alone Financial Literacy, Supersavers, over 5 sessions attended by 12 learners.
- Established a text-in service to provide residents of West Dunbartonshire with an alternative source of money help (WhatsApp).
- Hosted a Facebook Live Social Media campaign, highlighting the support available from Working4U. 1,967 views across eight videos in the first week.

Planned work going forward includes face-to-face workshops in schools; parental engagement events; workshops for residents in local homeless hostels and with community groups; drop-in sessions for money advice in the heart of the local community, for example in local cafes, churches and foodbanks; developing an online Money Hub for adults.

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing

Children and Young People Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services

The Children and Young People Community Supports and Service working group continues to implement the recommendations from the [national framework](#) by taking a whole system approach based on prevention and early intervention.

Glasgow University was commissioned by West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership to undertake a comprehensive review and analysis of children and young people's community mental health and wellbeing services and supports.

Phase 1 of the review sought to understand the prevalence of collaboration within West Dunbartonshire and explored how different sectors worked together in supporting children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Phase 2 engaged with young people and parents and carers of young people between September and January 2022 with a focus on seeking their views on local needs in relation to community mental health and wellbeing services and supports. The research explored their experiences of accessing mental health support, mental health information, and their understanding of the resources within the local area.

The **final report** sets out key recommendations and six areas for development and will inform further action planning processes for children and young people's community mental health and wellbeing services and supports.

Distress Brief Intervention Service

In March 2022, a new West Dunbartonshire Distress Brief Intervention Associate Programme - 'Ask once, get help fast' for young people aged 16yrs to 24yrs (26yrs for care experienced young people) commenced.

The new service supports young people who are experiencing 'emotional distress' and do not require clinical interventions. The service delivers face-to-face and telephone support, offered within 24hrs of referral.

The new service continues to use learning from the national programme and other Associate Programme areas while taking an incremental approach to implementation. The first phase of training in relation to the new service focused on Primary Care, Education and Police Scotland.

Scottish Families Affected by Drugs/Alcohol Young Persons Routes Project

The Children and Young People's Community Mental Health Supports and Service Working Group supported a financial contribution to Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs' Young Persons Routes Project.

The contribution supported the project's Corra Foundation application to increase the workforce capacity in West Dunbartonshire. Working alongside West Dunbartonshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership and local organisations, the project has a co-production approach, supporting and working with 12-26-year-olds affected by someone else's alcohol or other drug use, to design and test out what works best to support the individual.

Parental Support

A bespoke parenting programme for parents and carers of children with complex needs and neurodiverse issues such as Autism. This was delivered by a neurodiverse trainer during 2021/22 with 90 parents and carers completing the courses. The courses included Understanding Autism, Understanding Sensory Needs, Anxiety and Distressed Behaviour, and Managing Anger.

Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Programme

The Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Programme, has been refreshed and expanded from the previous ACEs Programme. It aims to prevent childhood adversity and trauma and to mitigate the effects across the lifecourse where it has already occurred. The programme acknowledges poverty as a form of adversity which affects a substantial proportion of the local population.

Workforce Development

Activities have continued to increase awareness of adversity, trauma and resilience across the West Dunbartonshire workforce. The Local Resilience Hub, which has over 400 members, held two online meetings in 2021/22 the themes being 'Healing Trauma and Connecting People through Community Arts' and 'The First 1001 Days'. Both were well attended and demonstrated an increase in knowledge among attendees.

The documentary film 'Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope' is a key resource to raise awareness of childhood adversity and trauma across the workforce. Two multi agency online viewings were held and were well-attended.

Both demonstrated an increase in staff knowledge on the topic. Around 1260 people have now seen the film locally. Focused sessions for Education staff continue with an integrated approach to viewing the resilience film as part of the activity around Cost of the School Day.

Planning continues to implement the [national Trauma Training Programme](#) locally, across a range of internal and external colleagues and maximising use of the range of resources across the four levels of training of trauma informed practice and wellbeing support available at <https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/>

It is being co-ordinated by the local trauma champion alongside local Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders in Justice, Education and Human Resources.

Taking a Strength-based Approach

In August 2021, West Dunbartonshire Council became the first in Scotland to officially endorse the [WAVE Trust 70/30 Campaign](#) to reduce child maltreatment (abuse, neglect, domestic violence) by 70% by 2030.

Community Awareness

Work continues to raise awareness of adversity, trauma and resilience in local communities in a sensitive, trauma-informed and supportive way. This includes working closely with the Champions Board and the local organisations represented at the Community Response Network, run by Clydesider Creative, to integrate the knowledge and wisdom that people with lived experience of trauma bring and build local community responses to trauma.

More Information about these services can be obtained at:

<http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/useful-information/children-and-young-people/>

Appendix 1: Lived Experience Session Feedback

Our household income allows our family to meet the cost of living.

With an average of 21%, participants scored a very low level of agreement with the statement.

The reasons provide were (reproduced in participants' own words):

- The cost of travel is rising.
- Concerns when savings reduce and rising cost of living.
- If I didn't have savings I would be financially detriment, my savings won't last long.
- Fuel costs V working hours.
- Frightening worry about costs! Everything is going up.
- I'm having to pay utility bills to support my son.
- I'm currently better off, it's still a struggle but basic needs are definitely being met resulting in less stress and worry.
- I see my kids at the week-end. My son is autistic and I can't afford to take him to activities.
- I couldn't even afford to buy him a pair of socks.
- Struggling to survive on £300 monthly income.
- I struggle with money. I have a wee girl. I get her two days a week. Clothing and food is difficult.
- I am on okay money. Couldn't afford gas and electricity before current situation.
- I did things I wouldn't have done, to support my family.
- I get a lot of help from my family.
- I get a decent amount of money. Never waiting on money in current situation. If I wasn't in current situation, then I would struggle.

Our household income allows our family to meet the cost of living and any unexpected costs.

With an average of 12%, participants scored an extremely low level of agreement.

The reasons provide were (reproduced in participants' own words):

- Dipping into savings every month – won't last.
- Kids wants and desires.
- Worry about kids, Christmas and birthdays.
- Rising fuel costs – car eating petrol.
- Continued rising cost of fuel- home.
- Mental challenge to keep up with the times.
- Broken car – impact on access to work.
- Too expensive to work.
- Anything money related gives most anxiety.
- Cutting into savings to cover car costs.
- Health related issues resulting in new clothing requirements.
- Pressures of parenting. Want to give everything to the kids.
- Mental health issues resulting from being unable to buy for the kids.
- Travel costs- I could not afford to get around – cost of trains and buses -I get by, by dodging train fares.
- My two year old broke the telly.

- Hospital visits. Can't afford to get there I phoned my mum and she loaned me the money.
- I can't afford to buy my kids anything or feed them if I get them at the weekend.
- School uniform £150 either gets them shoes or a jacket.
- School outings and time off school – things that kids want to do out of school with pals is too costly.
- Buying a winter jacket for school after term causes problems.
- Birthdays - - stressed I have to hope the family can help.
- Take me out of the false environment I am in I could not afford lightbulbs.
- If I talk about going back to work I can't do anything physical due to my health.
- Child had a dairy intolerance – so hospital visits- this costs for travel every couple of days.
- Constant fear of kids falling ill. If ambulance won't come. I have to get there dodging trains.
- Go to the physio and this costs a fortune.
- Find it hard when I have my daughter twice a week as I dot get money for her.

What Has to Change

We explored what has to change in order to improve the participants' level of agreement with the statements. Here are their suggestions:

- Tax people on higher incomes not lower incomes.
- Stop hammering low income families.
- Getting back to work, but because of addiction I have not worked since the 90's – I am not that qualified it would be a low income job- if I say I haven't worked since the 90's it's a stigma.
- Knowing what agency to call if in crisis.
- Imbalance (cost of living) needs to be addressed.
- Support services reduced waiting times.
- Mental health getting worse – more services.
- Benefits should mirror inflation and rising costs.
- Healthy food should be reduced to avoid having to buy junk food.
- I have worked all my life but I need to get financial help while I am in recovery.
- Cost of energy food fuel needs to go down.
- Benefits don't match cost of living.
- My mum works with the Council £140 warm home payment need to make people aware.
- Electricity gas – Government should help with this – credit on cards.
- Scottish Welfare Fund needs to be more approachable- very cheeky when you phone them.
- School uniform grant needs to be more than £150.
- Reduce the cost of living. If you are on a certain benefit give a bus pass or train pass.
- Foodbank-there is a stigma – needs to be more approachable.
- Living wage increase.
- Promote agencies who can help- credit unions and food shares.
- Additional childcare- fit for purpose- right hour's availability.
- Income inequality has to be addressed.
- Time factor with policy changes – needs to be faster.

- More action – less talking do something.
- Put aside political agenda and act together.
- Pay a living wage.
- Change of policy/government.
- Mental health and addictions through the roof – to escape out of minds.
- Politicians make promises – need to keep them.
- More action.
- Westminster running money into the ground.
- Need a new Government.
- If I could get a job that pays better off not through the books.
- Enough to provide a healthier diet for kids rather than going for the cheapest option.

To bring some focus to the support services designed to address disadvantage we asked the groups to consider the extent of their agreement to the following statement:

I know where to go to obtain good advice about welfare benefits and getting a job

At 40% the general level of agreement was higher than the previous statements.

The reasons provide were (reproduced in participants' own words):

- Work coach at DWP.
- Good services out there.
- Fair Start.
- Good having WWB to find services.
- Knowing which service to go to can be confusing.
- CAB hard to get an appointment.
- Citizens advice outwith this I don't know.
- I wouldn't know where to go. I just pick up the phone.
- Hate phoning up for a crisis grant –feel as though I'm begging for money as though they don't believe I am in crisis.
- Asking for bank statements – sometimes my mental health is so bad I can't.
- Job centre answering machine hard to get to speak to anyone or get through.
- Feels degrading being on the other end of the phone.
- Because of my limits to work I would not go to JCP to look. I would end up getting told to take a job.
- Not approachable. Begging (it feels like) Already feel uncomfortable.

What Has to Change

Given these responses we asked what would have to change to improve their perceptions of services. The reasons provide were (reproduced in participants' own words):

- Secure employment: not short time contract, not zero hour contract.
- UB40 job clubs.
- More face to face – not phone.
- Meaningful employment – progression opportunities.
- Secure employment.
- More than three payments from the Scottish Welfare Fund.
- Work life balance – not top-up with other jobs
- Out of pocket expenses to attend support – travel etc.
- More jobs paying a living wage.

- Free childcare for when in employment.
- Hate phoning job centre can't get through to them as getting through to answering machine.
- Help from staff in jobcentre. Advice from staff in jobcentre.
- More help to ease you back into work (phasing you in).
- Stop price increases cap prices and tax.
- More suitable jobs. Better paying jobs.
- Easier way to contact these services.
- More and better advertisements about what's available out there.
- More help for single parents.
- Need to be more easy accessible services with no stigma.
- More face to face.
- CAB not face to face.
- Raise the minimum wage.
- More education to help back into work.
- More information about agencies.

Appendix 2: Partnership Group Membership

Partnership Members	Remit
<p>Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Nurtured Delivery Improvement Group.</p>	<p>The Nurtured DIG is also lead group, among other strategic management responsibilities, for the <i>Integrated Children Services Plan</i> and the <i>Community Learning and Development Plan</i>.</p> <p>As such this group provides strategic oversight and support for the development and implementation of actions outlined in the in West Dunbartonshire Local Child Poverty Action Report.</p>
<p>The Strategic Employability Group in West Dunbartonshire consists of representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Dunbartonshire Council - Working 4 U; • West Dunbartonshire Council Education Services; • Skills Development Scotland; • DWP/JCP; • West College Scotland; • Work Connect; • Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce (DSYW); • West Dunbartonshire CVS; and • SQA. 	<p>Main objectives centre on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To co-ordinate improved service delivery to West Dunbartonshire citizens accessing local employability services through an agreed agenda. • To identify priority geographical areas and generic issues and to co-ordinate multi-agency initiatives to respond effectively. • To improve opportunities for citizens to gain access to appropriate learning, education, volunteering, training and employment.
<p>Adult Learning Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSCP • West Dunbartonshire Libraries • Communities Team, West Dunbartonshire Council • West College Scotland • West College Scotland • Skills Development Scotland (SDS) • West Dunbartonshire Council for Voluntary Services (WDCVS) • Clydebank Housing Association • Adult Learning and Literacies, Working4U 	<p>The Adult Learning Partnership is a forum to create and support a shared vision of Community Based Adult Learning in West Dunbartonshire through effective partnership working.</p> <p>Our partnership work is in the context of West Dunbartonshire’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan: Plan for Place 2017 – 27; the Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships for Community Learning and Development (2012);</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility: explore ways to improve access to services in terms of child care, venues, timetable and IT resources • Guidance and progression: strengthen the Partnership’s approach to providing Adult Learning guidance for West Dunbartonshire Learners
<p>The Youth Alliance in West Dunbartonshire consists of representatives from;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Dunbartonshire Council – Working 4 U; • Police Scotland; • Y Sort-it • Tulloch Trust • West Dunbartonshire Council – Housing 	<p>Main objectives centre on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To co-ordinate improved service delivery for young people through an agreed agenda. • To identify priority geographical areas and generic issues and to co-ordinate multi-agency initiatives to respond effectively to young people’s needs and aspirations.

Partnership Members	Remit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Dunbartonshire Council – Throughcare and Aftercare Teams • Action for Children • Skapade • West Dunbartonshire HSCP • West Dunbartonshire Champions Board • West Dunbartonshire Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a high quality youth participation and engagement structure that partners can utilise to inform future service delivery and which gives young people a voice. • To improve access to a range of joined-up services for young people that will keep them safe and improve their life chances, health and well-being. • To improve opportunities for young people to gain access to appropriate learning, education, volunteering, training and employment. • To have a shared approach to funding for youth work/youth services to ensure strategic use of funding across the partnership.
<p>West Dunbartonshire Information and Advice Partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Dunbartonshire Council – Working 4 U; • West Dunbartonshire CAB; • Clydebank Independent Resource Centre; • Clydebank Asbestos Group; • Scottish Social Security Agency; • DWP – West Dunbartonshire 	<p>To coordinate welfare/debt information and advice services maximising local investment in services and responding effectively to emerging issues.</p>
<p>Strategic Solutions Partnership (Housing)</p> <p>Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Dunbartonshire Council; • West Dunbartonshire Registered Social Landlords. 	<p>Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate in the West Dunbartonshire Housing Solutions Partnership and assist in the monitoring and implementation of West Dunbartonshire Council’s Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan (RRTP) to ensure the progression of the transition to Rapid Rehousing within West Dunbartonshire is carried out efficiently. • Contribute to an annual review and update of our RRTP. • Work in collaboration to build funding mechanisms to ensure future service provision. • Play a positive role in the delivery of the 5-year action plan.
<p>Food Insecurity Group consists of representatives from::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Dunbartonshire Council Working 4 U; • WDC Communities Team; • West Dunbartonshire Food4Thought; • West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare 	<p>The group was established to manage the risk of food insecurity emerging as a result of Britain’s exit from the European Union. The group has subsequently established responses to COVID-19.</p> <p>The aim is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to maximise access to food resources in West Dunbartonshire;

Partnership Members	Remit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain process to ensure that those most in need secure emergency food supplies; • Coordinate the distribution of food: • Provide access to support that will address the causes that drove service users to require emergency food.
<p>Cost of the School Day – Short-life working group. To research and identify actions designed to reduce the cost of the school day.</p>	<p>Members of the short life working group representatives from :</p> <p>Vale of Leven Academy (Teacher); Head of Centre Meadowview ELCC; Depute Head Teacher, Renton Primary; Depute Head Teacher – Our Lady of Loretto Primary; Education Support Officer.</p>

Appendix 3: Managing the Cost of Living 15 Point Guide

We know many of our residents are struggling to make ends meet due to the increased cost of living. Our recently launched £5million campaign of support is designed to help.

From energy funds, to abolishing social care charges and investing in holiday programmes to ensure our young people still benefit from a nutritious lunch, we want to make sure that no resident in West Dunbartonshire has to choose between heating and eating.

As well as these new initiatives, there is a range of support and advice already available, and it's important to make sure you know what is relevant to you.

Our 15-point guide shares practical actions residents could take to support themselves, their families or their neighbours.

1. Check your benefits

Up to 7 million people in the UK miss out on income-related state benefits, with an estimated £15bn of benefits going unclaimed each year. Make sure you are getting everything you are entitled to. Our Working4U team can help with benefit maximisation, or you can use an online benefits calculator.

To contact our Working4U team, please phone 01389 738296 or email working4u@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

2. Look into Pension Credit

If you're over State Pension age, check if you're eligible for Pension Credit. It provides extra money for living costs as well as access to additional support. It is estimated that 123,000 eligible households in Scotland are not claiming the payment, often because they don't know they can or how they claim.

You can find out if you're eligible and how much you could get using the Pension Credit calculator.

If you are of State Pension age and have savings, own your own home or have a retirement income, you may still be entitled to Pension Credit. An award can provide help with housing costs, Council Tax, heating bills and, for those aged 75 or over, a free TV licence.

3. Take advantage of free childcare

All three and four year olds, and eligible two years old, are entitled to 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare. 1140 hours is equivalent to 30 hours per week over a school year (38 weeks) or 22.5 hours per week over a full year (50 weeks). You can [apply](#) for a place at a local authority nursery, a private provider nursery in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council or a childminder who is in partnership with the Council.

You may also be eligible for a [Scottish Child Payment](#) to help towards the costs of supporting your family. This is a weekly payment of £20 for every child you look after who's under 6 years of age. Paid every four weeks, it can be used for things like travel costs, nappies, childcare or family days out.

4. Seek help if your benefits don't cover your rent

If Housing Benefit or Universal Credit doesn't cover all your rent, check to see if you can make a claim for a discretionary housing payment. You can apply through the Council [here](#).

5. Check your eligibility for a Council Tax Reduction

If you are a West Dunbartonshire resident of working age and claim means-tested benefits including Universal Credit, you may be eligible to apply for a [Council Tax Reduction](#). This is means-tested and could reduce your bill.

6. Help if you're experiencing illness or disability

If you or your family are experiencing illness or disability, you could be entitled to benefits. These include Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (for adults under state retirement age), Attendance Allowance (for those over state retirement age), and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (for children under 16, for new claims. These are not means-tested and consider the way your health conditions affect daily living and mobility. If you receive these benefits, your entitlement to other benefits including Pension Credit may increase. More information is available [here](#).

Please Seek advice if you already claim disability benefits such as DLA for adults, as your award will stop if you claim PIP instead.

If you're too unwell to work, you may be entitled to New Style Employment and Support Allowance and/or Universal Credit with Limited Capability for Work or Work Related Activity.

If you are unsure and need support, please contact our Working4U team on 01389 738296 or working4u@west-dunbarton.gov.uk or your local [Citizens Advice bureau](#).

Our partnership with Macmillan on the [Improving the Cancer Journey](#) initiative supports people diagnosed with Cancer understand what help they can get, including support with benefits.

7. Make a Carer's Allowance claim

If you are a carer, you may be entitled to Carer's Allowance and/or an extra payment called the carer's element within Universal Credit. This could mean £69.70 a week in Carer's Allowance if you care for someone at least 35 hours a week and you, the person you care for and the type of care you provide meets the criteria. To find out more, click [here](#).

8. Seek energy advice and research available fuel grants

We've partnered with major energy providers so if you are struggling to pay for energy or think you may get into difficulty, contact your supplier and let them know. They may be able to offer a grant to help.

If you can't get a grant from your supplier, check if you can get a grant from the [British Gas Energy Trust](#) (0121 348 7797). These grants are available to anyone - you don't have to be a British Gas customer.

The [Council](#) will also offer fuel vouchers to those who cannot heat their home.

In addition, we provide free and impartial energy advice to all residents, homeowners and private tenants living in the West Dunbartonshire area.

We can offer free home visits to offer tailored advice, heating advice to ensure you are using your system efficiently and support obtaining grants to increase property insulation and heat retention.

We can also offer guidance on all aspects of domestic fuel related issues such as cutting down on fuel bills, understanding your bills, choosing a supplier, payment methods, arrears and debt, reading meters and keeping you warm in your home.

9. Make use of local food banks

We've committed to providing local food banks with an extra £1000 each week to ensure they have enough food to meet demand in the area.

If you are struggling to afford enough food to feed yourself and your family, let us know. Our Working4U officers can discuss your options, including a potential referral to a local foodbank for support. Many local food banks do not require a referral, and anyone in need can attend. More information on food banks available [here](#).

10. Take advantage of grants supporting families with children

[Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods](#) are payments that help towards the costs of being pregnant or looking after a child.

Best Start Grant is made up of 3 one-off payments:

- Pregnancy and Baby Payment
- Early Learning Payment
- School Age Payment

Best Start Foods is a prepaid card that can be used in shops or online to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit. The payments you can get now will depend on:

- how far along in your pregnancy you are
- how old your child is

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are 2 separate payments. You apply for both Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods using the same form. This is to make sure you can get all the payments you can without having to fill in more than one form. You'll get separate letters to let you know whether you'll get each payment.

If you can get one payment now and another in the future, you'll need to fill in a new form each time you apply.

11. Reduce the cost of the school day

All Primary 1 – 5 pupils in West Dunbartonshire are automatically entitled to free school meals. If your child is not in the above year groups, you can still apply for a free school meal [here](#).

You may also be eligible to apply for a School Clothing Grant, which is £300 per child and paid in two instalments.

12. Take the worry out of school holidays with activities and meals

The Council runs a Summer Extravaganza programme offering young people up to the age of 18 the opportunity to participate in a range of free activities, as well as providing a free lunch.

In addition, all young people in West Dunbartonshire will have access to free swimming sessions during the summer holidays through West Dunbartonshire Leisure, while vulnerable families will be offered free gym and leisure access for the summer months.

You may be eligible for a [Free School Meal Payment](#) of £87.50 per child (£2.50 per day per eligible child). This payment covers lunches up to Tuesday 16 August (inclusive). For more information please contact FSM@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

A Bridging Payment (£130 per child) will be paid to families already in receipt of Free School Meals via our Benefits section. This payment will be made to you automatically.

13. Ask for debt advice early

If you're in debt, seek advice early rather than let things spiral out of control. As well as contacting Working4U for support, residents can also get help from [StepChange](#) or [Citizens Advice Bureau](#).

14. Use West Dunbartonshire's free period products

We work with UK Social Enterprise HeyGirls to ensure everyone in West Dunbartonshire who has a period will have convenient access to appropriate products free of charge, as required. The products are available in schools and community venues across the authority.

You can find venues that are stocking the products on the MyPeriodLive website or by downloading the PickupMyPeriod app on IOS and Android. A list of venues can also be found [here](#). Most venues stock these products in the toilets to avoid the need to ask for them, and residents are encouraged to take as much as they need for their cycle.

15. Seek emergency assistance

The Scottish Welfare Fund can help families and people in Scotland who are on low incomes. There are two types of one-off grant you can apply for.

A [crisis grant](#) may be available if you need help with costs that have arisen as a result of a disaster or emergency, to keep you and your family safe from harm. You may be in crisis because of a disaster like a fire or flood, or an emergency such as losing all your money or having to visit a sick child in hospital.

[Community care grants](#) may be available to you if you are about to leave care to live on your own in the community; you face going into care because you don't have the things you need to continue living at home; you require help because you are struggling to provide a safe and secure home for your family; or you need help to get essential household items like a cooker or washing machine but don't have the money to buy it.

If you need additional support, you can also contact our Crisis Support Team by texting the word 'help' to 07800 002 582 or referring yourself [here](#).

Appendix 4: NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Addressing Child Poverty

The following tables provide an overview of activity carried out by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde that is designed to address child poverty.

Table 13: NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Employability Programmes

NHSGGC employability programmes	
Summary of activity 2021/22	Plans for 2022/23
<p>Broadly we have been able to continue activity since last year and where paused due to pandemic, engagement has continued with partners and now rescheduling activity (e.g. non employed/ academic placement activity). New areas have been Kickstart programme in Facilities and our focus under Community Wealth Building.</p>	<p>In 2022/2023 the WATE plan continues delivery in the following areas aligned to our Workforce Strategy: Apprenticeships- Engagement with ongoing recruitment of modern apprentices aligned to our workforce plan, Expansion of Foundation apprenticeship opportunities in partnership with FE and Education partners, Formal Graduate programmes, Post pandemic reintroduction of careers activity in line with Education partners linked to apprenticeships and other routes to employment, Employability Programmes – Completion and evaluation of Kickstart, Schedule of employability programmes supporting guaranteed interviews for HCSW posts. Career Pathways – Aligned to our workforce plan and Fair Work commitments visible career access, development and progression opportunities for our staff and community. Community Wealth Building – Align our workforce activity to the pillars within CWB as an Anchor institution, create connections between HSCP HI led employability programmes in community to workforce opportunities</p>

Table 14: NHSGGC as a Service and Contract Procurer

NHS GGC as a procurer		
Summary of activity 2021/22	Outcome/activity data for 2021/22 by HSCP, including comparison with previous years	Plans for 2022/23
<p>Our spend and support of local businesses and employers. We have initiated work with the Supplier Development Programme and our Public Health Colleagues on the HALN Project to encourage more local SMEs to become suppliers to the Board and focusing on increasing diversity.</p>	<p>NHS GGC, including HSCPs current spend across the six local authorities is approx. £77m, 12% of our spend. In financial year 2020-21 the Board spent the following amounts within each Council region</p> <p>Glasgow City £51,887,682.55 Renfrewshire £13,866,596.56 West Dunbartonshire £4,164,261.35 Inverclyde £3,722,914.58 East Dunbartonshire £2,017,769.31 East Renfrewshire £1,652,899.90</p>	<p>We will continue work with the Supplier Development Programme and our Public Health Colleagues on the HALN Project to encourage more local SMEs to become suppliers to the Board and focusing on increasing diversity. We are also looking to increase our spend in all local authority areas to above the 12%.</p>
<p>Community benefits. Were we working to increase community benefits as part of community wealth building work</p>	<p>Within Glasgow City Council area suppliers have advised us that they have appointed 2 apprentices, 15 trainees, 3 student placements and 2 work experience. They also mention 50 volunteers and 2 Mentors.</p>	<p>We will be working with our suppliers to provide more detail on what community benefits have been achieved within each Council area.</p>

Table 15: NHSGGC Family Friendly Working

To support employees with families at risk of child poverty NHSGGC has a range of family friendly working policies	
Summary of activity 2021/22	Plans for 2022/23
To support employees with families at risk of child poverty NHSGGC has a range of family friendly working policies	Nil new planned 2022/23
Personal development programmes for career enhancement including bursary scheme.	No further developments planned 2021/22
<p>Money advice for staff In partnership with Home Energy Scotland; a series of online information sessions for were provided to staff, these gave advice on fuel saving behaviours in the home. (30 staff). Quarterly messages on debt advice are in staff payslips.</p> <p>A high profile campaign, Staff Money Worries, was run across NHSGGC for all staff at the end of March 2022. This included a revision of the All About Money NHSGGC webpages, a campaign promotional message in Core Brief, information cascaded via HWL groups and team briefs, and access to an advice video on credit card debt. Posters were designed and distributed to every HSCP and Acute site in NHSGGC. The campaign had a QR code to the website, and provide information on key themes of: home energy costs, money advice, benefits support, childcare and carers support. Support & Information Services, located within the main atriums of most NHSGGC Hospitals, continue to offer a drop in service for all staff that includes a holistic need assessment to identify priority need and offer ongoing support and onward referral to Money, debt advice and energy advice services.</p>	<p>22/23 – Money advice information workshops and video content with NHS Credit Union, for staff. HES – home energy workshops for staff. Payslip messages – debt advice messages quarterly. Staff Money Worries campaign. Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing resource contains money advice information and will be distributed to all staff. New project is a Staff Wellbeing Bus that will visit smaller sites including HSCP sites in order to provide rest and recuperation support and holistic health and well-being information to staff.</p>

To support employees with families at risk of child poverty NHSGGC has a range of family friendly working policies	
Summary of activity 2021/22	Plans for 2022/23
Supporting current employees who are experiencing or at risk of poverty	To support employees with families at risk of child poverty NHSGGC has a range of family friendly working policies and personal development programmes for career enhancement including bursary scheme. A pilot, in partnership with Home Energy Scotland, of staff energy and money advice has had good uptake extending the number of staff using our fuel poverty and staff money worries programme (1060 staff).

Table 16: NHSGGC Royal Hospital for Children Money and Debt Service

Royal Hospital for Children - Money and Debt Advice Service		
Summary of activity 2021/	Outcome/activity data for 2021/22 by HSCP, including comparison with previous years	Plans for 2022/23
The Money & Debt with advocacy service supports any families who have a child as an inpatient or who attend the hospital as an outpatient. It sees families from all 6 target groups as identified in BSBF, SG child poverty delivery plan, 2022. The service works closely with families who often experience major life changing circumstances due to a child being born with a medical condition, or a child suddenly becomes unwell or they are diagnosed with a lifelong or life limiting illness. These Parents	There were a total of 339 referrals into the service during 2021/2022 with a total 406 repeat clients also see. There was a total of £2,007,066.33 in financial gains and a total of £146,799.19 in debt, housing and non-housing managed. Of those who used the service 77% had an annual income of <£15k before seeing the service and were living in poverty. 46% of those who used the service identified as having a disability with the service reaching families with a total of 238 children (<16) who also had a disability. 17% of those who used the service	The service will continue to work with all partners through its multi-disciplinary steering group including Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity who fund the service, staff and families. Plans are in place to reintroduce the service back into the Hospital site after 2 years of being non front facing during the pandemic. Learning from the pandemic and family's needs are at the forefront of service delivery for 2022/23.

Royal Hospital for Children - Money and Debt Advice Service																
Summary of activity 2021/	Outcome/activity data for 2021/22 by HSCP, including comparison with previous years	Plans for 2022/23														
often become Carers and they are faced with increasing and additional costs of caring for a child with a disability or lifelong or life limiting illness.	were BAME and 20% required a translator for their appointments. Referrals from NHSGGC: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>East Dunbartonshire -</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Renfrewshire -</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Glasgow City -</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inverclyde -</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Renfrewshire -</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Dunbartonshire -</td> <td>15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A total of 153 new clients seen were from NHSGGC. A total of 111 clients seen were from outwith NHSGGC area.</p>	Area	Total	East Dunbartonshire -	5	East Renfrewshire -	11	Glasgow City -	100	Inverclyde -	6	Renfrewshire -	16	West Dunbartonshire -	15	
Area	Total															
East Dunbartonshire -	5															
East Renfrewshire -	11															
Glasgow City -	100															
Inverclyde -	6															
Renfrewshire -	16															
West Dunbartonshire -	15															

Table 17: NHSGGC Maternity Matters Debt and Advocacy

Special Needs in Pregnancy - Maternity Matters		
Summary of activity 2021/22	Outcome/activity data for 2021/22 by HSCP, including comparison with previous years	Plans for 2022/23
The Money & Debt with Advocacy Service - Maternity Matters supports any women and when required her family, who attends the SNIPs Maternity Service in Glasgow. It sees women who have multiple vulnerabilities and who may have a disability, BAME,	A total of 243 referrals were made to the service during 2021/22 and a total of 258 repeat clients were also seen. 46% of new clients seen had an annual income of <£6k, 37% had an annual income of <£10k and a further 15% had an annual income of <£15k. Only 1% of new	The service will continue to work with all partners through its multi-disciplinary steering group including Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity who part fund the service and with Maternity staff and with pregnant women and their families. As soon as it is safe to do so, the service will be

Special Needs in Pregnancy - Maternity Matters		
Summary of activity 2021/22	Outcome/activity data for 2021/22 by HSCP, including comparison with previous years	Plans for 2022/23
<p>single parents and pregnant and target groups as identified in BSBF, SG child poverty delivery plan, 2022. The service supports women to develop an action plan and an Advocate will work with the women to support the plan and facilitate attendance at other services from anything from 3 months upwards. Maternity Matters deliver a true client centred approach, building the trust of the women, whilst engaging via NHS settings and via the Midwifery team. A number of these women have low level literacy skills and, or, English is not their first language, which makes managing their money and financial literacy an additional challenge. Often their IT skills are also low making UC claimant commitments more difficult. .</p>	<p>clients seen had an annual income >£15k to £25k. Therefore 99% of those the service has seen would be classed as living in poverty before seeing the service. 61% of service users identified that they had a disability. Financial gains were a total of £381,978.34 and a total of £51,380.85 in both housing and non-housing debt was managed for clients. A total of 49% of new service users were BAME and a total of 52% of service users needed an interpreter to engage with the service. 53% of those who used the service were <25 years old. 22% were lone parents with dependants and a further 43% were single parents who were expecting their first child. A total of 40 travel cards were provided to women who had no money to pay for travel to their Maternity Appointments.</p> <p>HSCP BREAKDOWN: Glasgow city - 139 ED, ER, Ren & WD - 8 (data have been consolidated as individual numbers are small) Outwith NHSGGC - 5 (data have been consolidated as individual numbers are small)</p>	<p>reintroduced back into PRM & QEUH sites. The service will continue to provide a holistic approach to the women's needs and everyone seen in the service will receive a full Benefits/ Welfare rights check and an income maximisation check-up is completed, identification of and support with debt, energy support and direct access to grants to ensure that they are not without heating and lighting at home, support for housing issues, support to access food and Foodbanks, support to access grants e.g. Aberlour for Asylum seekers/ refugees or the Scottish Welfare Fund. The service will support women to access education, training and employment if they are ready.</p>

Table 18: NHSGGC Black and Ethnic Minority Maternity Support

Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) maternity	
Summary of activity 2021/22	Plans for 2022/23
<p>NHSGGC has an equality outcome to improve perinatal care for women in poverty, BME communities and those experiencing gender based violence. Of the 10,472 women who booked for maternity care in 2021/22, 45% were in SIMD 1 and 2 zones. For those requiring an interpreter, 78% were in SIMD 1 and 2 zones. Baseline research with BME women, including women in persistent poverty, highlighted barriers to service access (including use of interpreting) and ways in which the experience could be improved. Initial actions to address structural barriers in the maternity pathway include piloting video interpreting in the early pregnancy pathway and improving access to the Maternity Booking Line through use of a patient interpreting code.</p>	<p>Work will continue on the maternity pathway with maternity staff from community services to post-natal services to ensure equal access at all points of the pathway. Further specific research with women in poverty will be undertaken and bespoke resources for women and staff developed.</p>

Table 19: NHSGGC Money Worries in Maternity

Raising the issue of money worries in Maternity Services																													
Summary of activity 2021/22	Outcome/activity data for 2021/22 by HSCP, including comparison with previous years	Plans for 2022/23																											
<p>A Pilot quality improvement to increase financial enquiry and referral to support within maternity has been progressed in one (GCC) area in 2021/22, learning from this will be shared more widely in 2022/23. Improving access to maternity services will be considered as part of ongoing Best Start implementation.</p>	<p>The first awareness raising session with the Springburn Community Midwifery team was completed in March 2022. Referral pathways have been updated and supporting guidance has been developed and disseminated. Baseline and follow up referral data is being extracted from Badgernet to track progress.</p> <p>Data from local FI service providers for each HSCP/sector show the following direct referrals from maternity services as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>HSCP/Sector</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>20/21</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>North East Glasgow</td> <td>93</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North West Glasgow</td> <td>200</td> <td>107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Glasgow</td> <td>130</td> <td>81</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Dunbartonshire</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inverclyde</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Renfrewshire</td> <td>15</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Dunbartonshire</td> <td>61</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Renfrewshire</td> <td>4</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HSCP/Sector	21/22	20/21	North East Glasgow	93	48	North West Glasgow	200	107	South Glasgow	130	81	East Dunbartonshire	1	3	Inverclyde	0	1	Renfrewshire	15	18	West Dunbartonshire	61	36	East Renfrewshire	4	10	<p>The learning from the QI will be shared and rolled out across NHSGGC to ensure the issue is raised with every pregnant woman and an increase in referrals to Money Advice services is recorded.</p>
HSCP/Sector	21/22	20/21																											
North East Glasgow	93	48																											
North West Glasgow	200	107																											
South Glasgow	130	81																											
East Dunbartonshire	1	3																											
Inverclyde	0	1																											
Renfrewshire	15	18																											
West Dunbartonshire	61	36																											
East Renfrewshire	4	10																											

Table 20: NHSGGC Health Visitors and Money Worries

Raising the issue of money worries in early years (HWC) Health Visiting Services.																													
Summary of activity 2021/22	Outcome/activity data for 2021/22 by HSCP, including comparison with previous years	Plans for 2022/23																											
<p>A Scottish Government financial inclusion quality improvement practicum to increase financial enquiry and referral to support within Health Visiting has been progressed in one (GCC) area in 2021/22, learning from this will be shared more widely in 2022/23. The QI approach will be supported and rolled out to support the delivery of the Universal Pathway in NHSGGC.</p>	<p>Data from local FI service providers for each HSCP/sector show the following direct referrals from Health Visitors as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>HSCP/Sector</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>20/21</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>North East Glasgow</td> <td>674</td> <td>737</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North West Glasgow</td> <td>620</td> <td>312</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Glasgow</td> <td>1290</td> <td>1424</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Dunbartonshire</td> <td>69</td> <td>49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inverclyde</td> <td>0</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Renfrewshire</td> <td>137</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Dunbartonshire</td> <td>51</td> <td>250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Renfrewshire</td> <td>14</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	HSCP/Sector	21/22	20/21	North East Glasgow	674	737	North West Glasgow	620	312	South Glasgow	1290	1424	East Dunbartonshire	69	49	Inverclyde	0	10	Renfrewshire	137	32	West Dunbartonshire	51	250	East Renfrewshire	14	7	<p>The learning from the QI will be shared and rolled out across NHSGGC to ensure the issue is raised with every family and an increase in referrals to Money Advice services is recorded.</p>
HSCP/Sector	21/22	20/21																											
North East Glasgow	674	737																											
North West Glasgow	620	312																											
South Glasgow	1290	1424																											
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Renfrewshire	137	32																											
West Dunbartonshire	51	250																											
East Renfrewshire	14	7																											

Table 21: NHS GGC Planned Developments

NHSGGC Future Plans	
Activity	Plans for 2022/23
Families with Children with a disability	Children with a disability are a key target group of the CPA, 2017 and BSBF, 2022. Aim to understand families experience and impact of poverty for families with a child with a disability around the 3 key drivers of poverty. Plans to convene a Steering Group, scope out and commission research into needs of families with children and a disability in NHSGGC are underway. This research will identify themes and make recommendations for progress.
Travel Cots - GLASGOW ONLY	100 Travel Cots and twin packs of fitted sheets will be provided to Glasgow No1 Baby and Family Support Service. The Travel Cots will be provided to families who identify that they need a sleep space for their baby but do not have funds to purchase a cot. An external evaluation will be completed
Glasgow No 1 baby and Family Support – GLASGOW ONLY	NHSGGC, Trading Standards and No1 Baby Bank are working together to strengthen guidelines for safe use of second hand baby equipment.

