



East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan

2020-2021 Progress Report
(Year 3)





Introduction

The last year has been like no other we have experienced. COVID-19 has had an impact on all of our lives and families across the country have seen change in their circumstances as a result of the pandemic. Home learning and blended learning, reduced childcare options, parental furlough and job losses, increased digital demand have all created new and additional challenges for families and we cannot underestimate this. Those families who were experiencing poverty before COVID-19 are likely to have seen this intensified over the past year. In addition, many families who were 'just about managing' may have fallen into poverty due to their changing circumstances.

Whilst East Renfrewshire has one of the lowest levels of child poverty in Scotland, it is estimated there are still around 3,000 of our children and young people living in low income families; that is 16% of all children and young people living in the area.

We want all children in East Renfrewshire to experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed. In order to do this we need to tackle the root causes of poverty and reduce the impact of poverty, and this is more pertinent than ever at this time.

The Community Planning Partnership plays a key role in tackling poverty; with partner organisations working together to identify need and take actions. In the response to the pandemic, we have seen the strength of partnership working and this strength is also reflected in our actions to tackle poverty.

The purpose of this report is to outline the actions which have taken place over the past year to tackle the drivers of poverty, with an understanding that many of these have been crisis-response, reactive activities. The report also presents a picture of activities planned over the next year and beyond. These are shaped by lived experience and data we have at this time but we recognise that this will continue to grow and develop over time and as we recover and renew.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tony Buchanan".

Tony Buchanan
CPP chair

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Context

The Scottish Government's first Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22, Every Child, Every Chance, was produced in response to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The Act places a duty on local authorities and health boards to work together to report annually on what we are doing to tackle child poverty with a sharp focus on the three key drivers of poverty:

- Income from employment
- Income from social security and benefits in kind
- Costs of living

Income from employment includes bringing better jobs to the area, encouraging the payment of the Living Wage across the local area, providing in-work support and offering employment support programmes.

Income from social security includes maximising uptake of benefits, automating systems where possible to maximise access to benefit, and improving access to information and advice about benefits.

Reduced costs of living includes increasing availability of affordable housing, providing advice on how to minimise costs for energy and food, working to reduce the cost of the school day, supporting childcare provision (including increasing uptake of offering to eligible 2 year olds) and exploring cost effective transport opportunities.

The national delivery plan also identifies a number of priority groups where there is strong evidence that the risk of poverty is higher, specifically:

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



Where possible, actions to tackle the drivers of poverty should give particular consideration to these priority groups.

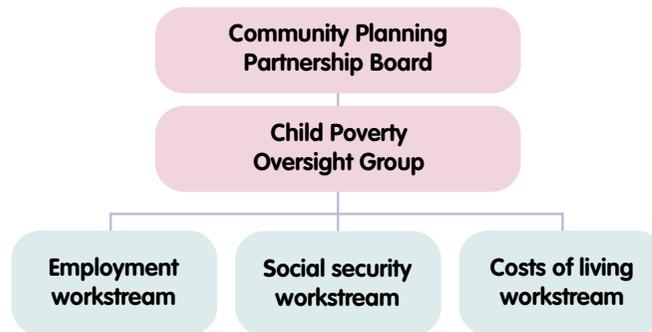
In East Renfrewshire, we continue to be committed to addressing the issue of child poverty. It is seen as integral to achieving the vision set out in our Community Plan to create an “attractive thriving place to grow up, work, visit, raise a family and enjoy later life”. The Community Plan contains our Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities which are focused on reducing inequality across groups and communities in East Renfrewshire. Our locality planning approach also seeks to reduce the inequalities in outcomes between deprived communities and the rest of East Renfrewshire; this is more relevant now than ever given our renewed focus on recovery of our services and building back better and fairer.

Attractive thriving place to grow up, work, visit, raise a family and enjoy later life.

Governance

The Community Planning Partnership is responsible overall for the Local Child Poverty Action Report and is supported by a Child Poverty Oversight Group. The oversight group has responsibility for creating a strategic environment which cultivates step-change in relation to tackling child poverty. The oversight group is jointly chaired by the council’s Deputy Chief Executive and the Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officer, and includes senior representatives from Education, HSCP, Employability, Money Advice, Environment Services, the Third Sector Interface and the Health Board.

The oversight group includes three Workstream Leads who each manage a workstream group aligned to the each of the drivers of poverty. The workstream groups develop and deliver on critical activities to encourage step-change and identify critical indicators to measure progress.



Lived Experience

As in previous years, we have collected and used lived experience feedback to understand need and direct our actions to tackle poverty. The pandemic has meant that feedback has been collected somewhat differently this year as we have not had the same opportunities for face-to-face engagement. This year, we have gathered lived experience feedback through relevant frontline workers, parental feedback through schools, adult learning evaluations and a number of online surveys. We held focus groups and interviews with frontline workers including employees from the Money Advice and Rights Team and the Citizens Advice Bureau, who have worked with residents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. These are the staff who are working with residents in poverty on a regular basis and are able to provide real insight into the issues and concerns that families have experienced over the last year.

The Education Department and individual schools worked directly with parents throughout the pandemic around home-learning, access to Hub places and all other issues relating to the welfare of pupils. Throughout this, parental feedback has been included and reported to the Education Committee. Where this feedback is relevant to poverty, we have used it to shape our actions and have included it in this report. East Renfrewshire Council have conducted a number of online surveys with the wider community, including a Citizen's Panel survey and an Equality survey. Findings included some poverty-related issues which, again has helped inform action and planning and has been included in this report where relevant.

The Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has clearly had a significant impact on our residents and staff over this past year, including the poverty-related work. Much of the activity during 2020/2021 has been focussed on crisis response and emergency need. The result of this is twofold; firstly, there are activities included in this report which were not identified in our previous report as future actions, and secondly, there are actions which were planned but have subsequently been delayed due to resources being redeployed or reprioritised. The pandemic has also changed the profile of need in terms of poverty. Those who were previously experiencing poverty are likely to have felt this become more entrenched and many of those who were previously 'just about managing' have been pushed into poverty. This continues to be a precarious balance for many who are on furlough, have a different working pattern or a reduced support network. It is likely that this situation will continue to change over the forthcoming year and beyond.

All three drivers of poverty have been impacted by COVID-19;

- Employment opportunities have been limited as particular businesses or whole sectors have closed or offered a reduced service. Many parents have found themselves working from home and/or with reduced childcare options to allow them to attend work.
- Demand on Social Security has increased nationwide and many parents have found themselves applying for support for the first time. This has brought challenges for the applicants in navigating new systems, and the providers in managing the increased demand.

- Changes in routine and circumstances has seen increase costs to many families for household essentials including food, fuel and digital access.

In addition, there has been an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of parents and families. Many families report increased stress and anxiety as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation as a result of lockdown measures.

Measures of progress

Whilst the overall level of child poverty will continue to provide a high level view of the profile of the area, we intend to monitor progress at a local level through a number of critical indicators relating to the three drivers of poverty. These are as follows:

Indicator	Measure and source	Baseline measure	Current data	Comments
OVERALL				
Children living in poverty	%age of children living in poverty (after housing costs) in East Renfrewshire: End Child Poverty 2019	16%	16%	The overall level of child poverty in East Renfrewshire remains steady from last year however the data-delay means that these figures relate to pre-pandemic.
INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT				
Real Living Wage employers in East Renfrewshire	Number of real Living Wage accredited employers: Living Wage Scotland 2021	11	16	This is mixed picture in terms of progress to increase income from employment; Children and young people participation levels remain high which is positive. The number of Real Living Wage accredited employers has increased which is a great success, particularly during such a difficult year for employers. However, there has been a significant rise in the unemployment level. This reflects the picture nationally.
Working age unemployment level	%age of economically inactive residents who want a job: NOMIS. Jan-Dec 2020	18.1%	24.7%	
Children and young people participation level	%age of 16-19 year olds participating in learning, training or employment: SDS Annual Participation Measure Report 2019	96.9%	96.7%	
INCOME FROM SOCIAL SECURITY AND INCOME MAXIMISATION				
Free School Meal uptake at Primary School	%age uptake of free school meals at primary school (P1-P7): School healthy living survey 2020	87.9%	87.7%	The uptake of free school meals has remained steady, but we have seen an increase in demand on financial wellbeing advice. This is due to many changing circumstances as a result of COVID-19 and reflects the national picture.
Access to financial wellbeing advice	Number of families accessing MART financial wellbeing advice: Local data	997	1318	
COSTS OF LIVING				
Fuel poverty	Fuel poverty (all households): Scottish House Condition Survey	16%	13%	The uptake of early learning and childcare remains high and the level of fuel poverty remains low, which is positive. However, the data-delay means that the fuel poverty figure is pre-pandemic so it could be expected this this might increase in future.
Uptake of funded early learning and childcare entitlement	%age of 3 & 4 year olds registered for funded early learning and childcare Dec 2020: Scottish Government Schools Statistics	93%	95%	

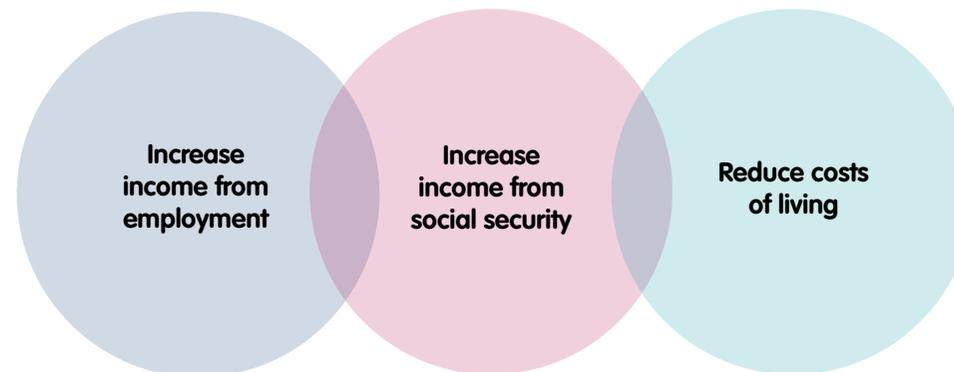
The format of our report

This report starts with a profile of East Renfrewshire highlighting key data which has been used to shape the plan. We have organised the core of our report into three chapters looking at each of the three key poverty drivers:

- Income from employment
- Income from social security
- Costs of living

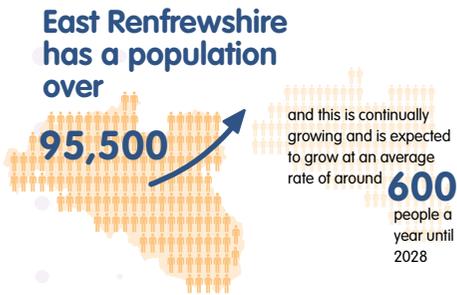
For each we have outlined our progress and achievements in 2019/20 including case studies where relevant to evidence the real impacts for families. We have also shared what we have learned from listening to families with lived experience of poverty although we are still building on this work.

We then present our plans for further action over the year ahead (2020-21).



PROFILE OF EAST RENFREWSHIRE

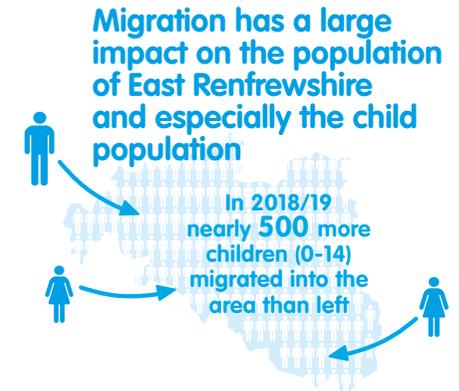
OVERALL



East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland with **19,525** individuals aged between 0 and 15 years



One in every five people living in East Renfrewshire is a child.

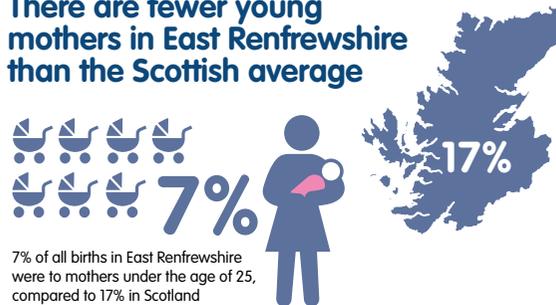


The proportion of children living in poverty in East Renfrewshire is the (joint) lowest in Scotland



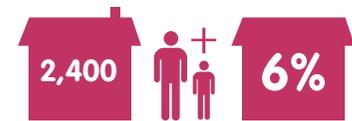
There are around 3,000 children living poverty in East Renfrewshire, which amounts to 16% of our children

There are fewer young mothers in East Renfrewshire than the Scottish average



7% of all births in East Renfrewshire were to mothers under the age of 25, compared to 17% in Scotland

The number of lone parent households is predicted to increase in the coming years



There are around 2,400 lone parent households in East Ren currently

It is projected that 6% of households will be lone parents by 2026.

EMPLOYMENT

Those **LIVING** in East Renfrewshire receive the **HIGHEST** average weekly pay in Scotland ▲

The average weekly full time pay is



£815

and the average weekly part time pay £257

However, those **WORKING** in East Renfrewshire receive the **LOWEST** average weekly pay in Scotland ▼

The average weekly full time pay is



£487

and the average weekly part time pay is £165



14.3% of households in East Renfrewshire are 'workless' meaning there is no individual over the age of 16 in the household who is employed

Over a third of children in East Renfrewshire come from 'mixed households'

This means a household contains at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment and at least one other is either unemployed or inactive



East Renfrewshire remains a generally economically active local authority. However, over the past year we have seen a rise in unemployment, like the rest of the country

77%
of residents of working age are economically active



1,600

There are 1,600 working age people who are unemployed which is an increase of approximately 400 people compared to the previous year

SOCIAL SECURITY/BENEFITS



East Renfrewshire residents are less likely than the Scottish average to receive income from social security and benefits



Nearly 2070 individuals are claiming for out-of-work benefits

This is approximately 4% which is lower than the Scottish average of 6% | 410 of these claimants were between the ages of 16 and 24

7% of all primary pupils from P4 to P7 are registered for free school meals

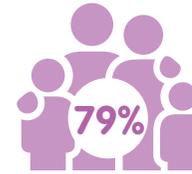


which is lower than the Scottish average of 21%

7% of secondary pupils are registered for free school meals



which is, again, lower than the Scottish average of 17%



There are 15,425 children in families that are registered for child benefit, which equates to 79% of all children in East Renfrewshire

This is among the lowest proportion when compared to other Scottish local authorities



430 young people receive an Education Maintenance Allowance



East Renfrewshire has a £100 school uniform grant

COSTS OF LIVING



The costs of living in East Renfrewshire are higher than average, particularly in relation to housing costs

The average weekly local authority rent is

£76.86



The average property price in East Renfrewshire in 2021 has increased by 11.5% since early 2020 to £250,935



Nearly three quarters of East Renfrewshire's houses are classified as being Council Tax band D or above, compared to the Scottish average of 41%

On average art, drama and sports activities, cost

£45.50

for a three month class



Chapter 1: Income from employment

**Increase
income from
employment**

**Increase
income from
social security**

**Reduce costs
of living**

Workstream

The East Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership (LEP) is leading on this workstream and includes representatives from East Renfrewshire Council's Work EastRen team, Skills Development Scotland, Education including Adult Learning, Scottish Enterprise, Mental Health services, Department for Work and Pensions, Money Advice and Rights Team and East Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce.

Lived experience feedback

Employment related issues were a key topic during our engagement and frontline staff identified several issues that have been preventing parents either from gaining employment, or securing better quality jobs that prevent them from experiencing in-work poverty.

Impact on benefit entitlement. One of the most common barriers for parents who want to progress or change their careers is the effect that this could have on their income from social security and different entitlements such as free school meals. Frontline staff noted that many of their clients are apprehensive to retrain and better their careers as they are worried they will be financially worse off overall.

Cost and availability of childcare. Frontline staff noted that the biggest restraint parents have when trying to increase their income from employment is the availability of affordable childcare. Many parents struggle to work before their child is entitled to a funded early years and childcare place (3 years or eligible 2 year olds) due to the cost or the opening hours of facilities. Parents have also expressed worry about the cost of travelling not only to and from work, but also to childcare too. This is a make-or-break factor for parents deciding to apply for a job or take on more hours at work to increase their income.

Access to appropriate information. Many parents had a lack of information or had misinformation about changing employment. Many did not know how to go about retraining to improve their employment prospects and others worried about the costs associated with this. Frontline staff said that while many of the clients they support are self-sufficient and have clear goals, they require assistance in understanding the benefits and process of looking to improve their employment income. Also, lack of confidence using technology makes it harder for people to apply for jobs/do training/apply for further education, meaning the poverty cycle continues.

The Impact of Coronavirus. Coronavirus has had a huge impact on employment income for parents, including some losing their jobs and many being placed on furlough for long periods of time. Frontline staff said that this has led to a significant increase in the number of families claiming in-employment benefits and looking for additional funding assistance. Lockdown restrictions have meant that parents who have been seeking to change careers into more sustainable and financially viable roles have not been able to gain the experience that they need to be considered for these jobs. For example, voluntary work experience placements have not been able to go ahead, leading parents to remain in low-income jobs or unemployed. Frontline staff the Money Advice and Rights Team noted that the lack of engagement with families due to lockdown has been challenging. Staff have not been able to physically go out into communities and speak to parents therefore services are not reaching everyone who could benefit from their help. This lack of engagement has reduced the opportunity for early intervention for those facing financial concerns and increased the instance of families requiring support when their issues become severe or critical.

Action taken

During 2020/2021 the Community Planning Partners across East Renfrewshire have taken action to increase income from employment. This includes;

East Renfrewshire Council utilising its position as employer and procurer

East Renfrewshire Council achieved Real Living Wage Accreditation in November 2020. We also reviewed our procurement process and have now added a Fair Work & Living Wage question into our evaluations to ensure that contract bidders are aware of this issue and consider these areas. We have encouraged companies to provide opportunities to low-income families by having increased Community Benefits points available for those helping people from priority backgrounds. We have included Community Benefit clauses which are now evaluated in all appropriate tender exercises and procedure reviews to now include a Community Wish List. At a Health Board level, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde procurement team are following the 'Once for All Scotland' procurement approach which includes a new national procurement portal for community benefits. There has been engagement with Public Health Scotland and NHSGGC Procurement to explore how national developments can support a local aim to enable more appropriate community benefits.

Encouraging more local businesses to become Real Living Wage accredited

East Renfrewshire Council, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have all become accredited Real Living Wage employers during 2020-2021. ERC's Economic Development team, Business Gateway East Renfrewshire and local employability partners continued to work collaboratively to encourage employers to adopt Fair Work practices and become Real Living Wage accredited by launching a 'Get Ready for Living Wage Week' in October 2020. We have seen an increase in the number of RLW accredited employers locally in the past year; from 11 to 16.



**16 RWL
accredited
employers**



Case Study: Real Living Wage Employer

Elmwood Nursery is a privately owned nursery in Newton Mearns and was established in 2002 by new mother Denise Bunis. Since then, Elmwood has expanded over two floors, gained an additional building and now cares for 87 children from a wide variety of backgrounds. In 2018, Denise sold her business to an Icelandic nursery group with a focus on democracy, creativity and gender equality and began the journey to become a Living Wage Employer.

Elmwood Nursery became a Real Living Wage employer in September 2020 because they wanted to increase payment to all staff. By paying all 30 of their staff the RLW, Elmwood can increase staff retention and motivation in work. Therefore the staff get to know the children more in-depth and can care for them on a more personalised level. This will help to improve the mental stimulation and wellbeing of the children. Staff no longer have to worry about their wages and can instead focus on caring for the children in their care. By paying the RLW, Elmwood Nursery is improving parents' income from employment and preventing in-work poverty for multiple families in East Renfrewshire. They said they found the application process "simple and straightforward" and said they "recognise the benefit it has had for all staff".

Our Business Development grant application requires organisations to demonstrate how they have adopted Fair Work Practices. Work EastRen have also adopted a Fair Work strategy by not advertising or putting clients forward for any zero-hour contracts, as well as working closely with clients to access RLW jobs.

The Department for Work and Pensions have launched their Kickstart programme, which was for the purpose of RLW accreditation, meaning that all directly employed staff aged 18+ should be paid at least the Real Living Wage, regardless if part of their wage is funded through employability schemes.

NHSGGC procurement team conducted an extensive exercise and found 11 contractors are not paying the real living wage (spend of £1.196m) and 12 companies assumed not paying the real living wage (spend of £622k). A process is being put in place to encourage payment of real living wage.

Increased support for parents to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression

Work EastRen and MART teams launched the new Scottish Government Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) programme, providing support for parents who face barriers to progressing their careers. This support includes help to gain a qualification; improving skills or work experience; money advice and motivational support. Eligible parents are also supported to access free early learning and childcare places.

A full time PESF Employability Officer has been recruited and is focusing on promoting and providing this programme to parents in priority groups. In addition a part time support officer has been employed in MART to assist parents with financial wellbeing, debt and Social Security. In partnership with DWP, Skills Development Scotland and the Third Sector interface, the council has developed a model which will address all barriers to career progression including lack of skills, experience, health support, money advice and access to childcare. Between September 2020 and March 2021, there were 19 registrations on the PESF programme. Of these:

- 3 parents have gained qualifications
- 3 have had successful employment outcomes
- 7 have had an increase in income, either from employment or benefit check



Case Study: Parental Employability Support

The Problem

Sophie approached the Parental Employability Support advisor looking to change careers and improve her income from employment. She is a single parent with a daughter who has additional support needs. She had always worked in retail or hospitality, but the hours weren't suitable for the needs of her daughter and she had always dreamed of working in care. However, she had been charged with minor assault for a mistake she made 10 years ago, when she was only 16. Sophie always thought this would prevent her from achieving her goal to become a care worker.

The Solution

The team spoke with Sophie and got a better understanding of her experience and overall goals for employment. They supported and paid for her to get a PVG check, a requirement for care workers. Although her assault charge was flagged up on the application, it stated that this would not prevent her from working with vulnerable people and she would be able to achieve her dream. The PES advisor helped to source voluntary work experience in a care home for Sophie, which led to her being offered a full-time, paid position.

The Impact

With the advisor and programmes support, Sophie now has the steady and fulfilling career she always wanted. She gets to spend more time with her daughter and her improved income now means they can do more activities together as a family. The team has made her feel confident in seeking employment and she no longer has the anxiety of her past mistakes preventing her from bettering her career.

Adult Learning Services also supported 23 parents to gain SQA accredited qualifications working in partnership with Clyde College and West College Scotland, helping them towards their employability goals. Courses included; ESOL, IT, Early Years & Childcare and Wellbeing.

**23 parents
gained SQA
qualifications**





Case Studies: Adult Learning Services

One parent, recently made redundant, needed to learn new IT skills to be able to apply for promotion in a new job. He has now completed several online IT courses and was really pleased at how fast he progressed and became more confident.

Another parent, who first contacted our service to start to look at career/job opportunities, has recently started work part-time as well as taking the first steps into learning bookkeeping by doing a free introductory course with the Open University.

Improved availability, access to and uptake of good quality in-work support programmes

The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) regularly review what employability services are being delivered within East Renfrewshire to identify gaps, avoid duplication, meet resident needs and secure funding. One recent example is Scottish Youth Guarantee programme which was announced by the Scottish Government in September 2021. The focus of the Government is moving young people into good jobs at a time when they are most vulnerable in a tough labour market that has seen impacts to the sectors most likely to employ young people (such as tourism, hospitality, retail and leisure). The programme aims to ensure no young person is left behind; every young person aged between 16 and 24 will be guaranteed an opportunity at university or college, an apprenticeship programme, employment including work experience, or participating in a formal volunteering programme.

The LEP put out a call for project proposals to all employability partners in East Renfrewshire. As well as meeting the programme criteria, the Partnership were also keen to help identify any gaps in provision within the area. One of the projects funded was via IncludeMe2 who are now providing much needed employability support to those young people with additional support needs. The project provides a range of individual, small group approaches, to help develop the skills, confidence, awareness and understanding to reach a positive destination in the young person's employment journey.

We continue to deliver the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind programme. The programme covers a wide range of support to those residents aged 16+ years with a focus on employed and unemployed parents; parents with disabilities; pre-employment support for young parents; pre-employment support for parents accessing funded Early Learning and Childcare and support for 16–26-year-olds via the Scottish Youth Guarantee programme. Since September 2020 the Parental Employability Support Fund programme has worked with 22 parents: 3 have secured full-time employment; 1 has employment outcomes; 1 has had an increase in their hourly rate; 4 have gained work related qualifications; 2 have undertaken volunteering placements. Other clients are working towards things such as SVQ's, applying for teacher training and setting up own their own businesses.



**No young person
is left behind**

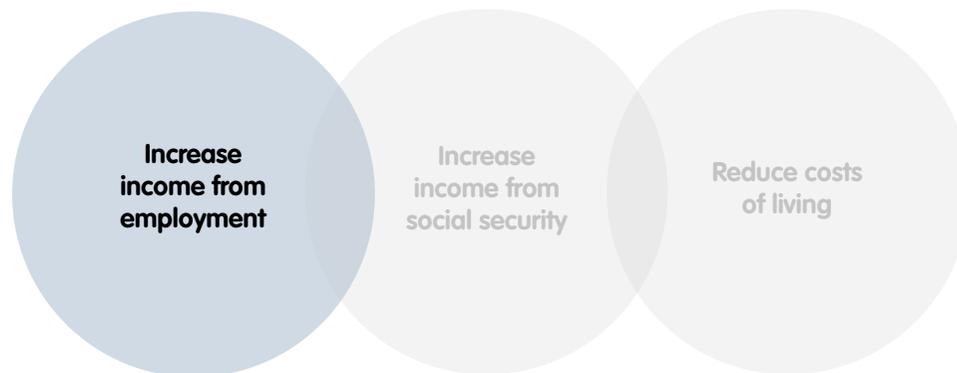
Most clients have also accessed Money Advice and Rights support and have gained financially with either change to their benefits, budgeting or receiving grants they didn't know they were eligible for. Partners have developed a new pathway for 16–24-year-olds via the Scottish Youth Guarantee programme in 2020-21, which will see specialist provision being delivered in the area for this age group including: additional support needs; care experienced young people; creation of 15 MAs; into work schemes.

NHSGGC has provided modern apprenticeship programmes and employability outreach programmes to schools and colleges, with a target group including young parents. Data relating to uptake and successes of these is not yet available but will be included in future reports. The NHS GGC Widening Access to Employment Strategy Academy implementation model changed due to the pandemic. The Academy go live date was delayed to October 2020, the programme was amended to delivery to online activity only and placement activity was withdrawn. The November 2020 programme ran similarly. In terms of child poverty, the number of parents accessing employability programmes going on to sustained employment will be measured now starting 2021.



**Clients have
gained
financially**

Future Actions 2021-2022



These actions are as accurate as possible at the time of writing. However, it is important to remember that actions will be subject to review as community planning partners further establish their recovery and renewal plans and once the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, jobs and income is more fully understood and priorities ahead are reshaped.



<p>Change required: Encouraging more local businesses to become real Living Wage accredited</p>	<p>What we will do: Establish the East Renfrewshire Living Wage Action Group to encourage and support new and existing employers, including NHS GGC, to work towards real Living Wage accreditation Lead: Local Employability Partnership Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Low income families</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number of accredited real Living Wage employers. - Increased number of local employers working towards real Living Wage accreditation
<p>Change required: Increased support for in-work parents to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression</p>	<p>What we will do: Implement the East Renfrewshire local model of the Parental Employability Support programme Lead: Work East Ren and delivered in partnership with Money Advice and Education Department Resources: £66,000 PES per annum plus £26,000 PES Boost. To support: 1 FTE Employability Officer and 0.5 FTE Money Advice Officer, dedicated vocational training budget Target Groups: Lone parents, person with a disability, 3+ children, ethnic minorities, youngest child <1, parents aged <25</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of participants achieving qualification, increasing skills - Number of participants achieving an increase in income - Number of employed participants gaining new employment or self-employment - Number of participants sustaining employment or self-employment 13/26/52 weeks after new employment start date
<p>Change required: Improved availability, access to and uptake of good quality in-work support programmes being delivered in East Renfrewshire</p>	<p>What we will do: Promotion of in-work support programmes to low income families particular those 'hardest to reach', through a range of engagement methods Lead: Local Employability Partnership Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Women, lone parents, person with a disability, 3+ children, ethnic minorities, youngest child <1, parents aged <25</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased engagement with hardest to reach

As part of Fairer East Ren (our Local Improvement Outcome Plan), we have a specific plan to ensure residents have the right skills, learning opportunities and confidence to secure and sustain work.

Chapter 2: Income from Social Security

Workstream

The East Renfrewshire Social Security working group is leading on this workstream. This is a partnership group with representatives from the council Revenues and Benefits department, the Money Advice and Rights Team, Department for Work and Pensions/Job Centre Plus, adult learning, Social Security Scotland Agency, the council's housing team, Citizens Advise Bureau and a local Housing Association.

Lived experience

Our engagement with frontline staff was crucial in identifying the challenges and changes families have faced in the last year in terms of social security support.

Change in demographic. A change in the profile of parents starting to claim social security benefits was one of the most recurring issues staff talked about. Due to lockdown and businesses being forced to close (either temporarily or permanently) staff all recognised that parents who started claiming benefits in the last year were often more self-sufficient and required less assistance than those who typically began to claim in years before.

Parents who were business owners looking for assistance were a particular demographic group that required support in accessing the correct grants and benefits. Although these parents often had savings, for many these ran out quickly and as the pandemic continued, they started to rely on income from social security more. Staff therefore recognised that this lockdown was a catalyst for poverty for those who were 'just getting by' before.

Anxiety of parents was also a big issue, in terms of worrying about what is going to happen when the extra government assistance, which is in place due COVID-19, is no longer available. Staff were also anxious about this and were worried about their capacity or ability to be able to deal with this likely increase in demand of support. The staff we engaged with all believed that income from social security would not be a key issue until later on in 2021, when government assistance decreases and job losses are likely to increase.

Lived experience

During 2020/2021 the Community Planning Partners across East Renfrewshire have taken action to increase income from social security, including;

All parents involved in the Parental Employability Support Fund are supported to calculate and understand any impacts on benefit entitlement

Since September 2020, 17 parents on the Parental Employability Support programme were assisted by the Money Advice and Rights Team PESF support officer. All of these clients gained crucial advice which has helped them all maximise their income both from employment and also Social Security. MART's partnership work with organisations also resulted in an additional £4,000 of Social Security payments being gained for families through their establishment of an extensive referral network.



Case Study: Parental Employability Support- Money Advice

The Problem

As a full time employed single mother Sally has always been able to juggle responsibilities and keep on top of things. In the midst of the pandemic and during young Kai's terrible two's, Sally decided it was time to go part-time to make balancing everything a bit easier. However, she began to worry about how that would affect her benefits, also Sally's boss threatened that she might need to go full time again soon.

The Solution

Sally joined the PES program aiming to keep her up-to-speed about her employment options and financial situation. Money advisor Steven helped Sally complete a full benefit calculation to ensure she was on the correct benefits and he explained how various career decisions would affect these benefits ranging from not working, right up to full time. Steven and Sally spoke almost every week for 6 weeks making sure Sally fully understood her options and dealing with any bumps in the road including one month where Sally's benefits were less than normal.

In addition to reassuring Sally and making sure she had the information required to make lasting change, Steven and the team provided additional support. Due to the difficulties Sally faced through COVID-19 related issues they made sure she had the opportunity to really bounce back. One way they managed to do this was to engage with the government and manage an application to an energy bill relief fund. Sally was awarded £121 off her energy bills, enough to ensure there was one less thing to worry about while Sally takes her next steps forward with Kai.

The Impact

Sally is now working with the employability side of the project to move into a new career with all the knowledge, understanding and support she might need during the transition. Sally said that the support had meant that she is now better able to focus at work now that she now had a better understanding of options available. Sally also felt that she and Kai had a more positive work/life balance, reduced stress and most importantly, able to spend more quality time together.

Feedback

Sally said, "Brilliant service! Just a quick message to say I noticed the gas/electric payment went through to my [energy companies] account fine. Thank you SO much for applying for that for me, it has helped very much".



17 parents gained crucial advice which has helped them maximise their income

Improved parental access to benefits and income maximisation information and advice

Benefits and income maximisation information and advice has been well-publicised through a variety of partner websites and social media posts throughout the year. In addition, the details of the Money Advice Team have been shared via schools to all parents on several separate occasions throughout past year and hard copy leaflets were added to food parcels delivered as part of the Free School Meal provision and from the Humanitarian Food Hub to support low-income households. In response to the increased demand for benefits advice from first-time claimants, the Money Advice and Rights Team produced a 'Benefits Quick Guide' and shared this to parents via schools.

During 2020-21, the Money Advice and Rights Team saw an increase in all the priority groups seeking advice from the service, except from larger families. There was a 35% increase in families with a child under 1 in the household a 17% increase in lone parent families and a 400% increase in parents/guardians 25 and under seeking advice from the service.

Overall, MART's services saw a 6% increase in enquiries. 1,318 of enquiries were from families with children and much of the year's provision was via food vouchers, advice and information and access to services. This means these families have gained crucial help in a turbulent time, with MART playing a key role not only in immediate relief, but also long-term recovery by helping these families maximise their income from social security.

COVID-19 significantly impacted on the work of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Corporate and Acute services. As the pandemic hit, staff worked quickly with contracted money advice services to ensure face to face services changed to phone and online appointments systems with a communications plan accompanying this. The provision of emergency food packages for those in need being discharged from hospital was extended, which included maternity settings (data available June 2021). Corporate and Acute leads collated on issues requiring potential regional and national escalation (e.g. evictions for pregnant women and families with a small child / new baby). A template on issues emerging across NHSGGC (e.g. emergency food provision) was shared on the national child poverty knowledge hub.

Whilst this data is not available at an East Renfrewshire level, across the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area, during 2020-2021 it is estimated 19,300 NHSGGC patients were referred to money advice services with a financial gain of £56million. 62% were parents, 38% of all referrals are BAME patients community (portion asylum seekers and refugees), 62% with a disability and 83% from SIMD one and two. Of this overall financial gain;

- £6.4 million was gained for clients in community NHS children and families services (3,954 referrals)
- £1.6 million was gained for children's hospital clients (329 referrals)
- £6.7 million was gained for long term conditions settings (3,151 referrals, a large proportion who are parents)
- £2.3 million from the primary care embedded money advice service (496 referrals (55% - female; 83% White Scottish; 12% only working full time; total 25% parents with 12% being lone parents)
- £275,968 was gained for the Special Needs In Pregnancy Service (76 referrals)
- £182,322 was gained for the neonatal support fund (932 applications)
- 305 emergency food packages were given out on discharge from hospital.

Improved poverty awareness and use of referral processes within frontline staff

During the pandemic the focus was on poverty awareness for frontline staff in Early Years Services, community nurses, midwives and health visitors. The Money Advice and Rights Team provided 'tool box talks' to groups, established referral networks and provided guides and materials to support anti-poverty work.

Bespoke training has been developed and delivered to staff in Housing Services and Customer First. Further specialist training courses have been delivered to key NHS teams and wider partners. These courses include:

- General Poverty Awareness
- Benefits for Younger People
- Benefits for Working Age

We cannot provide details of impact in terms of financial gain at this stage but hope to see this in future reports.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde developed a training programme for midwives in antenatal clinics and maternity centres. This was intended to be delivered face-to-face but once the pandemic hit, East Renfrewshire piloted this as virtual training. Training was provided to the midwives and Family Nurse Partnership staff. At this time it is too early to measure what impact this has had.

An NHSGGC review of Best Start grant uptake showed underutilisation. Quality improvement work is planned for 2021/2022 to ensure financial inclusion/routine enquiry within Maternity and Health Visiting pathways.

Information sources for early year's staff have been developed including a staff Facebook page, implemented in December 2020. New national materials for the early years' workforce were distributed, with corporate communication teams joining Social Security Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions and Scottish Government poverty / child poverty communications work. All information was shared on the staff Facebook page alongside video testimonials from a range of corporate staff, service managers and frontline staff.

Increased financial wellbeing support capacity to meet anticipated increased resident demand following the COVID-19 pandemic

The Money Advice and Rights Team faced an increase in social security enquiries relating to COVID-19 and recruited temporary additional staff to manage this. This resulted in the team handling 4,089 enquiries and generating more than £5m of income for local residents.



The Team handled 4,089 enquiries and generated more than 5K of income for local residents



Case Study: Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund

The Problem

Evie is a self-employed hairdresser who has been unable to work throughout the pandemic, resulting in a loss of income for her. She is also heavily pregnant and lives at home with her partner full time. Evie had contacted Citizen's Advice looking for assistance with a benefit check to find out if there was any entitlement to make a claim for anything. A benefit check was completed but unfortunately due to her partner's earnings from work they had no benefit entitlement.

The Solution

Evie was assisted with looking at any business grants that she may have had any entitlement to and was advised of the "Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund". CAB found that she would be entitled to make a claim for this so Evie applied and received a £4,000 payment. Evie was also advised that she would be able to make a claim for maternity allowance once she was further along into her pregnancy and that CAB would be able to assist with this application. Further to this the client was advised that once she had her baby we would complete a further benefit check as she may have further benefit entitlement at this point.

The Impact

Evie was very grateful for the support received and would be in contact in the future once further along in her pregnancy for further support. She said she felt comfortable seeking advice from CAB and appreciated their expertise and friendly service. She can now relax and enjoy her pregnancy without the financial worry and knows she has people she can turn to.

Provision of national social security supports

The UK and Scottish Governments provided a number of hardship grants to families, including:

- An additional £20 per week to Universal Credit client. In East Renfrewshire, this related to around 1,860 residents
 - Hardship payments for children eligible for Free School Meals. These payments were issued at Christmas 2020 and Spring 2021 and were £100 per child on each occasion. These payments were made for approximately 2,000 children each time
 - 94 people were paid from the Scottish Government's Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund totalling £188,000
- In addition, we reviewed our Scottish Welfare Funding processing and granted applications deemed 'medium priority' (previously only high priority applications were processed).

Provision of new, local financial security supports

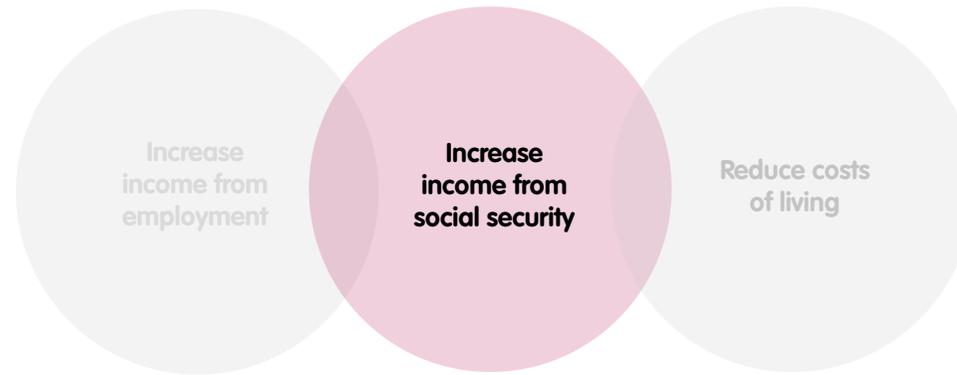
As part of the local humanitarian response to the pandemic, there were a number of short-term social security supports established. These included;

- 'Topping-up' the national Family Hardship Christmas payment by £25 for all eligible pupils in receipt of a Free School Meal, and also extending this to an additional 400 pupils in receipt of Clothing Grants but not FSMs
- Provision of shopping vouchers for households in financial need. During 2020/2021 we provided over £4,000 of vouchers to 28 families
- A discretionary fund was established to provide one-off payments of up to £250 to residents who had financial support needs as a result of COVID-19 but were not eligible for alternative funds such as the Scottish Welfare Fund. Between December 2020 and March 2021, approximately £22,000 was paid to around 100 families
- During winter 2020/2021 East Renfrewshire was a recipient of the Scottish Government's Winter Plan for Social Protection Funding for Vulnerable Children. The funding allocated to East Renfrewshire - £209,718 - was specifically targeted at the most vulnerable families known to HSCP Children and Families social work teams. Many of the children and young people were either looked after, care experienced, or involved in child protection processes. Social Workers were provided with funding to support over 100 of the most vulnerable families they work with. They had an average of £300 per family to spend at their discretion but in partnership with the families and dependent on the needs of the household. These spends included provision of items such as replacement white goods, household and garden furniture, bike, trikes and play items. Also sports items and materials, such as footballs, goalposts, punching bags and boxing gloves, to help reduce stress and isolation. Overall the funding also prevented family breakdown and children and young people being received into care
- Additional funding to established community organisations facing increased demand such as the Back to School Bank and Dunterlie and Thornliebank Food Shares.



**We provided
over £4,000
of shopping
vouchers to
28 families**

Future Actions 2021-2022



These actions are as accurate as possible at the time of writing. However, it is important to remember that actions will be subject to review as community planning partners further establish their recovery and renewal plans and once the impact of COVID-19 is more fully understood and priorities ahead are reshaped. Maximising income from benefits and entitlement will be key to mitigate impacts of anticipated rises in unemployment and under employment.

<p>Change required: All parents involved in the PACE employability programme are offered financial inclusion support</p>	<p>What we will do: Employ a 1 year temporary Income Maximisation Officer to support all PACE clients Lead: Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: c.£30,000 for 1 Grade 7 post Target Groups: recently redundant, people on furlough and those facing redundancy</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of clients accessing services - Number of clients having a positive outcome - Verified financial gain
<p>Change required: Improved knowledge of financial wellbeing within school leavers</p>	<p>What we will do: Deliver the UK Government's financial inclusion plan Lead: Education Department / Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: School pupils</p> <p>What we will do: Provide bespoke training on employability, positive options and financial well-being to school pupils Lead: Money Advice and Rights Team / Education Department / Street League Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Older school pupils</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of participants - Feedback from events <p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of training attendees - Feedback from training - Number of pupils with a positive destination following training
<p>Change required: Improved parental access to benefits and income maximisation information and advice, including new referral pathways</p>	<p>What we will do: Provide debt and benefit advice in local communities through a Community Hub Lead: ERC Money Advice, Social Security Scotland, Citizen's Advice and Neilston Development Trust. Resources: Staff from each agency Target Groups: Low income families living in and around Neilston</p> <p>What we will do: Develop a GP referral pathway to money advice services Lead: ERC Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: All priority groups</p> <p>What we will do: Produce digital resources aimed at residents more able to self-serve. 'How to guides' will be added to the Internet page along with links and descriptions to other services Lead: MART, CAB and Barrhead Housing Association Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: All priority groups, particularly new social security claimants</p> <p>What we will do: Financial Assessments/Income maximisation for all foster and adoption families in East Renfrewshire Council Lead: Health and Social Care Partnership / Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Care experienced families</p> <p>What we will do: Provide non English speakers with access to volunteer interpretation services for assistance in claiming Social Security Lead: Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire / Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: non-English-speaking residents, residents with English as a second language</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of families seeking assistance - Number of clients having a positive outcome - Verified financial gain <p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of GP referrals - No. of clients having a positive outcome - Verified financial gain <p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page 'hits' - Social media post 'reach' <p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of clients accessing the service - Verified financial gains <p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of clients accessing the service - Client feedback - Verified financial gain

Chapter 3: Costs of Living

Workstream

The Costs of Living group was newly formed to support this identified area of need as there was no existing 'natural home' for it. The group membership includes several East Renfrewshire Council departments including Economic Development, Housing Services, Education Department and Early Years Services. The group also includes members from partner organisations including Citizens' Advice Bureau, Home Energy Scotland and Citrus Energy.

Lived experience feedback

The ever-increasing cost of living due to the COVID-19 pandemic was at the forefront of our engagement with frontline workers. They described the difficulties faced by parents as a result of families having to spend more time in the house due to; home-schooling, homeworking and the stay-at-home instructions ordered by the government.

The cost of food was the main concern surrounding the increased cost of living due to the coronavirus pandemic. As families were spending more time in the house, they found that they were eating a lot more and grocery bills became a financial stress for parents. Frontline staff said that they dealt with a higher volume of parents seeking support to cover food costs. Many people engaged in the Equalities Survey identified food poverty as a symptom and result of the cost of living within East Renfrewshire. They all spoke about the reliance families in poverty may have on food banks or food larders.

Fuel costs for parents were also a vital issue raised. The frontline staff we engaged with noted that fuel poverty was one of the most common issues they had to find solutions for and felt that parents were extra anxious and strained over the winter lockdown and home-schooling during this time.

The cost of summer is another topic which is currently causing a lot of parents' stress and financial anxiety, according to our lived experience engagement. Children being off school and the activities that come with this is a strain on many families every year, but last year as most facilities were still closed or restricted this took the burden off parents who struggle with this financial ask. However, this year, staff have found that parents are feeling additional pressure to be able to give their children an active and fun summer, due to facilities being closed for so long.

The cost for community activities, in particular for children in poverty, was highly discussed in the Equalities Survey. Respondents spoke of parents in poverty who struggle to pay for cultural activities such as football or dancing due to the costs in East Renfrewshire, which affects children's development and experiences. This pressure is further heightened by many households' income reducing since March last year and the increasing cost of living they're experiencing (as previously discussed).

Digital Poverty. Due to home-schooling, the highest cost of the school day in the last year has been ensuring children have suitable devices and broadband so that they can continue to participate in their education to the best of their abilities. Several respondents in the Equalities Survey recognised the unfair disadvantage poverty places young people at within education. In particular, digital inclusion was a key intersecting theme, with multiple respondents noting that families in poverty lack the access to devices/broadband, meaning that children's online education can suffer as a consequence.

Action taken

During 2020/2021 the Community Planning Partners across East Renfrewshire have taken action to reduce the costs of living, including;

Increasing the availability of affordable housing to vulnerable families

East Renfrewshire Council's Housing Department is undertaking an ambitious new build programme in 2018-2024, which aims to build 362 new units overall in Barrhead, Newton Mearns, Maidenhill and Malletsheugh. To date, 45 units have been completed and 23 of these are aimed specifically at families with a further 206 family homes to be developed. The Housing Department will continue to target the affordable housing to particular vulnerable individuals or groups.

Increasing the support and advice surrounding food poverty

Throughout the pandemic East Renfrewshire Community Planning and third sector partners have worked extensively on the provision of free and low-cost food, including, but not limited to:

- Establishing a Food Hub to deliver weekly food parcels to those in financial need, distributing around 4,000 food parcels over a six-month period involving around 50 staff and volunteers
- Delivering approximately 1,300 weekly free school meal food parcels to all entitled pupils throughout lockdown and school holidays
- Providing supermarket vouchers to households in need through MART and Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Delivering emergency food parcels to homes via ERC Community Wardens
- Providing a volunteer run shopping service through the Community Hub
- Delivering hot meals through a number of third sector organisations
- Supporting 2 Food Shares to re-open when restrictions allowed
- Supporting the establishment of a Food Larder Network with 3 active larders at this time
- Creating a Food Dignity Network including connections with community growing spaces & gardens for community wealth building.

These provisions supported families during times of crisis and are now working to develop a sustainable, community-led approach to tackling food poverty.



**We delivered 1,300
free school meal
parcels per week**



"Thank you to everyone so much for all the time and effort in sourcing, packing and delivering the food packs for our family, it's been a real lifeline through such a difficult time for our family during the Covid-19 pandemic."

"Helped us millions receiving these packs as more time in house equals hungrier kids!"

Feedback from parents who receive home deliveries of free school meals during lockdown

"Thank you so much for the food packs. It has really been a fantastic help to us knowing that there is a lunch/dinner for my child to eat."

"These packs are amazing helping so many people, the staff who make and deliver these are incredible!"



Reducing the impact of fuel poverty for vulnerable families by providing support and advice

Fuel poverty is something which has become an ever-increasing issue as a result of COVID-19, as families are spending more time in the house due to the closure of schools or have had their income reduced as a result of furlough/ redundancies.

At a Health Board level, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has seen a major increase in staff using our fuel poverty and staff money worries programme (320% increase since last year, 781 staff used this service so far in 2020/21).

Barrhead Housing Association worked in partnership with Citizen's Advice Bureau to provide emergency fuel payments to tenants in need. Between May 2020 and March 2021, almost £20,000 was distributed to 257 East Renfrewshire residents who were struggling with fuel debt or costs.

Many residents were supported by the national supports provided by Home Energy Scotland. However, we identified there would be a gap in national provision between April 2021 and August 2021, so in March East Renfrewshire Council Humanitarian Group worked in partnership with Citizen's Advice Bureau to establish a local provision of emergency payments. The impact of this initiative will be included in next year's report.

In addition, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has provided energy clinics offering online or telephone appointments to staff to access fuel support advice. This had a 320% increase in usage compared to last year, with 1060 staff using the service during 2020-2021.

Reducing the cost of the school day

School Equalities Coordinators participated in a training event on child poverty in March 2021. The event focused on sharing practice, building greater understanding of strategies to reduce costs and re-evaluating the local context following the pandemic. A follow-up session in May 2021 will develop approaches to auditing the cost of the school day and using Pupil Equity Funding to reduce costs.

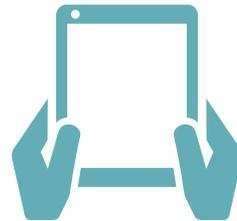
Many partners are making increased referrals to the East Renfrewshire Back to School Bank. The Back to School Bank provides children, in situations of poverty and hardship, with a brand-new school uniform, gym kit, school bag, stationery. The children remain anonymous and the school bank operates on a referral system with local support agencies, schools and third sector organisations. The Back to School Bank has seen an increase in demand over the past year and in recognition of this, East Renfrewshire Humanitarian Group have allocated funds from the Scottish Government's Supporting People Funding. This funding provided 50 uniforms including the additional items required for increased outdoor learning and changes of clothes due to COVID-19.

Reducing the cost of digital access

We have issued over 1,500 devices to families in financial need and these have been supported with connectivity where required. Through the Scottish Government Connecting Scotland programme we have issued devices to around 400 families through community links and a further 600 to families through schools. In March 2021, the Education Department provided an additional 700 devices to pupils in recognition of the additional pressures on larger families during home learning, and these devices were allocated based on equity related factors.

Adult Learning Services have also trained a team of Digital Champions who support families to get online and gain confidence using the devices to support their children's learning, their own learning journey including completion of accredited courses, attending college courses and searching and applying for work. Many of the parents that we are supporting also require support to improve their own literacy and numeracy skills.

In addition, as part of their annual 'Digital Refresh' programme, the Education Department have invested heavily in Promethean interactive panel devices and laptop and desktop PCs, ensuring that our schools have access to a wide range of devices that are up to date and fit for purpose. Through a multi-agency approach and a focus on equity and excellence, schools have been able to quickly identify which pupils require digital support and provide this efficiently, so that young people are not digitally excluded and can continue to receive the highest possible standard of education.



**We have issued
over 1,500 devices
to families**



Case Study: Schools and Digital Poverty

Barrhead Cluster

All schools gathered information regarding level of need (devices/Mifi) through phone calls or online form with initial focus on families who required devices during last period of remote learning and vulnerable families. Schools have built upon the practice that evolved from March-June 2020 and staff confidence and capacity has increased. Digital leaders/ICT Coordinators in each school have delivered a programme of CLPL on aspects such as Google Meet, Loom, Screencastify and Google Classroom and produced associated support materials. ICT coordinators/Digital leaders in all schools are providing a high level of ongoing support for families

Woodfarm Cluster

Schools used a range information to identify pupils who had no access or limited access to digital devices, and families continue to be consulted periodically to ensure that all learners continue to have the necessary technology and other practical equipment to engage. Learning from the experiences of the first school closure, all schools continued with contingency planning and developed detailed remote learning policies during August to December 2020. This included consultation with parents, learners and staff.

St Luke's Cluster

There has been a strong focus on equity and excellence with all settings and schools identifying quickly pupils who required access to digital devices and Mifi to support their online learning. Systems were put in place to allow families to borrow devices such as Chromebooks and laptops to enable them to participate along with their peers. Where digital accessibility has remained a challenge, pupils have been invited into the hub to re-engage with their learning. The digital capacity and confidence of staff is good and improving at a significant pace.

Increasing the provision of affordable childcare

Pandemic restrictions meant that the Scottish Government removed the legislative requirement to deliver 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare from August 2020. However, East Renfrewshire Council were mindful that families would have been depending on the offer of 1140 hours from August 2020 both in terms of childcare needs and reducing family expenses. It was recognised that during this period of unexpected financial stress and concern for many families, it was crucially important to enable them to plan ahead with knowledge of how their early learning and childcare needs would be met and without additional financial concerns. As such the decision was made to implement 1140 hours from August 2020 as planned, but with reduced flexibility and without the provision of lunches.

In a recent consultation families reported that the new hours suited their work and family life, relieving financial pressures and reducing the amount of time grandparents were being asked to provide childcare. In addition to 3 and 4 year olds, all eligible two year olds were also offered 1140 hours of ELC from August 2020. 120 families have benefited from this provision, an increase of 63% on the previous year. As well as providing Early Learning and Childcare for eligible and vulnerable 2 year olds, where there was capacity to do so we were also able to support working families with the offer to purchase nursery places at a considerably reduced cost, compared to commercial provision. A further 122 children and families in this age group benefited from this service, including keyworkers who required the provision during the lockdown period in January 2021.

The cost of childcare in LA ELC settings continues to be the lowest in Scotland at £2.25 per hour.

Future Actions 2021-2022



These actions are as accurate as possible at the time of writing. However, it is important to remember that actions will be subject to review as community planning partners further establish their recovery and renewal plans and once the impact of Covid-19 is more fully understood and priorities ahead are reshaped.

<p>Change required: Reduced energy costs for vulnerable families</p>	<p>What we will do: Employ a fuel poverty officer to develop advice and guides to support those struggling to manage the costs of their household fuel Lead: East Renfrewshire Council Resources: £35,000 Target Groups: Workless households, low income households, lone parents</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of people receiving energy advice - Increase in the number of people with affordable household fuel costs
<p>Change required: Increased provision of affordable housing options to vulnerable groups</p>	<p>What we will do: Work with local Housing Associations to consider their allocation policy in line with the priority groups Lead: Housing Department and local Housing Associations Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Low income families</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the number of vulnerable families accessing affordable housing provision
<p>Change required: Reduced cost to families of school attendance and participation</p>	<p>What we will do: Develop a Social Justice Strategy with a focus on resources, equity, participation, diversity and rights. This will incorporate our approaches to Pupil Equity Funding, Cost of the School Day and Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap. Reporting will include a requirement to report on impact of interventions to reduce CoSD Lead: Education Department Resources: School PEF awards Target Groups: Families in receipt of Free School Meals, other groups of children and young people identified by schools as experiencing poverty-related inequality</p> <p>What we will do: Work with equalities coordinators on CoSD including discussion on the clothing grant, Dressing for Excellence Policy and increased national provision of Free School Meals to P4 and P5 pupils Lead: Education Department Resources: School PEF awards Target Groups: Families in receipt of Free School Meals, other groups of children and young people identified by schools as experiencing poverty-related inequality</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % school PEF Plans and Reports detailing planned interventions and positive impact on reducing the cost to families of attendance and participation in school - Outcomes of Cost of the School Day audits across the authority area will be evaluated and used to plan next steps <p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clothing grant allocation revised (and amended if required) - Renewed Dressing for Excellence Policy
<p>Change required: Reduced cost to families of Early Learning and Childcare</p>	<p>What we will do: Provide a hot meal for all eligible children attending an Early Learning and Childcare setting in East Renfrewshire, irrespective of their attendance pattern Lead: Education Department Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Children aged 2, 3, 4 and 5 attending Early Learning and Childcare settings as part of their funded entitlement</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the number of children and families accessing free food entitlement - Reduced food bill costs to families of children attending nursery
<p>Change required: Reduced cost to families of Early Learning and Childcare</p>	<p>What we will do: Work in partnership to look at how the cost of attending services during family can be reduced and how families can be supported to reduced costs of purchasing items for a new baby from the learning within this report. Lead: NHS GGC Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Children <1, other groups</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced costs to families during pregnancy

Child poverty mitigating actions

It should be noted that this report outlines the changes to tackle the three drivers of poverty and therefore reduce the level of child poverty in East Renfrewshire. In addition to this, we recognise the importance of additional actions to mitigate the impact of child poverty. The wider Children's Services planning landscape includes a range of such actions, including under the Children and Young People's Plan 2020-2023 which includes a priority to increase social and economic opportunities.

Protection of Vulnerable Children and Young People

Throughout the last very challenging year HSCP Children and Families social work teams have operated as near to normal as has been possible. During the lengthy periods of tighter restrictions and lockdowns they have ensured weekly contact with vulnerable families by phone, doorstep, and when assessed as necessary, by home visits too. They have supported families access early years provision and school hub placements, and also actively encouraged regular and daily attendance at these establishments. This has ensured a very high proportion of at risk children and young people have had contact with trusted agencies and professionals each week during the lockdown periods especially. As a result vulnerable pupils' attendance at school hubs has been among the highest in Scotland at over 50% on average per week, with on average over 70% of children/young people have experienced weekly contact with a children's professional.

The ongoing data sharing between health and education colleagues to ensure all vulnerable families have information to access practical, emotional and financial support has been undertaken to minimise incidents of crisis and family breakdown, and ultimately has kept children safe. This includes women/mothers experiencing domestic abuse and families affected by significant parental mental health concerns and/or addictions. Close working with partners in Police, Women's Aid, and Recovery Services has also reduced risks and prevented even more children being received into care settings.



Attendance at school hubs has been the highest in Scotland

Provision of Learning Hubs during school closure periods

Throughout school closure periods, we have provided School Hub places for vulnerable children, including those experiencing poverty. During the initial school closure period between March and August 2020, seven learning hubs were established for vulnerable children and children of key workers. From March to June 2020 the number of children and young people attending the learning hubs increased from just over 300 to nearly 700 with the number of vulnerable children attending increasing from 24 to 228.

When schools closed in December 2020 the Education Department took the decision to offer hub provision in each ELC setting and school. This decision was based on the previous self-evaluation and attendance data in June when numbers of vulnerable children attending hub provision significantly increased when the provision was in their own setting. The number of children attending hubs increased to on average 1511 children and young people attending with over 600 vulnerable children attending. These placements ensured that children had a structure and routine to their day, were able to access fresh, hot meals and had educational support.

“Despite the school being in lockdown the pupils themselves have asked to attend the HUB as they seek the stability of school and a safe place to work.” Teacher

Health, wellbeing and resilience supports

Over the past year, Health and Social Care staff have maintained regular contact with families experiencing poverty to support their health, wellbeing and resilience. This has included phone calls and home visits for vulnerable families, allocation of Educational Hub places for those in need and emotional and wellbeing support for both children and parents.

Adult Learning Services ran an English as a Second Language (ESOL) for Parents course which included delivering family play packs, supporting children with learning and working in partnership with Family First. We provided an online ESOL for Parents course on a weekly basis and set up an ESOL for Parents Hub to share information and offer support. Within this provision, 33 parents were supported to engage and improve their English language using online learning, WhatsApp groups and distance learning options. We created our own videos for the Syrian Refugee parents to offer ideas of games to make and play with children. We offered ways to keep children motivated and provided links to websites, You Tube videos, and the BBC school programmes.



Case Study: Digital support

Referred by Family First, one parent was isolated and struggling to support her 11yr old with homework. Initially, I supported over the phone with numeracy learning. However, after we had applied for a Chromebook, through the Connecting Scotland initiative, I set the device up and helped the mum to create her first ever email address. It was then possible to send attachments with worksheets and learning links. It has been a big learning curve for mum to learn from scratch how to use the Chromebook. However, she is now sending and responding to emails, opening attachments and has taken part in her first online learning experience for National Numeracy Day on Microsoft Teams.

We are planning a 'Summer of Play' for 2021 as a response to the impact of COVID-19 and how it has compounded issues of health, wellbeing and resilience. This will address inequities in access to activities and support. The Summer of Play programme aims to provide support for those children and young people who may otherwise struggle to access such experiences during the holidays.

In addition to providing activities and support for children and young people, it will address the impact COVID-19 has had on levels of poverty by reducing the cost of living through the provision of free childcare during the sessions and address holiday hunger through the provision of a healthy lunch.



Conclusion

East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership has continued to keep a strong focus on child poverty and our role in both prevention and mitigation actions. We have engaged with those with lived experience of poverty, both directly and through frontline staff feedback, to inform and drive the required step-change in our area. Further, we have sought to increase the level and quality of data we collect to best identify the priority target groups.

As previously acknowledged, planning of any future actions at this point is challenging under the current climate. We still cannot be sure what the longer-term impacts of the pandemic will be and how the profile of poverty in East Renfrewshire might change. As a CPP, we will continue to monitor data and listen to lived experience feedback and use this to shape our decision making, actions and resources.

Child Poverty will remain a priority in East Renfrewshire and we will continue to monitor and drive step-change to response the immediate, medium and longer term needs of families in our area.

ANNEX 1: FULL PROFILE OF EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Our analysis of the available datasets identifies the scale of child poverty in East Renfrewshire, compared to the benchmarking authorities, and Scotland as a whole. The data profile looks at differences in East Renfrewshire communities. We would expect this profile to change as we see more data becomes available in relation to the impact of COVID-19, particularly around the 'four harms'.

GENERAL

East Renfrewshire has a proportionately large population of children living in the area and a proportionately low level of child poverty in comparison to the national average.

East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland. And this is expected to grow

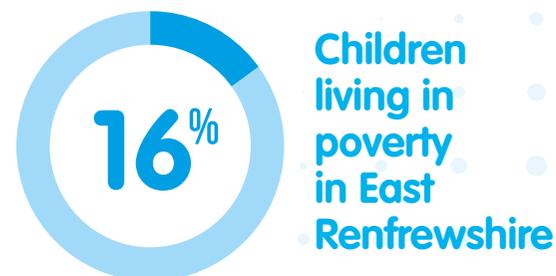
East Renfrewshire has a population over 95,500¹ and this is continually growing and is expected to grow at an average rate of around 600 people a year until 2028². Based upon National Records of Scotland (NRS) figures, this increase will be proportionally, the fourth largest of any local authority in Scotland.

There are 19,525 individuals aged between 0 and 15, this is the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland. One in every five people living in East Renfrewshire is a child.

Migration has a large impact on the population of East Renfrewshire and especially the child population. In 2018/19 nearly 500 more children (0-14) migrated into the area than left³, further adding to the number of children in the population. These levels of migration were the highest levels of any local authority.

The proportion of children living in poverty in East Renfrewshire is the (joint) lowest in Scotland

There are around 3,000 children living poverty within East Renfrewshire. This amounts to 16% of children living in East Renfrewshire⁴. This is lower than the Scottish average and comparable with East Renfrewshire's family group in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework⁵.



Child poverty rates are higher in some ward areas than others

In Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor Ward has the highest rate of child poverty; whilst Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood Ward has the lowest. Poverty rates are very much influenced by housing costs therefore the overall rates are reported as poverty level 'after housing costs'. Housing data is not available at this level therefore the measures at ward level are 'before housing costs' therefore they are not comparable with the overall measures and we should assume the true levels of poverty are higher than those reported. With that caveat in mind, the before housing cost child poverty levels by ward are as follows:

Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor	21%
Newton Mearns North and Neilston	12%
Giffnock and Thornliebank	9%
Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham	8%
Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood	5%

There are fewer young mothers in East Renfrewshire than the Scottish average

There were 59 children born in 2018 to mothers who were under the age of 25, this accounted for 7% of all births in East Renfrewshire. This was the lowest rate amongst the LGBF group authorities, along with being lower than the Scottish Average of 17%⁶.

The number of lone parent households is predicted to increase in the coming years

Within East Renfrewshire there are over 11,650 households with children. Around 2,400 of these are lone parent households, a priority group highlighted by the Child Poverty Act as being at greater risk of poverty. It is projected that lone parent households will make up a greater proportion of the households in East Renfrewshire by 2026 growing to 6%⁷, which is higher than the average Scottish increase.

1. ONS mid-year population estimates 2019
2. NRS 2018-based Population Projections by Council Area in Scotland
3. NRS Total Migration to or from Scotland
4. End Child Poverty 2019
5. These are local authorities that have similar characteristics, having similar levels of relative deprivation and affluence. These authorities are paired together for comparison over areas such as children, social work and housing
6. NRS Vital Events – Births
7. NRS Household projections for Scotland, 2018-2028

INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT

Generally, residents of East Renfrewshire are economically active, with low unemployment rates and low proportion of workless households.

East Renfrewshire remains a generally economically active local authority. However, over the past year we have seen a rise in unemployment, like the rest of the country.

There are around 57,000 individuals in East Renfrewshire of working age and 77% of these individuals are economically active. Black and Minority Ethnic groups are less likely to be economically active than East Renfrewshire as a whole, at 73%, however both are lower than the Scottish rate of 78%⁸.

There are 1,600 people who are unemployed who are of working age which is an increase of approximately 400 people compared to the previous year. However, this remains the lowest rate of the LGBF groups.

14.3% of households in East Renfrewshire are 'workless' meaning there is no individual over the age of 16 in the household who is employed. There is no reliable data available to identify how many of these households have children living in them, however the Scottish figure is 11.1%⁹ and it is assumed that the rate in East Renfrewshire is significantly lower than the Scottish average.

Over a third of children in East Renfrewshire come from mixed households (where a household contains at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment and at least one other is either unemployed or inactive), the second highest rate in Scotland¹⁰. Local knowledge suggests this could be due to a common family dynamic of one high-earner parent and one stay-at-home parent, however there is no data available to evidence this. This type of household could be particularly vulnerable to poverty should their circumstances change, for example a relationship breakdown or loss of employment which many may have experienced in the past year.

East Renfrewshire residents receive the highest average weekly full time pay in Scotland. However, residents are unlikely to be employed locally as those working in East Renfrewshire have the lowest weekly pay in the benchmarking group, with many workers earning less than the living wage.

The average weekly full time pay of residents in East Renfrewshire is £815, the highest in Scotland, and the average part time pay for residents is £257, which is also the highest in Scotland. However, we recognise that these residents are not employed locally as compared to the other LGBF groups, East Renfrewshire ranks as having the lowest weekly pay for both full time and part time workers. The average weekly pay for those working within the authority for full time workers is £487 and for part time workers is £165¹¹. Further, 31% of employees over 18 earn less than the living wage in East Renfrewshire, this is the lowest rate against the LGBF local authorities and is more than double the Scottish average of 15.2%¹².

There are 3,300 individuals in East Renfrewshire who have no formal qualifications, this translates to 5.7% of the working age population. This is lower than the Scottish average of 8.0% and is the ninth lowest rate in Scotland¹³.

INCOME FROM SOCIAL SECURITY AND BENEFITS IN KIND

East Renfrewshire residents are less likely than the Scottish average to receive income from social security and benefits.

There are 2,096 children in low income families within East Renfrewshire. Of these, 880 children are in families where there is a lone parent⁸. Nearly 2070 individuals are claiming for out-of-work benefits, this rate in East Renfrewshire (4%) is lower than the Scottish average of 6%⁹ and 410 of these claimants were between the ages of 16 and 24. Overall, there are 15,425 children in families that are registered for child benefit, which equates to 79% of all children in East Renfrewshire however this is among the lowest proportion when compared to other Scottish local authorities¹⁰.

Within East Renfrewshire 7.4% of all primary pupils from P4 to P7 were registered for free school meals, this increased from 6.9% in 2019 and is lower than the Scottish average of 21.3%. In secondary schools 7.4% of pupils are registered for free school meals, which is, again, lower than the Scottish average of 17%, however this figure has been rising every year since 2018 when 6.2% of pupils were receiving free school meals¹¹.

East Renfrewshire has a £100 school uniform grant which parents/carers can apply for. We have an automated system to issue this grant each subsequent year without having to reapply. In East Renfrewshire 430 young people receive an Education Maintenance Allowances, across Scotland over 31,000 receive an EMA¹².

⁸ ONS Annual Population Survey 2020

⁹ ONS Annual Population Survey 2020

¹⁰ ONS Annual Population Survey 2020

¹¹ ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2020

¹² Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Scotland, 2020

¹³ ONS Annual Population Survey 2020

¹⁴ DWP Households Below Average Income, 2019

¹⁵ ONS Claimant Count April 2021

¹⁶ HMRC Child Benefit Statistics, 2020

¹⁷ Scottish Government Pupils Census 2020

¹⁸ Scottish Government, Education Maintenance Allowances 2018



14.3%
of households
in East Ren
are workless

COSTS OF LIVING

The costs of living in East Renfrewshire are higher than average, particularly in relation to housing costs. Average house prices, average local authority rent and average council tax paid are all comparatively high.

The average property price in East Renfrewshire in 2021 has increased by 11.5% since early 2020 to rise to £250,935. This average is the second highest of Scotland's local authorities behind only the City of Edinburgh, with the average house price there being £280,940¹⁹. The average weekly local authority rent for a property in East Renfrewshire is £76.86, which is the 7th highest weekly rent for a Scottish local authority²⁰. This average is affected by the proportion of larger properties within the housing stock in the area. Anecdotally, we are aware of a high private rental market across the authority, with associated high weekly costs. However, there is no data available at a local level to evidence this as private rent statistics are broken down into Broad Rental Market Areas, with East Renfrewshire being part of Greater Glasgow.

Overall, East Renfrewshire had the 12th lowest rates for council tax across Scotland across all bandings, however nearly three quarters (73.7%) of East Renfrewshire's houses are classified as being band D or above, the highest proportion in Scotland, with the Scottish average being 41.2%. The average amount of council tax that is paid in East Renfrewshire is £1,573, the highest price paid in Scotland²¹.

There are a wide range of activities available to children in East Renfrewshire. On average art, drama and sports activities, run by East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure, cost £45.50 for a three month class and there are classes that are paid for on arrival, which cost between £3.15 and £5²². On average there is a 30% discount in these prices for concessions. There are also a wide range of more expensive privately run activities, and we believe this to be a thriving market, however there is no available data to evidence this.

The Active Schools programme delivered over 7,200 activity sessions in the 2018/19 academic year involving 8,200 individual children in East Renfrewshire²³. The number of sessions and the number of participants has increased compared to those observed in the previous three academic years.

¹⁹. UK House Price Index Scotland, January 2021

²⁰. Housing Revenue Account Statistics 2019-2020

²¹. Council Tax by Band 2019-20, Scottish Government

²². East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure

²³. Local Authority Active Schools data 2018-2019.



**East Ren houses
are band D or
above**

ANNEX 2: FUTURE ACTIONS 2021-2022

Population Outcome

The outcome we want is:

All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed

Intermediate Outcome

We will know we are making good steps along the way when:

Child poverty is reduced

Our contribution

So what we need to achieve is:

Improved income from employment for parents

Enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security

Reduced costs of living

Critical Activities

By:

Encouraging more local businesses to become Real Living Wage accredited

Increasing support for in-work parents to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression

Improving availability, access to and update of good quality in-work support programmes

Providing all PACE employability clients with financial inclusion support

Improving the knowledge of financial wellbeing with school leavers

Improved parental access to benefits and income maximisation information and advice, including new referral pathways

Reducing energy costs for vulnerable families

Increasing provision of affordable housing options to vulnerable groups

Reducing costs to families of school attendance and participation

Reducing costs to families of Early Learning and Childcare

Reducing costs to families of the pregnancy pathway

Critical indicators

- Children living in poverty
- Real living wage employers in East Renfrewshire
- Working age unemployment level
- Children and young people participation level
- Free school meals uptake at primary school
- Access to financial wellbeing advice in East Renfrewshire
- Fuel poverty
- Uptake of funded early learning and childcare entitlement

ANNEX 3: AGREED LONG TERM OBJECTIVES FOR NHSGGC AND ASSOCIATED LOCAL AUTHORITIES

NHSGGC and the 6 associated local authorities have agreed the following high level approaches:

1. Role as an employer

- Increase family friendly working approaches
- Attaining and maintaining Living Wage Employer Accreditation
- Parents as a priority group for interventions with staff who have money and debt worries
- Parents as a priority group in our Employment and Health approach
- Parents as a priority group for recruitment initiatives
- Child poverty a feature, as appropriate of Learning and Education programmes
- Child poverty outcomes in community benefit clauses

2. Role as a service provider (children and families settings)

- Ensure every opportunity is used to maximise income and reduce outgoings
- Develop innovative co-location models (e.g. with Social Security Services Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions)
- Ensure engagement with people with lived experience of child poverty to inform planning and review
- Analysis, where possible, of reach of interventions by Child Poverty Act priority groups (i.e. children of lone and/or young parents, children with disabilities and/or children of parents with a disability and black and minority ethnic children and also kinship carers)

3. Role as a partner

- Leadership on child poverty at Community Planning Partnership Boards
- Influencing, from local and regional perspectives, key national partners (e.g. SSS, DWP, Health Scotland)
- Influencing, from a child poverty perspective, housing policy
- Influencing, from a child poverty perspective, transport policy

In addition, NHSGGC will:

- Ensure child poverty is comprehensively addressed in the Children and Families Universal Pathway
- Develop child poverty, as appropriate, as a 'golden thread' in Acute health improvement programmes
- Provide public health data for use in Acute and CPP areas.

Contact for further information

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