

Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026

1. The Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Strategy and Partnership

Following the evaluation of “On the Up”, Dumfries & Galloway Council’s first Anti-Poverty Strategy 2015 to 2020, a new approach to tackling poverty and inequalities was developed and agreed by Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership. A new Poverty and Inequalities Partnership has been developed with an Independent Chair, and a new Strategy which will be delivered by the Partnership agreed.

The vision of the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Strategy 2021-2026 is:

‘A Dumfries and Galloway in which local action has driven poverty as low as possible and has mitigated as far as possible the impact of poverty when experienced’

Supporting this Vision are four Outcome Objectives and two Enabling Objectives:

Objective 1: Tackle severe and persistent poverty and destitution

Objective 2: Maximising income of people facing poverty

Objective 3: Reducing the financial pressures on people in poverty

Objective 4: Building individuals and communities’ ability to deal with the effects of poverty

Enabling Objective 1: Building organisational and system capacity

Enabling Objective 2: Addressing barriers to access

The Poverty and Inequalities Partnership has four Sub-Groups focused on delivering actions to achieve the partnerships objectives. The four Sub-Groups are:

- Tackling severe poverty and destitution and building individual and community capacity to tackle poverty
- Maximising income and reducing debt
- Reducing financial pressure on people in poverty
- Developing our approach to Child Poverty.

Sub-Group Chairs were also appointed from the Partnership to ensure that a Strategic Lead with expertise on each of the Sub-Groups subjects would successfully drive forward the delivery of each of the new Action Plans:

- Sub-Group 1: Claire Brown, Operations Manager, Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway
- Sub-Group 2: Christine Sinclair, Operations Manager, Dumfries & Galloway Citizens Advice Service

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- Sub-Group 3: Sue Irving, Housing Manager, Loreburn Housing Association
- Sub-Group 4: Laura Gibson, Health & Wellbeing Specialist, Public Health Improvement, NHS Dumfries & Galloway.

In addition, a Communications Sub-Group will take forward a partnership approach to communications relating to the work of the Partnership along with a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which will ensure that the delivery of each of the Short Term and Long Terms Actions included within each of the Action Plans are delivered within the agreed timescales.

The formation of the new Partnership and the Sub-Groups will ensure that our overall vision is reached through our new approach which is now delivered through effective partnership working at all levels by all public sector and third sector partners. By ensuring that we all share our approach to reducing and mitigating poverty and inequalities throughout our Region, we will be able to effectively and efficiently work together by:

- *Local partners maximising their impact through a partnership, whole organisation, whole system and action-focused approach.*
- *Organisations and staff at all levels within them understand the contribution that their organisation and team, and they personally, can make to tackling poverty in all their work.*
- *Every initiative taken forward by the public and voluntary sectors considers its impact on people in poverty, and access issues for people in poverty, and their actions do not at any point add to the burden of people in poverty.*
- *Funding and activity focuses most on those in most need.*
- *Organisations learn from each other's successes and mistakes.*

This Child Poverty Action Plan & Sub-Group both complements and supports the work of the other three Sub-Groups and their actions plans providing additional projects and actions which will ultimately reduce child poverty throughout our Region. All of our Action Plans should always be considered in the whole as four plans which, although they may appear to show some projects and actions which will achieve similar outcomes, each project has been developed to complete a specific action which will deliver our agreed outcomes which will compliment and support others throughout the timescale of our Partnerships Strategy.

2. Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of our Child Poverty Action Plan are:

- To develop, deliver and manage strategic and operational activities that focus on reducing child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway
- To reduce the number of children living in poverty and mitigate the impact of poverty for low-income families.

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We aim to achieve these objectives by working in partnership to focus on activities that:

1. Maximise income from employment
2. Maximise income from benefits
3. Reduce the costs of living
4. Provide help in other ways – access to opportunities and support that will help families to address the cause and effect of poverty e.g. food insecurity, period poverty and digital exclusion.

2.2 Priority families

Reflecting the evidence about who is most at risk of poverty, we will prioritise:

1. lone parent families
2. families with a disabled member
3. families with 3+ children
4. families where the mother is under 25
5. families with a child under 1
1. ethnic minority families.

In addition to this, we will also focus our actions on:

1. families with experience of the care system
2. families with a caring responsibility.

2.3. Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026

The table below sets out the activities that the Partnership plans to undertake from April 2022 to March 2026 to achieve the objectives set out above. This Plan both introduces new actions and builds upon existing action already being delivered locally.

It must be noted that many of the activities detailed within the three Action Plans of the other Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Groups will impact on and reduce Child Poverty and therefore these Action Plans should be read along-side the Action Plan presented below. This Child Poverty Action Plan focuses specifically on households with children which is significantly different to the other three Action Plans.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that there is work in other strategic areas that cross-cuts Child Poverty. As this is out with the scope of the Child Poverty Sub-Group and the wider Poverty and Inequalities Partnership to deliver and report on, these activities are not detailed here.

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The other national and local legislative, policy and priority areas that cross-cut Child Poverty include:

- *Scottish Attainment Challenge
- *Local Employability Partnership Plan
- *Mental Health Strategy
- *Regional Transport Strategy
- *Violence Against Women and Girls
- *Maternal and Child Health
- *Child Protection/Public Protection
- *Corporate Parenting Plan
- *Health and Social Care Strategic Plan
- *Locality Plan on Food Sharing
- *Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
- *Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits
- *Whole Family Wellbeing Fund
- *Early Learning and Childcare
- *Local Housing Strategy
- *Physical Activity Strategy
- *Children's Services Plan and Priorities
- *Community Learning and Development Partners' Strategic Plan
- *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- *Young Carers Strategy
- *Regional Economic Strategy
- *Equality Outcomes
- *Education Improvement Plan
- *Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan
- *UN Sustainable Development Goals

2.4. Monitoring and evaluation

A number of the short-term actions set out below are enabling actions which seek to explore the potential for developing new actions. These actions won't always have reviewable outputs or outcomes, however monitoring their delivery is important as additional actions are developed and added to the Action Plan. To do this comprehensively for both short and long-term actions, the Tool developed for monitoring and evaluating the actions of the other three Partnership Sub-Groups will be periodically completed for each action within the Child Poverty Action Plan.

Currently, the Community Planning Partnership has remitted the requirement for Local Authorities and NHS Board's to jointly report on actions to tackle child poverty to the Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership. However, with the establishment of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership, the Lead Officers for reporting on Child Poverty have been tasked with developing our local approach to child poverty and following the development of the Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026 will develop a proposal for how our work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts will be taken forward, including monitoring and evaluation of action.

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In line with the other three Sub-Group Action Plans, the short-term actions are expected to be delivered within a 6 month period. Long-term actions will take one year or longer to achieve and require to have specific timescales agreed with the lead service(s).

Performance measures and indicators for each of the actions also require to be added to the Plan.

Driver of child poverty reduction - Income from employment Hourly Pay, Hours worked, Skills and qualifications, Labour market, Digital inclusion				
Actions for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)		Cross-over with other P&IP Sub-Group Action Plans / other strategic plans	Lead service(s)	Timescale for achieving Action - Short or long-term (*to be specified)
1	Build upon opportunities in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing designed to close the poverty related attainment gap therefore maximising the future income of children e.g. Closing the Literacy Gap, Closing the Numeracy Gap, EmotionWorks		Education	Long-term
2	ELC and school staff signpost parents from low-income families to employability support when need is identified		Education	Long-term
3	Explore opportunities to develop or build on actions related to Employability specific to families with children through alignment with Dumfries and Galloway Local Employability Partnership (LEP) with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of the LEP Noone Left Behind (NOLB 25+) sub-group • Supporting the delivery of Parental Employability Support Fund • Supporting the development of parental employability provision as detailed in Best Start, Bright Future 	Local Employability Partnership Plan	Employability	Long-term

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Driver of child poverty reduction - Costs of living

Housing Heating Food, Education, Debt, Medication, Availability of affordable and accessible childcare, Availability of affordable and accessible transport, Access to affordable credit, Internet access, Savings and assets, Costs of hospital visiting

Actions for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)		Cross-over with other P&IP Sub-Group Action Plans / other strategic plans	Lead service(s)	Timescale for achieving Action – Short or long-term
4	Explore with the Strategic Housing Partnership opportunities to develop new actions to ensure that young people and families with children have high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and that meets their needs	Local Housing Strategy	Housing	Short-term
5	Schools and ELC settings continue the discretionary purchasing of uniform items and PE kits for low-income families using Pupil Equity Funding and to enhance provision of uniform swap services in partnership with Parent Councils.	Education Plan	Education	Long-term
6	Continue the roll out of free school meals to all ELC and primary aged school children P1 to P5 and increase the uptake of Free School Meals in secondary schools	Education Plan	Education, School Meals Service, Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits team	Long-term
7	Schools build on existing action which identifies the need for and distributes free IT equipment and enables internet access for low-income families	Education Plan Sub-Group 3 Outcome 3 Sub-Group 1 Objective 3.2	Education	Long-term

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8	Low level mental health support continues to be available to young people in school settings and communities	CSSaPP Mental Health Strategy Group Mental Health in Schools Sub-Group	CSSaPP Mental Health Priority Group, Education, Youth Work	Long-term
9	Explore further opportunities that ensure children and young people in low-income families have access to food through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast clubs in ELC settings, schools and other community settings • Holiday food provision (cash payments) • Weekend food provision (cash payments) • Active Schools activities • FareShare Membership and Provision 	Education Plan	CSSaPP, Education, Youth Work, Active Schools, Third Sector. Poverty and Inequalities Team	Short-term
10	Promote free sanitary products in primary and secondary schools and some community settings, including provision over school holidays		Education, Poverty and Inequalities Team	Long-term
11	All Midwives, Family Nurses and Health Visitors promote Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods to all pregnant women and families	Maternal and Infant Nutrition Framework	WC&SH	Long-term
12	Explore opportunities to further increase the number of Credit Union Schools Savings Projects in schools (currently 10)	Sub-Group 3 Objective 1	Credit Unions, Education, Poverty and Inequalities Team	Short-term
13	To reduce the costs of the school day, all curriculum activities including practical subjects and Active Schools activities continue to be free at the point of access	Education Plan	Education	Long-term

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14	Pupil Equity Funding continues to be used discretionally to fund school excursions for eligible families	Education Plan	Education	Long-term
15	Further develop School Uniform Banks and winter clothing projects exploring opportunities to expand these in schools and other community settings		Education, D&G Parent Council Forum, Poverty and Inequalities Team Third Sector and Community Organisations	Short-term
16	Repeat the Cost of the School Day research from 2015 and establish new actions	Scottish Attainment Challenge/Cost of the School Day	Education	Short-term
17	<p>Explore opportunities to develop additional actions that aim to increase the uptake of School Clothing Grants, Free School Meals, Holiday Food Payments and Council Tax Reduction by low-income families.</p> <p>Current actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Referencing of all families who apply for Benefits which would also qualify for Free School Meals and Free School Clothing Grants • Continue to use the Automatic Enrolment Process which has been developed by D & G Council Education Benefits and Financial Wellbeing & Revenue Teams (ensures that Applicants do not have to complete more than one Application Form) • Highlight to all families through the Education Services Family Contacts to get in touch for a Benefit Check to see if they may be eligible for Free School Meal Benefits and Free School Clothing Grants 		Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team, Education	Long-term

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also highlight that through their applicants to the above, that families will then also receive the Scottish Government Holiday Food Fund Payments All new clients who complete Benefit Checks are advised if they would be eligible for Free School Meals Referrals continue to be made by DAGCAS to the Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team, D & G Council for all of the above Benefits. Families are supported and signposted through each Primary & Secondary School to apply for a Benefit Check to access the additional financial support available 			
18	Explore opportunities to offer discretionary funded childcare / ELC places for children who do not meet the eligibility criteria i.e. child < 2 years (including FNP families and low-income families with children under 2 years) where young parent <18 wishes to return to education or training		CSSaPP, Education Social Work Private childcare sector Childminders	Short-term
19	Implement the Government's expectations on wrap-around and holiday childcare once funding model is agreed with COSLA, using consultation from January 2022 as baseline	Holiday Food and Childcare Programme	CSSaPP, Education, Private childcare sector	Long-term
20	Explore opportunities with SWestrans to develop actions that will improve the availability and affordability of transport for low-income families	Regional Transport Strategy	SWestrans, D&G Council Transportation Team,	Short-term
21	Increase the uptake of free transport to children and young people under 22 exploring opportunities for schools / youth work settings / Customer Service Centres to support families in the application process	Regional Transport Strategy, Sub-Group 3 Objective 4	D&G Council Transportation team, Education Youth Work	Long-term

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22	Promote to families with a disabled member, the National Entitlement Card (NEC) which gives people with a disability plus a companion free bus travel and also the Taxi-Card scheme for those unable to access transport		D&G Council Transportation Team, All partners	Long-term
23	Promote the expansion of the Young Patients Family Fund to all parents/carers and siblings who visit an inpatient baby, child or young person upto 18 years to enable them to claim expenses for travel, subsistence and accommodation costs in respect of hospital visits		WC&SH	Long-term
24	All professionals working with children and families promote tax free child care, with key messages and materials to be developed and shared with partners		NHS/HSCP, Education, Social Work, Third Sector Organisations	Short-term
25	Promote the minor ailments service to reduce costs of medicines for minor illness or complaints (available for all children and also adults in receipt of certain benefits)		WC&SH Pharmacies	Long-term
26	Promote baby boxes which provide essential items for new parents, increasing the uptake		WC&SH	Long-term
27	Explore opportunities to promote healthy affordable food choices for families of children with complex needs e.g. diabetes		WC&SH	Short-term
28	Explore opportunities to build upon Connecting Scotland's work to provide children from low-income families with digital devices and internet connectivity.	Digital Connectivity	Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	Short-term
29	Promote the free online Period Dignity Partnership Project which delivers monthly orders of sanitary products to all individuals across the region		Poverty and Inequalities Team	Long-term
30	Complete a mapping of all Breakfast, Mid-Morning & Snack Clubs / Projects which are delivered in primary and secondary schools	Sub-Group 1	Poverty and Inequalities Team,	Short-term

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			Youth Work Services, Education	
31	Consult with users and parents of all Food Based Projects within primary and secondary schools to provide evidence of the outcomes and increases in wellbeing of these services along with the costs involved in delivery		Poverty and Inequalities Team, Education	Short-term
32	Consult with all Youth Services to provide feedback on all Youth Projects which provide food and the outcomes of all young people who attend.		Poverty and Inequalities Team, Youth Work Services	Short-term
33	Increase awareness to all families of the additional support available through Home Energy Scotland Programmes and Emergency Funding including highlighting in School Newsletters, Online Forums and through Parent Councils & Parent Council Networks.	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	Short-term
34	Increase awareness to all families of The Hub Help for Heating Scheme Include all families in the launch of the new Emergency Energy Payment Assistance Programme for Vulnerable People Scheme (due to be launched in October 2022) including highlighting in the same ways above	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	Short-term
35	Promote the support currently available through Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) within Dumfries & Galloway who provide emergency payments to their Tenants in times of crisis	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, RSLs	Short-term
36	Highlight any new Energy Support Schemes which may be being developed through Third Sector Organisations to combat the cost of living crisis to families	Sub-Group 3	Poverty and Inequalities Team, All Partners	Long-term
37	Enhance promotion of free or low-cost activities and days out for children, young people and families such as museums, parks and Amazing Summer funded activities		Poverty and Inequalities Team, Education,	Long-term

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			Youth Services, All partners	
Driver of child poverty reduction - Income from social security and benefits Generosity of benefits, Reach of benefits, Eligibility criteria for benefits, Take up of benefits				
Actions for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)		Cross-over with other Sub-Group Action Plans / other Strategic Plans	Lead Service(s)	Timescale for achieving the Action – short or long-term
38	Train all public health nurses to raise awareness of the benefits available for low-income families at pathway visits, including the new Child Payment, and make direct referrals to DAGCAS / Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team when appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDFs on iPads back up leaflets in baby boxes which may have been discarded 	Sub-Group 2	WC&SH, DAGCAS Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team	Short-term
39	The above action is expanded to Midwives and Community Children's Nurses to increase awareness of available benefits and promotion to families		WC&SH, DAGCAS Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team	Long-term
40	The Grow Well in D&G App is expanded to include information about welfare and benefits including Young Patients Family Fund		WC&SH	Short-term
41	Increase the awareness of social work staff to embed income maximisation advice, benefits checks and charitable funding applications into social work practice for all families with social work involvement including Kinship carers.	Sub-Group 2	CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority Group, Social Work,	Long-term

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			DAGCAS, Financial Wellbeing, Welfare and Benefits Team	
42	Expand the support available to Care Experienced young people and Homeless young people to maximise their income from social security and benefits	Housing Strategy	Social Work, Housing	

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Other priority areas not covered by the three nationally identified drivers of child poverty reduction					
Actions for Sub-Group 4 (not already on the Action Plans of Sub-Groups 1-3)			Cross-over with other Sub-Group Action Plans / other Strategic Plans	Lead Service(s)	Timescale for Achieving the Action – short or long-term
43	Financial wellbeing and confidence	Financial Education is delivered in all primary and secondary schools through the Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing curriculums that is current in relation to online gaming/gambling, cryptocurrency, pay day loans etc		Education	Long-term
44	Impact assessments	Poverty impact assessments are embedded into decision making by all Public and Third Sector partners through the Fairer Scotland duty to impact assess against equality, diversity, health inequalities and children's rights		All partners	Long-term
45	Poverty related stigma	Explore opportunities to take action to reduce stigma related to income, financial status and welfare		Communications Sub-Group, Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	Short-term
46	Collective approach	Explore through the CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority Group and Whole Family Support funding, opportunities to ensure low-income families know how to access help and support when they need it, taking a no wrong door approach	Whole Family Support	CSSaPP Whole Family Support Priority Group	Short-term
47	Using data and evidence	Participation in Improvement Service child poverty data in rural areas project utilising data and intelligence to assist the partnership to develop a better understanding of our priority groups		NHS/HSCP, Council	Short-term

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48	Mapping our family support system	Develop a map of our local family support system from the perspectives of the families navigating child poverty supports to assist the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership and Children's Services Planning Partnership to identify barriers, gaps and challenges and develop solutions to overcome these		NHS/HSCP, Council, CSSaPP, Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	Short-term
49	The voice of people with lived experience	Develop additional opportunities to engage with people with lived experience of child poverty to ensure that their experiences shape future activity to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts		Poverty and Inequalities Partnership	Short-term
50	Increasing the number of 16–19-year-olds accessing their Child Trust Funds	Working in conjunction with the Share Fund, we will support all 16–19-year-olds to access their Child Trust Funds to ensure that they receive the funding which they may not know that they have (there are currently approximately 1,475 unclaimed Child Trust Funds within Dumfries and Galloway)		The Share Trust, Poverty and Inequalities Team, Education Services, Youth Work Services	Long-term