



## Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership

Note of Meeting Held on Wednesday 30 October 2024

at 2.00pm

DAGCAS, 81-85 Irish Street, Dumfries

### **Present:**

Nick Hopkins (NH)	Partnership Chair
Claire Brown (CB)	Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway (Chair of Sub-Group 1)
Wendy Jesson (WJ)	Dumfries & Galloway Council Poverty & Inequalities Development Officer (Chair of Sub-Group 3)
Liz Manson (EJM)	Community Planning and Engagement Manager, Dumfries & Galloway Council
Mark Molloy (MM)	Dumfries & Galloway Council Service Manager for Poverty & Inequalities and Youth Work Services
Paula Morgan-Kirkpatrick (PMK)	Social Security Scotland
Tony Reid (TR)	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Christine Sinclair (CS)	Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service (DAGCAS) and Chair of Sub- Group 2
Valerie White (VW)	NHS Dumfries and Galloway (NHSD&G)

### **In attendance:**

Lynne Burgess	Employability Skills and Partnership Manager, Dumfries & Galloway Council
Jennifer Burns (JB)	Secretariat
Chloe Dudgeon (CD)	Youth Worker – Dumfries & Galloway's Young Women's Network
Jo Kopela (JK)	Public Health Improvement Manager
Scott McMeeken (SM) (via Teams)	Waed Worker, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Kirsty Peden (KP) (Via Teams)	Community Engagement Manager, Dumfries & Galloway Council

### **Apologies:**

Jeanette Byers	Tackling Poverty Reference Group Chair
Scott Irving	SFRS
Alison Lamont	Wheatley Group



Phil Myers

Public Health Improvement Lead and  
Sub-Group 4 Lead

Caroline Scott

Social Security Scotland

Phil Storrier

Dumfries & Galloway College

## 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 The Chair **WELCOMED** everyone to the meeting.

1.2 **NOTED** apologies as above.

## 2. DRAFT MINUTES OF LAST MEETING ON 28 AUGUST 2024 AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 **APPROVED** note of the meeting on 28 August 2024 as a correct record.

2.2 **NOTED/ AGREED** under matters arising:

- It was confirmed that Partnership minutes will be published on the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership page of the D&G Community Planning Website.
- Annual Report which NH had presented to the Community Planning Senior Leadership Team had been circulated.
- NH attended the Equality and Diversity Working Group meeting on 3 September 2024 and although no firm conclusion reached, it opened discussions about how the EDWG and D and G P&I P could work better together.
- LL had set up Meetings between each of the Partnership Sub-Groups Chairs and the Tackling Poverty Reference Group to ensure future support to the Partnership of the TRPG.
- A group to look at the use of data on poverty by the partners and Partnership Members has been pulled together. It will report back at next meeting and share with CPSLT to develop a plan.
- NH will speak to EJM offline about the information hosted on Community Planning Website
- **ACTION: NH/EJM**

## 3. EMPLOYABILITY DEVELOPMENTS

### 3.1 HIGHLIGHTED:

- Dumfries and Galloway has received an allocation from the national No One Left Behind fund of £3.6M with £1.1M specifically allocated for child poverty.
- A Child Poverty Team has been created to offer help through small interventions e.g., support to travel to work, clothes etc. through to bigger work of key worker support.
- £66,000 is currently available through a Challenge Fund to be used for small sharp pilot innovations.
- In terms of delivery there has been a 40% increase in sign-ups to programmes with a 32% increase in parents signing up.



- In Stranraer, Kirkconnel and Kelloholm, workers are going out into the community to consult on how we might take action on child poverty in those areas, considering:
  1. How might we increase access to health and wellbeing services
  2. How we might increase childcare locally
  3. How we might increase awareness of services and opportunities in the community
- Funding is available for a lived experience panel which run a grant programme which would include promotional events e.g. Kirkconnel and Kelloholm focussed on the Hillview Leisure Centre and held a successful family fun and information day during the October holidays; it attracted 42 families which included 52 adults and 88 children and 17 organisations with 30 staff. LB is keen to replicate in Annan, Dumfries, Lincluden and Lochside.

### 3.2 AGREED

- To forward qualitative data gathered from the consultation exercises which could be useful for colleagues e.g. NHS  
**ACTION: LB**
- To forward the contact information for Lead Officer of YMCA in Dumfries to LB  
**ACTION: PMK**
- D & G P&I P will work to publicise employability developments and events and receive intelligence from Employability colleagues who are the eyes and ears of how people are impacted locally.  
**ACTION: ALL**

## 4. '137 CHALLENGE' Presentation by Chloe Dungeon, Youth Worker – Dumfries & Galloway's Young Women's Network

### 4.1 CD HIGHLIGHTED:

- Dumfries and Galloway's Young Women's Network is made up of a group of young women who have led the way locally speaking up on issues impacting young women and in particular violence against women.
- The Network
  - Attend national Events and work with similar programmes in Blackpool, Belfast and Wales
  - Organised their own 4 Nations's Conference in Stranraer in early March 2024
  - Recently launched a Young Women's Strategy which is highly ambitious, and now forms the Young Women's element of the Dumfries and Galloway Violence Against Women Partnership
  - Has launched a Mentoring Programme; 1-2-1 mentorship available; 2 mentors for each of the 5 pillars of the Strategy will help identify and deliver projects locally.

**4.2 FURTHER HIGHLIGHTED** 137 Challenge came through Action Aid as one in three women will experience some form of violence in their lifetime, and globally 137



women are killed per day by a partner, friend or family member. The Young Women's Network came up with the idea of candle bags on which people can write their first name, age and words to describe what the world would be like without gender based violence; and

**ENCOURAGED** members of the D and G P&I P to participate. **ACTION: ALL**

#### 4.3 AGREED:

- Young Women's Strategy would be shared with all partners. **ACTION: CD/MM**
- NHS colleagues to make a connection with CD about cervical cancer e.g., smear tests and promote through Young Women's Network; and pick up a conversation about NHS considering travel costs for preventative health appointments. **ACTION: VW**

### 5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (Taken under Item 7)

### 6. REPORTS FROM SUB GROUP CHAIRS

#### 6.1 SUB GROUP 1

##### HIGHLIGHTED:

- Meeting was due to be held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2024 – postponed due to the large number of apologies which were mainly due to October Holidays. Will be rescheduled and held in mid-November. Presentation at our next Meeting will be from Food Providers in relation to planning for the forthcoming winter months which are some of the most challenging in terms of ensuring that supplies are available for all new & existing clients.
- Worrying About Money Leaflets have been finalised after review redesign and are now available. E-mail will be sent out to all partners for orders to be directly couriered to all partner organisations and will also be launched again online added onto our Cost of Living Website.
- Work on developing our new Priority Projects below has already started:
  1. Analysis is being carried out to identify potential sources of cash first support or dignified in kind support available in the region.
  2. Consideration is being given to the most effective ways of supporting people with no recourse to public funds, with learning sought from other local authorities with higher numbers of people affected.
  3. The possibility of piloting a Links worker approach with one of the region's foodbank is being explored, focused on direct provision of support to link clients to other support services, and on building the capacity of foodbank volunteers and staff to identify needs and make referrals to other support. The worker will be additional to existing Links workers based with the HSCP (Community Champions Posts due to be launched shortly).



4. Scottish Welfare Fund Team and foodbank staff are to receive training on referral to services that can deal with the wider range of issues, linking them to existing sources of information on those services.
  - All agreed Priority Project Actions from the above will be allocated to Sub-Group 1 Members at this Meeting.
  - All other Priority Projects continue to be completed as planned.
  - The DAGCAS Cost of Living Report funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be completed and launched by DAGCAS and all Sub-Group 1 & Main Partnership Members will be invited to the launch.

**ACTION: CB**

## 6.2 SUB GROUP 2

### 6.2.1 HIGHLIGHTED:

- Portal update – CS, WJ and DAGCAS CEO due to meet on 12 November 2024 to consider hosting the Portal Project with potential funders identified by WJ
- New portal demonstration potentially arranged for 27 November but date to be confirmed
- Next Sub-Group meeting due later in November; main topics will be the portal project, new Sub-Group members and completion of other priority projects; noted the Child Trust Fund project has taken longer because of legal agreements.
- Outreach discussions taking place with Wheatley Homes South and DWP e.g., looking at joint events to give advice to residents.
- Child Payment Grant Joint Project has been delayed due to pressures on existing Services.
- Nick will table a test of change project to help those who have missed the attendance allowance benefit for older people.

**6.2.2 AGREED** to provide a contact within HSCP and to explore whether the single point of access which already exists within HSCP could be used instead of a new portal.

**ACTION: VW/CS**

## 6.3 SUB GROUP 3

### HIGHLIGHTED:

- The Merger of Solway Credit Union and Thistle Credit Union is progressing well. A Meeting has been arranged to discuss a new Service Level Agreement and specific projects within Sub-Group 3 which the Thistle Credit Union would be able to become partners in.
- Priority Projects are continuing.
- A key Priority Project is working with various Wind Farm Trusts to develop new fuel poverty projects which include funding Fuel Poverty Officers and specific advice and guidance. One of the Trusts will open grant funding applications to help people with fuel poverty. The hope is that once these new innovative projects are up and running, they can be shared with the other



Trusts within our Region and emulated in other areas. WJ will be in touch with DGC Developer Contributions Officer to discuss D & G Council managed Trust funds, therefore exploring every option for potential projects.

- The DG HandyVan Project has very kindly taken over the former Winter Fuel Project which was formerly delivered by The Hub. This new Project has now been launched throughout the Region.
- The new Winter Warmth Campaign is progressing well with leaflets almost ready and with plans to promote local services promoted through print, media and online. The Launch date is hoped to be the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 which is National Fuel Poverty Day.

**ACTION:WJ**

#### **6.4 COMMS SUB-GROUP**

##### **HIGHLIGHTED:**

- A report on Challenge Poverty Week will be brought to the next meeting

**ACTION:MM**

#### **7. BUDGET CONSULTATION**

##### **7.1 SM REPORTED**

- DGC Budget Consultation launched on the 31 October 2024 and will run until 12 noon on 6 December 2024;
- It contains Dumfries & Galloway Council Officer proposals for savings and is intended to give the opportunity for the public to feedback on those proposals.
- £30M of savings need to be found over the next 3 years on current budget projections.
- Community Conversations will take place in each ward seeing feedback, the related survey is available digitally or hard copies can be picked up in CSCs; digital assistance sessions (5 across the region) at which members of the Lifelong Learning Team and CLD Team will provide a device and assistance to members of the public in each of the areas.
- The website will use a Budget Simulator which allows the public to feedback on where they would prioritise
- Results of the consultation will be reported at Full Council on 12 December 2024 and will inform decisions taken by Elected Members in setting spending plans at the Dumfries & Galloway Council's Annual Budget Meeting on 27th February 2025.

**7.2 AGREED** that it is important for the D and G P&I P to be formally consulted about the Budget as cuts will have serious impacts to people in poverty; to canvas a suitable date during weeks beginning 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 for an online session with members of the Partnership who may wish to attend.

**ACTION: NH**

##### **7.3 HIGHLIGHTED** that

- Dates have already been agreed to consult with the EDWG, TPRG and the Youth Council



- Internal Screening Panels, Stakeholder and Political Parties Impact Assessments will be organised for each proposal.
- Impact Assessments are more robust as a consultative mechanism than the Budget Consultation, given the detail involved.

## 8. CHILD POVERTY

### 8.1 REPORTING

#### NOTED:

- Due to a re-structure within NHS Dumfries & Galloway, PM has now moved onto a new Post and will no longer Chair our Sub-Group 4.
- Sub-Group Meetings will still go ahead, the Annual Child Poverty Action Plan Report has been completed by D & G Council and the NHS and the slimmed down Child Poverty Action Plan will be presented to the DGC, NHS Board and Scottish Government
- VW taking forward actions to CPSLT in relation to child poverty

### 8.2 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

**HIGHLIGHTED** Lynne Burgess had agreed to take over as Joint Chair of Sub-Group 4 and together with a joint Chair from NHS D & G will together lead in developing Child Poverty; and **THANKED** PM for all his contributions.

### 8.3 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CHILD POVERTY ACCELERATOR FUND ROUND 2

**NOTED** the application to the Scottish Government Child Poverty Accelerator Fund for the DAGCAS Accessible Financial Wellbeing Support for Priority Families Project had been successful and £80,000 had been received to fund 3 x 14 hour posts to take services out in the 3 areas of Dumfries, Upper Nithsdale and Annandale and Eskdale. This Project would be delivered by DAGCAS in conjunction with D & G Council and WJ would be the Lead Officer for this Project.

## 9. UPDATE FROM COMMUNITY PLANNING/COUNCIL

#### HIGHLIGHTED:

- Poverty Auditing; the Council's Customer Insight Programme looking at CSCs, CareCall and digital access to Council Services. The Lead Officer is Mike Shepley. He is very interested in how his work dovetails with the Partnership's thinking on poverty auditing, and has already arranged to go to the TPRG in January 2025.
- NH will be invited to a meeting of the Council's Poverty and Housing Sub Committee in early 2025. It is trialling a different approach to Council Committees with meetings organised by themes. The first Committee will focus on child poverty and will contain stakeholder presentations with the aim of ensuring that Elected Members will be more informed about issues on the Poverty and Inequalities agenda.
- NH had met Stephen Morgan, Service Director Social Work Services (Chief



Social Work Officer) who is the lead Council Officer on the new Committee, and will continue to meet him regularly, as well as communicating through EJM and Stephen Jack.

**10. AOCB/ FUTURE MEETINGS**

**10.1 NOTED** visit from Minister for Public Health and COSLA Health and Wellbeing Spokesperson was taking place on 1 November 2024 which will include discussions and conversations about the challenges of living in a rural area. Fits in with lobbying and advocacy position and will feedback at next meeting. **ACTION: VW/MM**

**10.2 AGREED** to seek further discussions about poverty auditing with potential supporters/ funders.

**ACTION: NH**

**10.3 AGREED** to circulate a doodle poll for potential dates for an online meeting in December, and then in person meetings in early February, early April and June 2025.

**ACTION: JB**