

**Falkirk's
Local
Child Poverty
Action Report
2021**

Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Achievements and impact case studies**
- **Our Action Plan for 2021-23**
- **Endnotes**

Introduction

This is Year 3 of the Local Child Poverty Action Report. Latest figures from 2019/20 show that there were 6980 children living in poverty which is 24.8% of all children in the Falkirk area¹. Addressing poverty is a key priority for the Community Planning Partnership and this plan outlines actions to tackle this in Falkirk. Throughout the development of this report we have been mindful of the global pandemic and its ongoing effect on the most vulnerable families in Falkirk. Our ambition is to ensure that the detrimental effects of child poverty as a result of this pandemic are diminished.

We published our Year 2 report in February 2021, reporting achievements from 2019-20 and setting out our objectives for the next three years with shorter term actions to achieve these. Scottish Government requested a short Year 3 update report to capture progress in 2020-21 and reset reporting back to the planned timescales following the pandemic. This report therefore focuses on what we have achieved in 2020-21 and updates our 3 year (2021 - 2023) action plan as needed.

The priority groups that we identified previously remain the same and are:

Young people (16-19 or 16-24)

Care Experienced Young People

Large families (3+ Children)

Lone parents

Lived Experience

To inform our action plan and this report we gathered stories of lived experience of poverty from people accessing various voluntary sector services. These stories were considered by the Local Child Poverty Working Group to validate the actions in our plan and add additional actions where we identified gaps. The following paragraphs highlight some of the issues that people with lived experience of poverty are facing.

We found that a lot of families don't ask for help or talk about what they are going through. Committed to Ending Abuse (CEA) Falkirk recently received funding from the STV Children's appeal and purchased Asda shopping vouchers with this. They called all the families they work with and offered a voucher and found that many were so in need and so grateful but would not otherwise have been identified as families requiring help. These families had not reached out to ask for any assistance but when offered they said:

"Thank you, you's have saved us"

"It's both the girls' birthdays this month and now we will be able to celebrate".

"I had nothing in when you phoned, not even any milk"

"I can't stop smiling".

"The kids will be over the moon, thanks".

"I wasn't feeling good this morning, but this has cheered me up".

"Thanks, this takes the pressure off so much, be nice to treat the kids".

This highlighted the need to make sure we continue to work to identify families who may be in need of support. Our Lift Dashboard project will help us identify households at risk of poverty and allow us to target services and support to those households as outlined in our Action Plan.

One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) - Case Study

“In these very unusual times of COVID crisis, going through transition was the last thing anyone would wish for. As a single working migrant mother of a young child under 5, both having underlying health conditions, forced into homelessness days before lockdown, and with no family or close friends to serve as a support network, we were completely cut out. No access to the outside world, no access to transport, no contact with anyone around, life to us had come to a standstill. For a while I struggled to fulfil my working duties from ‘home’ without any form of digital connection. I was unable to get our prescriptions, unable to get my shopping done, unable to figure out my ‘new’ surroundings in the area. I was housed in for the first time in my life, unable to entertain or educate my child as we have no TV or internet to browse any material, unable to keep track of my child’s nursery announcements, unable to follow government updates or announcements for what is next, unable to even check the weather forecast. It is beyond my comprehension how anybody could simply think that in this day and age anyone can live without a form of digital connection. Thanks to One Parent Families Scotland, I am now able to do all of the above.”

This highlights the need to address digital exclusion which we have included in the action plan.

Families Supported by Barnado’s

A young person had to attend school for a few days over a month to complete practical assessments, no uniform was required, but sadly he did not have appropriate clothing. Funding was provided for him to have appropriate clothing so he could attend and complete his crucial assessments. If this was not provided this young person would have not been able to attend school and would have serious impact on his education results.

In one household, the family cooker stopped working and the single parent with two boys was so grateful for the help to purchase a new cooker, so she could continue cooking and providing meals for her family. The mum is on medication for depression, so this helped to prevent her mental health deteriorating and for the boys to be fed.

The above examples highlight the value of support and the need to take a person-centred approach to resolving issues and addressing the needs of a household. They also show the value of the support provided by the third sector.

Achievements and Impact Case Studies

Achievements

In 2020/2021 we

- Supported 99 young people onto the young person's guarantee scheme
- Reduced the percentage gap of school leavers from the most deprived and the least deprived areas entering a positive destination such as employment
- Supported 44 parents from our priority groups in parental employment support tackling in-work poverty.
- Delivered an online event to 55 managers at Falkirk Council to enable them to better support their lower paid staff
- Improved the uptake among families of eligible 2-year olds for early learning and childcare including through a targeted social media campaign.
- Secured an increase in the uptake of free school meals entitlement by 25% on the previous year.
- Supported 236 households in fuel poverty
- Supported 717 individuals/households with the costs of staying connected during the Covid restrictions addressing digital exclusion
- Set up a referral process within NHS to refer to Welfare Benefits team
- Provided 1002 devices from Connecting Scotland supporting vulnerable families and care experienced young people
- Supported 800 households with food on a regular basis
- Provided a dedicated Income Maximisation officer in Brae High School to help families in need
- Gathered lived experience of people receiving help from the voluntary sector and fed into this plan.

Impact Case Studies

Parental Employment Support

Anna is a married 48 year-old disabled parent of a school age child and lives within a Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation postcode.

As an unemployed parent, Anna commenced Parental Employment Support (PES) with the Falkirk Council Employment and Training Unit (ETU) in December 2020 and had a better off in work calculation completed which provided her with updated benefit advice. She was also advised how her household income would increase depending on number of hours she worked if employed and how this would affect her working tax credits.

Anna was supported on a regular basis by a Key worker and Employment Support worker who helped her with a range of Employability Supports, Confidence Building, Job Search, CV development and Mock interviews.

Anna gained more confidence throughout her PES journey with ETU, as she became more confident that support could be provided to manage her disability in the workplace.

Anna was successfully recruited to an Admin role in a Company located in her community which fitted around her childcare needs. She has increased her household income. As a result of the support provided to Anna from ETU, she felt more comfortable discussing Access to Work needs and reasonable adjustments with her new employer.

Tackling Digital Exclusion

The covid-19 pandemic magnified and exacerbated a number of longstanding issues in our communities. One such issue is digital exclusion.

Pre-pandemic, digital exclusion was a significant issue. According to the Citizens Advice Scotland, cost is the single biggest barrier when it comes to digital access. As such, those living in low-income households are far more likely to be digitally excluded.

Community organisations and public sector organisations referred digitally excluded individuals to the Fairer Falkirk team and the team were then able to contact these individuals to arrange a £25 payment to help go towards their digital costs.

One individual spoke of their increasing inability to pay for broadband. The £25 top-up payment would go towards paying her monthly broadband package which totalled £34.95. Whilst cheaper broadband packages are available, those cheaper packages are from companies that aren't well connected in her area. She said for her it's a choice between slightly more affordable broadband with an unreliable connection or more costly broadband but with a reliable connection that enables her children to participate in home learning.

Another individual was quite emotional about the payment and what it would mean to him. He said that his phone regularly runs out of money which means he is unable to keep in touch with his daughters as often as he'd like. Whilst he said his daughters are quite good at phoning him when he has no credit in his phone, he felt that simply not having the choice to contact them himself whenever he wanted was upsetting. He said he didn't want to tell his daughters that he couldn't afford to top-up his phone on a regular basis, but at the same time didn't want them to think he doesn't care enough to keep in contact with them.

One individual was delighted to receive the payment because he said not having credit on his phone can often leave him feeling isolated. He said that his family don't have much money left once they've paid all the other monthly bills, and because his wife is a carer any money they do have left is usually used to top up his wife's phone.

Supporting In-Work Progression

Carol is an employed single 46-year-old parent of a school age child and lives within a Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation postcode

As a Health and Social Care employed parent with Mental Health issues, Carol commenced Parental Employment support with Falkirk Councils Employment and Training Unit (ETU) in March 2020.

She struggled with Covid restrictions and Home schooling. As her childcare provider was required to shield they were unable to care for her child when she went to work and this had a negative impact on her mental health which resulted in an absence from work.

A better off in work calculation was undertaken with her, which provided her with updated financial advice in relation to her seeking alternative employment. This gave reassurances about the affect any change of hours may have on benefits and overall income.

Carol was supported on a regular basis by a Key worker who helped her with a range of Employability Supports, such as Job Search, how best to complete an application form and interview preparation.

Carol also received Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) Individual Placement Support (IPS) which involved an IPS worker providing supports to enable her to return to the workplace and discussions with her line manager to temporary alter her hours so that she was available to take her child to and from school supporting her current childcare needs.

Carol continued to build confidence and with the support of her key worker has been successful in an alternative role within her current employer which meets her childcare needs and has scope for career development. Carol hopes that it will, as her child gets older, give her opportunities to advance her career further.

Carol is in receipt of In Work support to ensure that she manages the challenges associated with changing job and the continuous Covid restriction landscape.

Our Action Plan for 2021-23

Table 1: Actions to increase income from employment for young people and families

Change required by 2023 (outcome)	Action to achieve change & lead organisation	Impact measure (2020/2021)	Who	When	End of year 2021 progress update	Action for 2021 onwards
1.1 Increase engagement with employment support services for young people and parents on low income utilising a case management approach	Increase reach and accessibility within the community of flexible employability programmes including Parental Employability Support and Young Persons Guarantee	Quarterly reporting re priority groups and geographical areas	Falkirk Council Employment and Training Unit	Oct 2020	Young Persons Guarantee started in November 2020 Falkirk Council has: Engaged with 99 participants of which 40 have multiple barriers to employment. The initial target was 75 to March 2021. 76 have/are participating in employability training programmes. 28 participants have gained a qualification. 24 participants have started employment. 10 participants have started a modern apprenticeship. Parental Employment Support: Pre -Work Total 21 parents in the priority groups have engaged in pre work support in 2020/2021. The initial Target was 65 and engagement has been impacted by COVID and childcare commitments. 5 Lone Parents, 2 Parents with a Disability, 1 Parent with a Disabled Child, 3 BAME Parent, 5 Young Parents > Age 25, 0 Youngest Child > 1 year, 5 Large Family 3+. Outcomes: 1 Job, 2 College 5 Financial advice interventions 3 have completed certificated training progressions.	Additional funding allocation for Young Persons Guarantee, Parental Employment Support Fund and No One Left Behind School Transitions programme to be confirmed by SG in June. CO-design and further programme delivery will continue and reach will be widened to ensure priority groups attracted to employability support provision on offer.
	Offer flexible employability programmes including Parental Employability Support and Young Persons Guarantee	Regular evaluation of engagement figures within employability services aligned to priority groups and geographical areas	Falkirk Council Employment and Training Unit	March 2021	1349 participants engaged in Council delivered employability support programmes in 2020/2021. 146 participants progressed into employment.	Continued service evaluation and community engagement.
1.2 Increase the proportion of Falkirk Council area employees being paid the Living Wage	Implement Young Person Guarantee, Kickstart, PESF	Quarterly reporting re priority groups and geographical areas	Falkirk Council Employment and Training Unit Local Employability Partnership: Skills Development Scotland, DWP, DYW, Business Gateway, FV College, NHS, Third Sector Reps	Oct 2020	National Employer Recruitment Incentive Framework including minimum offer to employers now established and being implemented locally aligned to National Living Wage.	Utilise Employer Recruitment Incentive offer to promote National Living Wage to employers locally. Raise with Community Planning Partnership Board to encourage employers to pay living wage.
1.3 Reduce the outcome gap in positive destinations between young people from the most and least deprived areas	Enhance current provision in line with needs analysis	School leaving destination rates (SLDR) and Annual Participation measure (PM) Quarterly reporting re priority groups and geographical areas	Falkirk Council: Employment and Training Unit & School Improvement Team Skills Development Scotland DYW Local Employability Partnership	Oct 2020	In 2019/20, the gap in % of school leavers entering a +ve destination was 10.8% (87.2% for most deprived areas; 98.0% for least deprived areas). This is a reduction from the 15.0% gap of 3 years ago (2016/17) Falkirk's participation measure for 2020 was 91.9% which was down by 0.4% There was also an increase of 1.1% of those who's destinations were unconfirmed. The overall percentage of young people aged 16-19 years participating in education or employment is 91.9% in Falkirk. 83.7% were participating from the most deprived areas compared to 96.5% from the least deprived areas.	Continue with greater partnership working and targeted interventions to deliver a more pupil centred curriculum which allows pupils to progress on different pathways Local Employability Partnership will continue to work in partnership with secondary schools to develop a delivery action plan to support increase in positive destinations. A subgroup has been developed to focus attention on this area and the tracking of young people.
1.4 Increase income for families experiencing 'in work poverty', through skills development, financial advice and employment progression opportunities	Implement Parental Employment Support Fund Skills Development Scotland is piloting an In-Work Support.	Regular reporting and analysis of engagement and outcome volumes	Falkirk Council Employment and Training Unit Skills Development Scotland	March 2021	Skills Development Scotland: Adult Guidance area of My World of Work website www.myworldofwork.co.uk now created for adults who want to upskill and retrain Parental Employment Support: In -Work Poverty Total 44 parents in the priority groups have engaged in support in 2020/2021. The initial Target was 68 and engagement has been impacted by COVID and childcare commitments. 15 Lone Parents, 0 Parents with a Disability, 2 Parent with a Disabled Child, 3 BAME Parent, 1 Young Parents > Age 25, 2 Youngest Child > 1 year, 21 Large Family 3+. Outcomes: 38 In-work starts. 31 Qualifications, 3 promoted posts, 2 College progressions Falkirk Council held an Online event to tackle money worries for Council employees. 55 tier 5 and 6 managers attended the event to hear about Benefits advice, Debt advice and Crisis and community care grants, Employment and training unit and parental employment support and Free Period Products. Positive feedback about the event on Teams and also Hubs to be included next time around.	Implement Parental Employment Support Fund Skills Development Scotland is piloting an In-Work Support. Continue to increase the reach of the programmes with the support of Council intelligence system re low income households. Targeted Falkirk North. Work in collaboration with a variety of support services to design and implement a community based parental support programme in areas of most need. In work support partnership working with local employers third sector and private business re progression opportunities and increased income potential. Consider replicating online Event for third sector partners and NHS Forth Valley.
1.5 Alignment of employability, early learning and childcare	Childcare offer to be available at any point of contact	Targeted uptake of eligible 2's and 1140 to Upper Braes/Falkirk North and lone parents	Employment and Training Unit Children's Services: Early Years		Promotion of childcare provision and finical support to access childcare provision to enter training and employment opportunities. Supporting the delivery of online training in the Early Learning Centre sector to ensure qualifications are aligned roles and in work progression opportunities are increased. Early Learning Centre Training Supported by employability service; 81 Induction Quals; Progressions: 8 MAL3 and 16 MAL2 Employability supported Modern Apprenticeships 32 SVQ3 and job progressions.	Parental Employment Support Fund presentation and leaflets to be delivered to all Early Learning and Childcare Funded Age 2 providers Our place Camelon & Tamfourhill (OPCT) re Employment and Training Unit Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF). Plan to link in with Parent Councils to discuss PESF supports. Ongoing partnership development discussions with Family Nurse Practitioners, One Parent Families Scotland, Intensive Family Support Service, Circle, and Falkirk Council Community Partnership Programme re engagements with Young Parents to design PESF community support programmes.
1.6 Falkirk CPP partners will exploit their potential as large employing organisations and procurers of services to maximise income from employment for young people and families.	Utilise Kickstart, Young Person Guarantee and Employer recruitment incentives to bolster volume of opportunities for young people and families	Reporting of volumes of places, employers and young people	Employment and Training Unit Community Planning Partnership LEP	March 2021	Kickstart: 54 Employers and 162 subsidised vacancies available for local young people from April 2021. Young Persons Guarantee: 26 participants are being supported by an in-work training allowance to support a 1-year minimum job opportunity. No One Left Behind: 4 ERI supported jobs secured locally European Social Fund: 9 ERI supported jobs started locally Falkirk Council: 6 Employer Recruitment Incentives to support those within priority groups to sustain employment with local businesses, public and third sector jobs. Many Community Benefit in Procurement work placement opportunities were postponed due to Covid. Developing the Young Workforce: Have deployed Co-ordinators in each Falkirk Secondary school to increase employer engagement capacity and opportunities for school leavers, as part of the Scottish Governmetn Young Persons Guarantee pledge.	Continue to implement employer engagement strategies and work collaboratively within the LEP to ensure widest reach to local opportunities. Re-engage with CBIP opportunities locally. Enhance partnership working with Business Gateway and Skills Development Scotland re: local business support mechanisms, redundancy support and employer recruitment incentive offers. Raise with Community Planning Partnership Board.

Table 2: Actions to reduce the cost of living for young people and families

Change required by 2023 (outcome)	Action to achieve change	Impact measure (2020/2021)	Who	When	End of year 2021 progress update	Action for 2021 onwards
2.1 Increase uptake of funded, early learning and childcare entitlement for 2- and 3-year olds	Promote entitlement to priority households at all opportunities	Increase in uptake of Early Learning and Childcare	Falkirk Council Children's Services NHS Forth Valley Third Sector	March 2021	All eligible 3-year olds are offered a place in an Early Learning Centre setting the month after their third birthday. Significant work has been undertaken to improve the uptake among families of eligible 2 year olds. Additional 'reserved' places have been identified in Early Learning centres to support the additional uptake of eligible 2s placements arising, in part, from the pandemic.	Review communications to ensure parents have the right information at the right time as to their eligibility.
	Targeted campaign on social media to promote entitlement	Percentage of people clicking through to additional information	Falkirk Council Children's Services and Communication team	March 2021	A targeted campaign was launched in February via Facebook and Twitter to encourage parents to apply for a nursery place. Targeted work is also done via Early Learning centres to ensure that parents of eligible 2 year olds have information about applying for a placement as a 3 year old.	Review communications to ensure parents have the right information at the right time as to their eligibility.
2.2 Reduce financial barriers to education for children and young people	Free School Meals, Clothing Grant & Education Maintenance Allowance.	% of eligible families known Increased % uptake for Free School Meals	Revenues and Benefits/DWP	December 2020	462 concessionary awards of FME passported to eligible families identified using CTR/HB data. Increased Free Meals Entitlement uptake of 25%. 4874 Free Meals Entitlement awards made up to 31/3/21 compared with 3903 up to 31/3/20 (excludes P1-3 universal Free Meals Entitlement). Increased Clothing Grant & Foot Ware uptake of 5%. 5287 awards made up to 31/3/21 with 5016 up to 31/3/20. 4.9% year on year drop in Education Maintenance Allowance uptake.	Apply concessionary award of Free Meal Entitlement to support low income families access School Breakfast Clubs free of charge. Revisit the cost of the school day.
2.3 Reduce the cost of energy and utility bills for young people and children	Provide targeted fuel advice for priority groups to increase access to the Fuel Voucher Scheme for clients who have found themselves in financial difficulty, plus increased signposting of clients to Home Energy Scotland (HES) to receive free and impartial advice on energy related enquiries.	Number in uptake of fuel voucher scheme Number signposted to Home Energy Scotland	Citizen Advice Bureau Falkirk Council Home Energy Scotland	October 2020 and onwards	Support for Fuel poverty - recognising their higher costs and as part of our Covid-19 support Falkirk Council provided: £75 to low income households required to self-isolate. £100 to low income households who are shielding, off gas, staying on the Travellers site or in temporary or supported accommodation. This is all being done through outbound calls team. By end March 2021 236 households supported Sources of support for households with acute care needs/overnight carers identified and shared with NHS to support families.	Continue to provide Covid-19 fuel support to dedicated groups - including child poverty priorities where possible. Continue to offer training on the Services offered by Home Energy Scotland to front line Staff
	Ensure Falkirk Council are registered with any new scheme available after October 2020.			March 2021	The Home Energy Scotland scheme ended in April 2021. Citizen Advice Bureau were registered with them until that date but there is no equivalent scheme after this date. Other existing schemes include: British Gas Energy Trust, account holders of any supplier can apply - https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/ There are also companies who offer grants specifically for their customers: npower Energy Fund Scottish Power Hardship Fund Ovo Energy Fund E.on Energy Fund EDF Energy Customer Support Fund Bulb Energy Fund.	To continue to make residents aware of existing schemes and to identify any future schemes as they become available.
2.4 Increase the financial wellbeing of young people and families	Improve accessibility of income maximisation advice Support young people to maintain tenancies	Work with Upper Brass/Fairer North and BAME communities and young people to adapt income maximisation services Number of people aged 16-24 accessing debt and budgeting support	Falkirk Council Community Advice Services/Fairer Falkirk Falkirk Council Community Advice Services	March 2021	Referral process set up for various sections within NHS. Refer to the Welfare Benefits Team. Leaflet / referral form has been agreed between partner organisations. Referrals from health visitors continue. Welfare Benefits web page up to date with all existing benefits. Online digital referral to welfare benefits team via website. Facebook promotion to raise awareness of the Welfare Benefits Team and Debt Team - what help is available - 20/5/20 and Poverty week 5-11 October. Engagement Focus groups, with care leavers and the champions board on a weekly/monthly basis to inform our service delivery so it better meets the needs of young people Youth Tenancy Film Project Working in partnership with the East Housing Options Hub and other local authority champions boards to create an online media resource to help young people sustain their tenancies	Partnership working with Employment and Training Unit to ensure more effective referral pathways between Housing Needs Service and Employment and Training Unit services to prevent future homelessness Finish recording of online tenancy sustainment resource and promote via schools and social media
2.5 Improve digital inclusion amongst young people and families in the most deprived areas and priority groups	Ensure organisations and services bid for Connecting Scotland resources to support digital inclusion	Increase in young people and families who have access to equipment, support and connectivity	Falkirk Council NHS Forth Valley Third sector	October 2020 ongoing	Following extensive promotion by various partners each Falkirk round of Connecting Scotland was over-subscribed with high quality applications, resulting in Falkirk getting an increased share of devices. To date Falkirk has received 1002 devices. 590 of which were part of round 2 supporting vulnerable families and care experienced young people.	Continue to ensure we maximise applications to future Connecting Scotland rounds.
	Investigate opportunities to address digital exclusion for young people and families in priority groups and areas	Increase in young people and families who have access to equipment, support and connectivity	Falkirk Council NHS Forth Valley Third sector	March 2021	So far Connecting Scotland's programme has reached over a thousand people across Falkirk: • 228 people at clinically high or extremely high risk from COVID-19 • 590 families with children or young care leavers • 184 socially isolated older and disabled people. Building on Connecting Scotland, COVID-19 Digital Exclusion Fund offered grants of up to £5000 to services and partners to purchase devices and connectivity for households who are digitally excluded due to cost. In the two weeks the fund was live 26 applications were submitted from services and organisations that support some of our most vulnerable residents. Funding was secured from Inclusion Scotland to make available internet-enabled devices for households staying in our supported accommodation units to improve digital inclusivity. The Data Top Up project was launched on March 1st and ended on April 30th. During this period, the Fairer Falkirk team made payments to 669 digitally excluded individuals/households. This included 478 phone calls, 61 fuel referrals and 117 referrals from both primary and secondary schools across the Falkirk Council area. 170 households have received the £25 connectivity payment who are currently in temp accommodation. During lockdown, Community Learning and Development Service provision moved online and young people & families were offered blended learning opportunities. In order to participate, the digital needs of young people and families were addressed in terms of access to device, connectivity and support to build skills & confidence in the use of digital technologies. Examples of activities include Falkirk's Summer Take Away Project https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/5251/learning-through-lockdown.pdf ESOL Syrian VPRS Project, Falkirk Champions Board, Falkirk's Young Scot/ Attainment Challenge Project, Falkirk's Young Parents Project (FSYPP), Connect Family Learning Project, Family Learning in Carronshore	Consider a further round of Covid-19 digital exclusion fund if budget is available. Continue to investigate other opportunities to address digital exclusion for young people and families in priority groups and areas.
2.6 Prevent and reduce homelessness for households including families with children and/or key young people	Minimise the number of families evicted from social housing ensuring eviction is a last resort	Recruitment of a dedicated prevention officer to engage with families at risk of eviction from Scottish secure tenancies. Look at alternatives to eviction such as conversion of tenancies to short Scottish secure tenancies for a period instead. Improved partnership working with local RSLs around section 11 notices and homelessness prevention activity. This will include additional information sharing protocols, key points of contact and case conferences.	Falkirk Council Local Registered Social Landlords	October 2020 ongoing	Family liaison officer post Delayed to 2021/22 due to Covid. Dedicated post to be developed to support those at most risk of eviction Falkirk Council rent arrears cases Established a working group in January 2021 to identify and target cross-departmental support to households most at risk of being evicted from Falkirk Council tenancies when Covid restrictions are lifted Partnership working with other RSLs/ PRS November 2020 - established a working group with RSLs and the team who receive section 11 & 14 notices at FC to ensure early identification of those at risk of eviction and provide housing options advice and assistance to minimise unnecessary homelessness Homeless prevention fund Launched in March 2021, the fund has already received 9 applications to help rapidly rehouse homeless households and prevent homelessness	Homeless prevention team Exploring development of a pilot scheme to ensure joined-up service approach to supporting households at risk of homelessness.
	Reduce the number of families becoming homeless because of domestic abuse	Recruitment of 2 part-time domestic abuse officers to work within the homeless assessment team to ensure victims of domestic abuse properly supported, are fully aware of their housing options and receive appropriate support to enforce their housing rights if they wish to remain in their current accommodation.	Falkirk Council	October 2020 onwards	Domestic abuse post Job description complete and awaiting CVs input before going to recruitment in 2021/21 Improve our office environment We have made available Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) safe spaces to increase access to services in a safe and confidential manner Joint working Ongoing - continuing to explore housing options for perpetrators whilst keeping victims safe with joint working with key agencies	Housing Needs Service Gender-based Violence Policy 2021-22 Housing Needs Service to develop Domestic Abuse Policy for customers to better meet needs of woman and children at risk of homelessness Domestic abuse post Recruit Homeless prevention scaled up 2021-22 will likely see a change in the law making it easier for Falkirk Council to keep victims (predominately women and children) in their Scottish secure tenancies.
	Ensure young people are fully informed about housing options and homelessness rights and services with FC area	Working with the education team at FC to develop content and resources to be taught as part of the school curriculum re housing options and homelessness rights and services. Ensure that young people are empowered to make informed decisions about their housing options and know where they can seek further assistance. There is now a debt advice worker specifically to work with young people. RRTP working with champions board to create TSS videos and resource for young people.	Falkirk Council	October 2020 onwards	Education Delayed due to Covid - Engaging with education to develop a module as part of the Curriculum for Excellence, to ensure young people are aware of what's involved in managing their own tenancy and know where they can get help in future if they need housing options/income maximisation advice	Education Promote online tenancy sustainment resource in schools once finalised and develop module on housing options in partnership with colleagues in education. National housing options toolkit, should be launched in 2021/22
	Ensure unavoidable periods of homelessness are minimised to reduce unnecessary trauma	Increase the quote of social housing lets to homeless households from 33-45%. Recruit a dedicated allocations team to help homeless households quickly identify, bid on and secure properties advertised on the choice-based letting portal in FC area for social landlords. Improve tenure choice and reduce periods within temporary accommodation for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness by recruiting a PRS landlord and tenant liaison officer who will promote the PRS as a viable housing option as well as support prospective tenants secure affordable PRS accommodation that meets their household needs.	Falkirk Council	October 2020 onwards	Households in temp working group Feb 2021 - established a working group to develop an action plan aimed at identify and prioritising households who have been in temp the longest for move-on options into settled accommodation. There has been a reduction of households in temporary accommodation however, slower than planned due to increasing numbers of households presenting as homeless in the last quarter of 2020/21. Allocations policy change October 2020 - FC's allocations policy was amended to ensure periods of homelessness are minimised and priority given to those in greatest housing need Conversions Since October 2021 - suitable households have been actively identified and approached by the HNS for conversion of temporary accommodation into settled accommodation. Incentive scheme Households under-occupying have been identified in order to approach re move to smaller properties, increasing the available properties for larger households. Improve access to settled accommodation 2021-22 - preparations are ongoing for the planned re-launch of the Deposit Guarantee Scheme to help with the upfront costs of securing a tenancy in the PRS. New allocations team In post from January 2020, this service will be focussed on helping homeless households to secure settled accommodation more quickly	Direct matches New process being put in place to prioritise direct matches for households who have been in temp accommodation the longest including families. Allocations team Prioritising support to those who are at risk of losing their priority homelessness banding due to non-bidding. Helping to ensure they are able to secure settled accommodation more quickly Incentive scheme Actively engage with households eligible for access to incentive scheme due to under-occupation of larger properties, explain support that can be offered to move (not just financial offering) Conversions Housing Needs Service staff continue to identify households where conversion of temp to settled accommodation may be a suitable option Homeless prevention fund Prevention fund will continue to be used by Housing Needs Service and the tenancy sustainment/supported accommodation services to more quickly move households on from temporary accommodation into settled housing. Or prevent avoidable homelessness Deposit Guarantee Scheme To be relaunched for up to 30 households a year to access initially Private Rented Sector access service To be put out to tender once deposit guarantee scheme relaunched
2.7 Reduce food poverty for young people and families	Develop dignified food access programmes with key groups	Number of households accessing affordable food via community food projects	Third sector Falkirk Council	March 2021	The Covid-19 pandemic increased the need for emergency food significantly. Falkirk Council and partners worked in collaboration with local community food providers to provide additional funding to make sure people had access to food throughout the pandemic. Over the course of the year an average of 800 households have been supported with food on a regular basis.	Continue to work with Community Food providers and partners to ensure people have access to food during Covid-19 pandemic. Continue to develop dignified food access programmes with key groups to address longer term sustainability.
	Develop signposting to food services advertised across the partnership	Number of people using our Support Services map to find food support	Falkirk Council	March 2021	The Council Support for People service has made 2225 referrals for food support in 2020/21. We continue to provide our support services map however due to Covid closures it has been less useful this year.	Continue to support people to access food via the Support for People Service. Promote our Support Services map once services open up again.
2.8 Improve support pathways to families in financial crisis through the reduction in the proportion of refused applications for SWF support	Promote Scottish Welfare Fund to third sector organisations	Number and success rate of applications supported by third sector organisations	Falkirk Council Third sector	March 2021	We do not have numbers and success rates for 3rd parties.	To attend third sector awareness sessions and continue to engage with third party organisations.
	Increase awareness of Scottish Welfare Fund across Council and NHS	Increased proportion of successful applications	Falkirk Council NHS Forth Valley	March 2021	Scottish Welfare Fund took part in online event to help tackle financial worries. Media campaign in local paper and on social media.	To continue to promote services across Falkirk via social media and take part in any sessions that can help to raise awareness via training sessions.
	Promote digital access in communities to support provision of evidence for Scottish Welfare Fund	Reduction in proportion of applications with insufficient supporting evidence	Falkirk Council	March 2021	Promote web campaign on Facebook to social media applications.	Continue to support applicants and refer for further help when required. Sign-post to local digital areas for free connectivity. Ensure team are aware of services that offer computer literacy courses.
2.9 Reduce the cost of participation in sport, leisure and culture experiences for young people and families	Undertake a test of change with a priority group to assess the actions and policies required to deliver to key groups	Number of 'Go Cards' Issued across FCT Number of young people from lower income accessing sport and physical activity through Active Schools Programme.	Falkirk Community Trust Falkirk Council NHS Forth Valley Sport Scotland	March 2021	Leisure facilities closed due to Covid-19 Pandemic. As a result, work for care leavers put on hold. Due to Covid-19 pandemic we were unable to progress this test of change in 2020/2021.	Undertake test of change with a priority group to assess the actions and policies required to deliver to key groups.
	Support young people in a low income household, to access out of school creative activity (subject to successful Creative Scotland Youth Arts Fund bid).	Number of pupils taking part Percentage of pupils who report improved musical ability as a result of the after-school activity provision. Percentage of children who report that they wouldn't normally take part in this activity.	Falkirk Community Trust	January 2021	Falkirk Community Trust is working on a programme that will work with children and young people, currently living in poverty, in the Falkirk area to create a programme of music activity that will both help them explore and develop their own music skills; build confidence and capacity in their abilities; and widen access to a range of other activities that are currently 'off limits' to them due to a number of barriers, not least economic.	Falkirk Community Trust are working with teachers from Falkirk HS and St Mungo's HS to identify pupils for participation. Music specialists have been engaged and the initial sessions are due to take place during the school summer holidays and then continue on a weekly basis during the autumn term.

Table 3: Actions to increase income from benefits and entitlements for young people and families

Change required by 2023 (outcome)	Action to achieve change	Impact measure (2020/2021)	Who	When	End of year 2021 progress update	Action for 2021 onwards
3.1 Increase uptake of welfare benefits and entitlements by young people and families on low income	Increase family income by providing welfare benefits support via direct referral route between NHS Forth Valley and Community Advice Services	Number of referrals made by health visitors, family nurse practitioners, midwives and community mental health team Number of pregnant women and families with children under 5 who get advice from Community Advice Service Total financial gain for clients referred by health visitors, family nurse practitioners, midwives and community mental health team	NHS Forth Valley health visitors, family nurse practitioners and midwives Falkirk Council Community Advice Service	Ongoing to September 2021	Financial support is referenced within our early years Admissions information Referrals received from 1/9/20 - 6/5/21 = 79 Financial Gain = £37,325.57 based on current awards	Our early years strategic planning framework will include a focus on strengthening equity and engagement with low income families
	Increase take up of early learning & school payments	Uptake of benefit in Falkirk area as a % of Scottish uptake Advertising across Early Learning and Childcare and schools using Group call and other social media. Targeted Facebook advertising click through as part of #challenge poverty week	Social Security Scotland Falkirk Council Falkirk Council	March 2023	Updated letter re benefit uprating for registrars to use when register a birth. Provides information on Welfare Benefits Team and how to contact if customer is having difficulties with financial hardship / benefits	
	Increase parental awareness and take up entitlements	Production of media campaign/ social media campaign to raise awareness of entitlements as part of #challenge poverty week Hits on webpages Use of entitlement calculator Referrals from other services	NHS Forth Valley Falkirk Council Third sector partners	March 2023	Brae High School - provide dedicated Income Maximisation Officer to work with families who are in financial hardship / poverty. 3 / 3 hours per week.	Increase parental awareness and take up entitlements Implement the lift dashboard and use it to identify and target households for support.
	Increase staff and parental knowledge of benefits available for families	Share information across all services about benefits eligibility Uptake of welfare benefits training by staff	Falkirk Council	March 2021	Currently working on producing Welfare Benefits Guide with Fairer Falkirk, showing what benefits are available for parents, adults, youth and people with disabilities Online OLLE Training for Falkirk Council Staff - Welfare Benefits created for New Style ESA, PIP, Pension Credit, Carers Allowance Attendance Allowance Facebook promotion to raise awareness of the Welfare Benefits Team and Debt Team - what help is available - 20/5/20 and Poverty week 5-11 October	To have the Welfare Benefits Guide on the website for partner agencies / staff to access a direct link into the Welfare Benefits pages for information on various benefits - referrals for benefit advice to Welfare Benefits Team Add Universal Credit to OLLE training Use tenant talk to raise awareness of service within the council for access to support people that are having in financial hardship
3.2 Improve communication with young people, families and child poverty support partners	Gain further insight into lived experience of poverty/ child poverty and dignified approaches to tackle issues	Number of people with lived experience of low income involved in service design Co-production of resources with those with lived experience of poverty/child poverty Review learning from research and integrate actions into next LCPAR	Third sector Falkirk Council NHS Forth Valley The Health foundation	March 2021	Due to Covid-19 this has been impacted. Work has been undertaken on how Covid-19 has impacted on young people through the Lockdown Lowdown work. Work is underway to gather lived experience case studies from third sector and produce a gap analysis for the year 3 plan. Aligned with Falkirk Council Community Engagement Strategy, examples of Community Learning and Development Service engagement with young people & families to co-design and co-produce services include: Family Learning in Carronshore, Falkirk Champions Board, Falkirk's Young Scot/Attainment Challenge Project, Falkirk's Young Parents Project, Falkirk's Summer Takeaway Project, Parental participation in Falkirk's Child Protection Committee, Young People's Mental Health and Well Being Project, Relationship First Project.	Gain further insight into lived experience of poverty/child poverty and dignified approaches to tackle issues Challenge stigma and shame associated with poverty.
	Group call/text to all parents of school aged children with links to benefits they could be eligible for including free school meals, clothing website etc	Increase in parental awareness of supports available to reduce the cost of the school day		March 2021	Unable to progress text to all parents. Communications sent out via schools and all Head Teacher's asked to share information on Scottish Child Payment and Worrying about money leaflet with staff and parents.	
	1140 expansion for priority group participants (young people and parents)	Reporting of employment opportunities aligned to 1140 expansion of priority groups and areas	EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING UNIT Children's Services: Early Years	March 2021	Through positive targeted as part of the 1140 expansion, all Modern Apprentices who have completed the benchmark qualification have a full time, permanent post within Falkirk Council.	Restart Modern Apprenticeships from August 2021 Start 1140, parental employment support and health visitors sub-group

References

- 1 Local Child Poverty data for 2019/20 After Housing Costs:
see Child poverty in your area 2014/15 - 2019/20 - End Child Poverty