

**Falkirk's
Local
Child Poverty
Action Report
2020**

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Foreword

This is the second published report highlighting the work of partners across Falkirk to reduce child poverty. We are committed to improving outcomes to make Falkirk a fairer place to live amongst children, in health, in communities, making our place safer and growing our economy. Reduction in child poverty is central to these goals and it is encouraging to see the shared commitment to this work evident in the annual report and action plan.

This report was published during the Covid-19 pandemic which has caused a major global crisis. Projects have been suspended; for many months face-to-face work stopped or has been confined to digital contact; families are having to manage increased financial hardship, many for the first time and vulnerable children and families have been unable to access the support they need. Sadly, the pandemic is not over and the evidence for its impact on child poverty is only beginning to emerge. This impact will be experienced for many years to come and we believe there will be an increase in child poverty in Falkirk as household finances are put under increased pressure.

Our partners, community and third sector organisations have not wavered in their commitment and have played a vital role in supporting people throughout the pandemic. This has alleviated some of the devastating effects that poverty has on our citizens and demonstrated what can be achieved when we all work together towards a common goal. We need to build on this going forward to make sure we continue to work as equal partners across our communities.

Falkirk Council, NHS Forth Valley and our partners ambition is to ensure that the detrimental effects of child poverty as a result of this pandemic are diminished. This Local Child Poverty Action Plan builds on our commitment from the previous plan in 2019-20 and outlines current activity as well as highlighting changes for the future which will play a part in addressing child poverty.

Councillor Cecil Meicklejohn
Chair of Falkirk Community Planning Board

Cathie Cowan
Chief Executive,
NHS Forth Valley

As a manager within Barnardo's and Chair of Falkirk's Fairer Childhood group, I have been privileged to be part of CVS Falkirk and Third sector response to the Covid-19 crisis. CVS Falkirk coordinated and supported Third Sector organisations and volunteers, who in turn provided critical support to local communities throughout the pandemic. However, already this crisis has disproportionately affected low income families. Many have suffered income and job losses, and today's young people face extremely complex challenges. The pandemic must be a catalyst for real change. Within our Local Child Poverty Action Plan, children in Falkirk have been put at the heart of tackling the endemic issues of poverty to ensure every child in Falkirk can thrive. Falkirk's collaborative actions across the Third Sector and Community Planning Partnership, to mitigate the challenges of poverty, will provide both short and longer-term solutions that will give the most vulnerable children the best possible chance of a positive future.

Karen Head

**Children's Services Manager,
Barnardo's Forth Valley Services**

Introduction

Over 166,000 children in Scotland today are living in relative poverty¹. With 5106 of those children living in the Falkirk area, addressing child poverty is a priority for Falkirk's Community Planning Partnership.

In 2019 the partnership produced its first Local Child Poverty Action Report, following the passing of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. We gathered information on activities taking place to tackle child poverty as well as what else needed to be done in the near future to prevent a further increase.

This year's report was put together during a time of unprecedented crisis across the globe. Although some of the work to tackle child poverty which was planned over these months was overtaken by the need to respond to the COVID-19 emergency, communities, partners, local authorities and countless other organisations pulled together to support as many people as possible throughout this difficult time. The efforts made by so many prove that the aim of helping individuals and families out of poverty is still at the forefront even during a pandemic.

The following report details the progress made over the past year (2019/20) in relation to the key poverty drivers. It also identifies work that needs to take place in the coming years (2021-23) and the groups we have identified as most at risk of poverty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local data and input from partner organisations was used to identify the most vulnerable groups across our area, particularly in light of the pandemic. Going forward we will focus on the needs of those families and communities and take actions that have the biggest impact on their situations.

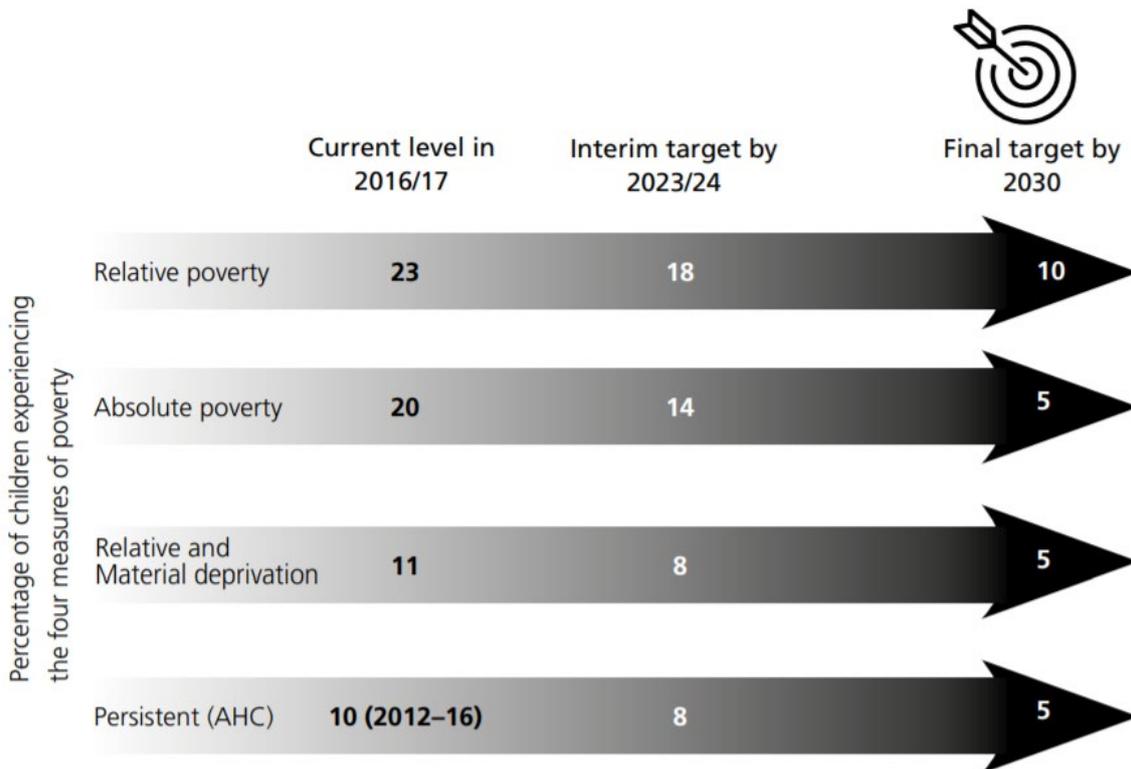
**The scale of
the challenge
nationally and
locally**

The Scottish Government has set national targets across the four principle measures of poverty as shown on the diagram below. This includes interim target levels of child poverty by 2023/24 as well as a final target of 10% of children in Scotland experiencing relative poverty by 2030.

Keeping these measures provides a degree of continuity with measures previously set out in the UK-wide Child Poverty Act 2010. All four measures were chosen following extensive UK-wide consultation and were designed to complement each other, with each capturing different aspects of poverty².

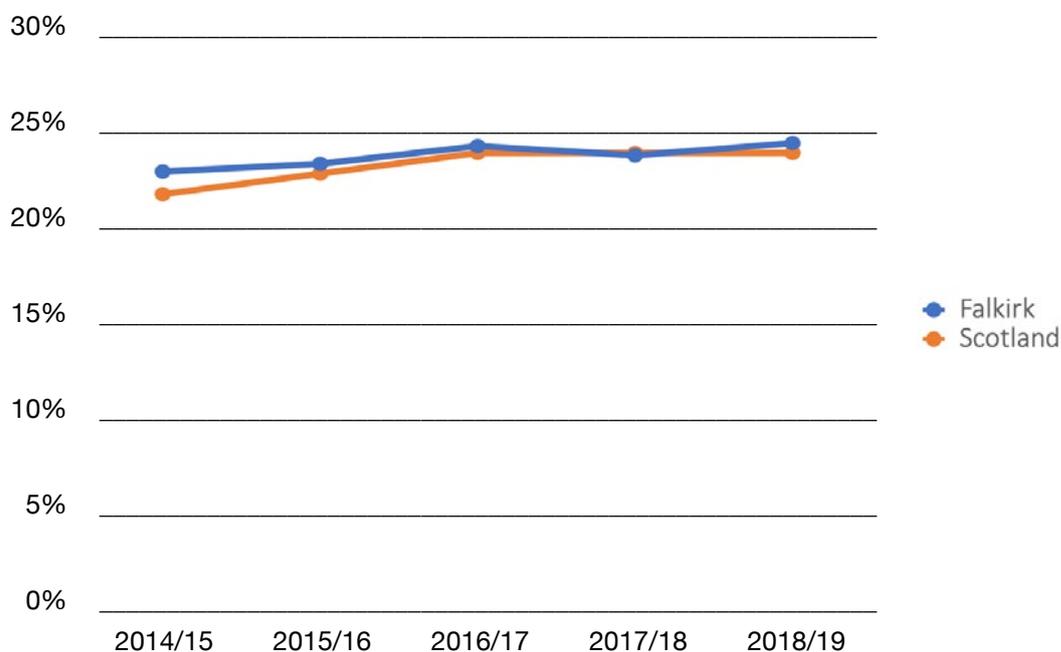
Change required to meet targets

Below we compare current levels of poverty across the four indicators with the 2030 targets:



The graph³ below shows the percentage estimates of children living in poverty below 60% median income after housing costs in Falkirk compared to the Scottish average, between 2014/15 and 2018/19. According to these figures there were 6555 (23%) children living in poverty in 2014/15 rising to 6929 (24.5%) in 2018/19. This shows that the Falkirk area sits around the Scottish average with around 1 in 4 children living in poverty.

Percentage of Children living in poverty after housing costs



Child Poverty in the Falkirk area⁴

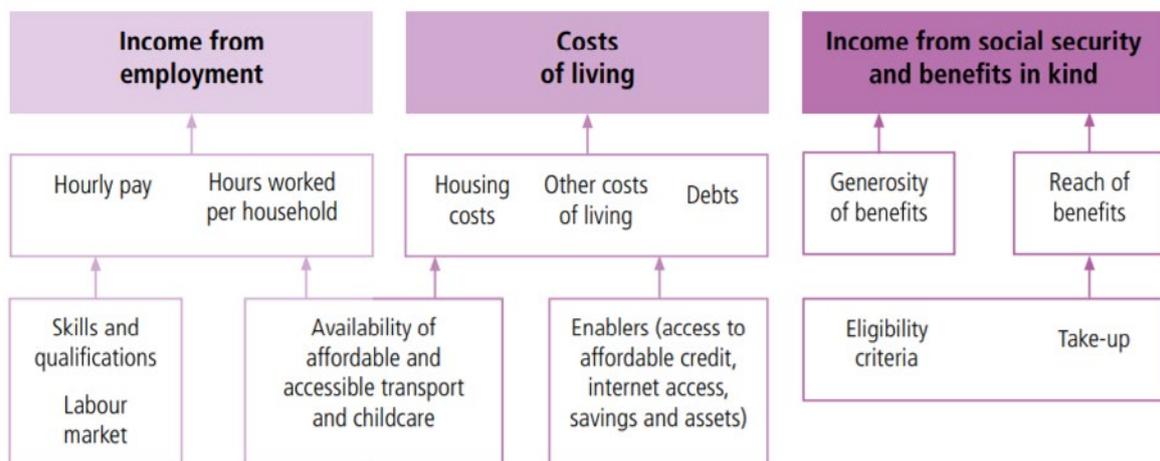
Highlighted below is the percentage of children in relative poverty by ward (before housing costs) in the Falkirk area and the level of child poverty in Falkirk compared to Scotland. Overall in Falkirk there was 5103 (18%) of children living in poverty before housing costs according to these figures in 2018/19. Falkirk North and Grangemouth are two of the wards with the greatest level of need, however child poverty is an issue across all wards in Falkirk.

Ward	% children in relative poverty (2018/19)	No children in poverty
Bo'ness & Blackness	18	485
Grangemouth	23	611
Denny & Banknock	18	629
Carse, Kinnaird and Tryst	14	566
Bonnybridge and Larbert	13	408
Falkirk North	26	984
Falkirk South	19	480
Lower Braes	14	376
Upper Braes	17	564
Total	18	5103

Scope of the plan and links to others

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

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



The actions presented in this report link to Towards a Fairer Falkirk 2019-2024 which outlines the Community Planning Partnerships approach to tackling the impact that poverty has on individuals, households and communities in the Falkirk area, our Economic Strategy 2015-2025 and Economic Recovery Plan in response to Covid-19 pandemic and A Thriving Forth Valley, NHS Forth Valley Health Improvement Strategy 2017-2021.

Governance and reporting arrangements

Addressing poverty is a key priority for the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership, supported by the Fairer Falkirk Partnership. This report and subsequent progress of the action plan will be considered by the following:

- Fairer Falkirk Partnership
- Falkirk Children's Commission
- Local Employability Partnership in Falkirk Council
- Children & Families Programme Board
- Health Improvement Programme Board of NHS Forth Valley

The final plan will be approved by the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership board.

Achievements in 2019/2020

Driver 1

Income from Employment

In 19/20 we

- Introduced a family learning programme enabling families to learn together on topics such as wellbeing, literacy and numeracy
- Supported parents experiencing 'in work' poverty funded by the Scottish Government through the 'Parental Employment Support Fund' (PESF)
- Delivered Post School Services to young people from Grangemouth Hub & Denny Library (Skills Development Scotland)
- Delivered workshops to young people in the Youth Obligation cohort to DWP Customers in Falkirk/Grangemouth.

Lynsey began working with the Employment and Training Unit (ETU) as a parent with previous work experience. She wanted to enhance her prospects of promotion and increase income for her family. Lynsey was keen to develop her experience of working in childcare and to gain a qualification that would allow her to progress within the sector. Through her post as an Early Learning Childcare Assistant (ELCA) she was able to develop her practice and was given the opportunity to undertake the Level 7 SSC&YP Vocational Qualification (VQ) through the PESF programme.

The experience gained through her ELCA post has allowed Lynsey to develop her knowledge of working in childcare. In her job role, and to support her VQ, she was allocated a mentor who worked closely with her, observing good practice and providing support on a one to one basis when required. Guidance was also provided by her Assessor with the completion of the SVQ 3-Social Services: Children and young People qualification.

Lynsey has 3 young children and had to work hard to sustain a good work life balance for her and her family. With the support of her Assessor, colleagues and her sheer determination Lynsey developed her knowledge, understanding and working practice of the vocational qualification and quickly achieved her qualification.

Lynsey attended various in-service training sessions including Food Hygiene, First Aid, Child Protection and is involved in all aspects of the Early Years workplace. Lynsey continued in the ELCA post during the summer break, however as her children returned to school, she decided she would apply for a promoted position as an Early Years Officer (EYO) in her local area. Lynsey was successful at interview and is now working her notice as an ELCA with her current nursery. Lynsey is a valued member of the team and will be missed by her colleagues, children and parents.

Through the partnership and network of supports, Lynsey has been able to work hard to achieve the goal she set herself at the start of her journey. Both Lynsey and her family are benefitting from her recent achievements. The opportunity has allowed Lynsey to work in the sector she enjoys and that also fits with her family commitments. She has achieved a work life balance and increased income. Lynsey has achieved her goal and is keen to continue developing in her current role.

Driver 2

Cost of living

In 19/20 we

- Agreed a new charges and concessions policy resulting in the expansion of free school meals entitlement and removal of breakfast club and music tuition fees for people on income-related benefits
- Provided food and community activities to reduce holiday hunger and improve access to activities during school holidays - 15 570 meals provided during summer 2019
- Supported 75 young people to access leisure facilities by providing free transport to improve health and wellbeing
- Ensured community organisations and staff had up to date information to address fuel poverty via our bi-annual Falkirk Fuel Forum and specific training for new staff.
- Increased uptake of free school meal provision by 10% compared to previous year
- Implemented a project to provide debt and budgeting advice to 16-25 year olds. The purpose of this project is to assist those who have taken on a tenancy to be able to successfully sustain it.
- Established the Falkirk Food Consortium to develop community food plans addressing food insecurity
- Established Three Paid Membership Food pantries in Central Locality and three Pantries in development in East and West Locality.
- Established a Community Food Hub to receive Procured Food from Fare Share
- Worked with 8 community organisations to distribute to 711 families at risk of food insecurity.
- Completed Fuel poverty training that involved all new staff at Citizen Advice Bureau to help and assist clients
- Supported people experiencing hardship due to wet electric heating systems from the Community Advice Services Debt and Welfare Benefits teams

Paul, a care leaver, worked with the Falkirk Champions board to identify 10 priorities to support care experienced young people. Two of these priorities were access to travel and access to leisure, the latter aiming to improve both physical and mental health.

The Falkirk Champions Board scheme is funded by the Life Changes Trust and Falkirk Council's Community Learning and Development team. The Scottish Attainment funding in partnership with Young Scot was identified as a means of supporting the work of Falkirk Champions Board and a successful funding application was made for £100k. Paul took part in the pilot scheme along with 74 other care experienced young people.

The project provided free travel, access to Falkirk Community Trust facilities and Young Scot rewards to the young people. On receipt of the vouchers for the scheme, feedback from Paul shows how this has impacted on the young people so far:

Paul says: "Gaining access to the gym would significantly increase my health and would give me the motivation to access the gym and to keep fit. I would like to use the voucher to buy new gym stuff so that I can access all parts of the gym. I hope to buy new shoes for the gym and some gym clothes as I would like to lose 2st. I have put on 2st on from having mental health problems and I would like to use it for to help my mental health by going to the gym Also, getting the free bus pass means I can go to my pals and champs, instead of sitting in my room. When lockdown is lifted, I'm looking forwards to getting stuck in."

Unfortunately, the travel and leisure parts of the project were halted due to COVID-19. However, the young people including Paul, continued to be offered rewards via the Young Scot online platform with digital rewards being available alongside advice and support throughout the current situation.

Driver 3

Income from social security and benefits in kind

In 19/20 we

- Promoted Social Security Scotland benefits to identified priority groups - Social Security Scotland benefits resulting in an additional £620 491 to support families across Scotland and a further £3000 supporting young carers
- Promoted our support services via targeted social media as part of #challengepoverty week resulting in a 10-fold increase in use of our entitlement calculator
- Launched our services online support map showing where people can access free WIFI, advice and support, community food and period products across the Falkirk area
- Promoted best start grants directly to those who may be eligible via registrars, schools and nurseries
- Provided poverty awareness training to 200 Falkirk Council Housing and Communities staff to raise awareness and understanding of poverty and how individuals can help

A new project has been set up in Falkirk where health visitors identify new mums in need of assistance with their financial situation and refer them to our service to carry out a benefits check and full financial health check. When referrals come to the Welfare Benefits team the client is telephoned the same day

Emma was referred to our service via health visitors' pilot (HVP). A benefits advisor called Emma to introduce themselves and to arrange a suitable time to discuss her finances. Due to COVID-19 face to face was not an option, therefore, advice and support was given via telephone.

Emma lived with her partner and 2-year-old son in a 2-bedroom social housing property. Their rent was £305 a month and they paid full rent and council tax. The only benefit Emma received was child benefit. Their partner worked full time, with an income of £1500 per month.

The advisor worked with Emma to get an accurate record of the amounts of money coming in from earnings and benefits and amount of rent and council tax that was being paid. They then carried out a benefits check which identified that Emma was entitled to Universal Credit.

An income and expenditure form was completed. This is a detailed list of what is coming into the household and what is going out. This identified that she had no disposable income and was not spending excessively as she has very little income. It was identified that her phones, TV and broadband could be switched over to a cheaper provider. Also, her fuel bills could be switched to a cheaper tariff.

Following the benefits check and financial health check, the advisor had a full discussion with Emma regarding her income. Emma had been led to believe that because her partner was working full time she would not be entitled to any benefits. After carrying out the benefits check the advisor identified that she was entitled to Universal Credit. In doing so this would mean that her housing costs would also be paid, and she would then be entitled to other benefits such as the best start grants for her son. The advisor offered to assist her with the claim, but Emma was confident enough to claim online herself.

The advisor gave advice about switching TV package for a cheaper provider, over the phone, and talked her through how to do this, using comparison websites to get a better deal. Similar advice was also given for changing energy suppliers.

The debt advice service and social welfare fund was also discussed with Emma, but she didn't need either of these services at this time.

Over the next few weeks, the advisor followed up to see how she was doing. She advised that she was now in receipt of UC and was starting an application for a best start grant.

Claiming Universal Credit covered Emma's housing costs as well as boosting household's income by a further £68 per month. This also enabled Emma to apply for the best start grant which provided early learning payment of £250 and best start food payments of £17 every 4 weeks.

**From now
until 2023**

Whilst the previous section highlighted the range of policies undertaken to mitigate child poverty by the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership in 2019/2020, the partnership is keen to ensure that we are working together to maximise our efforts to reduce the number of children living in poverty in the Falkirk area. Going forward we will work to address the underlying causes of poverty where possible alongside mitigating the impact of poverty on individuals, families and communities.

To provide us with a greater understanding of poverty across the Falkirk Council area a strategic needs assessment was carried out. This brought together local and national data and included ward level data where possible. A summary of the key findings from this assessment is included in Appendix 2.

The full needs assessment was shared with partners at a workshop in September 2020. The purpose of the workshop was to identify the outcomes that we will work towards over the next three years. From these initial actions and priority groups were agreed for the following year.

Further work is required to develop a greater understanding of the local issues and how they should be addressed from people with lived experience of poverty. This will be done as part of the community conversations that are planned to develop a new local outcomes improvement plan for Falkirk's Community Planning Partnership.

Having reviewed the feedback from last year's joint Local Child Poverty Action Plan, it was clear that the recommendations required the partnership to develop longer term plans to tackle child poverty. As a result, the partnership has developed a three-year plan of action to outline longer terms plans which provide clear outcomes which we are aiming to achieve. The end of this three-year plan will mark the mid-point in the timeframe of the Scottish Government's child poverty strategy. At this point the partnership will review the actions delivered to date to tackle child poverty in the Falkirk Council area and develop a new plan for the 5-year timeframe of the national strategy.

Impact of COVID-19

Research by the Save the Children and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that 7 in 10 families surveyed in Scotland about the impact of COVID-19 have had to cut back on food and other essentials, while 51% have fallen behind on rent or other household bills. 55% of families on Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit in Scotland have been forced to borrow money since the start of the crisis - with many relying on expensive forms of credit. 4 in 10 people claiming Universal Credit took an advance which needs to be repaid. (improvement Service). Moreover, a recent report has also found that children and young people from low income households are 2.5 times more likely to have had higher levels of mental health issues during lockdown than higher income peers.⁵

Priority Groups

Whilst our actions will support many people on a low income across the Falkirk area, we have identified four groups that we will prioritise over the next year. These groups have been selected due to the particular impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on them.

Young people **(16-19 or 16-24)**

The situation for young people is particularly challenging. We know that any period of unemployment at a young age can have long-term scarring effects, with implications for economic, health and social outcomes.

- Youth unemployment is expected to rise-resulting in a further 1110 young people becoming unemployed in the Falkirk area.^{6 7}
- Workers aged under-25 are two-and-half times more likely to work in a sector that was shut down during lockdown⁸
- Young workers experienced the largest fall in average hours (negative 5.9%) compared with other age groups⁹

Those in the younger age bracket of 16-19 years at greatest risk (40% of jobs) compared to 20-to-24-year olds (30%) with those leaving education and entering the labour market for the first time particularly at risk.¹⁰

Now and over the longer-term, young workers and those leaving education are likely to suffer the most. Recessions tend to lead to particularly large increases in unemployment for young people. This is because young people are most likely to face increased competition from those with more work experience and job-specific skills. This is a particular concern this time around as there are more older people in the workforce; two million more than in 2008, and four million more than in the early 1990s, coinciding with increases in the pension age. Long term unemployment has significant negative social and economic consequences for individuals and indeed places where it is concentrated.

Large families (3 + Children)

There are nearly 600,000 families with dependent children in Scotland (2018), of which 73,000 (12%) are larger families (three or more children):

- 9% have three children
- 2% have four children
- 1% has five or more children.

Of the 982,000 dependent children in Scotland, around 25% live in larger families. For most local authorities, larger families make up between 10% and 13% of all families¹¹.

Taking a percentile representation for the Falkirk area this would therefore equate to 2190 families with 3+ children living in the household and 7365 individual children and hypothetically 2400 living in a large family in relative poverty. If 23% of families in the Falkirk area are living in poverty larger families would represent around 8% of these families.

Certain BAME groups are more likely than the White-Scottish group to have three or more children. For example, findings from the 2011 Census showed that, of families headed by a White Scottish household reference person, 13% had three or more dependent children. This figure was much higher for some ethnicities. It was highest for the Pakistani group (36%), then Arab (32%), Bangladeshi (26%); White: Gypsy/Traveller (25%) and African (24%).

One third of all children living in relative poverty in Scotland live in a large family. Larger families were more significantly affected by the benefits caps introduced due to the two-child cap. Therefore, families are at greater risk of experiencing poverty as a family grows.

A recent Office for National Statistics analysis carried out 17-27 April 2020, shows just under 1 in 4 adults (23%) said the coronavirus was affecting their household finances.¹²

The most common impact in this group was reduced income (70%), with nearly half saying they had used savings or borrowed to cover living costs. (End Child Poverty). 65% of children living in poverty in Scotland are in households where someone works.¹³

Lone parents

COVID-19 is especially challenging for single parents and their children as they rely on one income and are without the support of another adult in the household to balance childcare arrangements, home schooling, supermarket trips and any additional caring responsibilities. The practicalities of lockdown and self-isolation for lone parents who are already disproportionately affected financially have been significant.

18% of the lowest earners were behind on their household bills, compared with just 2% of those in the highest income bracket. Lowest earners were also more than five times more likely to report that they had been hungry and had not eaten at some time during a week¹⁴.

Evidence from previous pandemics suggest women and girls could experience more negative and long lasting impacts than men¹⁵. Close the Gap reported in May 2020¹⁶ that women, particularly Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and young women are most likely to work in a sector that has been shut down. While some women will work in Keyworker roles, others will be unable to continue to work due to childcare restrictions. Over 50% of employment in the accommodation and food service sector is made up of women, and it is among the sectors with the highest proportion of women, compared to men, in its workforce. The poverty rate is higher than the Scottish average for households with a worker in this sector: 28% of all people who are in a household with a worker in this sector were in poverty (Scottish average is 19%). The figure for children was 41% (Scottish average is 24%).¹⁷

Care Experienced Young People

Care-experienced refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked after background at any stage of their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked after. A report by 'Who Cares Scotland'¹⁸ has reported on the challenges facing care leavers during the COVID-19 pandemic which include;

Poverty: cost of living, increased utilities, food bills and impact on rent and housing options have left many care leavers in debt for the first time or with increasing levels of debt. As with the wider population, care leavers have been impacted by redundancy and furlough with an increase in those claiming out of work benefits and attempting to navigate the universal credit application process, resulted in an increase in applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund.

Health and Wellbeing: Isolation and a deterioration in mental wellbeing has been reported by many care leavers during this period. The reduction in support from services during the period has resulted in greater strain within family units. Those living in temporary accommodation with little or no access to online resources and support networks have reported increasing deterioration in mental and physical health. Recent bereavements prior to or during lockdown, have also been recognised as a significant contributor to isolation and deteriorating mental wellbeing. Stress and anxiety regarding current financial and social impacts in addition to concerns re the future with the feeling of little or no access to information.

Information and Participation: many care leavers are limited in their ability to participate due to lack of access to essential equipment, reporting issues with old and faulty equipment and mixed messages re available resources. Additionally, the lack of a working telephone to converse with or connect with supports such as services, family and friends has a significant impact on their ability to maintain relationships, education, job searches and stay informed on COVID-19 measures

Provision of Care: Placement changes due to the impact of COVID-19, limitations to contact with friends, family and support networks in addition to imposed quarantine measures in some supported accommodation facilities have caused further isolation and anxiety.

Priority areas

The Falkirk North ward has the highest proportion of children living in households experiencing relative poverty, compared to the rest of the Falkirk area. As such we will look for opportunities to prioritise this area as we take forward actions to address child poverty. However, our actions will not exclusively focus on this area given we know that there are children living in poverty across all areas.

Our Action Plan **for 2021-2023**

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
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
	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
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 ETU Local Employability Partnership: SDS, DWP, DYW, Business Gateway, FV College, NHS, Third Sector Reps	Oct 2020
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)	Falkirk Council: ETU & School Improvement Team	Oct 2020
		Quarterly reporting re priority groups and geographical areas	SDS DYW Local Employability Partnership	
1.4 Increase income for families experiencing ‘in work poverty’, through skills development, financial advice and employment progression opportunities	Implement Parental Employment Support Fund SDS is piloting an In-Work Support.	Regular reporting and analysis of engagement and outcome volumes	Falkirk Council ETU SDS	March 2021
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	ETU Children’s Services: Early Years	
1.6 Falkirk Community Planning Partners 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	ETU CPP LEP	March 2021

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
2.1 Increase uptake of funded, early learning and childcare entitlement for 2-3 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
	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
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
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	October 2020 and onwards
	Ensure Falkirk Council are registered with any new scheme available after October 2020.			March 2021
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 Braes/Falkirk 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
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
	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
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
	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
	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 housing 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
	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
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
	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
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
	Increase awareness of Scottish Welfare Fund across Council and NHS	Increased proportion of successful applications	Falkirk Council NHS Forth Valley	March 2021
	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
2.9 Reduce the cost of participation in sport, leisure and culture experiences for young people and families	Undertake 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
	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 afterschool activity provision. Percentage of children who report that they wouldn't normally take part in this activity.	Falkirk Community Trust	January 2021

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
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
	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
	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
	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
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	Third sector Falkirk Council NHS Forth Valley	March 2021
	Undertake research with families on the impact of COVID-19 on child poverty	Review learning from research and integrate actions into next Local Child Poverty Action Report	The Health Foundation (bid subject to successful application) NHS Forth Valley Falkirk Council	March 2021
	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
	1140 expansion for priority group participants (young people and parents)	Reporting of employment opportunities aligned to 1140 expansion of priority groups and areas	ETU Children's Services: Early Years	March 2021
3.3 Increase the proportion of Falkirk Council area employees being paid the Living Wage	Utilise employer recruitment incentives, opportunity creation aligned to growth and investment and community benefits in procurement clauses	Regular reporting	ETU Procurement LEP	March 2021

**Links to
associated
plans and
policies**

Towards a Fairer Falkirk 2019-2024

This strategy focuses on addressing the impact poverty has on individuals, families and communities. To address poverty, it is crucial that we implement long term interventions at a national and local level that will take people out of poverty in a lasting and sustainable way. We will do this locally through a range of interventions that help lift people out of poverty.

Shaping the Future NHS Forth Valley Health Care Strategy 2016-2021

This strategy sets out the expectation that we will address health inequalities and support people to take responsibility for their own health and care. We know that health and life expectancy are generally poorer for people who live in areas of deprivation.

A Thriving Forth Valley 2017-2021

This health improvement strategy sets out the challenge in terms of improving the health of people in our area.

Integrated Children's Services Plan 2017-2020

Our Community Planning Partnership aims to give all our children the best possible start in

life. By providing opportunities and raising aspirations we can make sure that our children and young people have the best chance later in life. This goes beyond academic attainment to build resilient young people who have skills that support them throughout their lives. This plan sets out our ambition for children and young people and how we will support them to have the best possible start in life.

Inspiring Active Lives A Culture and Sport Strategy for Falkirk 2013-2023

We recognise poverty goes beyond lack of money and extends to lack of opportunity.

This strategy sets out the ambition for the Falkirk area and the need to provide opportunities for everyone to reach their full potential. Providing a range of culture and sport activities helps people to:

- Learn and develop new skills
- Be effective contributors
- Enhance their sense of wellbeing
- Be more active
- Strive for achievement in all parts of their lives.

Economic Strategy for Falkirk 2015-2025

We know that the best way for people to move out of poverty is into well paid, secure employment. Employment is more likely to provide financial security which helps people cope with crisis and changes in circumstances. This strategy focuses on how investment in the area through our work in the Grangemouth investment zone, can benefit those most disadvantaged. We will seek investment in our area where it has a positive benefit to individuals, families and communities in greatest need.

Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership **Integrated Strategic Plan 2016-2019**

Poverty increases the support needs of many people. Poverty related health inequalities are often a driver of breakdown in personal resilience leading to dependence and support need. Addressing the impact of poverty through signposting and advice around income maximisation is an important part of our interventions. The implementation of the Towards a Fairer Falkirk strategy and action plan provides an opportunity to review and improve existing antipoverty practice in Social Work Adult Services.

Local Housing Strategy 2017-22

Housing and access to a home is important for everyone. However poverty can mean a struggle to:

- Pay rent
- Keep your home warm
- Furnish your house in a way that makes it a home.

This strategy sets out our priorities with regards to housing, recognising that the supply of affordable housing is only part of the solution. The strategy identifies groups who are likely to have issues with accessing and sustaining tenancies and sets out how the Council and Registered Social Landlords will work together to support people including:

- People with specialist housing needs caused by a disability
- Gypsy traveller communities
- Care experienced young people
- Asylum seekers
- People who have suffered from domestic abuse.

Appendix 1
2019-2020
Progress
update

Driver 1

Income from Employment

Hourly Pay

Hours worked per household:

- Skills and qualifications
- Labour Market
- Accessible transport & childcare

Action	SOLD/ Fairer Falkirk Action Plan/Service or Business Plans link	Who is taking this action forward?	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst	Progress to date
Develop/improve referral pathways to Skills Development Scotland - from any partners	SOLD Outcome Two: We will grow our local economy to secure successful business, investment & employment	Employability forum	Those currently excluded from the labour market with barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. A particular focus will be on priority groups.	SDS Post School Services were being delivered from Grangemouth Hub & Denny Library with further outreach services planned for Larbert. This made the SDS Careers Information Advice and Guidance service more accessible to customers in those areas. SDS is not able to offer those community based services at this time because of COVID-19, but hopes to be able to do so again in 2021. Services are now available virtually instead. Pre COVID-19 SDS was also involved in delivering workshops to young people in the Youth Obligation cohort to DWP Customers in Falkirk/Grangemouth.
Investigate the role of Council and Community Planning Partnership Partners as employers-annualised hours instead of zero hours contract -suppliers work through procurement to improve employment conditions	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Falkirk	Those currently excluded from the labour market with barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. A particular focus will be on priority groups.	There are no zero-hour contracts in NHS Forth Valley.
Community Learning and Development - family learning & volunteering "pre" employability	SOLD Outcome Two: We will grow our local economy to secure successful businesses, investment & employment	Fairer Childhood	Those currently excluded from the labour market with barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. A particular focus will be on priority groups.	Family Learning pilot - Reginal Improvement Collaborative given the ok to take on new groups as part of their pilot project. Next steps are identifying suitable times in the year for Braes to get involved and join the project. Braes progress Braes Learning Teaching family group established. Flourish programme running across S1-S3 enabling family members to learn with their young person. The programme currently focuses on Health & Wellbeing (S1), Literacy (S2) and Numeracy (S3). Tracking and monitoring of this programme has been ongoing as part of Braes Pupil Equity programme
Raise awareness of benefit entitlement and changes - Falkirk wide campaign promoting use of entitlement calculator and availability of advice and support	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Falkirk	People most at risk of financial hardship People who experience social or economic disadvantage (e.g. due to disability, long term health conditions, English as an additional language, etc.) Vulnerable people/ People who otherwise would have difficulty representing their own interests	Entitlement to benefit promoted to staff and public via social media during challenge poverty week. This included targeted Facebook advertising to priority groups. Calculator used 457 times during campaign week compared to 39 times the previous week.
Increase uptake of social security Scotland benefits for identified groups	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Fairer Money	People most at risk of financial hardship People who experience social or economic disadvantage (e.g. due to disability, long term health conditions, English as an additional language and homelessness) Vulnerable people/ People who otherwise would have difficulty representing their own interests	Best Start: Falkirk 3% LA Share % Falkirk (% Scotland) Approved 72% (67%) Denied 24% (27%) Withdrawn 4% (4%) Total awards £620491 Young Carers 25 applied, 15 granted total awards £3000. Eligibility data not yet available.
Increase volunteering opportunities regarding priority groups for skills development Family learning - personal plan Developing core skills - literacy and numeracy	SOLD Outcome Two: We will grow our local economy to secure successful businesses, investment & employment SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	CVS/ Children's Services	Those currently excluded from the labour market with barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. A particular focus will be on priority groups.	Review of recording and process of family learning personal plan undertaken. Creation of new Family Learning Plan: 'What Matters to Me' personal learning plan & process to identify pathways to employment, volunteering & further learning. Ongoing
Increase engagement of parents and carers in Community Learning and Development in partnership with libraries - preventative action to make focus on families and children	SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Children's Services	Low income families & single parent families	No progress to date.
Work with local businesses to support employment opportunities e.g. subcontracting	SOLD Outcome Two: We will grow our local economy to secure successful businesses, investment & employment	Employability forum	Those currently excluded from the labour market with barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. A particular focus will be on priority groups.	ETU Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive 2019-2020 = 19 ETU Supported Employment Incentive 2019-2020 = 28 ETU TSEG Supported Business funded places 2019-2020 = 15 Community Benefit in Procurement Opportunities 2019-20 (exercise not complete for this year) 15 employed (including MAs) 5 work experience opportunities Forth Valley College Became their own managing agent for construction 2019/2020 and engaged with over 30 new construction employers. Before the COVID crisis we had engaged with over 20 new employers who were recruiting for apprentices. Covid19 will inevitably impact this in a negative way as we have employers in the last three weeks letting us know that they will no longer be taking on apprentices in August 2020.
Supporting staff and volunteers working with families at risk of poverty to increase volunteering and employability skills through food	SOLD Outcome Two: We will grow our local economy to secure successful businesses, investment & employment	Fairer Falkirk	Staff and volunteers who are working in SIMD 1-3 and/or with groups at higher risk of poor health and wellbeing/ inequalities.	Implemented food capacity building programme (training, grants, funding agreements and resources) in community, prison and early years settings.

Driver 2 Costs of Living

Housing Costs

Other Costs of Living

- Debts
- Accessible transport & childcare
- Enablers

Action	SOLD/ Fairer Falkirk Action Plan/Service or Business Plans link	Who is taking this action forward?	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst	Progress to date						
Develop dignified community food plans which address local food poverty priorities including considering Community Food Networks and Community Larders to address food insecurity	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Four: Our population will be healthier	Fairer Falkirk/Children's Services	Low income families & single parent families	Community Food Plan Workshop for Denny & District held in November 19 held as part of a series of Local Community Action Plan Workshops CLDS Support to community organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Falkirk Food Consortium (FFC) established in June 2019. · Successful application to SG Investing in Communities Fund awarded £156K in January 2020. · 3 Paid Membership Food Pantries established in Central Locality, (Langlees, Camelon & Westquarter) · 3 Pantries in Development in East & West locality, (Grangemouth & Denny) (Dec 19 - Mar 20) Community Food Hub established to received EU Exit SG Procured Food from Fare Share. Work with 8 community organisations to distribute to 711 families at risk of food insecurity.						
Implement the new concessions and charges policy for Council and Community Trust charges	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Falkirk/Finance	Low income families & single parent families	Policy agreed and implementation from April 2020 re extending free school meals entitlement, breakfast clubs and music tuition fees.						
Address the cost of transport as a barrier to accessing local authority and NHS Services	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Two: We will grow our local economy to secure successful businesses, investment & employment	Community Planning Partnership/Fairer Falkirk	Those currently excluded from the labour market with barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. A particular focus will be on priority groups.	There is national policy set which states that payment can only be made to those who comply with the concessionary travel. Plans in place to start a test of change in paediatric AHP clinics in Falkirk with Falkirk Councils travel lead however work was halted due to pandemic. Developed an internal flyer and due to explore how this is promoted. Working to gather support from DWP to identify those entitled to concessionary travel cards. Employment and Training Unit have adapted their travel reimbursement process to ensure equality of access to skills development and employability provision. This ensures participants can travel and attend provision regardless of individual financial circumstances and decreases accessibility issues for those experiencing poverty. Participants are issued with a bus pass on a weekly basis while attending provision in the early stages of their interventions support. Those who undertake programmes of more than 3 hours a day will also be eligible for a subsistence payment. Participants who take part in programmes of 16 hours or more a week will be provided with travel and subsistence payments, directly into their bank account in advance of attendance to alleviate the need to pay out expenses and have these reimbursed to them. For those who have issues with bank related debt, referral and support will be sought from community advice services and an alternative payment method established.						
Promote entitlement to benefits, support to check fuel tariffs and affordable credit options etc at tenancy sign up	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Money	Low income families & single parent families	No progress to date						
Identify opportunities to align Poverty Act duties and Pupil Equity Funding Planning	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Fairer Childhood		PEF Steering Group and Fairer Falkirk Group to identify opportunities to join up.						
Develop community growing including fresh produce, links into volunteering, skills development, help tackle other health issues	SOLD Outcome Four: Our population will be healthier	Children's Services/ Development Services	Low income families & single parent families	£3.5k of Investing in Communities Fund allocated to community in organisations in Bainsford & Langlees & Grangemouth to develop growing areas Recruitment process started in February 20 for 3 Pantry workers (1 per locality) to take forward growing initiatives and volunteering opportunities						
Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on access to money/work/ training	SOLD Outcome Two: We will grow our local economy to secure successful businesses, investment & employment	Employability forum	Families experiencing domestic abuse.	No progress to date.						
Review the best approaches to improving family nutrition and deliver actions as part of a dignified community food plan	SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults SOLD Outcome Four: Our population will be healthier	Fairer Childhood	Low income families & single parent families	Small grants and a range of food hygiene, food and health and cooking skills training, pictorial resources, breastfeeding and starting solids support have been provided via food projects. Support was provided to the consultations on developing local food plans and actions were identified pre COVID-19. The landscape has changed due to the pandemic. As we move out of the emergency phase, additional opportunities that support food plans, food recovery and reduced dependency on food aid are being explored with partnership group which would take a whole system approach improving family and community nutrition. E.g. Sustainable Food Places						
Support community organisations to provide advice e.g. fuel tariffs and local access to community learning opportunities	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Money	People most at risk of financial hardship People who experience social or economic disadvantage (e.g. due to disability, long term health condition, English as an additional language, etc.) Vulnerable people/ People who otherwise would have difficulty representing their own interests	For Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB): Quarterly meetings of the Fairer Falkirk Group attended by local organisations and Council services to share information to maximise resources. For CAB: Bi-yearly Fairer Money conference took place Nov 2018, bringing local organisations together to highlight partnership work in tackling poverty. Work with community organisations ongoing. See Falkirk Food Consortium The Council hosts a Falkirk Fuel Forum twice a year to update local organisations on fuel poverty issues which includes tariff & energy efficiency grant advice. Falkirk Council energy website pages kept up to date with relevant information. All new Staff receive Fuel Poverty training in order to help and assist clients. Community Advice Services Debt and Welfare Benefits teams supported people experiencing hardship due to wet electric heating systems.						
Reduce the cost of the school day: Increase uptake of free meals, including looking at carrying over free school meal allowance from one day to another	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Fairer Childhood	Low income families & single parent families	Free Meal Entitlement Number of awards <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Year 2017/18</td> <td>3,191</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 2018/19</td> <td>3,523</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 2019/20</td> <td>3,870</td> </tr> </table> The option to carry forward unspent FME is restricted to young people in the secondary sector aligned to the menu choice available. In secondary, this means the young person in receipt of FME can spend up to £2.55 per school day, either on a two-course lunch or for example on a breakfast option and a lighter lunch. Should they wish, they can top up their card from their own funds to increase their daily spending. Due to risks identified around the need to move from daily to weekly reconciliation, resulting specifically in the risk that pupils will go over their weekly allowance, the decision has been made not to implement a plan to carry over free school meal allowance at present. The priority is being given to implementing concessionary FME awards based on the council decision taken last year to do so.	Year 2017/18	3,191	Year 2018/19	3,523	Year 2019/20	3,870
Year 2017/18	3,191									
Year 2018/19	3,523									
Year 2019/20	3,870									
Reduce holiday hunger and improve access to activities	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Fairer Childhood	Low income families & single parent families	Evaluation of the 2019 summer programme shows that 15,570 meals were provided at a total cost of £24,567. Falkirk Community Trust (Active Schools) worked alongside Head Teachers to identify children who would benefit from a weeks (free) sport coaching. 210 children were involved in the sports coaching 1400 breakfasts provided 1050 lunches provided 2100 fruit provided 1050 snacks provided Falkirk Foodbank provided a 10-day food parcel to mitigate the impacts of 'holiday hunger', with 10 families receiving two 14-day parcels. Referrals were made by Social Work, Teachers, Health Visitors etc. 220 families referred for a food parcel 331 Adults 541 Children 9920 meals provided						
Provide free nursery food and snacks in all council early years establishments.	SOLD Outcome 1: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Falkirk Children's Commission and Falkirk Council Children's Services	Will benefit all children to avoid stigma. The aim is to benefit low income households.	Free snacks and food now provided at all FC early years establishments.						
Review how we identify and assess child neglect relating to parental substance misuse	SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults SOLD Outcome Four: Our population will be healthier	Fairer Childhood	Children at risk of neglect as a result of parental substance abuse	CPC self-evaluation activities & specific actions in CP workstream / Closer to Home Strategy and SCR improvement plans. Multi agency risk assessments, use of tools and frameworks, moving to blended training are actions in these plans.						

Driver 3

Income from social security and benefits in kind

Generosity of benefits.

- Eligibility criteria
- Reach of benefits

Action	SOLD/ Fairer Falkirk Action Plan/Service or Business Plans link	Who is taking this action forward?	Group(s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst	Progress to date
Promote entitlement to childcare (2+) and identify and address barriers.	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Fairer Childhood	Low income families & single parent families	Ongoing
Develop a "visual" picture/map of what could/should be accessed, and advisors can then ensure they are not missing options - reducing gaps or duplication at the same time for partners	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Falkirk	Low income families & single parent families	Support services map developed and available. Map highlights period products, welfare advice, community food, and access to online services across localities.
Maximising the uptake of Scottish devolved benefits, for example Best Start grants and Baby boxes, with priority groups and targeting this approach with specific teams, for example, income maximisation/ community advice services and registrars	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Fairer Money	Low income families & single parent families	Welfare Benefits Teams promoted Best Start Grants within Schools & Nurseries. Letter highlighting best start grant and funeral payment providing information on the Welfare Benefit team included within the registrar packs. Falkirk Council Welfare Benefit web pages updated - Best Start and Funeral Payment and on registrar's page and enrolment pages within children services
Investigate referral rates and uptake of income maximisation support by priority groups	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Money	Low income families & single parent families	Data not available for eligibility for all benefits or for all priority groups. Fairer Childhood Group working with DWP to get data.
Increase staff awareness and understanding of child poverty including how they might make a difference within their role	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Culture	People living in poverty and accessing Council services	Poverty awareness training delivered to c200 housing staff.
Raise awareness of benefit entitlement and changes - Falkirk wide campaign promoting use of entitlement calculator and availability of advice and support	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Falkirk	People most at risk of financial hardship People who experience social or economic disadvantage (e.g. due to disability, long term health conditions, English as an additional language, etc.) Vulnerable people/ People who otherwise would have difficulty representing their own interests	Entitlement to benefit promoted to staff and public via social media during challenge poverty week. This included targeted Facebook advertising to priority groups. Calculator used 457 times during campaign week compared to 39 times the previous week.
Increase low income families' awareness and uptake of welfare benefits and entitlements	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Falkirk	Pregnant mums and families with children under three with a focus on low income families	Deliver Routine Enquiry on financial wellbeing undertaken at key midwifery and health visiting contacts. All referrals made via Council Advice Service with face to face service where required.
Increase NHS and Health and Social Care Partnership staff knowledge, awareness & confidence for signposting patients to income maximisation & benefits advice	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live	Fairer Falkirk	HSCP locality teams GP & primary care teams Public Health/ Community staff e.g. health visitors, district nurses, family nurse practitioners	Development of tables of services across FV where patients can be signposted to for income max support. Collation of support links for primary care staff - to aid patients in claiming benefits e.g. when off sick from work.
Increase uptake of social security Scotland benefits for identified groups	SOLD Outcome One: Our area will be a fairer and more equal place to live SOLD Outcome Three: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults	Fairer Money	People most at risk of financial hardship People who experience social or economic disadvantage (e.g. due to disability, long term health conditions, English as an additional language, etc.) Vulnerable people/ People who otherwise would have difficulty representing their own interests	Best Start: Falkirk 3% LA Share % Falkirk (% Scotland) Approved 72% (67%) Denied 24% (27%) Withdrawn 4% (4%) Total awards £620491 Young Carers 25 applied, 15 granted total awards £3000. Eligibility data not yet available.

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