

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL25 June 2025Report by Director of Business Operations and Partnerships and Chief Officer HSCPLOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the annual East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Report as required by the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that Council:
 - (a) notes the Local Child Poverty Action Report as required under the Child Poverty Act 2017; and
 - (b) approves the report for publication, subject to IJB and NHSGGC Population Health and Wellbeing Committee approval.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3. Tackling child poverty is a key priority for both Scottish Government and East Renfrewshire Council. Scottish Government's Child Poverty Action Plan "Best Start, Bright Futures" sets out the approaches being taken at a national level. Each local authority, along with their health board, is required to publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) which describes the approaches being taken at a local level.

4. The LCPAR guidance allows for multi-year action planning, with annual progress updates. The [2024 East Renfrewshire LCPAR](#) sets out our approach to tackling child poverty (2024 – 2027). Specifically, we committed to:

- improving our understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty;
- improving income from employment for parents;
- enhancing gains for families from income maximisation and social security; and
- reducing costs of living.

5. The 2025 LCPAR provides updates on progress between April 2024 and March 2025. The report describes actions taken, includes relevant progress measures where available, and provides case studies to illustrate areas of good practice. It is structured around our 2024 commitments set out above.

6. Child poverty in East Renfrewshire is the lowest in Scotland, at 12% or 2,842 children. This has fallen since last year which was 14% or 3,247 children. This decline is positive and suggests that the work we are doing is having an impact. However, these figures are still above the targets set out in the Child Poverty Act, which aim to reduce child poverty in Scotland to 10% by 2030. Therefore we need to continue to prioritise action to tackle child poverty, and continue to work in partnership to deliver on this.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

7. There is no specific budget associated with this report. Some of the activities referenced in the report require budget, which comes from a mix of Scottish Government funding and existing budgets within ERC and NHSGGC.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

8. The Child Poverty Oversight Group includes partners from East Renfrewshire Council, HSCP, NHSGGC, ER Citizens Advice Bureau, Police Scotland, Barrhead Housing Association and Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire. Progress reported through the LCPAR has been delivered in partnership.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

9. As this report is primarily a progress and performance update, there are no implications in terms of staffing, property, legal, IT, equalities, or sustainability. Each of these issues has been mainstreamed through service plans and equality, fairness and rights impact assessments carried out where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 - (b) approves the report for publication, subject to IJB and NHSGGC Population Health and Wellbeing Committee approval.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Best Start, Bright Futures: Scottish Government tackling child poverty plan 2022-2026](#)

[East Renfrewshire LCPAR 2024](#)



East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Report Progress Updates 2024–2025

Contents

Introduction from Community Planning Partnership Chair	3
Background	4
Profile of children and young people in East Renfrewshire	8
1 Improved understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty	11
What we know about children living in poverty in East Renfrewshire:	12
- Actions we have taken in 2024-25	13
2 Improved income from employment for parents	16
What we know about employment in East Renfrewshire:	17
- Actions we have taken in 2024-25	18
- Measures of progress	22
3 Enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security	23
What we know about social security uptake in East Renfrewshire:	24
- Actions we have taken in 2024-25	25
- Measures of progress	28
4 Reduced costs of living	29
What we know about costs of living in East Renfrewshire:	30
- Actions we have taken in 2024-25	31
- Measures of progress	34
Mitigating actions	35
Conclusion and Next steps	37
Footnotes	39



INTRODUCTION FROM COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP CHAIR



East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership is committed to addressing child poverty and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive. Our Local Child Poverty Action Report outlines the steps we have taken and the progress we have made in tackling child poverty within our area. This report highlights our ongoing efforts to support families, and provide essential services to those in need.

The report complements our new strategic vision, **A Place to Grow**, our Children's Plan **"At Our Heart – The Next Steps"** and is in line with our commitment to **The Promise**.

In East Renfrewshire, we are proud to have the lowest rate of child poverty in Scotland and it is encouraging that this rate has declined over recent years. This shows that the local and national actions combined are making an impact. However, we cannot be complacent and we must continue to tackle child poverty as a priority.

In this report, we detail the actions we have taken over the past year to reduce child poverty, including initiatives to increase income from employment, enhance social security support, and reduce the costs of living. We also include details of the wider support we have provided to children and families, and we outline our future plans and commitments to continue this vital work.

Together, with our partners and the community, we are dedicated to ensuring that every child and young person, regardless of background or circumstance will fully flourish on their journey to adulthood and that we will work together to reduce poverty.

Councillor Owen O'Donnell
Chair of Community Planning Partnership

BACKGROUND

Child poverty remains a critical issue in East Renfrewshire, affecting the lives and futures of many children and families. The child poverty rate here is the lowest in Scotland at 12%. However, this equates to approximately 2,842 children and we consider this still too many.

Legislative Framework

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets ambitious targets to reduce child poverty across Scotland by 2030. The Act mandates that by 2030, less than:

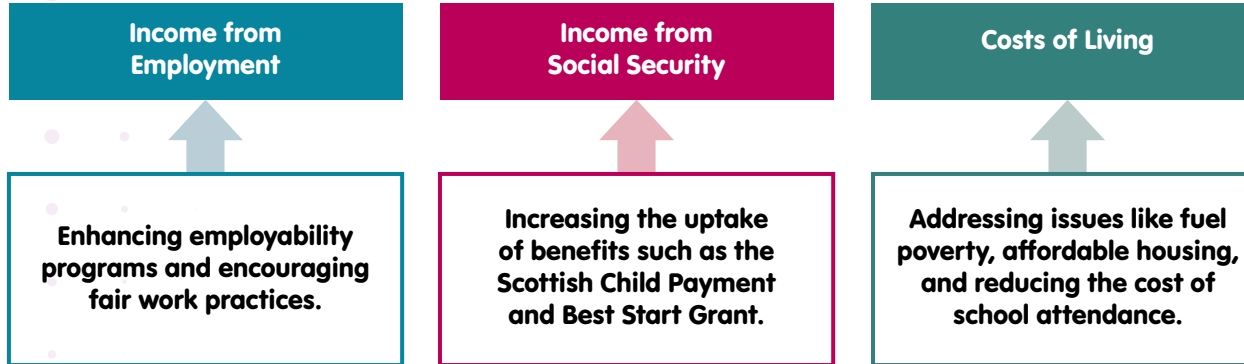
- 10% of children are in relative poverty,
- 5% of children are in absolute poverty,
- 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation, and
- 5% of children are in persistent poverty.

These targets are based on the income left to a household after housing costs. The Act also requires local authorities and health boards to produce annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports, detailing the measures taken to reduce child poverty and progress towards these targets.



Strategic Initiatives

In alignment with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act, the Scottish Government launched the **Best Start, Bright Futures** delivery plan for 2022-2026. This plan outlines comprehensive actions to support families and reduce child poverty, focusing on three main drivers:



Best Start, Bright Futures emphasises a collaborative approach, involving all sectors of society to deliver sustainable progress towards the 2030 targets. It builds on the foundations laid by the previous plan, "Every Child, Every Chance," and aims to deliver transformational change through targeted policies and support.



Local Context

In East Renfrewshire, our Community Planning Partnership vision, **A Place to Grow**, aims to create a community where everyone can flourish, thrive, and grow. By 2040, we envision a place where:



Ensuring every child and young person can fully flourish on their journey to adulthood.

Creating an inclusive, connected, and green place with a fair, sustainable, and healthy local economy.

Promoting good health and wellbeing at all stages of life, with communities leading positive change.

Our efforts are also guided by **The Promise**, a ten-year plan to improve the care system for care-experienced young people, ensuring they are loved, safe, and respected. Additionally, the **East Renfrewshire Children's Plan** for 2023-2026, titled **"At Our Heart – The Next Steps,"** sets out our vision and priorities for children, young people, and family services over three years.

Together, these frameworks and initiatives form the backbone of our strategy to tackle child poverty in East Renfrewshire, ensuring that all children and families have the support they need to thrive.

Report format

This report provides updates on the commitments we set out in our report last year. Specifically:

- **Improved understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty:** enhancing our use of data to better understand the profile of poverty; listening to the voices of those experiencing poverty; and creating a more 'joined up approach' to service delivery.
 - **Improved income from employment for parents:** support to both unemployed and in-work parents through the Parental Employability Programme.
 - **Enhanced gains from income maximisation and social security:** increased poverty awareness for frontline staff; and increased accessibility of support.
 - **Reduced costs of living:** ensuring strategies, policies and budget decisions take a child poverty and children's rights lens.
- Each commitment is set out in a separate chapter which describes the current position, action taken and the progress measures. In addition, we have included a chapter around mitigating actions which aim to support those children and young people who are currently living in poverty.



**Improved understanding of
the circumstances of families
in, or at risk of, poverty**



**Improved income from
employment for parents**



**Enhanced gains from income
maximisation and social security**



**Reduced costs
of living**

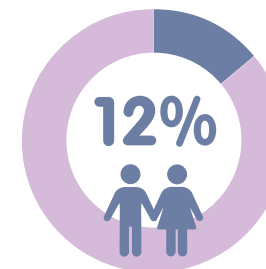
PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE



One in five (19,355) of our population are children aged 0-16 years ¹

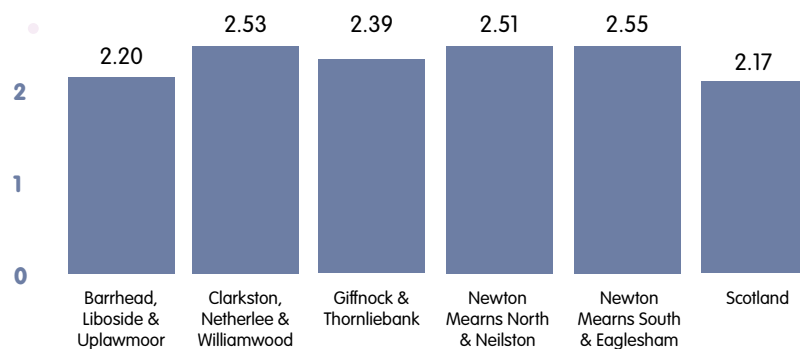


We have the highest proportion of children and young people in any local authority in Scotland ¹



Child poverty rates after housing costs are the lowest in Scotland, at 12% (2,842 children). This has fallen from last year at 14% (3,247 children) ³

Average Household Size



We continue to have the largest average household size, and all wards are larger than the Scottish average ¹



More than 9 out of 10 children are living in a household with at least one adult in employment. Less than 1 in 10 children are living in a workless household ²



Child poverty rates are highest in parts of Barrhead and Neilston ²

Child poverty priority groups

Scottish Government identified six priority groups who are at highest risk of poverty. This is what we know about the profile of each in our area.



Large Families

We have the largest household size in Scotland; averaging 2.4.

1



Disabled households

Around one in five (21%) of families in receipt of Universal Credit are claiming Disabled Child Element.

4



Minority Ethnic families

One quarter of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. This has nearly doubled in the last decade. Around 70 different languages are spoken in our schools.

5



Lone Parents

53% of those living in poverty are living in lone parent households.

2



Child under 1

Around 12% of families (306 out of 2,528) claiming Universal Credit have a child aged 1 year old or younger. In East Renfrewshire there are 125 children aged 1 year old or younger living in relative poverty.

2&4



Young parents

There were 47 children born in 2023 to mothers who were under the age of 25. This accounted for 6% of all births in the area which is lower than the Scottish average of 14%.

6

Progress summary

✓ We said

We will *improve* our understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty

We will *improve* income from employment for parents

We will *enhance* gains from income maximisation and social security

We will *reduce* the costs of living

✓ We did

Explored a range of different data sources, including the cost-of-living dashboard, external and internal data sources.

Offered a dedicated support to parents already in work, to tackle in-work poverty.

Delivered extensive training with frontline staff to ensure they can best help families.

Delivered training to school leadership staff around the profile of poverty, Cost of the School Day and Increasing Equity.

✓ We did

Listened to the feedback from low-income parents.

Worked in partnership to provide tailored support for parents with a disability, or raising a child with a disability.

Extended the reach of support services to make them more accessible to families.

Delivered the Energy Best Deal programme to tackle fuel poverty.

✓ We did

Provided support in the spaces most convenient for families.

Provided paid placements for parents within our Education Department.

Promoted support services widely and through different methods.

Piloted an economic empowerment project to support women affected by domestic abuse.

Introduced the Time to Flex project to help create a local employment market which meets the needs of parents and carers.

Continued to ensure maternity and early years services have strong referral pathways to support services.

✓ The impact

Identified areas of 'hidden poverty' or financial vulnerability which changed how some services were delivered e.g. Thrive Under Five and Cost of the School Day

Supported double the number of 'in-work' parents, with a quarter of them increasing their income.

Provided financial wellbeing advice to over 3,000 families.

Over half of all schools have undertaken a 'Cost of the School Day audit' to identify and reduce financial barriers faced by families.

Supported over 100 parents with training or qualifications and over 60 into employment.

Achieved total financial gains for child related benefits worth over £2 million.

Secured client financial gain of over £60,000 in relation to energy costs.

Successfully piloted a new flexible accreditation with one local employer.

Managed over £2 million of debt for households with children

1: IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF FAMILIES IN, OR AT RISK OF, POVERTY

East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland and this is increasing. We are working hard to maintain the lowest rate of child poverty in Scotland at 12% or 2,842 children (after housing costs) or 2,099 (before housing costs).

In a smaller authority like East Renfrewshire where partnership working is critical, it is crucial that we can delve deeper and really understand the needs of our children and families. We also need to be aware of households who are financially vulnerable and at risk of poverty, at the earliest opportunity to provide preventative and early intervention support, with a 'no wrong door' approach.

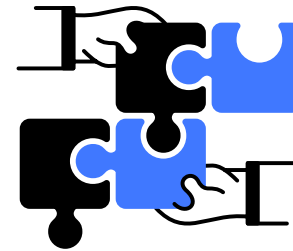
We aim to achieve this improved understanding by:



Enhancing use of data to better understand the profile of families in poverty, and those at risk of poverty



Listening to the voices of families experiencing poverty and using these to shape services delivered



Creating a more 'joined up approach' to ensure families receive coordinated support from all relevant services, with 'no wrong door'

What we currently know about children living in poverty in East Renfrewshire:



Parental Employment

Around **75%** of children in poverty have **at least one parent in work.**

Around **25%** live in **workless households.**

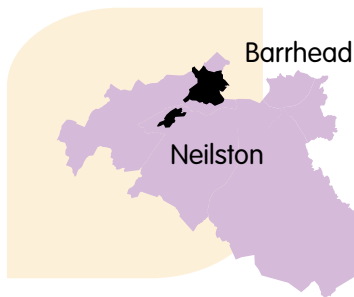
2



Household Type

Over **50%** of children in poverty live in **lone parent households.**

2



Geographic Concentration

Highest rates in **Barrhead and Neilston.**

Around **half** of children in parts of **Dunterlie, East Arthurlie and Dovecothall, and Neilston and Uplawmoor.**

Over a **third** of children in parts of **Auchenback.**

2



Hidden Poverty / Financial vulnerability

Exists in all areas **across the authority,** and not always visible in statistics.

Families living beyond their means in traditionally more affluent areas as evidenced by the cost-of-living dashboard and financial advice services uptake.

7

Actions we have taken in 2024-25

Uncovering Hidden Poverty: A Data-Driven Transformation

In East Renfrewshire, we're working to better understand poverty - its causes, impacts, and how to intervene earlier. Partnering with Smart Data Foundry, we've developed a Cost-of-Living Dashboard that uses anonymised banking data to identify households under financial stress, such as those relying on overdrafts, overspending, depending heavily on benefits, or lacking emergency savings.



Case Study: Using Data to Rethink Financial Vulnerability and Service Delivery

Background

In collaboration with **Smart Data Foundry**, our organisation has continued to develop and refine a **Cost-of-Living Dashboard** - a powerful data-driven tool designed to identify and understand financial vulnerability across our local authority area.

The Challenge

Traditional indicators of deprivation, such as the **Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**, often fail to capture the full picture of financial hardship. Many individuals and families experiencing financial stress may not live in areas officially classified as deprived. This creates a risk of overlooking "hidden poverty" and missing some households who might benefit from support services.

The Solution

The Cost-of-Living Dashboard uses anonymised **banking data** to identify households that meet specific financial vulnerability criteria, including:

- Regular reliance on overdrafts
- Spending beyond income
- High dependence on benefits
- Low emergency financial resilience

The dashboard can track changes over time and look at differences by income brackets and age categories. It also includes a **mapping tool** that visualises financial vulnerability across geographic areas. The dashboard has revealed unexpected patterns of hardship, and identified areas where financial vulnerability appears to exist, but households are not engaging with money advice or other support services. It highlighted geographical differences where other factors (income and age) remained comparable, suggesting the varying impact of cost of living in different parts of the authority.

Case Study: Using Data to Rethink Financial Vulnerability and Service Delivery

Impact and Insights

The insights from the dashboard have led to some key changes in service delivery:

- **Inclusive Program Design:** The **Thrive Under 5** initiative, which promotes healthy weight in pre-school children, was designed to be **open to all families**, not just those in lower SIMD areas. This inclusive approach led to referrals from more affluent areas and enabled **parental workshops** to be delivered across a broader range of locations.
- **Challenging Assumptions:** Data shared with **Headteachers** revealed that:
 - Many families living beyond their means were **not receiving free school meals**
 - Some areas with **high educational attainment** also showed high overdraft reliance

These findings challenged traditional assumptions about poverty and encouraged schools to **rethink their approach** to initiatives like **Cost of the School Day**, ensuring they are more responsive to the nuanced realities of financial vulnerability.

Conclusion

This partnership and the resulting dashboard have expanded how we understand and respond to financial hardship. Complementing the traditional deprivation indices and embracing real-time financial data, we gain a wider understanding of need and we are better equipped to **target support, design inclusive interventions**, and **challenge perceptions** of poverty.

Building on learning from our work with Smart Data Foundry, we are refocussing work on integrating internal datasets at a local level - like Council Tax Reduction, Housing Benefit, free school meals, clothing grants, and rent arrears - to build a fuller picture of household vulnerability. This will help us target support earlier and more effectively. We are engaged in the national data-sharing discussions around Scalable Approach to Vulnerability via Interoperability (SAVVI) and Scottish Child Payment data. As these projects develop, we will respond and utilise this additional data as appropriate.

We're also using postcode-level data from CACI Ltd. to estimate household income, spending, and disposable income. This helps pinpoint areas under the most financial pressure. Through a COSLA-led agreement, we're working with other councils to explore how this data can shape wider policy. Together, these efforts mark a shift towards a more data-informed, proactive, and equitable approach to tackling poverty.

Listening, Learning, and Evolving: How Lived Experience Shapes Services in East Renfrewshire

At Work EastRen, we centre service design around the voices of those we support. In 2024–25, we held five Employability Feedback Groups with parents from priority groups, offering a safe space to share experiences and shape future services. These insights, along with input from the Local Employability Partnership parental sub-group, directly inform our Annual Investment Plan and guide Parental Employment Support (PES) grant-funded provision.

We're also running a targeted housing survey to hear from families with lived experience of poverty. The findings will help us better understand our families which will help inform future housing services.

Creating a Seamless Support System for Families in East Renfrewshire

In East Renfrewshire, we continue to build a system where there is truly “no wrong door” for families seeking support.

To ensure support is both accessible and familiar, our Parental Employment Support Advisers, along with MART and Family First teams, are now co-located in several primary schools and early years centres. These local hubs offer parents a convenient and collaborative space to seek advice and support, right where their children learn and grow.

Following the success of this work, the model has been expanded to include libraries and additional family centres, making it easier for families to access help in their own communities.

Together, these efforts reflect a deep commitment to listening, adapting, and acting - ensuring that every parent in East Renfrewshire can access the right support, at the right time, in the right place.



2: IMPROVED INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT FOR PARENTS

Employment alone does not prevent poverty. Almost three quarters of the children living in poverty in East Renfrewshire are in a household with at least one adult in employment. We need to focus not only on getting parents and carers into employment but also supporting them to progress whilst they are in work. The Parental Employability Support programme will support both unemployed and in-work parents.

Median earnings for those living in our area are higher than average, however median earnings for those working here are lower than average. Therefore, we need to consider the local availability of well-paid, family-friendly employment opportunities. We also recognise the importance of transport and childcare as levers to employment. Whilst these are not specific to the area of child poverty, we will work to ensure these are influenced through a child poverty lens.

We aim to achieve this improved income by:



Increasing into work support for unemployed parents and support to in-work parents to progress in the workplace

What we know about employment in East Renfrewshire:



Employment Rate

Around 80% of people are economically active
- higher than the national average.

8



Earnings

£862 for residents
(above the Scottish average of £740).
£693 for those working in the area.

9



Households with Children

Most children live in households with working adults:

Around three quarters (72.5%) of children live in households where all adults are employed

Around a fifth (21.4%) have at least one adult in employment

Less than one in ten (6.1%) live in workless households

Almost 3/4 of children in poverty live in households with at least one working adult.

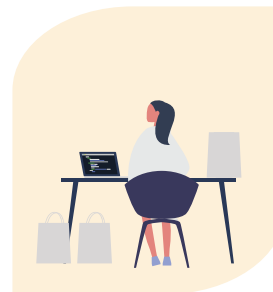
10



Real Living Wage Employers

35 accredited employers.
Most are small businesses (28 with ≤50 employees).

11



Business Landscape

2,670 businesses, with 98.9% being micro businesses.
Only 1.1% employ 50+ people.

8

Actions we have taken in 2024-25

Driving Change Through Partnership: A Year of Progress in Parental Employability and Inclusion

Collaboration is central to our employability strategy. The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) parental sub-group meets regularly, bringing together partners from housing, education, health, and employment services to co-design actions based on parent feedback.

Since introducing an in-work adviser, tailored support for working parents has doubled - 76 parents supported, with 24% improving household income. Twelve accessed training grants to boost skills and prospects.

Work EastRen and Enable Works supported 38 parents with disabilities or caring responsibilities; 14 moved into work and 15 received training. Community outreach through schools and family centres increased registrations from 131 to 215.

To address health-related barriers, 26 parents joined wellbeing programmes with RAMH and East Renfrewshire Leisure Trust, receiving counselling and confidence-building support.

A parental traineeship programme offered paid placements in nurseries and education admin roles. Of 13 participants, 8 secured or extended employment, 2 joined the supply list, and 3 continue to receive support.

Parent voices shaped the Local Employability Partnership delivery plan through four lived experience sessions. Financial inclusion remains key, with a dedicated officer supporting 122 parents with budgeting, benefits, and better-off calculations.

Engagement has grown through evening sessions, targeted school communications, and partnerships with employers via the Chamber of Commerce, Business Gateway, and Flexibility Works.



Creating a Local Job Market That Works for Families: The Time to Flex Story

Helping parents into work means more than offering support - it requires jobs that fit family life. Feedback from local parents highlighted key barriers: limited affordable childcare and a lack of flexible job opportunities.

To address this, we launched Time to Flex, funded by the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund and delivered with Flexibility Works. The project supports local employers to adopt flexible working through workshops, tailored advice, and peer learning.

A major milestone is the UK's first flexible working accreditation, developed by Flexibility Works with the Robertson Trust. Barrhead Housing Association, a pilot participant, has already achieved accreditation - demonstrating how flexible practices benefit both staff and the wider community.

By working together, we're building a job market that truly supports parents and carers to thrive.

Case Study: Barrhead Housing Association – Embedding Agile Working for a Happier, Healthier Workforce

Organisation Overview

Barrhead Housing Association is a community-based housing provider in East Renfrewshire, Scotland. With a team of 30 employees, the organisation manages over 1,000 social rent properties. The workforce includes approximately 10 office-based, non-customer-facing roles and 20 frontline positions that require more structured hours and on-site presence.

Why Flexibility?

Barrhead Housing recognised the need to attract and retain talented individuals from diverse backgrounds, many of whom require flexibility to balance work with personal responsibilities. The leadership believed that empowering staff with greater autonomy over when and where they work would not only enhance wellbeing but also improve productivity and service delivery.

The Journey to Agile Working

While formal flexible arrangements such as part-time and compressed hours had long been in place, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the potential of more informal, agile working models. In March 2024, Barrhead Housing introduced a comprehensive agile working policy applicable to all staff. The policy acknowledges the varying nature of roles but commits to flexibility wherever operationally feasible.



Case Study: Barrhead Housing Association – Embedding Agile Working for a Happier, Healthier Workforce

Current Flexible Working Practices

- **Informal Flexibility:**

Staff can choose when and where they work, provided business needs are met. Remote working is supported for tasks that don't require physical presence.

- **No Core Hours:**

Employees are not bound by fixed start or end times. They can adjust their schedules around personal commitments, as long as they remain responsive during standard business hours.

- **Agile Leave:**

Up to 12 additional paid days off per year, separate from annual leave, replacing the previous time-off-in-lieu (TOIL) system. These can be taken in full or half-day increments for any reason.

Implementation Challenges

Initial rollout revealed the need for clearer guidance on how agile leave could be used - particularly around combining it with annual leave (which is not permitted). The organisation invested in training line managers to ensure consistent and confident application of the policy.

Impact and Outcomes

The shift to agile working has had a transformative effect:

- **Employee Feedback:** Staff have described the flexibility as “life changing,” with many reporting positive impacts on their families and personal lives.
- **Improved Morale and Teamwork:** Survey data shows a boost in morale and collaboration.
- **Reduced Absence and Turnover:** Sickness absence has declined, and staff turnover remains low - both attributed to the supportive work environment.
- **Output-Based Performance:** Success is measured by outcomes rather than hours worked, fostering accountability and trust.

Looking Ahead

While the organisation explored the idea of a four-day workweek, the team collectively decided it wasn't suitable due to potential disruption to customer service. This open dialogue reflects a mature, collaborative culture. Barrhead Housing remains committed to evolving its flexible working practices in partnership with staff, ensuring they remain responsive to changing needs while staying true to their mission.

Key Takeaways

- Flexibility supports recruitment, retention, and wellbeing.
- Agile leave recognises extra effort and promotes work-life balance.
- Measuring outputs over hours encourages autonomy and accountability.
- Ongoing dialogue with staff ensures policies remain relevant and effective.

Building Futures: How NHSGGC is Driving Employability and Opportunity

As one of the region's largest employers, NHSGGC is driving change through a wide range of employability and skills programmes. Across the Health Board area, we have delivered:

- **Modern Apprenticeships:** 42 young people have moved into permanent roles, with 47 more in training.
- **Graduate Apprenticeships:** 30 staff are studying Business Management through a new partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University.
- **Targeted Programmes:** Initiatives like the Academy Pre-employment Programme and Project Search support young people, including those with additional needs.
- **Workplace Support:** Two Employability Support Workers provide one-to-one coaching to help trainees succeed.
- **Community Engagement:** Over 1,100 people reached through career events and Scottish Apprentice Week activities.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** NHSGGC collaborates with MCR Pathways, the NHS Scotland Anchor Group, and the Glasgow Skills and Employment Board.

Whilst we cannot specify the data at an East Renfrewshire level, we know these efforts reflect a coordinated, inclusive approach to tackling poverty and improving long-term opportunities for local families.



Measures of progress

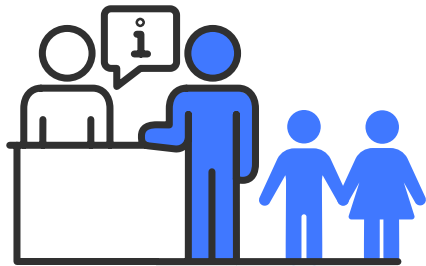
Below are the key indicators and progress measures associated with 'improved income from employment for parents'.

Indicator	Data source	Baseline 2023/24	Target	2024/25
Number of in-work parents engaging with PES programme	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	38	50	76
Percentage increased household income for in-work parents	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	20% increased household income	35% increased household income	24%
Number of PES parents receiving training and/or qualification	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	18	25	106
Number of PES parents moving into employment or self-employment	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	41	41	62
Number of parents with a disability in the household accessing employability support	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	8	20	35
Number of PES parents supported into volunteering	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	24	30	3

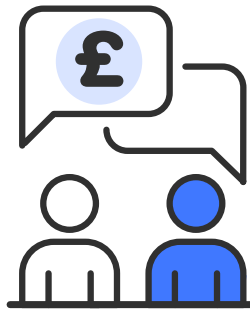
3: ENHANCED GAINS FOR FAMILIES FROM INCOME MAXIMISATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Households in East Renfrewshire are less likely to receive income through social security than other parts of Scotland. Uptake of Social Security Scotland benefits is lower than many other parts of Scotland, as is the percentage of children receiving Free School Meals and Education Maintenance Allowance. For some, this may be because household income makes them ineligible for support. However, for others, this could be a lack of awareness and/or a need for support to apply. Despite an increase over the last year, estimates suggest that there are still around 15% of households eligible for the Scottish Child Payment who are not taking it up. We need to work to ensure all households are supported in a dignified way to receive their full entitlements and have their household income maximised, where they wish to do so. This links with the previous section (1) which focuses on the use of data to identify and better understand the profile of families in poverty, and target support accordingly.

We aim to achieve these enhanced gains by:



Increasing poverty awareness of frontline staff working with families



Increasing accessibility of money advice and rights support

What we know about social security uptake in East Renfrewshire



Universal Credit

2,528 families receive it.
 538 claim **Disabled Child Entitlement**.
 306 families have a child aged 1 year or younger.

4



Scottish Child Payment

3,315 applications approved since 2020.
 485 of these between **2024–2025**.

12



Food Parcels (Apr–Sep 2024)

Around 2,000 food parcels were
 distributed to households with children.
 Equivalent to 77 families per week.

13



Best Start Grant (2024–2025)

3,045 payments totaling **£255,013**:
 Pregnancy & Baby: 80 payments (£43,888)
 Early Learning: 125 payments (£39,121)
 School Age: 220 payments (£70,122)
 Food: 2,980 payments (£101,882)

12

Scottish Welfare Fund (2024–2025)

1,533 successful applications totalling **£689,375**:
 Community Care Grants: 423 applications (£544,252)
28% increase since 2023/24
 Crisis Grants: 1,110 applications (£145,123)
7% increase since 2023/24

14

Actions we have taken in 2024-25

Empowering Communities Through Awareness, Access, and Inclusion

In 2024-25, East Renfrewshire advanced its anti-poverty efforts through extensive training, outreach, and support. The Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) delivered 67 events, including community sessions, Health Visitor refreshers, and monthly support for Care Experienced Young People. A key highlight was poverty awareness training co-led by Work EastRen, MART, and ERCAB, deepening staff understanding of poverty.

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (ERCAB) expanded its reach with nine new outreach clinics, including one at Isobel Mair School, and supported 270 clients through the SPACE project - securing nearly £486,500 in financial gains in six months. The Parental Employability Support (PES) programme also continued to provide budgeting and benefits advice to 122 parents via a dedicated financial inclusion officer.

These efforts reflect a collaborative, community-focused approach - bringing services closer to families and equipping both residents and professionals to tackle poverty more effectively.

Case Study: Helping a Family Settle and Thrive

A refugee father came to us looking for a fuel voucher - he was struggling with rising energy bills and trying to support his family after recently being granted leave to remain in the UK. Life in a new country was already challenging, and with English not being his first language, navigating the benefits system felt overwhelming.

How We Helped

When we sat down with him, it became clear there was more going on than just the fuel costs. He had unknowingly built-up debts, including council tax arrears, due to errors in how his benefits were being managed. He hadn't been able to apply for or maintain some of the support he was entitled to.

We carried out a full benefits check, helped him fix the issues with his claims, and supported him in contacting the council to sort out the arrears. The family had just moved into permanent housing, and the kids had to switch schools. Understandably, he was worried about the costs - uniforms, school meals, and other essentials. We stepped in to help with a Back-to-School referral, applied for free school meals, and secured a uniform grant that even covered school jackets.

The Impact

He left the appointment feeling relieved and much more confident. He now understands what support is available and how to manage his finances. Most importantly, his children are better prepared for school - no longer feeling left out because of missing essentials. This support has made a real difference in helping the family feel more settled and secure in their new home.

Connecting Communities Through Clear Communication and Trusted Information

In East Renfrewshire, effective communication is key to connecting families with the support they need. MART shares timely updates on entitlements and services through social media and digital billboards in key locations like Barrhead and Clarkston.

ERCAB complements this with a widely distributed monthly newsletter, reaching schools, family centres, housing associations, and more. It includes updates on legal, financial, and wellbeing support, along with real stories that make services feel approachable and human.

These efforts ensure residents know where to turn for help - reflected in strong engagement with money advice services, financial gains, and debt managed.

Case Study: Helping a Single Dad Find His Feet

When a single dad came to us, he had just taken on full-time care of his young son. Understandably, he was feeling overwhelmed—worried about how he'd manage financially and provide the stable home his child needed.

What We Did

We sat down with him and quickly realised he wasn't getting all the support he was entitled to. Since he now had full custody, we helped him apply for Child Benefit and updated his Universal Credit to include his son—this meant he could now receive the child element of the benefit.

During our chats, he also shared that his son had recently been diagnosed with ADHD. Based on that, we supported him in applying for Child Disability Payment. That application is still in progress, but things are looking positive.

The Difference It Made

With these changes, his financial situation has already started to improve. More importantly, he told us he feels much more confident and secure in his ability to care for his son. He's no longer just getting by - he's looking ahead with hope.

Tackling Poverty and Promoting Wellbeing: NHS Activity in East Renfrewshire

NHSGGC continues to play a key role in East Renfrewshire by delivering services that reduce poverty, improve health, and build financial resilience, during pregnancy and parenthood. This includes money and debt advice offered through the Maternity Matters service for pregnant women and increased Health Visitor referrals, showing stronger early intervention efforts.

There has also been action to support ethnic minority families including better interpreting services, culturally appropriate materials, and staff training in anti-racism and poverty awareness.



Measures of progress

Below are the key indicators and progress measures associated with 'enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security'.

Indicator	Data source	Baseline 2023/24	Intended direction of travel	2024/25
Number of MART and CAB clients from priority groups	MART and CAB databases	MART: 2,599 CAB: 2,863 Total: 5,462	Aim to increase	MART: 2,691 CAB: 2,967 Total: 5,658
Total financial gains for child related benefits	MART and CAB databases	MART: £908,269 CAB: £1,117,286 Total: £2,025,555	Aim to increase	MART: £1,038,080 CAB: £1,551,684 Total: £2,155,366
Number of families accessing financial wellbeing advice	MART and CAB databases	MART: 1,728 CAB: missing data Total: n/a	Aim to increase	MART: 1,759 CAB: 1,831 Total: 3,590
Total volume of debt being managed for households with children	MART and CAB databases	MART: £908,269 CAB: £1,710,079 Total: £2,618,348	Aim to increase	MART: £897,309 CAB: £1,783,021 Total: £2,680,330
Number of referrals to Money Matters from maternity services	Number of pregnant women referred to Money Matters; NHSGGC database	5	Aim to increase	1

4: REDUCED COSTS OF LIVING

The essential costs of living, including food and fuel, are increasing throughout the country. In East Renfrewshire, we recognise that our housing costs are particularly high. The average property price in East Renfrewshire is over £100,000 higher than the Scottish average; and the private rental price for a 4 bed property is over £400 higher per month. Our Council Tax banding charges in East Renfrewshire are less than the Scottish average in the 2025/26 financial year.

While recognising that many of the costs of living for families are outwith our influence, we acknowledge areas for influence across the Community Planning Partnership including the cost of the school day, social housing and community food supports.

We aim to achieve this reduced cost of living by:



Applying a child poverty and children's rights lens when developing strategies, policies and developing budget proposals which apply to children and families

What we know about employment in East Renfrewshire:



Average Property Price

is higher than nationally:
 East Renfrewshire: £291,014
 Scottish Average: £185,870

15



Private Rent

is higher than nationally:
 (Greater Glasgow as data not
 available at East Renfrewshire level)
 2-bed: £1,024 vs £893
 3-bed: £1,354 vs £1,136
 4-bed: £2,217 vs £1,793

16

Actions we have taken in 2024-25

Supporting Schools to Understand and Act

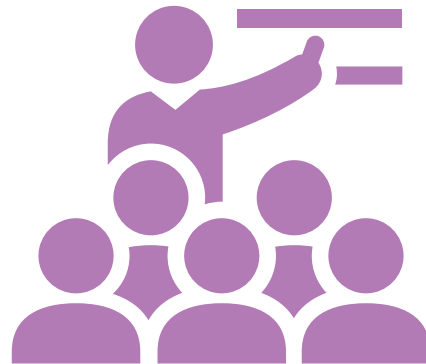
In autumn 2024, the Education Quality Improvement Team led sessions for Head Teachers, Heads of Centre, and Equalities Coordinators, introducing insights from the Cost-of-Living Dashboard. These sessions, supported by Strategic Services, helped school leaders better understand local socio-economic challenges and tailor support accordingly.

In partnership with the Child Poverty Action Group, Equalities Coordinators also explored ways to involve pupils in reducing school-related costs. Several schools have joined the Cost of the School Day Voice Network, empowering pupils to share ideas and raise awareness.

A second round of data collection is underway to track progress on Cost of the School Day Audits, building on a 56% baseline from October 2023.

Between August 2024 and January 2025, the Education Quality Improvement Team co-designed a three-day professional learning programme with three head teachers. The focus was increasing equity through curriculum, learning, teaching, and assessment. The pilot involved 27 Principal Teachers from both primary and secondary schools. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive - 100% rated the programme as very good or excellent, and 94% strongly agreed it would influence their own and others' practice. A second cohort will begin in autumn 2025.

Across East Renfrewshire, we have a strong commitment to listening and adapting to learners' needs. One local primary school has directly responded to pupil feedback to inform the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).



Case Study: Using Pupil Voice to Identify and Remove Barriers

School: Netherlee Primary School

Focus: Enhancing participation and equity through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

Context

Netherlee Primary School, working with a modest Pupil Equity Fund allocation of £25,725, set out to better understand why some learners were not fully engaging in school life. Data showed that 41% of pupils identified for PEF support were not completing homework, and 52% were not participating in lunchtime or after-school activities.

Approach

Rather than make assumptions, the school turned to the most valuable source of insight—the pupils themselves. Through a series of focus groups and interviews, learners shared their experiences and challenges. They spoke about time pressures, caring for younger siblings, lack of quiet space or a desk at home, and even the types of clubs on offer not appealing to them or feeling inaccessible.

Action and Impact

Armed with this feedback, the school made some important changes. Pupils were invited to help decide how some of the PEF funding should be used. This led to the purchase of practical supplies and resources to support homework completion. Ongoing monitoring of engagement ensures support can be put in place quickly, if and when necessary. The school also revamped its extra-curricular offer, introducing more inclusive and varied clubs like gardening, art, and meditation - designed to complement existing sports activities. Recognising the value of community involvement, the school reached out to parents, inviting them to help run clubs. Timings and locations were adjusted to make participation easier for all families. The school also began using PEF to support family learning opportunities, which has led to a noticeable increase in parental engagement, especially from families who hadn't previously attended school events or parents' evenings.

Conclusion

This case study highlights how listening to pupils and involving them in decision-making can lead to meaningful, practical changes that remove barriers and promote equity. Netherlee Primary School's approach demonstrates the power of collaboration, creativity, and community in supporting every child to thrive.



Tackling Fuel Poverty

Since launching in October 2024, East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau's Energy Best Deal programme has delivered over 200 advice sessions, helping residents manage energy costs, resolve billing issues, and access grants and fuel vouchers.

Between October 2024 and April 2025, the programme secured £60,696 in financial gains for local households. It also equipped frontline workers with the knowledge to better support vulnerable clients.

By combining expert advice with practical outcomes, Energy Best Deal is making a real impact - helping families stay warm and financially resilient.

Helping sustain tenancies

We have provided practical support for tenants in socially rented accommodation to help them maintain their tenancy. Barrhead Housing Association has provided:

- 25 Carpets, included fitting
- 24 Kitchen starter packs
- 25 food vouchers at a value of £25
- 51 customers with up to 6 fuel vouchers worth up to £59 each, totalling £10,437 through the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust Fuel Fund.

Economic Empowerment Pilot: Supporting Women Affected by Domestic Abuse

A new East Renfrewshire pilot, led by HSCP and Women's Aid (WASLER), combines financial advice from MART with emotional and practical support to address domestic abuse - an issue linked to 43% of child protection cases and 23% of local homelessness.

The pilot supports women by:

- Providing budgeting advice and financial literacy workshops
- Ensuring access to full entitlements and future planning
- Integrating financial support into safety planning
- Raising staff awareness through joint training

This joined-up approach helps women rebuild their lives with greater safety, stability, and financial independence.



Measures of progress

Below are the key indicators and progress measures associated with ‘reduced costs of living’:

Indicator	Data source	Baseline 2023/24	Target	2024/25
Percentage of schools who have undertaken a CoSD audit	ERC Education records	56%	Aim to increase	67%
Percentage of families presenting as homeless or seeking housing options due to financial reasons	ERC Housing homelessness and housing options data – ERC*	Not yet available	Aim to decrease	8.25%**
Percentage of families on housing waiting lists citing financial reasons	Housing waiting lists – ERC and BHA	Not yet available	Aim to decrease	Data expected Sept 2025
Percentage of social housing properties meeting the Social Housing Net Zero target	Implementation date yet to be set, following consultation process	Not yet available	Aim to increase	Data not formally launched by Scottish Government

* This data relates to homeless applications. Work is ongoing in 2025.26 to improve the data held regarding housing options approaches.

** families with children (9 of 109) presenting as homeless, specifically cited financial reasons as the primary reason for failing to maintain their accommodation in 2024.25.

MITIGATING ACTIONS

Whilst it is vital to address the drivers of poverty for the long term, we continue to take action to mitigate the impact of poverty. This chapter provides a brief overview of some of the key actions we have taken during 2024-25.

Support for Care-Experienced Young People

With HSCP support, 23 Junior ISAs were opened through the Share Foundation, each with a £200 government deposit. Additionally, 15 young people attended housing skills sessions focused on budgeting and money management - topics they identified as key to independent living.

For younger children, HSCP continues its partnership with the Imagination Library, delivering 236 free books monthly to looked-after children aged 0–5 to support early literacy.

In 2024/25, inclusive Holiday Programmes engaged 83 care-experienced children and 21 family members, with 76 more attending the Inclusive Support Service scheme. Co-designed with young people, these programmes offer enriching activities and help parents stay in work, especially benefiting those who face barriers to mainstream provision.

Supporting Early Years and Healthy Families

We have supported a range of activities to support young children and families and ensure they are supported to live healthy lives. This includes:

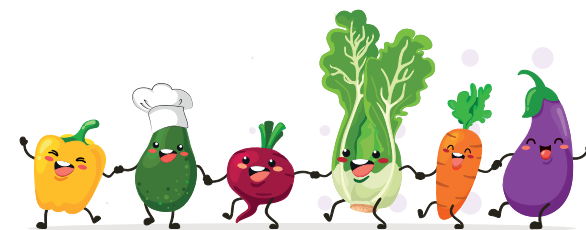
Thrive Under 5 - which promotes healthier lifestyles through cooking, food education, and family wellbeing. This provided one-to-one support, family cooking classes, a Family Food Growing Network, food hygiene training and other multi-agency supports.

Peas Please - which offered cooking sessions and take-home packs within early years settings.

Mini Master Chef - which trained children and staff in food hygiene.

HENRY - which supports parenting and wellbeing through 8-week sessions.

In the short term, these initiatives help families make healthier choices and support child healthy development. In the longer term, we hope to see broader impacts in terms of reducing health inequalities.



Empowering Young People and Families in Barrhead: A Year of Community Impact

Over the past year, a range of initiatives in Barrhead by Barrhead Housing's Brighter Futures programme to support young people and families with life skills, wellbeing and practical help.

Key Highlights:

- First Home Skills course reached 114 pupils at Barrhead and St Luke's High Schools, covering tenancy, budgeting, cooking, DIY, and more to prepare for independent living.
- Dunterlie Tots and Toddlers welcomed 96 children for early years development and social interaction.
- Totnosh Family Cooking engaged 130 participants in healthy eating and kitchen confidence.
- Incahootz Drama ran weekly workshops for 108 young people, using creativity to explore real-life issues.
- Dunterlie Mums and Babies supported 39 parents through peer-led parenting discussions.
- Back-to-School Bank provided 59 new uniforms to local families.
- ERA's summer programme supported 43 individuals with additional support needs.
- Happy Dunterlie hosted free summer events, including a community-wide Summer Fun Day.



These efforts have strengthened community ties, boosted confidence, and ensured inclusive access to support and enrichment.

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) to deliver targeted family support and break the cycle of poverty

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) has enabled us to invest in dedicated roles focused on analysing data across all aspects of children's lives - from early years and universal services to more targeted interventions. This insight helps us better understand the challenges families face and tailor our support accordingly. Crucially, this work is not limited to traditional children's services but involves a wide range of partners, ensuring a more holistic and inclusive approach.

WFWF resources are directly supporting families to overcome personal, familial, and societal barriers that contribute to poverty. Key initiatives include:

- **Intensive Family Support:** A dedicated health visitor works within our team to support families involved in child protection and welfare systems.
- **Domestic Abuse Support:** Funding has strengthened our partnership with Women's Aid, providing vital support for victims of domestic abuse and coercive control.
- **Education and Wellbeing:** In schools, WFWF supports initiatives like circle time, which nurtures children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, and the Learn Well service, which helps children return to and stay engaged in education.

Poverty affects families in complex and varied ways. Through the WFWF, we are addressing these challenges head-on - reducing isolation, promoting inclusion, and empowering families to build better futures. Every initiative supported by the fund is a step toward sustained, systemic change.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Over the past year, East Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership has continued to take ambitious, collaborative action to reduce child poverty and support families to thrive. Through a strong focus on data, lived experience, and partnership working, we have deepened our understanding of the challenges families face and responded with targeted, practical solutions.

We have strengthened employability support for parents, expanded access to financial advice, and worked with schools and communities to reduce the everyday costs of raising children. Our efforts have been delivered through strong partnership working and have been shaped by the voices of those with lived experience, ensuring that services are not only effective but also compassionate and inclusive. This includes enhancing our "no wrong door" approach through collaborative working.

While we are proud of the progress made, we recognise that child poverty remains a complex and persistent issue. Tackling child poverty is a long-term ambition and not something which can be addressed through short-term activities. In last year's report, we set out our 3-year approach and this continues to be our focus going forward.

We will continue to improve our understanding of the circumstances of families through effective use of data and a 'no wrong door' approach; listening to the voices of those in poverty and using them to shape services; and work to ensure families receive coordinated support from all relevant services.

We will continue to improve income from employment by increasing into work support for unemployed parents, and support to in-work parents to progress and increase their household income.

We will continue to increase income to families through income maximisation through increased staff awareness; providing support services in places families will access them; and promoting services widely to reach all families who might need them, including those in hidden poverty.

We will continue to play our role in reducing the cost of living for families. Whilst recognising that many aspects are beyond our control, we will work to ensure that local decision-making, including budget-setting, strategic priorities and policy changes, are done through a child poverty lens.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to working with families, partners, and communities to build a fairer East Renfrewshire - one where every child has the opportunity to flourish, thrive and live well.



Population Outcome

The Outcome we want is ...

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

Intermediate Outcome

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

Child poverty is reduced

Our Contribution

So what we need to achieve is ...

Improved understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty

Improved income from employment for parents

Enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security

Reduced costs of living

Critical Activities

By ...

Enhancing use of data to better understand more the profile of families in poverty, and those at risk of poverty

Listening to the voices of families experiencing poverty and using these to shape services delivered

Creating a more 'joined up approach' to ensure families receive coordinated support from all relevant services

Increasing into work support for unemployed parents and support to in-work parents to progress in the workplace e.g. through Parental Employability Programme

Increasing poverty awareness of frontline staff working with families

Increasing accessibility of money advice and rights support

Applying a child poverty and children's rights lens when developing strategies, policies and developing budget proposals which apply to children and families

Critical Indicators

- Number of in-work parents in PES programme
- Percentage increased household income for in-work parents
- Number of PES parents receiving training and/or qualification
- Number of PES parents moving into employment or self-employment
- Number of parents with a disability in the household accessing employability support
- Number of PES parents supported into volunteering
- Number of MART and CAB clients from priority groups
- Financial gains for child related benefits
- Families accessing financial wellbeing advice
- Volume of debt being managed for households with children
- Number of Money Matters referrals from maternity services
- Percentage of schools who have undertaken a CoSD audit
- Percentage of families presenting as homeless or seeking housing options due to finances
- Percentage of families on housing waiting lists for financial reasons
- Percentage of social housing meeting Net Zero targets

FOOTNOTES

1. [Scotland Census 2022](#)
2. [DWP Children in Low Income Households data](#)
3. [End Child Poverty data 2025](#)
4. [DWP Universal Credit data](#)
5. [ERC Seemis data](#)
6. [National Records for Scotland](#)
7. [Smart Data Foundry Cost of Living dashboard](#)
8. [Nomis Labour Market Profile](#)
9. [Nomis Annual Survey of hours and earnings](#)
10. [ONS Annual Population Survey](#)
11. [Living Wage Scotland Employer Directory](#)
12. [Social Security Scotland Agency statistics](#)
13. [Trussell Trust statistics](#)
14. [ERC Revenues and Benefits data](#)
15. [Land Registry UK House Price Index](#)
16. [Scottish Government Private Sector Rent Statistics](#)



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