



East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan

2021-2022 Progress Report
(Year 4)





Introduction

This past year has continued to be challenging for families experiencing financial difficulties. The ongoing and cumulative impacts of COVID-19, Brexit and the Cost of Living Crisis has seen families facing more financial pressures than ever before. Those previously experiencing poverty have seen this worsened and many previously 'just about managing' are now finding themselves in poverty.

We are fortunate in East Renfrewshire to have a comparatively low level of child poverty, however the challenges faced by families who do experience poverty are the same regardless of location. So we continue to focus on tackling the drivers of poverty whilst also mitigating the impacts of those who are in poverty.

As a Community Planning Partnership, we have worked together throughout the year to provide the support required to the families most in need. Inevitably, some of this support has been short-term, crisis response whilst other has been medium and longer-term with a focus on creating and embedding lasting change.

This report outlines the actions we have taken under each of the three drivers of poverty and describes the impact which these actions have had where possible. It also describes how we have listened to the experiences of local families experiencing poverty and used these to shape our ongoing actions and inform our future plans to tackle poverty.

At the time of writing this report, the Scottish Government recently released a new national Child Poverty Delivery Plan called Best Start, Bright Futures. We acknowledge the actions within this may subsequently impact our local delivery actions, therefore those noted in the report may be subject to change throughout the lifespan of this document.

We want all children in East Renfrewshire to experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed. We will continue to tackle child poverty to create a fairer future with all and make people's lives better.



Contents

- 2 Introduction
- 4 Executive summary
- 6 Context
- 8 Lived Experience and the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic
- 9 Measures of progress
- 15 Chapter 1: Income from employment
- 22 Chapter 2: Income from Social Security
- 35 Chapter 3: Costs of Living
- 41 Future Actions 2022 onwards
- 47 Conclusion
- 48 Annex 1: Future Actions 2022 onwards
- 49 Annex 2: Agreed long term objectives for NHSGGC and associated local authorities
- 50 Annex 3: Full profile of East Renfrewshire



Executive Summary


- East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any Scottish local authority, with almost 20,000 children aged 0-15 years
- The proportion of children living in relative poverty (low incomes compared to average UK household) in East Renfrewshire is among the lowest in Scotland; around 2,500 children or 12.8%
- Almost one in five households (18%) are 'workless' meaning there is no individual in the household employed
- Those *living* in East Renfrewshire receive the highest average weekly pay in Scotland. However, those *working* in East Renfrewshire have the lowest average weekly pay
- East Renfrewshire residents are less likely than the Scottish average to receive income from social security and benefits. However, since the beginning of Covid-19, there has been a significant increase for financial support
- Uptake rates for benefits, Scottish Welfare Fund and Money Advice support are rising and, more recently, amongst new groups including those in work and those living in traditionally more affluent areas


East Renfrewshire has
almost 20,000 children
aged 0-15 years




EMPLOYMENT

Local Indicators:

 Increase in Living Wage Employers

 Decrease in unemployment


 Increase in 16–19-year-olds in work, training or employment


Local Actions:


- Encourage Living Wage accreditations
- Support parents in the workplace, train and gain progression
- Use participatory budgeting to design employability programmes
- Implement a new Parental Transition Fund and Best Start, Bright Futures programme

SOCIAL SECURITY

Local Indicators:

 Uptake of Free School Meals & Clothing Grants

 Slight decrease in number of families accessing financial advice but higher than pre-pandemic


 Increase in Scottish Welfare Fund applications


Local Actions:


- Offer financial inclusion support to all parents receiving employability support
- Provide financial wellbeing support in schools including parents, carers and staff
- Increase affordable credit options in the area
- Make use of data to best target supports to eligible families

COST OF LIVING

Local Indicators:

 Fuel poverty remains static but is expected to worsen

 All 3- & 4-year-olds registered for funded Early Learning & Childcare

 Increase in referrals for money advice and use of food supports

Local Actions:

- Reduce energy costs
- Increased affordable housing options
- Reduce the cost of school attendance and participation
- Reduce the cost of Early Learning and Childcare
- Reduce the cost of the pregnancy pathway



Context

The Scottish Government's first Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22, [Every Child, Every Chance](#), was produced in response to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The Act places a duty on local authorities and health boards to work together to report annually on what we are doing to tackle child poverty with a sharp focus on the three key drivers of poverty:

- Income from employment
- Income from social security and benefits in kind
- Costs of living

In March 2022, Scottish Government published its second delivery plan 2022-2026, [Best Start, Bright Futures](#). This delivery plan continues to focus on the drivers of poverty whilst also considering how best to support those who are currently experiencing poverty. The structure of this delivery plan is:

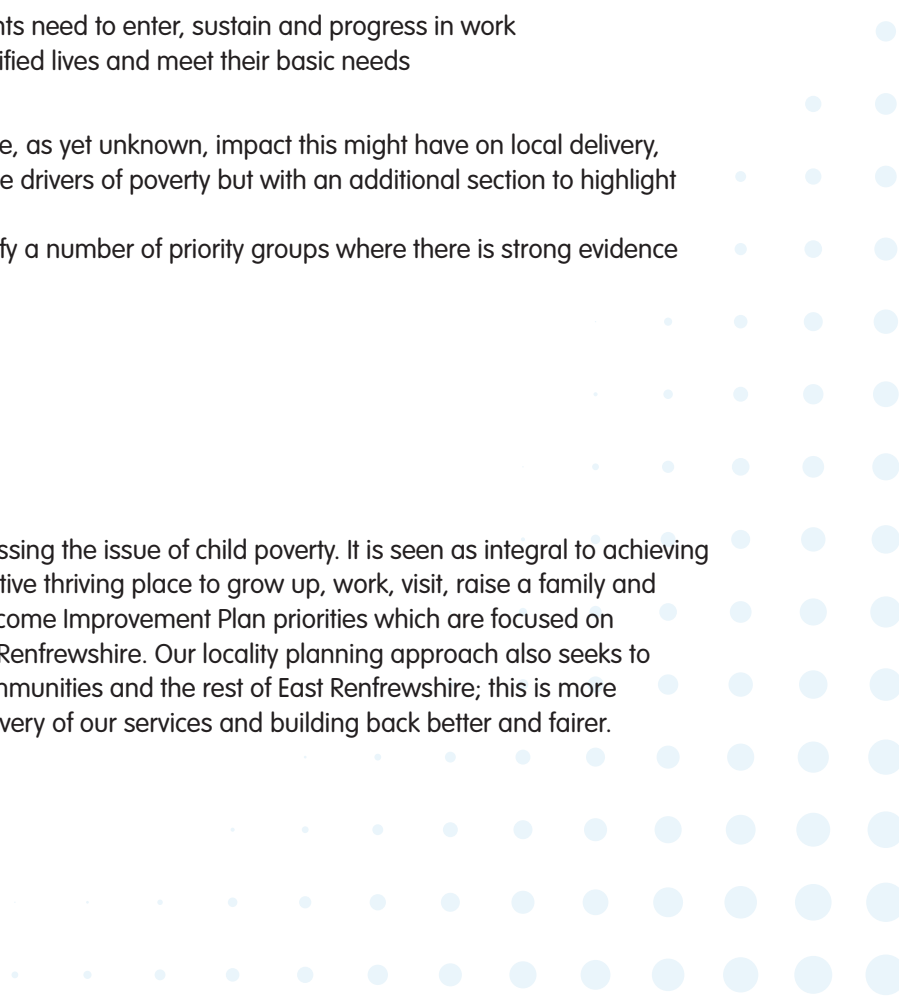
- Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work
- Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs
- Supporting the next generation to thrive

Given the recent publication of this new delivery plan and the, as yet unknown, impact this might have on local delivery, the following report will focus on actions taken to tackle three drivers of poverty but with an additional section to highlight mitigating actions to support the next generation to thrive.

Both the previous and the new national delivery plans identify a number of priority groups where there is strong evidence that the risk of poverty is higher, specifically:

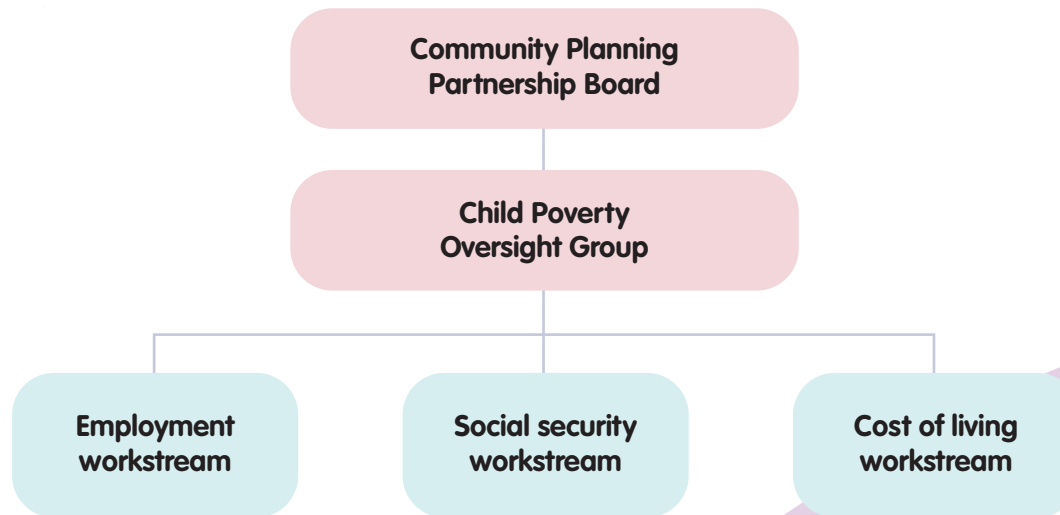
- Lone parents
- Families where a member of the household is disabled
- Families with 3 or more children
- Minority ethnic families
- Families where the youngest child is under 1
- Mothers aged under 25

In East Renfrewshire, we continue to be committed to addressing the issue of child poverty. It is seen as integral to achieving the vision set out in our Community Plan to create an "attractive thriving place to grow up, work, visit, raise a family and enjoy later life." The Community Plan contains our Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities which are focused on reducing inequality across groups and communities in East Renfrewshire. Our locality planning approach also seeks to reduce the inequalities in outcomes between deprived communities and the rest of East Renfrewshire; this is more relevant now than ever given our renewed focus on recovery of our services and building back better and fairer.



Governance

The Community Planning Partnership is responsible overall for the Local Child Poverty Action Report and is supported by a Child Poverty Oversight Group. The oversight group has responsibility for creating a strategic environment which cultivates step-change in relation to tackling child poverty. The oversight group is jointly chaired by the council's Director of Business, Operations and Partnerships and the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Chief Officer, and includes senior representatives from Education, HSCP, Employability, Money Advice, Environment Services, the Third Sector Interface, the Health Board and partner organisations including Barrhead Housing Association and Citizens Advice Bureau. The oversight group is supported by three workstreams aligned to each of the drivers of poverty. The workstream groups develop and deliver on critical activities to encourage step-change and identify critical indicators to measure progress.



Lived Experience and the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic – through the direct impact of the virus and the secondary effects of measures introduced to control its spread – has been unprecedented in the breadth and depth of its impact on Scotland's society and economy. The pandemic has resulted in multiple prolonged periods where most schools and businesses were required to close, where a large proportion of the workforce were furloughed or required to adapt to new work from home directives, where public services were set on an emergency footing to protect the most vulnerable, and where there has been extensive disruption to community activities.

In Autumn 2021, we commissioned a study with the overall aim to improve our understanding of the impact of the pandemic. This included a particular focus on the lived experience of residents and communities, how these have varied across key socio-economic groups, and the extent to which the pandemic may have added to existing inequalities.

The research used a mixed method approach, incorporating a desk-based review to make best use of available evidence, alongside fieldwork using a mix of survey and in-depth qualitative research to produce a rich set of evidence around the lived experience of the pandemic.

The research findings highlighted a number of key poverty-related impacts including:

- An increase in the number of benefit claimants
- Increased demand for financial support
- Increased applications for Scottish Welfare Funding
- A change in profile of those households requiring financial support, with more in-work residents facing difficulties and also more residents in 'traditionally affluent areas'
- An increase in 'work-ready' employability clients, often following redundancy
- Increased demand for support with fuel debt
- Increased use of Food Larders and Food Train
- Early indications of a worsening of the poverty-related attainment gap
- An increased awareness and better understanding of 'hidden poverty' within communities and people having a better understanding of the struggles many face

Further details of these findings are included within the relevant chapters of this report and the full findings are available [here](#). These findings will continue to inform the work of the CPP to tackle child poverty going forward.

Measures of progress

Whilst the overall level of child poverty will continue to provide a high level view of the profile of the area, we intend to monitor progress at a local level through a number of critical indicators relating to the three drivers of poverty. These are as follows:

Indicator	Measure and source	Year 2 data	Year 3 data	Current data	Comments
OVERALL					
Children living in poverty	Percentage of children living in poverty (after housing costs) in East Renfrewshire: End Child Poverty 2019	16%	16%	12.8%	We have seen a slight reduction in our child poverty rate, to 12.8%* compared with the previous figure of 16%. (There is a caveat around the data due to sampling issues related to the pandemic). We remain as one of the lowest rates in Scotland. However, this is still around 2,500 children and young people experiencing poverty in East Renfrewshire.
INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT					
Real Living Wage employers in East Renfrewshire	Number of real Living Wage accredited employers: Living Wage Scotland 2021	11	16	23	East Renfrewshire Council, Business Gateway East Renfrewshire and Living Wage Scotland worked in partnership to promote Living Wage accreditation to employers based in East Renfrewshire. The Economic Development team will continue to promote and pay for this initiative in 2022/23.
Working age unemployment level	%age of economically inactive residents who want a job: NOMIS Jan-Dec 2020	18.1%	24.7%	17.1%	17.1% represents 2,500 of the population. 19.6% for the national level. There has been a slight decrease in the % of economically inactive residents who want a job. This is largely due to impacts of Covid on the local economy. Work EastRen and employability partners will continue to promote and engage with local residents who are seeking employment.
Children and young people participation level	%age of 16-19 year olds participating in learning, training or employment: SDS Annual Participation Measure Report 2019	96.9%	96.7%	97.2%	East Renfrewshire continues to support 16-19 In year olds participating in learning, training or employment.
INCOME FROM SOCIAL SECURITY AND INCOME MAXIMISATION					
Free School Meal uptake at Primary School	Percentage uptake of free school meals at primary school (P1-P7): School healthy living survey 2020	87.9%	87.7%	No data available	There was no data collected for uptake of free school meals in 2021. Data was collected in Spring 2022 and will be published later in 2022.
Access to financial wellbeing advice	Number of families accessing MART financial wellbeing advice: Local data	997	1318	1232	There has been a slight decrease in the number of families accessing financial wellbeing advice this year but this is remains higher than pre-pandemic level.
COSTS OF LIVING					
Fuel poverty	Fuel poverty: Scottish House Condition Survey	16%	13%	13%	The level of fuel poverty has remained static although we note that the lag in data publication means that this does not present a true, current reflection.
Uptake of funded early learning and childcare entitlement	Percentage of 3 & 4 year olds registered for funded early learning and childcare Dec 2020: Scottish Government Schools Statistics	93%	95%	100%	All eligible 3 and 4 year olds are registered for their funded early learning and childcare place in 2021 which is a great achievement and should provide parents with affordable childcare options to enhance their employment opportunities.

The format of our report

This report starts with a profile of East Renfrewshire highlighting key data which has been used to shape the plan. We have organised the core of our report into three chapters looking at each of the three key poverty drivers:

- Income from employment
- Income from social security
- Costs of living

For each we have outlined our progress and achievements in 2021-2022 including case studies where relevant to evidence the real impacts for families. We then present our plans for further action over the year ahead (2022-2023).

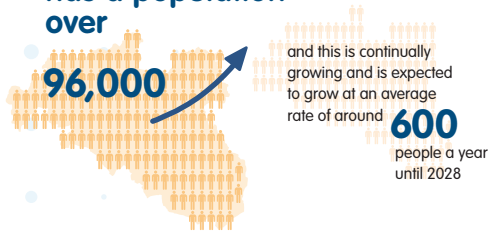


PROFILE OF EAST RENFREWSHIRE

OVERALL

East Renfrewshire has a population over

96,000

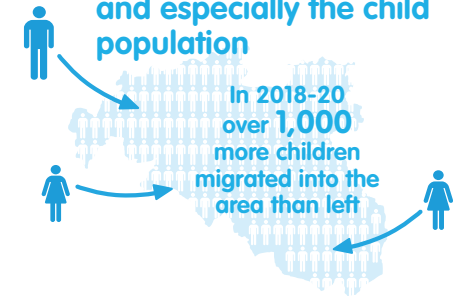


East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland with **19,646** individuals aged between 0 and 15 years



One in every five people living in East Renfrewshire is a child.

Migration has a large impact on the population of East Renfrewshire and especially the child population



The proportion of children living in relative poverty in East Renfrewshire is among the lowest in Scotland



There are around 2,500 children living poverty in East Renfrewshire, which amounts to 12.8% of our children

There are fewer young mothers in East Renfrewshire than the Scottish average

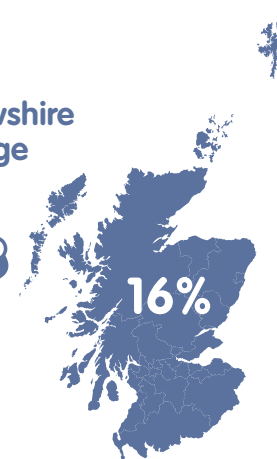


6%

6% of all births in East Renfrewshire were to mothers under the age of 25, compared to 16% in Scotland



16%



The number of lone parent households is predicted to increase in the coming years



There are currently around 2,400 lone parent households in East Renfrewshire.

It is projected that 6% of households will be lone parents by 2026.

EMPLOYMENT

Those **LIVING** in East Renfrewshire receive the **HIGHEST** average weekly pay in Scotland ▲

The average weekly full time pay is



£809

and the average weekly part time pay £308

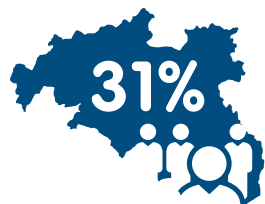
However, East Renfrewshire ranks **LOWEST** average weekly pay in Scotland when both full-time ▼ and part-time workers salaries are combined

The average weekly full time pay is

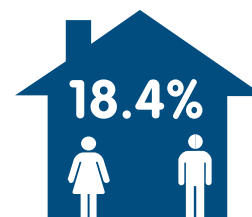
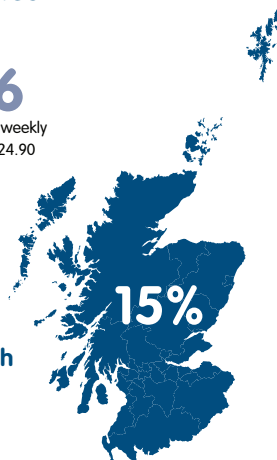


£626

and the average weekly part time pay £224.90



Further, 31% of employees over 18 earn less than the living wage in East Renfrewshire which is double the Scottish average of 15%



18.4% of households in East Renfrewshire are 'workless' meaning there is no individual over the age of 16 in the household who is employed. This is up 4% from last year ▲

Over a third of children in East Renfrewshire come from 'mixed households'

This means a household contains at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment and at least one other is either unemployed or inactive



East Renfrewshire remains a generally active local economy, with early indications that unemployment rates are beginning to recover from the last two years



1,500

There are 1,500 of the working age population who are unemployed which is an decrease of approximately 100 people since last year

72%

of residents of working age are economically active

SOCIAL SECURITY/BENEFITS



East Renfrewshire residents are less likely than the Scottish average to receive income from social security and benefits



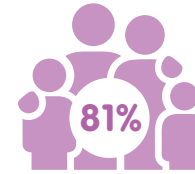
Nearly 2070 individuals are claiming out-of-work benefits

This is approximately 4% which is lower than the Scottish average of 6% | 410 of these claimants were between the ages of 16 and 24

7% of pupils from P5-7 are registered for free school meals



8% of secondary pupils are registered for free school meals



There are 15,920 children in families that are registered for child benefit, which equates to 81% of all children in East Renfrewshire

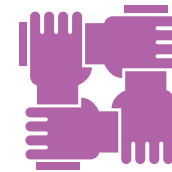
This is among the lowest proportion when compared to other Scottish local authorities



430 young people receive an Education Maintenance Allowance



East Renfrewshire has a £120 clothing grant for Primary school pupils and a £150 clothing grant for pupils in Secondary school



Since the beginning of COVID-19, there has been significant increase in demand for financial support

37% for Welfare Fund, 81% for MART, approximately 50% for food larders/food train

COSTS OF LIVING



The costs of living in East Renfrewshire are higher than average, particularly in relation to housing costs

The average weekly local authority rent is

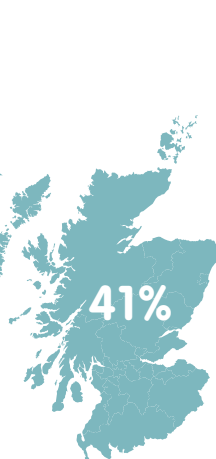
£77.39



The average property price in East Renfrewshire is **£274,223** which is a 9.2% increase since early 2021



Nearly three quarters of East Renfrewshire's houses are classified as being Council Tax band D or above, compared to the Scottish average of 41%



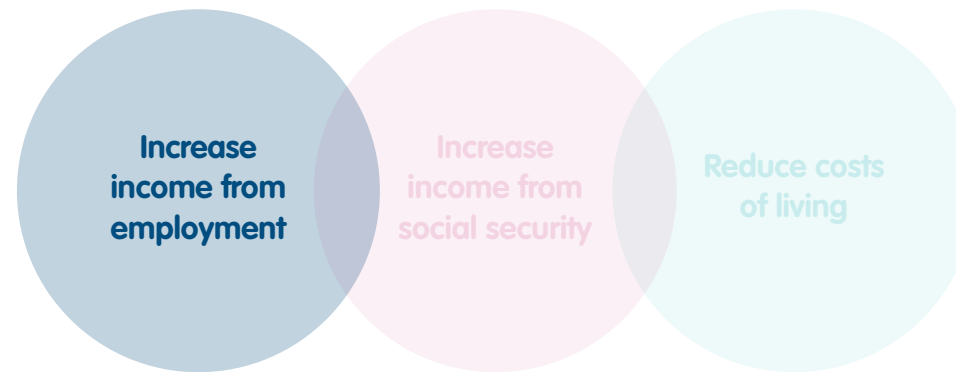
On average art, drama and sports activities cost

£45.50

for a three month class



Chapter 1: Income from employment



Workstream

The East Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership (LEP) is leading on this workstream and includes representatives from East Renfrewshire Council's Work EastRen team, Skills Development Scotland, Education including Adult Learning, Scottish Enterprise, Mental Health services, Department for Work and Pensions, Money Advice and Rights Team and East Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has broadly been able to continue employability programmes as part of our Widening Access To Employment (WATE) strategy. Where activity was paused due to the pandemic this is now being rescheduled. New areas have included our Kickstart programme with Facilities and our wider focus on Community Wealth Building.

Data and lived experience feedback

As mentioned in the 'Context' chapter, we gathered feedback from lived experience, community and stakeholder engagement and desk-based data sources to understand the impact of Covid in East Renfrewshire. There were several findings which related to employment and access to work.

We have seen a change in profile of those seeking employability support during the pandemic. Business Gateway and Economic Development services have seen a significant increase in the number of 'work ready' people looking for support, for example following redundancy. While these residents typically require less intensive support from services, the range of assistance available is limited by Scottish Government funding being primarily targeted towards those who are not job ready. Nevertheless, this change in profile of demand means that the 'core' client group (e.g. those facing multiple barriers to employment) are facing increased competition from more 'work ready' residents.

A significant increase in contacts from self-employed residents was seen in the early months of the pandemic, including those ineligible for government support programmes. However, these cases appear to have fallen back as public health restrictions on businesses have eased.

We have also seen the benefit claimant count significantly higher than pre-Covid level and particularly so for 16–25-year-olds which could include young mothers (one of the key priority groups).

The research further tells us about the challenges faced in terms of mental health impacts, particularly for those caring for young children. This included some evidence of differences in impact across genders, with several female participants highlighting a loss of structure in their day and the challenges of balancing child-care with remote learning and other pressures. However, it should be noted that support services have also seen an increase in male clients, some with some with significant existing mental health needs and others with anxiety associated with employment or income.

Action taken

During 2021/2022 the Community Planning Partners across East Renfrewshire have taken action to increase income from employment. This includes;

Encouraging more local businesses to become Real Living Wage accredited

Living Wage Scotland worked in partnership with Business Gateway East Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Council to promote Living Wage accreditation to employers based in East Renfrewshire.

Businesses can apply online to become an accredited Real Living Wage employer and the Council offered funding to cover the cost of accreditation for the first year.

There are now over 2000 employers in Scotland who pay the real Living Wage. This includes 23 employers in East Renfrewshire, across the public, private and third sector, including the Council and Barrhead charity Include Me 2 Club (IM2C).

Paul McIlvenny, of IM2C said: "We decided to register for the Living Wage accreditation as we operate in sectors that, for a long time, felt devalued, always entry-level and have historically paid the national minimum wage. The Living Wage accreditation enables us to recognise the fantastic effort, energy and impact our team have in people's lives and across our communities."

The Economic Development and Business Gateway East Renfrewshire will continue to promote the Living Wage accreditation to employers based in East Renfrewshire.



23 employers in
East Renfrewshire pay
the real Living Wage

Increased support for in-work parents to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression

The Work EastRen team continue deliver the Scottish Government funded Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF). The Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) is collaboratively managed by Scottish and Local Government, providing dedicated support for low-income families. PESF offers support to:

- Lone Parents
- Parents with disabilities
- Young parents age 25 years and less
- Minority ethnic families
- Families with a disabled child
- Families with 3 or more children
- Families where the youngest child is under 1 year

Key Workers take a holistic approach where parents are supported to upskill and/or re-train, increasing family income, lifting themselves and their families out of poverty.

The fund will provide personalised support for parents who face barriers to progressing their careers, including help to gain qualifications, improving skills or work experience; money advice, and motivational support.

To date the Work EastRen team have registered 38 clients with 16 moving into employment and 6 who have entered into further vocational training.

Those registered on the programme also have to financial support help with travel to work and interview clothing.



38 people have been supported through the PESF Fund



Case Study

Concern

Rebecca* is a 30 year old single parent living in East Renfrewshire, with a daughter that has additional support needs. Unfortunately, she has a criminal record relating to charges that were brought about when she was a teenager. Rebecca has always worked in hospitality and has managed to work her way to a supervisor in a well-known Glasgow Hotel. She hoped to move into work in the care sector but had concerns that her criminal record would prevent this.

Solution

Rebecca received financial support from the Parental Employability Support Fund (PSEF) to apply for a PVG which showed she would be able to work in this sector. The PES Adviser then worked alongside a job broker to find a work placement at a care home and supported her to complete an online learning course in Mental Health. This online course provided Rebecca with a boost for starting her work placement.

Rebecca attended a work placement which went really well. She was invited for an interview and the PES advisor supported her in preparing for this, so that she could attend feeling confident in her skills and knowledge and answer the questions given. Rebecca was offered a role with 21 hours and this works well with her childcare needs.

Impact

Rebecca is currently £34 a week better off and has explored her options in detail with the Money Advice Support Officer. Her mental health is much better and she feels she has gained some self-worth. Previously, Rebecca would not have taken this step, out of fear as to what her past had restricted her from doing, that people would judge her and that she wouldn't be able to work in the care sector. Now, with the help of the PES advisor, Rebecca has gained some care training, is in the process of starting to achieve qualifications related to her role and has progressed into a permanent position with further prospects.

Improving availability, access and update of good quality in-work support programmes

The NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde employability programmes continue to provide ongoing recruitment of modern apprentices and support to existing apprentice cohorts; delivery of sector-based work academies and development of alternative pathways into employment; revised provision of careers awareness activity. They are further considering the feasibility of developing 'Academy approach' within HSCPs recruitment, adopting of Young Person's Guarantee and Kickstart.

Work EastRen undertook significant promotional work around the Parental Employability Support Fund programme in 2020/21. This included a new social media campaign and flyers that were distributed to partners.



Employability support for disabled parents

We know it is difficult for parents with a disability to increase the family income, but our new support service can help.

Through the Parental Employability Support Fund, our dedicated officer can help parents with a disability learn new skills, check they are accessing any benefits they are entitled to and help search for jobs.

**So if you are a parent with a disability, then get in touch:
Call: 07501388115 or email: lynsey.ross@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk**

For more information on how Work EastRen can help, visit www.workeastren.co.uk



work EastRen



Parental Employability Support Fund

If you're a working parent on a low income or would like to get a better paid job and increase your family income, then we can help.

Through this Scottish Government fund, we can help you:

- learn new skills to improve your employment prospects,
- maximise your income from employment as well as from benefits,
- search for jobs and prepare for interviews.

So, if you are a:

- lone parent,
 - family where the parent or child has a disability,
 - parent with 3 or more children,
 - parent from an ethnic minority,
 - parent with youngest child under 1 years old or
 - parent aged under 25 years old,
- then get in touch with us to find out more.

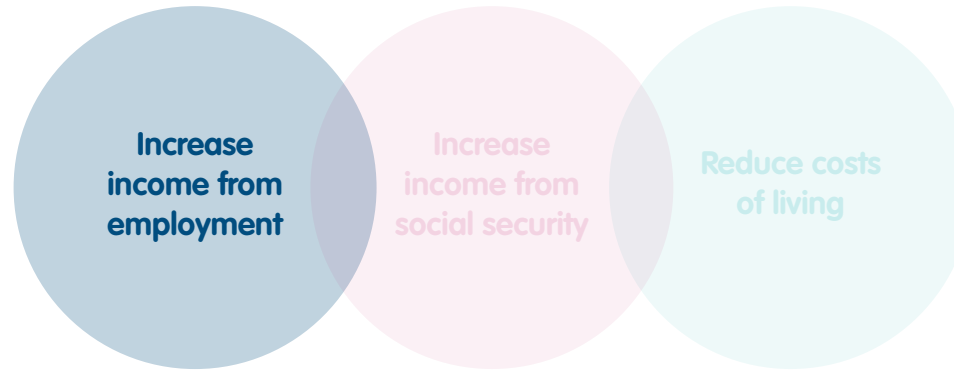
You can call 07920781991 or email naomi.nicol@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk



work EastRen



Future Actions 2022 onwards



These actions are as accurate as possible at the time of writing. However, it is important to remember that actions will be subject to review as community planning partners further establish their recovery and renewal plans and once the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, jobs and income is more fully understood and priorities ahead are reshaped.

<p>Change required: Encouraging more local businesses to become real Living Wage accredited</p>	<p>What we will do: Establish the East Renfrewshire Living Wage Action Group to encourage and support new and existing employers, including NHS GGC, to work towards real Living Wage accreditation. Leads: Local Employability Partnership, NHSGGC Resources: Within existing resources Target Groups: Low income families</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of accredited real Living Wage employers. • Increased number of local employers working towards real Living Wage accreditation.
<p>Change required: Increased support for inactive and in-work parents to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression</p>	<p>What we will do: Implement the East Renfrewshire local model of the Parental Employability Support programme and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This will include employability support, vocational training and new employer recruitment incentives for businesses employing local residents Lead: Work EastRen and delivered in partnership with Money Advice. Resources: To be confirmed Target Groups: Lone parents, economically inactive parents, person with a disability, 3+ children, ethnic minorities, youngest child <1, parents aged <25</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants achieving qualification, increasing skills • Number of participants achieving an increase in income • Number of employed participants gaining new employment or self-employment • Number of participants sustaining employment or self-employment • 13/26/52 weeks after new employment start date • Increase in the take up of employer recruitment incentives
<p>Change required: Design and inputs to employability programmes via Participatory Budgeting</p>	<p>What we will do: Engage with relevant stakeholders to help shape the design of future PES activity via a pilot scheme. Lead: Work EastRen in partnership with the Local Employability Partnership Resources: To be confirmed Target Groups: Women, lone parents, person with a disability, 3+ children, ethnic minorities, youngest child <1, parents aged <25</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants achieving qualification, increasing skills • Number of participants achieving an increase in income • Number of employed participants gaining new employment or self-employment <p>Number of participants sustaining employment or self-employment 13/26/52 weeks after new employment start date</p>
<p>Change required: Delivery of new Parental Transition Fund and Best Start, Bright Futures programme</p>	<p>What we will do: Design and delivery new Parental Transition Fund and Best Start, Bright Futures Programme via Scottish Government monies to meet local needs and to tackle the financial barriers parents face in entering the labour market, particularly over the initial period of employment and provide pathways into sustainable employment. Lead: Work EastRen in partnership with the Local Employability Partnership Resources: Budget from Scottish Government to be confirmed Target Groups: Women, lone parents, person with a disability, 3+ children, ethnic minorities, youngest child <1, parents aged <25</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants achieving qualification, increasing skills • Number of participants achieving an increase in income • Number of employed participants gaining new employment or self-employment • Number of participants sustaining employment or self-employment 13/26/52 weeks after new employment start date

As part of Fairer East Ren (our Local Improvement Outcome Plan), we have a specific plan to ensure residents have the right skills, learning opportunities and confidence to secure and sustain work.

Chapter 2: Income from Social Security



Workstream

The East Renfrewshire Social Security working group is leading on this workstream. This is a partnership group with representatives from the Council Revenues and Benefits department, the Money Advice and Rights Team, Department for Work and Pensions/Job Centre Plus, Adult Learning, Social Security Scotland Agency, the Council's Housing team, Citizens Advise Bureau and a local Housing Association.

In NHSGGC, financial advice services have continued and are returning to hospital settings. This includes the Special Needs in Pregnancy and Royal Hospital for Children financial advice and advocacy services which between them have supported over 400 families, many on very low incomes. A high proportion of these families fall in to one or more of the child poverty priority groups.

Lived experience

As mentioned in the 'Context' chapter above, we gathered feedback from lived experience, community and stakeholder engagement and desk-based data sources to understand the impact of Covid in East Renfrewshire. There were several findings which related to employment and access to work.

The Council's Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) and East Renfrewshire CAB both report that a significant proportion of those seeking financial advice and support during the pandemic were also experiencing mental health challenges. Research participants made clear that loneliness and isolation have been a key challenge for many, and that extended periods of isolation without in-person contact with family members have affected all parts of the community. In addition to the widespread effects of social isolation, some also highlighted the extent to which their mental wellbeing had been affected by job and financial insecurity, including reduced hours of work and reduced income.

There has been a significant increase in cases being handled by the Council's Money Advice and Rights Team (MART), and in Scottish Welfare Fund applications:

- MART case numbers in 2020/21 represented a 75% increase from 2019/20, and an 83% increase from 2018/19. This was in large part due to MART being involved in COVID relief efforts during 2020/21, although by summer 2021 case numbers remained above pre-COVID levels
- Applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund increased by 37% between Jan-Mar 2020 and Jan-Mar 2021, translating into a 46% increase in Fund awards
- This increase was driven primarily by a 94% increase in Community Care Grant applications, translating into a 108% increase in awards
- CAB has also experienced a significant increase in demand for services, with 46% of CAB customers in August 2021 using the service for the first time

The experience of local services providing financial advice and support also indicates some shift in the profile of households requiring support. This has included an increasing number of in-work residents experiencing financial difficulties as a result of reduced hours and/or increased living costs, and more families affected by poverty for the first time. This contrasted with the more typical profile of demand for financial advice and support, and included residents in more affluent areas struggling with high housing costs and little or no savings following a reduction in their income.

Other key trends in the characteristics of those experiencing financial difficulties during the pandemic are summarised below:

- A significant increase in contacts from self-employed residents was seen in the early months of the pandemic, including those ineligible for government support programmes. However, these cases appear to have fallen back as public health restrictions on businesses have eased.
- An initial reduction in debt-related cases appeared to be the result of mortgage and credit freezes, and the Council ceasing to pursue arrears. However, this now appears to be changing as creditors begin to pursue debt that was on hold during the pandemic, and which may have increased over this period.
- Services have been contacted by substantial numbers of residents who have not had to ask for help before. These residents were typically referred via other services (such as schools or health services) or through the Council website. While services have sought to raise awareness of available support for those encountering difficulties for the first time, there is potential that some of these residents will be unaware of their options.

Money Advice



& Rights Team

**Significant increase
in cases being
handled by MART**

Between April 2021 and March 2022, the Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) worked with 1,232 families with children and generated income of £852,000. In total MART assisted 3420 clients and generated income of £5,600,000.

Priority Group	Count Number of Cases
Carer for a disabled person	124
Child under 1 in household	16
Household with a disability	561
Lone Parent	147
Minority Ethnic Household	42
Parent/guardian 25 or under	3
Three or more children household	35

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau provided assistance to 1,141 families within the Child Poverty key groups, including assistance for 248 families who experienced a family breakdown, 37 parents seeking maintenance from a non-resident parent, and 27 application for pregnancy and baby payments.

Action taken

During 2021/2022 the Community Planning Partners across East Renfrewshire have taken action to increase income from social security, including;

Providing all PACE and PESF employability clients with financial inclusion support

All clients involved in either the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) programme or the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) programme were offered individual financial inclusion support. This resulted in 62 families with children being given financial inclusion support in conjunction with employability advice and support and generated a financial gain for families of £514,000.

CAB assisted
1,141 families





Case Study

Concern

Amy* first approached the team with struggles financially having just moved home and in the midst of one of the coronavirus lockdowns. She is a single parent with a son who is not yet two years old. She had signed up to Universal Credit, however this led to her getting into debt through advanced payments which she was desperate for at the time.

Solution

The adviser gathered some of Amy's information, implementing an approach that ensured that while the immediate problems were dealt with, she was also supported to make a long-lasting change in her life.

Firstly adviser talked Amy through the process of a benefit check, making sure every step had been completed and that all information was up to date and accurate. This showed an opportunity to improve the council tax reduction she receives, which the adviser completed for her, leading to a saving of around £900 a year. To ensure that Amy was coping, weekly budgeting meetings were arranged to help her maintain a budget and avoid future debt, she was especially struggling with their utility bills.

Over the next four months these meetings continued with adviser helping arrange crisis grants and the team supporting person with a food bundle over Christmas. The adviser supported Amy in a holistic and bespoke way, assisting with communication with employability and internet usage as well. The adviser has also managed to arrange refunds and the cancellation of a contract client mistakenly took out several months ago.

Impact

Today Amy is feeling much more positive and in control. She is putting £10 a month aside into a savings account for their son, which is boosting her self-esteem tremendously. The adviser and the team have arranged for an energy grant to be paid to Amy to alleviate the stress, this will cover the energy bills for up to the next 3 months.

Amy is now looking forward to the future with their son and has built up the confidence and energy to arrange to move, currently saving for a deposit and looking for a job that will lead to a career.

Improving the knowledge of financial wellbeing within education

We have identified two primary schools as part of a pilot to embed advice services into an education setting. This will be delivered from April 2022. We have also agreed to provide training to nursery staff in identifying the signs of poverty. Working alongside Early Learning and Childcare colleagues, the Money Advice and Rights Team have agreed a new referral process and policy to look at financial disadvantage when considering discretionary nursery placements for 0-3 years olds.

Improved parental access to benefits and income maximisation information and advice, including new referral pathways

We have continued to work in partnership to improve the Cancer Journey Service and have a well-established two-way referral system between Macmillan Cancer and money advice services. 51 referrals were received from MacMillan Cancer.

The Council Housing Team introduced a new direct referral process to the Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) for any tenant in arrears.

In addition to the 6 priority groups, we have identified staff as a key group to support and treat any employee from the ER family organisations as a priority group. This includes referrals to MART from Human Resources case officers. With the backdate pay award MART were available to offer advice to staff on how the backdate may impact their Universal Credit. 16 members of East Renfrewshire Council staff have been assisted by this service.

Further to this, to support employees with families at risk of child poverty, NHSGGC has a range of family friendly working policies and personal development programmes for career enhancement including bursary scheme. A pilot, in partnership with Home Energy Scotland, of staff energy and money advice has had good uptake extending the number of staff using our fuel poverty and staff money worries programme, although we cannot quantify how many of these are East Renfrewshire residents.

We continue to work in close partnership to deliver poverty-related training and briefing sessions to frontline staff including midwives, the Carers Centre, health visitors, GP Practices and others.

We are working in partnership to deliver the 'The Promise' including offering bespoke and dedicated services for income maximisation, debt reduction and employability advice to all care experienced young people and carrying out a financial assessment and benefit check for all kinship carers. All of East Renfrewshire's kinship carers have been offered a financial assessment and social security advice as part of the Kinship care support offered by HSCP and the council.

**Poverty-related
training for
frontline staff**





Case Study

Concern

Luke* is a young 22 year old single parent, with a two-year old daughter. His daughter has complex medical needs and receives Disability Living Allowance. He is a former care leaver and was referred to MART from the Care Experienced Young People team. He recently split up from his partner who was claiming Child Benefit and Carers' Allowance in respect of their daughter. They were joint tenants, therefore the Universal Credit housing element was split between them.

When his partner moved out, Luke failed to notify DWP or HMRC. He was also only receiving 50% of Universal Credit because ERC housing needed partners to complete the relevant paperwork to allow housing to verify full housing costs with UC. This led to a build-up in rent arrears of £1124.

Solution

MART worked in partnership across the Council in order to support Luke to maximise his income and reduce his debts. MART worked with the Housing service to advise that they were assisting Luke and helped him get his UC housing costs backdated. They also worked with the HSCP, to get a supporting letter which was sent to UC, HMRC and DWP to get the DLA, Child Benefit and Carers Allowance paid to him. Lastly, MART provided a Humanitarian grant to Luke, to allow him to buy additional items like clothing and furniture for his daughter.

Impact

This partnership work allowed for housing costs to be backdated and ensured that Luke and his daughters' income from social security was maximised. This support and guidance allowed Luke to pay his arrears and helped him to manage his budget on an ongoing basis. This has massively helped his confidence and his mental health. He is no longer burdened with the anxiety of debt or confusion around his entitlements, and can now focus on parenting his daughter and improving both of their lives.

Improved parental access to benefits and income maximisation advice within NHSGGC health services

A pilot quality improvement programme to increase financial enquiry and referral to support within maternity has been progressed in one (GCC) area in 2021/22, learning from this will be shared more widely in 2022/23.

Improving access to maternity services will be considered as part of ongoing Best Start implementation.

The first awareness raising session with the Springburn Community Midwifery team was completed in March 2022.

Referral pathways have been updated and supporting guidance has been developed and disseminated.

Baseline and follow up referral data is being extracted from Badgernet to track progress. Data from local money advice providers for each HSCP/sector show the following direct referrals from maternity services as follows:

HSCP/Sector	21/22	20/21
North East Glasgow	93	48
North West Glasgow	200	107
South Glasgow	130	81
East Dunbartonshire	1	3
Inverclyde	0	1
Renfrewshire	15	18
West Dunbartonshire	61	36
East Renfrewshire	4	10

A Scottish Government financial inclusion quality improvement practicum to increase financial enquiry and referral to support within Health Visiting has been progressed in one (GCC) area in 2021/22, learning from this will be shared more widely in 2022/23. The QI approach will be supported and rolled out to support the delivery of the Universal Pathway in NHSGGC.

Data from local FI service providers for each HSCP/sector show the following direct referrals from Health Visitors as follows:

HSCP/Sector	21/22	20/21
North East Glasgow	674	737
North West Glasgow	620	312
South Glasgow	1290	1424
East Dunbartonshire	69	49
Inverclyde	0	10
Renfrewshire	137	32
West Dunbartonshire	51	250
East Renfrewshire	14	7

Improved
parental access
to benefits



The Money & Debt with Advocacy Service - Maternity Matters supports any women and when required her family, who attends the Special Needs In Pregnancy (SNIP) Maternity Service in Glasgow. It sees women who have multiple vulnerabilities. The service supports women to develop an action plan and an Advocate will work with the women to support the plan and facilitate attendance at other services from anything from 3 months upwards. A total of 243 referrals were made to the service during 2021/22 and a total of 258 repeat clients were also seen. 46% of new clients seen had an annual income of <£6k, 37% had an annual income of <£10k and a further 15% had an annual income of <£15k. Only 1% of new clients seen had an annual income >£15k to £25k. Therefore 99% of those the service has seen would be classed as living in poverty before seeing the service. 61% of service users identified that they had a disability. Financial gains were a total of £381,978.34 and a total of £51,380.85 in both housing and non-housing debt was managed for clients. A total of 49% of new service users were BAME and a total of 52% of service users needed an interpreter to engage with the service. 53% of those who used the service were <25 years old. 22% were lone parents with dependants and a further 43% were single parents who were expecting their first child. A total of 40 travel cards were provided to women who had no money to pay for travel to their Maternity Appointments. 8 clients who used this service lived in East Renfrewshire.

The NHSGGC Children's Hospital money advice service saw 339 referrals in 2021/2022 with a total 406 repeat clients also seen. There was a total of £2,007,066.33 in financial gains and a total of £146,799.19 in debt, housing and non-housing managed. Of those who used the service 77% had an annual income of <£15k before seeing the service and were living in poverty. 46% of those who used the service identified as having a disability with the service reaching families with a total of 238 children (<16) who also had a disability. 17% of those who used the service were BAME and 20% required a translator for their appointments. 11 clients were from East Renfrewshire.

NHSGGC has an equality outcome to improve perinatal care for women in poverty, minority ethnic communities and those experiencing gender based violence. Of the 10,472 women who booked for maternity care in 2021/22, 45% were in SIMD 1 and 2 zones. For those requiring an interpreter, 78% were in SIMD 1 and 2 zones. Baseline research with minority ethnic women, including women in persistent poverty, highlighted barriers to service access (including use of interpreting) and ways in which the experience could be improved. Initial actions to address structural barriers in the maternity pathway include piloting video interpreting in the early pregnancy pathway and improving access to the Maternity Booking Line through use of a patient interpreting code.

NHSGGC aims to understand families experience and impact of poverty for families with a child with a disability around the 3 key drivers of poverty. Plans to convene a Steering Group, scope out and commission research into needs of families with children and a disability in NHSGGC are underway. This research will identify themes and make recommendations for progress.



49% of new
service users
were BAME

Additional demand on existing social security supports

Free School Meal (FSM) and Clothing Grant (CG) recipients have both increased from 2020/21 to 2021/22, with an 18% increase in FSM and 5% increase in CGs. There has been an increase in demand, and the new Revenues & Benefits system now automatically awards where applicable.

Council Tax Reduction (CTR) caseload has also increased – since March 2020, CTR has increased by 8% reflecting the impact of residents' changed financial circumstances over the past 2 years since Covid-19. Demand for the Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis and Community Care Grants) has also increased significantly during this period.

New, pandemic related social security supports

Throughout 2021 – 2022 we have worked to deliver the Covid Self Isolation Support Grants and Low-Income Pandemic Payments. Residents accessing either of these grants were provided with the opportunity for a benefit check and information on managing debt.

We administered Family Bridging payments on behalf of Scottish Government and also provided additional 'top-up' payments from Humanitarian Support funding. £948,000 of Family Bridging Payments were made during 2021/22 (during Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring). These payments supported around 1,700 school pupils. Free School Meal payments of £93,000 were also made, replacing the voucher scheme which had been used previously. Two "top up" payments were made during the Winter/Spring from Humanitarian funding, with an additional £84,000 supporting pupils receiving Free School Meals and a further £78,000 supporting 500 pupils receiving Clothing Grants only.

In addition to this, we provided a cash payment to all Looked After and Accommodated in December 2021 towards the cost of Christmas.

Throughout 2021-22, we operated a discretionary grant aimed at low-income households affected by the pandemic. Approximately £83,000 was paid to 390 households, 186 of which were families with children.

East Renfrewshire Citizen's Advice Bureau (ERCAB) is one of six bureaux in the country participating in a Scottish Government pilot aimed at eradicating the need for foodbanks. As part of this pilot, ERCAB has been providing shopping cards in place of referrals to the Foodbank, whilst also providing access to emergency income, money advice and wider holistic support services. We have issued £40,000 worth of vouchers to over 600 households with children; 1360 children reached in total. ERCAB are participating in an analysis with Citizens Advice Scotland and Scottish Government to assess the pilot, and if it can be progressed.



**8% increase
in Council Tax
Reduction**



Case Study

Concern

In March 2021, Laura* was supported to complete a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) review form by a ERCAB welfare advisers. In September 2021 Laura received a decision of 'no points' meaning the award of Standard Rate Daily Living and Enhanced Rate Mobility had now ended.

Losing a vital 'gateway' Benefit such as PIP has had a devastating impact on Laura and her husband as they lost their entitlement to; Carers Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit.

With no other source of income, the only suitable option was for them to make a joint Universal Credit claim. Being on UC has provided the couple with a regular income, but unfortunately they are financially worse off as entitlement only covered Standard Allowance and Housing Element.

Solution

While the PIP award is being challenged ERCAB have been able to relieve some of their financial pressures by providing regular fuel and food assistance – currently totalling to an estimated £500 client financial gain.

Impact

Having the shopping cards has made an incredible difference to this family as they have the freedom of going into a shop, browsing and picking up items of their choice, on a day that suits them.

From Jan 2022, the Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) has worked alongside ER Carers Centre to deliver a discretionary carers grant. MART carried out benefit checks for all applications. This grant was advertised via partners to focus on carers who have not been in touch with services before. The Carers Centre registered all applicants to their service and promoted their 'respitality' card: a local discount scheme aimed at carers. MART referred 104 clients to the carers centre and 72 grants were paid out.

Future Actions 2022-2023



These actions are as accurate as possible at the time of writing. However, it is important to remember that actions will be subject to review as community planning partners further establish their recovery and renewal plans and once the impact of COVID-19 is more fully understood and priorities ahead are reshaped. Maximising income from benefits and entitlement will be key to mitigate impacts of anticipated rises in unemployment and under employment.

<p>Change required: All parents involved with employability programmes are offered financial inclusion support</p>	<p>What we will do: Employ a 1 year temporary Income Maximisation Officer to support clients seeking employment support Lead: Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: c.£30,000 for 1 Grade 7 post Target Groups: recently redundant, people on furlough and those facing redundancy, those on low wage seeking to enhance skills and income</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of clients accessing services - Number of clients having a positive outcome - Verified financial gain
<p>Change required: Improved knowledge of financial wellbeing among school aged residents, parents and carers and staff.</p>	<p>What we will do: Deliver the Government's financial inclusion plan Lead: Education Department / Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: within existing resources Target Groups: school pupils , parents, carers and staff</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of participants - Feedback from events
<p>Change required: Improved parental access to benefits and income maximisation information and advice, including new referral pathways</p>	<p>What we will do: Provide debt and benefit advice in local communities through a Community Hub. Lead: ERC Money Advice, Social Security Scotland, Citizen's Advice and Neilston Development Trust. Resources: Staff from each agency Target Groups: Low income families living in and around Neilston</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of families seeking assistance - Number of clients having a positive outcome - Verified financial gain - Soft outcome feedback analysis
	<p>What we will do: Develop a GP referral pathway to money advice services Lead: ERC Money Advice and Rights Team Resources: within existing resources Target Groups: all priority groups</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of GP referrals - Number of clients having a positive outcome - Verified financial gain - Soft outcome feedback analysis
	<p>What we will do: Produce digital resources aimed at residents more able to self-serve. 'How to guides' will be added to the Internet page along with links and descriptions to other services. Lead: MART, CAB and Barrhead Housing Association Resources: within existing resources Target Groups: all priority groups, particularly new social security claimants</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page 'hits' - Social media post 'reach'
	<p>What we will do: Financial Assessments/Income maximisation for all priority HSCP children and family cases in East Renfrewshire Council including midwifery / health visiting and capitalising on NHSGGC's improvement work with BME communities and families with a disability Lead: Health and Social Care Partnership / Money Advice and Rights Team / NHSGGC Resources: within existing resources Target Groups: Care experienced families</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of clients accessing the service - Verified financial gains - Soft outcome feedback analysis - For NHSGGC, assessing patient experience of maternity pathway

	<p>What we will do: Provide non English speakers with access to volunteer interpretation services for assistance in claiming Social Security</p> <p>Lead: Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire / Money Advice and Rights Team</p> <p>Resources: within existing resources</p> <p>Target Groups: non-English-speaking residents, residents with English as a second language</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of clients accessing the service - Client feedback - Verified financial gain
<p>*NEW*</p> <p>Change required: Improved availability of affordable credit options within East Renfrewshire</p>	<p>What we will do: Explore affordable credit options available for and seek to implement one or more provider within East Renfrewshire</p> <p>Lead: Child Poverty Oversight Group</p> <p>Resources: within existing resources</p> <p>Target Groups: all priority groups</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable credit available for East Renfrewshire residents
<p>*NEW*</p> <p>Change required: Enhanced use of data to provide insights and interactivity</p>	<p>What we will do: Explore options to enhance the use of data to allow the characteristics of those in poverty to be better understood and. In turn, to design and implement impactful solutions</p> <p>Lead: Insights and Data Team</p> <p>Resources: within existing resources</p> <p>Target Groups: all priority groups</p>	<p>How we will measure progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of insight reports - Enhanced understanding of characteristics (including intersectionality) of child poverty in East Renfrewshire

Chapter 3: The costs of living



Workstream

The Costs of Living group was newly formed to support this identified area of need as there was no existing 'natural home' for it. The group membership includes several East Renfrewshire Council departments including Economic Development, Housing Services, Education Department and Early Years Services. The group also includes members from partner organisations including Citizens' Advice Bureau, Home Energy Scotland and Citrus Energy.

NHSGGC continues to have a partnership agreement with Home Energy Scotland for patients and staff. To support our staff with money worries; another Staff Money Worries campaign was run in March 2022 and we are working in partnership with Home Energy Scotland to provide online information sessions

Lived experience feedback

As mentioned in the 'Context' chapter above, we gathered feedback from lived experience, community and stakeholder engagement and desk-based data sources to understand the impact of Covid in East Renfrewshire. There were several findings which related to employment and access to work.

Fuel debt has been a significant factor during the pandemic, reflecting increased energy use as more people worked from home and continuing fuel price inflation. CAB has distributed around £80,000 in fuel vouchers during the pandemic to date, primarily to help those who had accumulated debt.

Services have seen an increase in demand for other support services for those in financial difficulty, such as food larders and clothing banks. This is also reflected in a 50%+ increase in demand for the Food Train service at the peak of lockdown, and the establishment of two food larders during the pandemic. Food larders appear to have played a particularly important role for households who may have fallen into financial difficulties for the first time, and for whom stigma associated with existing food banks may have been an issue (also reflected in the successful trialling of shopping vouchers being offered as an alternative to food banks). While this has clearly been a positive change for many residents, it is unclear the extent to which food larders have been as effective as other food banks in referring residents to other sources of advice and support.

In addition to the changing profile of demand during the pandemic, services also expressed concern around potential for a significant increase in need for financial support and advice over the coming period. This reflected concern that 'hidden' debt cases could emerge as creditors continue to re-activate pursuit of debt, and the impact of recent and further anticipated increases in fuel costs for levels of fuel debt. In relation to the latter group, it was noted that fuel poverty cases can take time to emerge as residents accumulate debt, and suggested that "the worst is still to come" in terms of the impact of fuel costs.

Similar concerns were also expressed in relation to other pressures on household finances. This included the effect of housing market inflation on private rent levels and concern around a potential rise in evictions, and a "perfect storm" of removal of the Universal Credit uplift, planned national insurance increases, and continuing price inflation.

Action taken

During 2021/2022 the Community Planning Partners across East Renfrewshire have taken action to reduce the costs of living, including;

Reducing energy costs for vulnerable families

East Renfrewshire Council has employed an Energy Cost Advisor to provide holistic advice and support to households facing energy poverty. The support includes reviewing bills and tariffs; switching suppliers; applying for grants; wiping out debts from pre-pay meters; reducing customer's payments; and helping people to get back on supply.

The Energy Cost Advisor works in partnership with other Council services, Barrhead Housing Association, support workers, Barrhead Health and Care Centre, RCA Trust and Home Energy Scotland.

The service started in October 2021 and the Energy Cost Advisor has helped over 40 households saving them approximately just over £10,000.

East Renfrewshire Citizens' Advice Bureau (ERCAB) worked in partnership with Barrhead Housing Association and East Renfrewshire Council to provide a fuel support scheme to help households with gas and electricity costs. Payments were made to households to support them with the weekly or monthly energy costs, and also as one-off payments to manage any energy debt. The scheme ran between June 2020 and March 2022 and during that time over 350 households have been supported, with approximately £100,000 being paid out.

£100,000
in fuel support to
over 350 households





Case Study

Concern

Sharon* is a 46-year-old single parent to a 22-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter. Sharon has severe mental health issues as well as physical issues. Sharon had no electricity after tampering her meter and her gas was capped. Sharon's energy supplier wanted to remove her meter and would only replace it if she paid off the full debt and £300 for a new meter.

Solution

The Energy Cost Advisor arranged a home visit with Sharon along with her Housing Officer, Social Worker and her Community Psychiatry Nurse. The Advisor then worked with the provider on Sharon's behalf and arranged to have her electric meter fixed free of charge and get her gas uncapped.

Impact

Fortunately, this enabled Sharon to get her supply back on just before Christmas. This meant her son, who is in the army, was able to stay with her whilst home on leave and her daughter was able to spend Christmas in a warm home.

The Energy Advisor continued to work with the Housing Officer, Social Worker, Psychiatry Nurse and the Adult Support and Protection team to ensure Sharon is well-supported in a warm and comfortable home.



Case Study

Concern

Emily* had been in debt with British Gas and was struggling to setup a payment plan which was affordable to her. Emily is a single parent to three young children and is in receipt of Universal Credit. Emily struggles with poor mental health.

Solution

Emily discussed her situation with ERCAB and was able to receive a lump sum of £400 towards her debt. This brought the debt down significantly meaning she was now able to afford a payment plan for the rest of the debt.

Impact

Emily was extremely grateful as this reduced the financial pressure on a day-to-day basis and she was now able to afford her gas and electricity payments. This has improved her financial situation and also helped with her mental wellbeing.

Increasing provision of affordable housing options to vulnerable groups

East Renfrewshire Council's Housing Service lets up to 250 empty homes per year and has a new build programme which aims to deliver an additional 362 new council homes. To date 98 homes have been delivered with a further 91 due for completion in 1st half of 2022/23. In addition, as the Strategic Housing lead for East Renfrewshire, the Housing Service supports the delivery of an additional affordable housing through Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). The SHIP and the Council's lettings plan aims to ensure that all existing and new social housing in East Renfrewshire is target to those most in need.



362 new council homes

Reducing costs to families of school attendance and participation

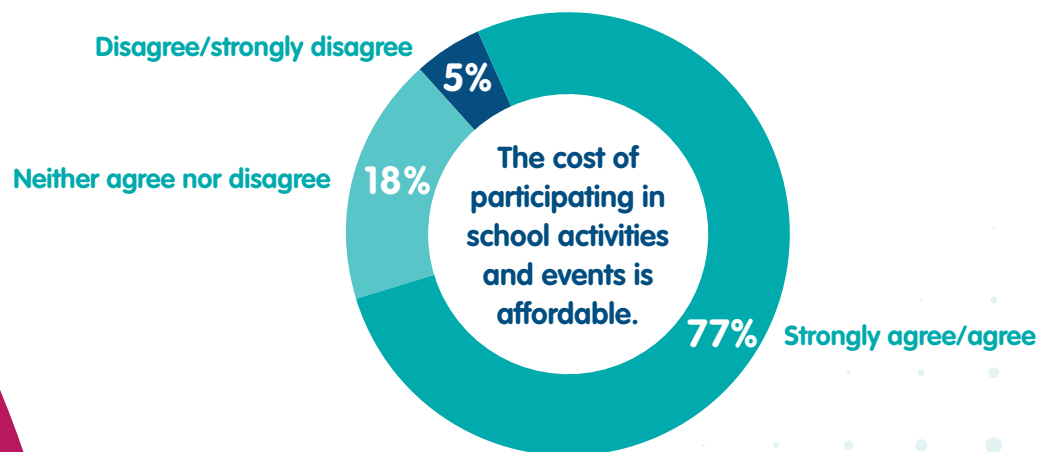
12 schools across the authority area have worked in partnership with the Education department since May 2021 to audit the cost of the school day. This builds on work undertaken together with all schools to raise awareness and deepen understanding of child poverty, including hidden poverty. The cost of the school day practice sharing group met in October, January and March to collaborate on the audit process and create local action plans based on findings.

The audit process has been designed to allow analysis and comparison of the most significant costs to families in different school communities. Due to the impact of Covid-19 there have been delays in the audits in some locations therefore the audit overview is not yet complete. However, early indications suggest that school uniform is by far the most challenging costs for families in connection with school attendance and participation. Further results and analysis will be available later in the year.

The Education Department revised the Dressing for Excellence school uniform policy in February 2022 following thorough consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The revised policy places increased emphasis on the importance of reducing the cost of uniform to families and stipulates that all school uniforms must be able to be purchased within the total amount of the school clothing grant. Adjustments to the lists of approved items have been made to enable savings for families where possible.

In a recent East Renfrewshire Council parental involvement and engagement census, more than three quarters of parents agreed that the cost of participating in school activities and events is affordable.

East Renfrewshire Council worked in partnership with local school uniform charity Back to School Bank to fund approximately 60 full uniform packs including winter items. The charity noted an ongoing increase in demand since 2020 including higher demand from older pupils and higher demand for Winter items, which both come with higher associated costs.



Reducing costs to families of Early Learning and Childcare

Pandemic restrictions meant that the Scottish Government delayed the legislative requirement to deliver 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare until August 2021. East Renfrewshire Council was able to implement 1140 hours from August 2020 in order to support families, but with reduced flexibility and without the provision of lunches for every child. However, during this period we did provide lunches to vulnerable children and families, including those impacted by poverty. A self-referral scheme was put in place and was publicised well within each Early Learning and Childcare setting, including during parents' inductions. With full implementation from August 2021, every child who is eligible for funded Early Learning and Childcare now receives a lunch as part of their provision in addition to milk and healthy snacks.

Within local authority settings food is provided by Facilities Management for 1,875 three to five year old children and 123 eligible two year olds. 565 children access their 1,140 hours entitlement with childminders and private or voluntary nurseries. These funded providers received an additional payment to cover food ensuring that all children receive this part of their ELC entitlement no matter where they access their provision.

Reducing costs to families of the pregnancy pathway

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has progressed a pilot quality improvement project to increase financial enquiry and referral to support within maternity in one local authority area in 2021/22. The learning from this will be shared more widely with the other local authority areas within NHSGGC, including East Renfrewshire, in 2022/23. Improving access to maternity services will be considered as part of ongoing Best Start implementation.

NEW: Humanitarian Food Access Fund

This one-off, temporary fund using Scottish Government Covid Funding, was administered through the East Renfrewshire Humanitarian Covid Response group. This fund was focused on providing financial resource to those food banks/larders that set up in response to the pandemic.

Three newly established food larder groups received a share of the £25,000 fund. The groups were set up as a direct response to the increased demand on local food banks to provide access to food for those hardest hit by the pandemic. East Ren Food Larder provides breakfast, lunch and dinner packs to over 50 households per week and offers a delivery service. Eaglesham Food Larder offers a trolley service open to anyone to help themselves once a week. Neilston Primary School Larder provides a breakfast trolley outside the school gates each morning, and also offers a holiday and weekend provision.

**Food Larder
provides packs to
over 50 households
per week**



Future Actions 2022 onwards



Change required:

Reduced energy costs for vulnerable families

What we will do: Employ a fuel poverty officer to develop advice and guides to support those struggling to manage the costs of their household fuel.

Leads: East Renfrewshire Council

Resources: £35,000 (funded until March 2023, but unclear source of funding thereafter)

Target Groups: Workless households, low income households, lone parents

How we will measure progress:

- Number of people receiving energy advice
- Increase in the number of people with affordable household fuel costs

What we will do: NHSGGC partnership with Home Energy Scotland

Leads: NHSGGC

Resources: NHSGGC Health Improvement staff time

Target Groups: Workless households, low income households, lone parents

Change required:

Increased provision of affordable housing options to vulnerable groups

What we will do: Work with local Housing Associations to consider their allocation policy in line with the priority groups

Lead: Housing Department and local Housing Associations

Resources: Within existing resources

Target Groups: Low income families

How we will measure progress:

- Increase in the number of vulnerable families accessing affordable housing provision

Change required:

Reduced cost to families of school attendance and participation

What we will do: Develop a Social Justice Strategy with a focus on resources, equity, participation, diversity and rights. This will incorporate our approaches to Pupil Equity Funding, Cost of the School Day and Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap. Reporting will continue to include a requirement to report on impact of interventions to reduce CoSD

Lead: Education Department

Resources: School PEF awards

Target Groups: Families in receipt of Free School Meals, other groups of children and young people identified by schools as experiencing poverty-related inequality and all families experiencing hidden poverty

How we will measure progress:

- % school PEF Plans and Reports detailing planned interventions and positive impact on reducing the cost to families of attendance and participation in school
- Outcomes of Cost of the School Day audits across the authority area will be evaluated and used to plan next steps

What we will do: Work with equalities coordinators and Head Teachers on CoSD including discussion on the clothing grant, Dressing for Excellence Policy and increased national provision of Free School Meals to P4 and P5 pupils

Lead: Education Department

Resources: School PEF awards

Target Groups: Families in receipt of Free School Meals, other groups of children and young people identified by schools as experiencing poverty-related inequality and all families experiencing hidden poverty.

How we will measure progress:

- % schools actively adopting CoSD approaches will increase
- % schools with universal uniform support strategies in place will increase

Change required:

Continue to reduce cost to families of Early Learning and Childcare

What we will do: Continue to provide a hot meal for all eligible children attending an Early Learning and Childcare setting in East Renfrewshire, irrespective of their attendance pattern

Lead: Education Department

Resources: Within existing resources

Target Groups: Children aged 2, 3, 4 and 5 attending Early Learning and Childcare settings as part of their funded entitlement

How we will measure progress:

- Increase in the number of children and families accessing free food entitlement
- Reduced food bill costs to families of children attending nursery

Change required:

Reduced cost to families of the pregnancy pathway

What we will do: Work in partnership to look at how the cost of attending services can be reduced and how families can be supported to reduced costs of purchasing items for a new baby from the learning within this report.

Lead: NHS GGC

Resources: Within existing resources

Target groups: Children <1, other groups

How we will measure progress:

- Reduced costs to families during pregnancy

Child poverty mitigating actions

It should be noted that this report outlines the changes to tackle the three drivers of poverty and therefore reduce the level of child poverty in East Renfrewshire. In addition to this, we recognise the importance of additional actions to mitigate the impact of child poverty. The wider Children's Services planning landscape combines a range of such actions, including under the Children and Young People's Plan 2020-2023 which involves a priority to increase social and economic opportunities.

Family Wellbeing

In 2021-22, in addition to fulfilling their statutory duties, East Renfrewshire's HSCP Children and Families Social Work teams have supported families to gain access to their early years' childcare entitlement and helped young people return to face-to-face teaching in schools' full time.

The continuous sharing of data and insights between HSCP and Education colleagues has ensured that all vulnerable families have access to the practical, emotional and financial support that they require, including individuals experiencing domestic abuse (particularly women) and families affected by parental mental health concerns and addiction. In turn, this has minimised incidents of crisis, family breakdown and ultimately, helped to keep children safe. Our close partnership work with Police, Women's Aid and Recovery Services has also reduced these risks and prevented more children and young people from being placed into care settings.

Our Social Work staff are vigilant to the signs of poverty and are familiarized with East Renfrewshire's approach to tackling this; being particularly conscious of the stigma surrounding this issue and the vulnerability for hidden poverty in our Local Authority.

The Social Work service also direct some of their activities towards supporting financial inclusion for families, working in partnership with the Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) to consider income maximisation as part of routine contacts. This helps to improve their income from social security, in order to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families.

In addition, we identified our most vulnerable families and offered them assistance in purchasing items for winter wellbeing activities, including winter clothing such as wellies, waterproofs and insulated clothing. This provision helped to reduce the stress and financial burden in fraught households and encouraged healthy wellbeing and positive interactions that helped support their children. Our Support Workers also assist families by making charitable applications on their behalf for essential items such as white goods, beds, duvets, curtains etc.



Helping young people return to face-to-face teaching

Our Health Visiting Service play a vital role in mitigating the impacts of families most at risk of poverty. The team work alongside MART to identify and refer families onwards who would most benefit from assistance with income maximisation. This support includes promotion of the Best Start Grant and Early Learning Payment for families who are eligible, as well as highlighting and signposting families to local foodbanks and food share services.

Health Visitors will also refer at risk families to the Council Employability Officer for assistance with skills development and job applications. Alongside this, there is also continuous communication between the Team and the Job Centre, so that awareness of any local enterprise initiatives can be shared to parents/guardians. Referrals to Housing are also supported and promoted where existing accommodation is identified as a health and wellbeing barrier.

Overall, East Renfrewshire Council's HSCP Children and Families Social Work teams have worked in partnership with a multitude of wider Council services to provide wrap-around support that mitigates the impact of poverty and prevents further social inequalities for children and families most at risk, whilst also improving their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Adult Learning

During 2021 – 2022 Adult Learning Services worked with 48 parents to deliver blended learning opportunities supporting them to achieve their learning goals across the four areas of life: personal, family, work and community. Programmes included Literacy and Numeracy for Work & Family, Digital Cafés, ESOL for Work and Conversation Clubs to increase skills and confidence.

Within our ESOL provision, we supported 36 parents to engage and improve their English language using online learning options including WhatsApp groups and video calls. We created videos and padlets to support families who were new to Scotland and East Renfrewshire; sharing information and signposting to support services. ESOL for Parents courses have been delivered to ensure parents understand the Scottish education system and feel confident to support their children with learning and develop the language required to become more involved with educational establishments. This year, there was a demand for numeracy support and this programme has been supported by teachers from the ERC Maths Champions Network. We continue to run the ESOL for Parents Hub to share information and offer support.

Adult Learning Services delivered 12 digital devices and mobile Wi-Fi connections to parents this year through the Connecting Scotland programme. The team are trained as Digital Champions and continue to support the families to get online and gain confidence using the devices to support their children's learning, their own learning journey including completion of accredited courses, attending college courses and searching and applying for work.

As a team, we supported 17 parents to gain SQA qualifications working in partnership with Clyde College and West College Scotland, supporting them to work towards their employability goals. Courses included; ESOL, IT and Early Years & Childcare and Wellbeing. 5 parents were also supported to pass the B1 Life in the UK test.



36 parents supported to improve their English language

Get into Summer 2021

During Summer 2021, we provided a range of Get into Summer activities which were planned and delivered in partnership between Education, Community Learning and Development, Culture and Leisure Trust, Social Work and East Renfrewshire Carers Centre.

Children and young people who were allocated places in the ERCL summer camps met a wide range of the criteria set out by the government. This included: 22 care experienced children and young people; 17 young carers; 83 from low income families; and 90 who were defined on SEEMIS as having an additional support need.

Of the 107 young people, aged 14 to 18, who took part in the range of trips and activities they co-designed with our CLD team: 27% live in poverty; 11 care experienced and 4 were young mothers who benefitted from provisions made for their young children (aged 2 and under) to join them. Certain activities were co-designed with our LGBT+ Youth group, and ring fenced for their participation at their request.

All families (770 children) who were provided with play kit bags lived in SIMD1-2. Furthermore, 41 of these children were care experienced.

Our two ASN summer programmes were targeted at 130 children and young people with significant additional support needs, most of whom attend specialist educational provision within East Renfrewshire. It should be noted that many other children and young people with significant additional support needs participated in other summer activities, such as the ERCL Trust summer camps, and adaptations were made as required to ensure they were able to enjoy the best possible experience.

In total over 2,200 children and young people had first-hand experience of Get Into Summer activities. Many other family members, in particular parents and carers, will have benefitted through removing the need for them to provide child care and lunch.

Over 2,200 children and young people enjoyed Get Into Summer activities



Feedback

"It was great to get out of the house and try different sport. I really liked basketball and netball." Child

"I really liked the camps, getting outdoors and making new friends." Child

"I liked all the different activities and I wish I could go back to the camp again." Child

"a good way to catch up with... (community worker)." Young person

"the first thing I've done apart from school since before covid." Young person

"Just wanted to send a message to you and the team to say thank you so much for the time and effort you put into the activities during the summer holiday! Hope you guys realise the great impact you all had on child and all of us by giving child the opportunity to go out and experience activities he would never have done!" Parent

"Just thought I'd let you know child had a great time at Castle Semple, came home, said how tired they were, went upstairs for a shower then feel asleep. He even never came down for dinner, it's great what you are offering the young people, they normally don't do activities like these." Parent

"She has been more confident with a new group and being outdoors." Parent

"He has gained confidence within himself, showing us what he's learned." Parent

"So crucially important for all of our family; provided respite for siblings, allowed mum to work and I cannot state how important it was for child to be back in his familiar school environment (over the summer) as he is so thoroughly routine driven." Parent

"Child is not able to visit many places or enjoy summer holiday activities the way other children can. So having a dedicated club for him to attend where his needs are well understood and well catered for is absolutely fantastic. It helps him enjoy activities outside of the home and to have a little exposure to socialising with other children." Parent

Provision of breakfast carts

Children and young people from two secondary school and eight primary schools in Barrhead, Neilston and Thornliebank have benefited from a no cost grab-n-go breakfast provision funded by the Humanitarian Fund. Over the course of this session, pupils have been able to help themselves to toast, cereal and fruit from a breakfast cart, prior to the start of the school day. Approximately 400 children and young people have benefited from this on a daily basis.

Removal of charges for instrumental lessons

As part of the first 100 days commitments of the new parliament, the Scottish Government abolished fees for instrumental music tuition in schools with effect from the start of session 2021/22. Funding was provided to support this policy with the intention that pre-pandemic levels of provision in local authorities could be sustained at no cost to families, and is intended to cover the cost of instrument hire as well as tuition. In terms of impact, families will no longer need to pay the £300 (or £225 for each sibling) annual charge for instrumental music lessons. Pupils eligible for free school meals or those studying music as part of national qualifications already received a full concession.

**Families no longer need
to pay for instrumental
music lessons**





Conclusion

East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership has continued to keep a strong focus on child poverty and our role in both prevention and mitigation actions. We have engaged with those with lived experience of poverty, both directly and through frontline staff feedback, to inform and drive the required step-change in our area. Further, we have sought to increase the level and quality of data we collect to best identify the priority target groups.

This report outlines our intended future actions to continue to tackle child poverty. However, we acknowledge that the profile of poverty and demand on services continues to evolve as a result of the pandemic. Therefore, we will continue to monitor data and listen to lived experience feedback and use this to shape our decision making, actions and resources.

Child Poverty will remain a priority in East Renfrewshire and we will continue to monitor and drive step-change to response the immediate, medium and longer term needs of families in our area.

Annex 1: Future Actions 2022 onwards

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 income from employment for parents

Enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security

Reduced costs of living

Critical Activities

By . . .

Encouraging more local businesses to become real Living Wage accredited

Increasing support for inactive and in-work parents to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression

Designing inputs to employability programmes via Participatory Budgeting

Delivering of new Parental Transition Fund and Best Start, Bright Futures programme

Ensuring all parents involved with employability programmes are offered financial inclusion support

Improving knowledge of financial wellbeing among school aged residents, parents and carers and staff

Improving parental access to benefits and income maximisation information and advice, including new referral pathways

Improving availability of affordable credit options within East Renfrewshire

Enhancing the use of data to provide insights and interactivity

Reducing energy costs for vulnerable families

Increasing provision of affordable housing options to vulnerable groups

Reducing costs to families of school attendance and participation

Reducing cost to families of Early Learning and Childcare

Reducing cost to families of the pregnancy pathway

Critical Indicators

- Children living in poverty
- Real Living Wage employers in East Renfrewshire
- Working age unemployment level
- Children and young people participation level
- Free school meal uptake at primary school
- Access to financial wellbeing advice in East Renfrewshire
- Fuel poverty
- Uptake of funded early learning and childcare entitlement

Annex 2: Agreed long term objectives for NHSGGC and associated local authorities

NHSGGC and the 6 associated Local Authorities have agreed the following high level approaches:

1. Role as an employer

- Increase family friendly working approaches
- Attaining and maintaining Living Wage Employer Accreditation
- Parents as a priority group for interventions with staff who have money and debt worries
- Parents as a priority group in our Employment and Health approach
- Parents as a priority group for recruitment initiatives
- Child poverty a feature, as appropriate of Learning and Education programmes
- Child poverty outcomes in community benefit clauses

2. Role as a service provider (Children and Families Settings)

- Ensure every opportunity is used to maximise income and reduce outgoings
- Develop innovative co-location models (e.g. with Social Security Services Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions)
- Ensure engagement with people with lived experience of child poverty to inform planning and review
- Analysis, where possible, of reach of interventions by Child Poverty Act priority groups (i.e. children of lone and/or young parents, children with disabilities and/or children of parents with a disability and black and minority ethnic children and also kinship carers)

3. Role as a partner

- Leadership on child poverty at Community Planning Partnership Boards
- Influencing, from local and regional perspectives, key national partners (e.g. SSS, DWP, Health Scotland)
- Influencing, from a child poverty perspective, housing policy
- Influencing, from a child poverty perspective, transport policy

In addition, NHSGGC will -

- Ensure child poverty is comprehensively addressed in the Children and Families Universal Pathway
- Develop child poverty, as appropriate, as a 'golden thread' in Acute health improvement programmes
- Provide public health data for use in Acute and CPP areas

Annex 3: Full profile of East Renfrewshire

Our analysis of the available datasets identifies the scale of child poverty in East Renfrewshire, compared to the benchmarking authorities, and Scotland as a whole. The data profile looks at differences in East Renfrewshire communities. We would expect this profile in upcoming reports, as more data becomes available in relation to the impact of COVID-19, particularly around the 'four harms'.

General

East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland. And this is expected to grow

East Renfrewshire has a proportionately large population of children living in the area and a proportionately low level of child poverty in comparison to the national average.

East Renfrewshire has a population over 96,000¹ and this is continually growing and is expected to grow at an average rate of around 600 people a year until 2028.² Based upon National Records of Scotland (NRS) figures, this increase will be proportionally, the fourth largest of any local authority in Scotland.

There are 19,646 individuals aged between 0 and 16, this is the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland. One in every five people living in East Renfrewshire is a child. 14.5% of people who report having a limiting long-term mental or physical condition have dependent children.

The proportion of children living in poverty in East Renfrewshire is the (joint) lowest in Scotland

Migration has a large impact on the population of East Renfrewshire and especially the child population. In 2019/20 over 570 more children (0-14) migrated into the area, with none leaving,³ and in 2018/19 this figure was also nearly 500, meaning over 1000 more children have been added to the area in this two year period.

Child poverty rates are higher in some ward areas than others

There are around 2,500 children living in poverty within East Renfrewshire. This amounts to 12.8% of children living in East Renfrewshire. This figure is a decrease of roughly 3.2% (500 children) from the previous released data.⁴ This is lower than the Scottish average and comparable with East Renfrewshire's family group in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.⁵

In Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor Ward has the highest rate of child poverty; whilst Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood Ward has the lowest. Poverty rates are very much influenced by housing costs therefore the overall rates are reported as poverty level 'after housing costs'. Housing data is not available at this level therefore the measures at ward level are 'before housing costs' therefore they are not comparable with the overall measures and we should assume the true levels of poverty are higher than those reported. With that caveat in mind, the before housing cost child poverty levels by ward are as follows:

Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor	21%
Newton Mearns North and Neilston	12%
Giffnock and Thornliebank	9%
Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham	8%
Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood	5%

There are fewer young mothers in East Renfrewshire than the Scottish average

There were 48 children born in 2020 to mothers who were under the age of 25, this accounted for 6% of all births in East Renfrewshire. This was the lowest rate amongst the LGBF group authorities, along with being lower than the Scottish Average of 16%.⁶

The number of lone parent households is predicted to increase in the coming years

Within East Renfrewshire there are over 11,650 households with children. Around 2,400 of these are lone parent households, a priority group highlighted by the Child Poverty Act as being at greater risk of poverty. It is projected that lone parent households will make up a greater proportion of the households in East Renfrewshire by 2026 growing to 6%,⁷ which is higher than the average Scottish increase.

Income from employment

East Renfrewshire remains a generally economically active local authority, with early indications that employment levels are beginning to recover from the last two years.

Generally, residents of East Renfrewshire are economically active, with low unemployment rates and low proportion of workless households.

There are around 57,000 individuals in East Renfrewshire of working age and 72% of these individuals are economically active which is slightly lower than the Scottish rate of 78%.⁸

There are 1,500 people who are unemployed who are of working age which is a decrease of approximately 100 people compared to the previous year. This remains the lowest rate of the LGBF group.

18.4% of households in East Renfrewshire are 'workless' meaning there is no individual over the age of 16 in the household who is employed. This is an increase of 4% from the previous year. There is no reliable data available to identify how many of these households have children living in them, however the Scottish figure is 12.1%⁹ and it is assumed that the rate in East Renfrewshire is significantly lower than the Scottish average.

East Renfrewshire residents receive the highest average weekly full time pay in Scotland. However, residents are unlikely to be employed locally as those working in East Renfrewshire have the lowest weekly pay in the benchmarking group, with many workers earning less than the living wage

31% of children in East Renfrewshire come from mixed households (where a household contains at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment and at least one other is either unemployed or inactive).¹⁰ Local knowledge suggests this could be due to a common family dynamic of one high-earner parent and one stay-at-home parent, however there is no data available to evidence this. This type of household could be particularly vulnerable to poverty should their circumstances change, for example a relationship breakdown or loss of employment which many may have experienced in the two years.

The average weekly full time pay of residents in East Renfrewshire is £809, the highest in Scotland, and the average part time pay for residents is £308, which is also the highest in Scotland. However, we recognise that many of these residents are not employed locally as compared to the other LGBF groups, East Renfrewshire ranks as having the lowest weekly pay average when both full time and part time workers' salaries are combined. The average weekly pay for those working within the authority for full time workers is £626 and for part time workers is £224.90.¹¹ Further, 31% of employees over 18 earn less than the living wage in East Renfrewshire, which is the highest rate against the LGBF local authorities and is more than double the Scottish average of 15.2%.¹²

There are 2,500 individuals in East Renfrewshire who have no formal qualifications, this translates to 4.4% of the working age population, compared to 5.7% the previous year. This is lower than the Scottish average of 7.7% and is the fourth lowest rate in Scotland.

Income from social security and benefits in kind

East Renfrewshire residents are less likely than the Scottish average to receive income from social security and benefits

There are 2,096 children in low income families within East Renfrewshire. Of these, 880 children are in families where there is a lone parent.¹³ 1,130 individuals are claiming for out-of-work benefits, this rate in East Renfrewshire (2%) is lower than the Scottish average of 3.8%.¹⁴ and 165 of these claimants were between the ages of 16 and 24. Overall, there are 15,920 children in families that are registered for child benefit, which equates to 81% of all children in East Renfrewshire however this is among the lowest proportion when compared to other Scottish local authorities.¹⁵

Overall, 57.2% of pupils in East Renfrewshire are registered for free school meals, with the figure being so high due to the universal roll out for pupils in P1-4. Within East Renfrewshire 7.5% of all primary pupils from P5 to P7 were registered for free school meals, which is lower than the Scottish average of 21.3%. In secondary schools 7.7% of pupils are registered for free school meals, which is, again, lower than the Scottish average of 17%, however this figure has been rising every year since 2018 when 6.2% of pupils were receiving free school meals.¹⁶

East Renfrewshire has a £120 for primary and £150 for secondary school uniform grant which parents/carers can apply for. We have an automated system to issue this grant each subsequent year without having to reapply. In East Renfrewshire 430 young people receive an Education Maintenance Allowances, across Scotland over 31,000 receive an EMA.¹⁷

Costs of living


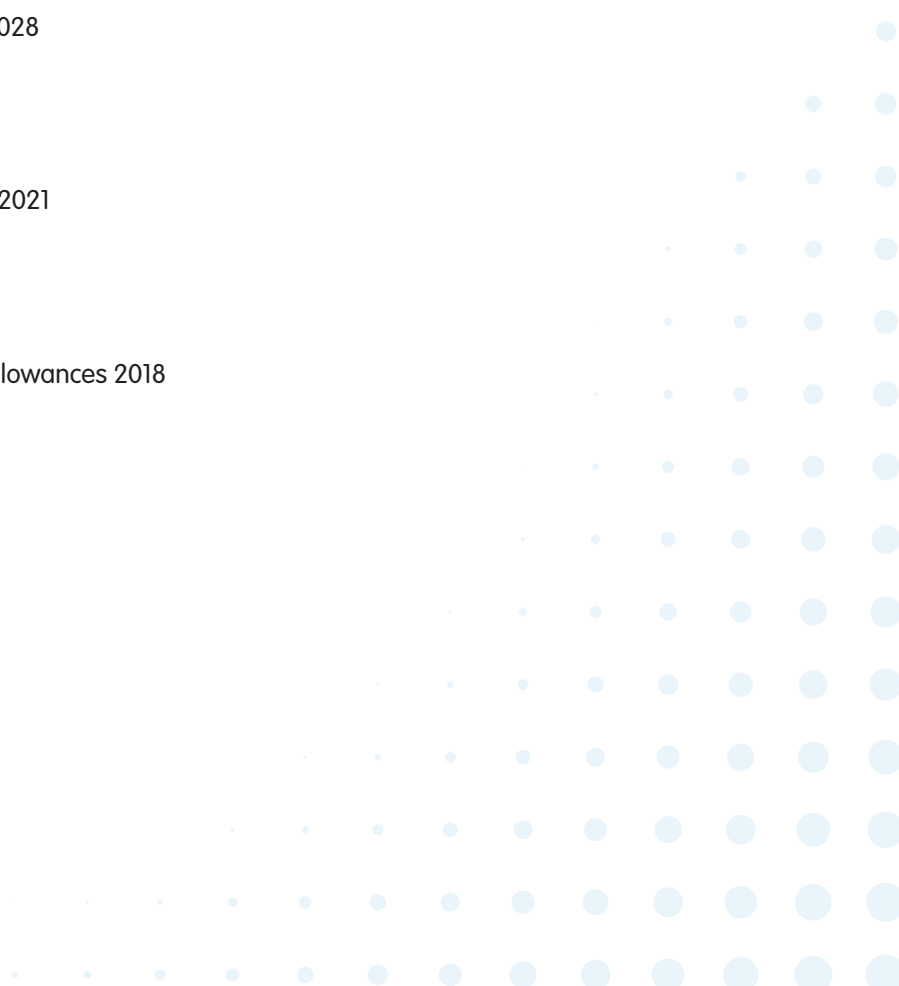
The costs of living in East Renfrewshire are higher than average, particularly in relation to housing costs. Average house prices, average local authority rent and average council tax paid are all comparatively high.

The average property price in East Renfrewshire in 2022 has increased by 9.2% since early 2021 to rise to £274,223. This average is the second highest of Scotland's local authorities behind only the City of Edinburgh, with the average house price there being £315,070, with the Scottish average being £161,847.¹⁸ The average weekly local authority rent for a property in East Renfrewshire is £77.39, which is the 7th highest weekly rent for a Scottish local authority.¹⁹ This average is affected by the proportion of larger properties within the housing stock in the area. Anecdotally, we are aware of a high private rental market across the authority, with associated high weekly costs. However, there is no data available at a local level to evidence this as private rent statistics are broken down into Broad Rental Market Areas, with East Renfrewshire being part of Greater Glasgow.

In East Renfrewshire, 73% of households are in Council Tax Band D-F, 33% more than the Scottish average. The average amount of council tax that is paid in East Renfrewshire is £1,573, the highest price paid in Scotland. In the period 2017-2019, the fuel poverty rate varied from 13% in East Renfrewshire, although it is expected that this figure is much higher in 2022, due to energy costs climbing significantly.

There are a wide range of activities available to children in East Renfrewshire. On average art, drama and sports activities, run by East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure, cost £45.50 for a three month class and there are classes that are paid for on arrival, which cost between £3.15 and £5.²⁰ On average there is a 30% discount in these prices for concessions. There are also a wide range of more expensive privately run activities, and we believe this to be a thriving market, however there is no available data to evidence this.

The Active Schools programme delivered over 7,200 activity sessions in the 2018/19 academic year involving 8,200 individual children in East Renfrewshire.²¹ The number of sessions and the number of participants has increased compared to those observed in the previous three academic years.

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- ¹ ONS mid-year population estimates 2021
 - ² NRS 2018-based Population Projections by Council Area in Scotland
 - ³ NRS Total Migration to or from Scotland
 - ⁴ End Child Poverty 2019
 - ⁵ These are local authorities that have similar characteristics, having similar levels of relative deprivation and affluence. These authorities are paired together for comparison over areas such as children, social work and housing.
 - ⁶ NRS Vital Events – Births
 - ⁷ NRS Household projections for Scotland, 2018-2028
 - ⁸ ONS Annual Population Survey 2021
 - ⁹ ONS Annual Population Survey 2021
 - ¹⁰ ONS Annual Population Survey 2021
 - ¹¹ ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021
 - ¹² Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Scotland, 2021
 - ¹³ DWP Households Below Average Income, 2019
 - ¹⁴ ONS Claimant Count March 2022
 - ¹⁵ HMRC Child Benefit Statistics, 2021
 - ¹⁶ Scottish Government Pupils Census 2021
 - ¹⁷ Scottish Government, Education Maintenance Allowances 2018
 - ¹⁸ UK House Price Index Scotland, February 2022
 - ¹⁹ Housing Revenue Account Statistics 2020-2021
 - ²⁰ East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure
 - ²¹ Local Authority Active Schools data 2018-2019
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