






**Best Start,
Bright Futures**
Tackling Child Poverty
Delivery Plan
2022-2026



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Ministerial foreword - Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government

Shona Robison



Tackling child poverty is the Scottish Government's national mission and we know it will take all in society to work together to deliver the change needed. This Delivery Plan sets out the bold and ambitious actions that we will take with partners across Scotland to provide the support families need both immediately and in the medium to longer term. Through these actions we can deliver sustainable progress towards our 2030 targets and deliver our vision for a fairer and more prosperous Scotland.

Over the past four years of our first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, *'Every Child, Every Chance'*, we have delivered considerable new support for families, embodied by the massive expansion of funded early learning and childcare, our devolved employment services and Scotland's unique family benefits. Together with the wider action set out in the plan we have both delivered immediate improvements to families' lives, and enhanced the life-long outcomes of children and young people across the country.

I am proud that the actions of this government and partners over the past four years, together with those set out in this Plan, are projected to deliver the lowest levels of child poverty in Scotland in the last 30 years. This means that by 2023-24, the year of our interim targets, using current projections we anticipate that around 17% of children will live in relative poverty, with more than 60,000 fewer children living in poverty since the Act was passed in 2017.

This is despite the major economic uncertainty and significant impact of COVID-19 on our economy and society. The pandemic highlighted even more the disproportionate impact major events can have on some parts of society. It brought into sharp relief that our focus on tackling and reducing poverty and inequality in our society, alongside the ability for us to pull together as a nation and deliver the change needed, is absolutely the right one to have.

I welcome the progress made and know we are building on strong foundations as we move to deliver the ambitious targets we have set for 2030. This Plan outlines the actions we will take – including policies which will deliver transformational change.

We had already announced our intention to increase the unique Scottish Child Payment – introduced as part of our first Delivery Plan – to £20 from April. In this plan we show how we are going to go further by increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £25 per week per child, when it is extended to eligible children under 16 by the end of this year. We will also work with our local authorities to mitigate the UK Government's Benefit Cap, which hits our priority families the hardest, to the greatest extent possible, backed by investment of up to £10 million each year.

To deliver sustained reductions in child poverty over the longer term and break the cycle of child poverty, we will work with partners to provide the integrated and holistic support parents need to enter quality employment, improve their wider wellbeing and engage with the drivers of poverty reduction. So we will significantly increase investment in our employment support services with an additional £53 million to scale up the No One Left Behind employment approach to reach

up to 50,000 parents and provide a new £15 million transitions fund to support people into work. This will be alongside further developing and increasing access to childcare and focusing on delivery of a truly ‘no-wrong door’ approach to public services.

As a Government we will lead the way, focusing on how we can enable this change through our investments, policies and approaches. We are also committed to supporting families impacted by the current cost of living crisis which could be exacerbated further by world events. People will shortly start to receive £150 payments as part of our £290 million package to help tackle soaring energy bills.

The 2030 targets require us to work differently – placing an ever greater focus on families and the places they live. Through phased approaches to change, working in a small number of localities, we can identify the barriers to progress and the keys to removing these for families and partners.

The actions in this Plan are informed by the views, experiences and knowledge of our partners – including our Poverty and Inequality Commission and people who have experienced the damaging impacts of poverty first hand – and I am grateful to each and every person and organisation that has shared their invaluable insights with us. I look forward to continuing this engagement and partnership as we focus on delivery of these ambitious actions.

The actions for families which are set out in this Plan are rightly ambitious, requiring tough decisions to be made in the years ahead to deliver within the fixed budget available to this government, but by working together we can deliver the support families need and drive progress toward a fairer future for Scotland.



Shona Robison

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government

Ministerial Foreword - Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery

John Swinney



Our work to tackle child poverty is strongly aligned with our commitment to the outcomes of the Independent Care Review. ‘The Promise’ recognised that if Scotland is to be the best place in the world to grow up, we need our public services to work for, and with children, young people, and their families. We know that poverty negatively impacts on the wellbeing of families, with the negative effects intensifying the more persistent and deep their experience. Tackling poverty will help us to support better outcomes for parents and carers and, vitally, to make a life-long difference for children and young people – helping us to ensure that Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up.

Our commitment to Keep the Promise requires us to deliver differently. We must ensure a coordinated approach to services which wrap around families – providing the right support to the right people at the right time and in a way that is respectful and empowering for families. We want people to be enabled to engage with the wide ranging action set out within this Plan.

By taking this approach we can support people out of poverty, while tackling the deep-seated causes of poverty in our country.

Supporting today’s children to reach their full potential will ensure that child poverty remains lower in the future as they become the parents of the next generation of Scotland’s children. Whilst we fully recognise that measures aiming to improve the lives and outcomes of today’s children will not necessarily bear a measurable impact on the targets set, they are essential to our overall strategy to break the cycle of poverty once and for all.

The measures outlined in this Plan strike an important balance across the three drivers of poverty reduction, strengthening the immediate support families need through social security whilst building the services that will improve their wellbeing and outcomes and enable them to move out of poverty through employment and reducing household costs. We will also continue to take strong action to tackle the poverty related attainment gap and to deliver our Young Person’s Guarantee, providing children and young people with the education, skills and opportunities they need to thrive.

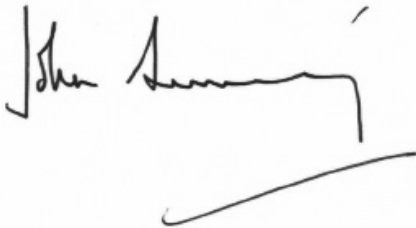
When Parliament agreed the targets on child poverty they were rightly ambitious. However no one could have predicted a global pandemic at the scale of COVID-19 or current international events – all of which are driving the cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures that we face. This is not the backdrop we would wish for our second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, however we are more committed than ever to achieving the progress needed to provide a better future for Scotland’s children.

Our ambitious work on child poverty is underpinned by our Covid Recovery Strategy which sets out our vision for recovery. The pandemic has highlighted the damage caused by deep-rooted inequalities in our society and the determination we all share to tackle these head on. Whilst the threat of Covid has not gone away, we will continue to deliver the action needed to provide

financial security for low income households, to promote the wellbeing of children and young people, to deliver good, green jobs and fair work, and to rebuild our public services.

Our actions are those we can deliver within the limitations of our fixed budget and devolved powers. Independence would provide us with all the levers of powers and therefore a far greater range of options and approaches to tackling child poverty and the ability to ensure policy coherence to that end. We will set out the prospectus for an independent Scotland over the coming months.

This Plan sets out the actions needed to realise Scotland's ambition for families, providing a framework of bold and ambitious action through which we will help to lift thousands of children out of poverty in Scotland – and rally partners across Scotland to support in delivering our national mission to tackle child poverty.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Swinney', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

John Swinney

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery

Executive Summary

Best Start, Bright Futures sets out how we will work together to deliver on Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty. It is not solely a plan for the Scottish Government, it is a plan for all of Scotland, recognising the contribution all parts of society must make to deliver the change needed for children and families.

Successfully tackling child poverty requires our approach to evolve, to focus on outcomes rather than inputs, and to deliver evidence-informed wide ranging action across Scotland, which works together to wraparound and support families. It will require the transformation of our economy, further investment in key infrastructure such as childcare and transport, and provision of the right high-quality support at the right time in order to help families to move out of poverty.

No one action in isolation can make the change needed. It is the cumulative impact of action across sectors, by all partners, in all parts of Scotland, which will make the difference for children and families.

Best Start, Bright Futures sets out a vision for Scotland, the changes that are needed to achieve this, and the actions we will take with partners to deliver that change. The plan outlines Scotland's offer to families in order to tackle child poverty head on.

This plan is built on the foundations of the work we have undertaken together over the last four years, since the publication of *'Every Child, Every Chance'*. That includes new and improved supports such as those delivered through Social Security Scotland, including the Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grant, Scotland's unique approach to employability through the No One Left Behind, our commitment to deliver more warm and affordable homes and action to strengthen the impact of public sector spend through Fair Work First.

Importantly, it also builds on the work we have taken through our response to COVID-19, which has seen us work together in new ways – breaking down barriers to progress, and putting people at the heart of decision making. Throughout this plan we highlight the progress we have already made, and what more is needed.

In delivering our national mission we are building on the available evidence of what works and focusing efforts on the three drivers of child poverty reduction and the six priority family types at greatest risk of poverty. Focusing in this way will ensure that our actions make the difference needed.

We do not underestimate the challenge in front of us. When the child poverty targets were set by the Scottish Parliament in 2017 they were ambitious. Since then, the impacts of EU Exit and COVID-19, compounded by the current cost of living crisis and rising inflation, make these targets even more challenging.

But these challenges have not reduced our ambition, rather, they have strengthened our resolve to work together to make an even greater impact on the lives of children and their families.

To provide the immediate support families need, and to deliver further progress against the interim targets, we will further enhance investment in social security support over the coming year. This includes increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £25 per week per child by the end of 2022 and taking steps to mitigate the Benefit Cap as fully as we can within the scope of devolved powers, taking immediate steps to support as many families as possible in 2022.

We will also take immediate steps to significantly scale up employment support for parents, with the aim of supporting up to 12,000 parents to ultimately enter and sustain employment.

In large part due to the actions we have taken to date, together with those set out in this plan, using current projections we anticipate that around 17% of children will live in relative poverty in 2023, with over 60,000 fewer children living in poverty since the Act was passed in 2017. Whilst economic modelling cannot precisely account for what may happen, particularly in the context of the cost of living crisis, inflation rises and increasing international instability, we anticipate on the basis of current information that over 50,000 fewer children will live in absolute poverty compared to 2017, with around 16% of children projected to live in absolute poverty in 2023. However, as the impact of the economic situation becomes clearer, this Government will continue to consider further actions required over the lifetime of this plan to achieve these targets, to support families, and break the cycle of child poverty.

In addition to their direct impact on the child poverty targets, the actions set out in this plan will lay the foundation for the transformation in our economy and public services that will be required to meet the 2030 targets, and to set Scotland on a path for sustained poverty reduction.

We recognise the challenge in front of us, and call on all of our partners, and all of Scotland to get behind these actions, and to take further steps to contribute to tackling child poverty.

A short summary of the actions we will take together is set out below.

Scotland's Offer to Families – a short summary



Working together to deliver differently

We are committed to working together to ensure that systems work for the people who need them most, trialling and evaluating new approaches, adapting our ways of working, and investing in rigorous monitoring to understand how changes are impacting on priority families.

Key actions

In the coming year we will **identify a small number of pathfinder areas** to commence work on a new phased approach to whole system change. We will **invest up to £5 million in 2022-23 from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund** and leverage the full package of funding set out throughout this plan, to support the work of pathfinders, bringing together partners in a locality to overcome barriers and maximise the use of resources to provide holistic support tailored to the individual needs of families.

We will also build on the learning of our Social Innovation Partnership to **work with up to 300 people in 2022-23, providing deep, adaptable, person-centred support that strengthens wellbeing, while addressing short-term needs and supporting long-term aspirations including employment and other positive destinations**. Backed by investment of up to £9.75 million in 2022-23, alongside investment from The Hunter Foundation, this will include relational support, delivery of accessible funded childcare options and close working with employers to promote flexible working and wellbeing in the workplace.

Part A: Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work

We are committed to supporting parents to access, sustain and progress in employment where this is their choice. We will do this through:

- A strengthened employment offer to parents
- Connectivity and childcare to enable access to employment
- Transforming our economy

Key actions – a strengthened employment offer to parents

To meet the needs of parents, **we will significantly increase investment in employability support, making up to £81 million available in 2022-23**. This will support delivery of a new offer to parents, providing support tailored to their needs through a dedicated keyworker – including support to access childcare and transport – and access to skills and training. Investment will also support the creation of up to 600 funded opportunities in 2022-23 for parents.

To complement this, we will launch a **£2 million Challenge Fund**, to test out new approaches to supporting parents into work.

As a part of the package of enhanced support, **we will deliver a new Parental Transition Fund to tackle the financial barriers parents face in entering the labour market**, particularly over the initial period of employment, investing up to £15 million each year.

Over the course of 2022-23 we will work with health boards and local authorities to provide up to 200 funded placements for parents through a new NHS Demonstrator Project for those experiencing long-term unemployment.

We will **make child poverty a central pillar of our Lifetime Skills Offer**, with enhanced support for the priority groups. We will also publish a new Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland in spring 2022.

Through these actions we aim to support up to 12,000 parents into work, helping to increase household incomes from employment.

Key actions – connectivity and childcare

In summer 2022, **we will develop and publish a strategic plan for all of our childcare commitments** for the remainder of this Parliament.

This will set out our approach to further **develop our funded offers of early learning and childcare for children aged one and two**, starting with low-income households within this Parliament, and to **build a system of school age childcare**, offering care before and after school, and during the holidays by the end of this Parliament.

We will work to improve availability of buses, introducing a **£1 million community bus fund**, supporting local authorities to improve the availability of public transport in their areas. We will also review how **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)** can be used to support low income families.

We will step up our ambition on Connecting Scotland and will bring 300,000 people online by the end of 2026, backed by £200 million. The new programme will focus efforts initially on digitally excluded low income families from the six priority groups, working with key partners across the public and third sector to reach those who need it most.

Through these actions we will tackle household costs for families and support parents to engage with the employment support.

Key actions – transforming our economy

To ensure that enhanced employability and skills support is matched with fair work opportunities, **we will work in partnership with public, private and third sector employers to identify and overcome barriers to parental employment.** This includes progressing fair work actions in low paid sectors and ensuring investment in Just Transition supports meaningful action on child poverty.

We will build on our existing work to remove barriers to employment, taking a strategic and intersectional approach to tackling employment inequalities. We will publish our refreshed Fair Work Action Plan in 2022, including commitments relating to structural barriers and inequalities, as well as discrete focus on the Gender Pay Gap, the disability employment gap and a new Ethnicity Pay Gap strategy.

We will promote fair work practices through public procurement policy and practice. By this summer, we will introduce a requirement on public sector grant recipients to pay at least the real living Wage to all employees.

To connect this dual action on fair work and public investment to local and regional economies, **we will develop Community Wealth Building action plans with every local authority and take forward plans for the introduction of a Community Wealth Building Bill during this session of Parliament.**

Through these actions we will support the creation of new sustainable fair work opportunities for parents, tackling structural inequalities which prevent priority families from participating in the labour market.

Part B: Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs

We are committed to delivering public services in a holistic way that enables choice and support for everyone to flourish in thriving communities.

We will do this through action focused on:

- A transformational approach to people and place**
- Enhanced support through social security**
- Income maximisation**
- Access to warm and affordable homes**

Key actions – people and place

We will invest at least **£500 million of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding over the next five years**, with the first £50 million of this transformational funding in 2022-23. This will help transform services that support families to ensure that all families can access preventative, holistic support which is wrapped around their needs, and provided when they need it and for as long as they need it.

Recognising the connection between child poverty and health inequalities, we will commence delivery of **our new Getting it Right Together** approach by June 2022, focusing on a range of settings. Through this new approach we will support the most deprived communities and develop a ‘no wrong door’ approach to support, linking into wider elements of action across this Plan.

To enable better access to the support families need, we are investing £36 million over two years through our Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.

Whilst we are constrained by UK budgeting arrangements, **we will use the ongoing Resource Spending Review to provide multi-year funding for the third sector where possible to do so**, enabling more sustainable, joined up, strategic planning for the sector.

We will invest £325 million over the course of the Parliament in the **Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP)**, which includes continuation of the £25 million Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. We will also continue to deliver the Empowering Communities Programme, with up to £18 million per year complementing the capital investment programme.

Through these actions we will provide financial, practical and emotional support, helping to tackle and mitigate the impact of poverty as well as preventing it.

Key actions – social security

We will double the value of the Scottish Child Payment (SCP) to £20 per week per child from April 2022, and will roll out the SCP in full to children under 16, and further increase the payment to £25 per week per child by the end of 2022. To further support families, **we will increase the value of 8 Scottish social security benefits by 6%**, including Best Start Grants and Carer's Allowance Supplement, to keep pace with rising costs.

We will also legislate to remove the income thresholds from Best Start Foods by 2023-24, bringing eligibility in line with both Best Start Grant and Scottish Child Payment.

We will improve how support is provided to carers and make links to wider services.

To better recognise the different impacts of different caring situations, we plan to introduce an extra payment of £10 a week for people who will get Scottish Carer's Assistance who are caring for more than one disabled person.

We will also work with local authorities to mitigate the Benefit Cap as fully as we can within the scope of devolved powers, taking immediate steps to support as many families as possible in 2022, with this support targeted at families and the child poverty priority family types in particular.

Through these measures we will put money directly in the pockets of low income households, lifting children out of poverty and combatting the cost of living crisis.

Key actions – income maximisation

We will shift more of the complexity of navigating the benefits system away from potential applicants, **making it easier for people to access support** when they need it. This includes further exploring systems of automated payment, beginning with the Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grant, and delivering more person centred referral and handover processes.

We will **take targeted action to overcome the additional barriers faced by the priority family types.** This includes: working with seldom-heard groups to better understand and address non take-up of benefits, expanding access to the Family Nurse Partnership and strengthening the Health Visitor Pathway.

We will also enhance access to advice and support, in places where families already go, investing up to **£10 million to increase access to holistic advice services** in the current parliamentary term, including expanding access to advice in health and education settings.

Through these measures we will help to ensure families receive the financial support they are entitled to, putting more money in the pockets of families.

Key actions – warm and affordable homes

Over the next four years, we will continue to invest in the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, in line with our commitment to deliver 110,000 more affordable energy efficient homes by 2032, including 70% available for social rent, and 10% in our remote, rural and island communities. We will place the prioritisation of tackling child poverty at the heart of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme through further strengthening housing planning processes to ensure larger family homes are delivered where they are needed.

We will take action to reduce costs for families in the private rented sector, investing £2.75 million in 2022-23 to begin private rented sector reforms which will aim to reduce child poverty by improving the quality of provision and housing affordability for families.

We will provide a further £10 million to continue our Fuel Insecurity Fund in 2022-23 to tackle the cost of living crisis, helping households at risk of self-disconnection, or of self-rationing their energy use.

We will work in partnership with housing associations to break the cycle of homelessness, funding Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans for 2022-23 and 2023-24 to enable local authorities to scale up Housing First for Families in their areas.

Through these actions we will help to keep housing costs low, provide support with rising energy bills and tackle homelessness for families.

Part C: Supporting the next generation to thrive

Best Start, Bright Futures focuses on the action needed to address the three drivers of child poverty. However, we know that tackling child poverty requires wider action, enhancing children's wellbeing and outcomes, and supporting them to achieve their potential and avoid becoming parents in poverty in the future.

We want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up, and for every child to grow up safe, loved and respected.

Together with partners we will strengthen Scotland's offer to children and young people through action focused on:

- Best start to life
- Supporting children to learn and grow
- Post school transitions

Key actions – Best start to life

We will deliver on our commitment to invest £60 million in renewing play parks in Scotland over the lifetime of this Parliament, to ensure all children have access to quality play in their own community.

Throughout 2022, **we will publish a suite of refreshed materials to provide practitioners with the confidence, clarity and practical support to continue to implement GIRFEC** in well-planned, joined-up and streamlined ways, helping to prevent or mitigate childhood adversity and trauma.

We will also continue to invest £4 million each year until 2025 for The Promise Partnership Fund, to help organisations with early intervention and to deliver changes to better support children, young people and families in, or on the edges of care - helping drive forward change that matters to children, young people and families.

Through these and existing measures we will provide the right support at the right time for children and improve their health and wellbeing from birth.

Key actions – Supporting children to learn and grow

Working together with local authorities, Education Scotland and schools themselves, **we will invest a further and increased investment of £1 billion over the course of the Parliamentary term in the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge programme.**

In recognition of the importance of digital technology in education, **we will ensure access to a device for every school aged child by 2026.**

We will also publish a **new Youth Work Strategy** focused on providing services to young people most in need. A renewed focus on delivering outcomes through youth work will help to alleviate poverty by ensuring young people have the support they need to make informed positive life choices that lead to a better future.

Through these measures we will tackle the poverty related attainment gap and continue to support the health and wellbeing of our children and young people.

Key actions – Post school transitions

To support young people after they leave school, and throughout their transition into the adult world, we will develop a School Leavers' Toolkit. The toolkit will bring together practical information about budgeting and finances, as well as guidance for school leavers on how to exercise their full democratic rights as citizens.

We will invest up to £45 million in the Young Person's Guarantee, including Our Future Now and Discovering Your Potential, in 2022-23. This will provide new and enhanced education, skills, employability and employment opportunities as well as relationship based support to young people who are at risk of not participating in opportunities and face significant barriers in entering the labour market.

Over the next three years, we will enhance the total student support package so that it reaches the equivalent of the Living Wage, including for estranged students. Scotland already provides the most generous bursary support in the UK for college students, and delivering this increase will provide even greater support for those in need.

These actions will support young people to achieve better life long outcomes, preventing them becoming the parents of children in poverty in future.

A Vision for Scotland

Taken together, the actions detailed in this plan can propel Scotland towards meeting the interim targets, and set us on track to achieve the 2030 child poverty targets.

Best Start, Bright Futures builds on the strong foundations of 'Every Child, Every Chance' and goes further in policy ambition, resource and accountability to step up our work on tackling child poverty.

Through direct efforts to get more cash in the pockets of families now, alongside a genuinely holistic, person-centred package of family support, we can help to ensure families receive the right support at the right time, for as long as they need it, creating the conditions for families to navigate their way out of poverty.

From this foundation, enhanced employability and skills support, alongside the connectivity and childcare to enable parents to take up good quality employment, will sustainably increase incomes for families across Scotland.

This is not a plan for the Scottish Government, but a plan for Scotland. This package of policies will not deliver the transformation we set out to achieve without a new focus on delivery: working in partnership across the public, private and third sectors; listening to and learning from priority families; testing, learning, adapting and scaling interventions that will make the biggest difference to those who need it most.

The publication of this plan marks the start of a new phase of our approach to tackling child poverty. As we move to implement the actions set out in the plan, we will work closely with all partners to refine, deliver and evaluate our work on child poverty, learning and improving as we go forward.

We call on everyone in Scotland to play their part, taking action to support our national mission, to create a fairer, more equal country where all children and families are supported to flourish.



Introduction

There have been significant changes in the four years since the publication of 'Every Child, Every Chance', which have impacted on the lives and experiences of children and families across Scotland. Our progress in developing a wellbeing economy in Scotland has faced considerable challenges.

Despite this through our concerted action we have delivered new support for families, including through devolved social security and employability support, and have come together as a nation to protect the most vulnerable from the impacts of COVID-19.

It is in this context that we outline this plan for Scotland, setting out the actions we will take together in the next four years to deliver on our shared national mission to tackle and reduce child poverty.

Best Start, Bright Futures focuses on delivering the national mission on Child Poverty

Achieving the targets set by the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 is imperative to improving the lives and outcomes of Scotland's children and young people, their families and wider communities. The First Minister has declared that tackling child poverty is the national mission of this Scottish Parliamentary term for the Government and we are committed to mobilising all of Scotland to work with us to deliver the change needed.

The interim targets below must be met during the life of this plan, with final targets to be met by 2030 - aligning with the timescales for Scotland to Keep the Promise:

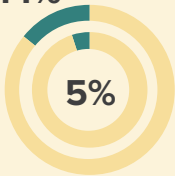
18%



Fewer than 18% of children living in families in relative poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 10% by 2030.

This means fewer than one in ten children living in households on low incomes by 2030, compared to the average UK household.

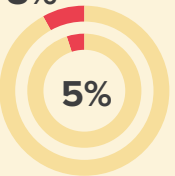
14%



Fewer than 14% of children living in families in absolute poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030.

This means fewer than one in twenty children living in low income households where living standards are not increasing by 2030.

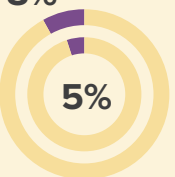
8%



Fewer than 8% of children living in families living in combined low income and material deprivation in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030.

This means fewer than one in twenty children living in low income households who can't afford basic essential goods and services by 2030.

8%



Fewer than 8% of children living in families in persistent poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030.

This means fewer than one in twenty children living in households in poverty for three years out of four by 2030.

Best Start, Bright Futures builds on strong foundations, including action delivered through ‘Every Child, Every Chance’, the first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan

In the past four years we have worked together to deliver a range of new and enhanced support for families in Scotland. These measures, which are increasing incomes, reducing costs and improving outcomes for families, include:

- Establishing Social Security Scotland and delivering 12 benefits, seven of which are completely new, including Best Start Grants, Best Start Foods and the Scottish Child Payment – providing a range of benefits specifically focused on support for low income families with children which, by the end of 2022, will be worth over £10,000 by the time a families’ first child turns six
- Providing respectful person-centred employment support through new and distinctive Scottish services, including Fair Start Scotland and the Parental Employability Support Fund, and transforming the way we work with partners through our No One Left Behind Approach
- Massively expanding the provision of fully funded high quality early learning and childcare, providing 1,140 hours for eligible children aged 2, 3 and 4
- Delivering the Money Talk Team service, in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland, putting almost £42 million into the pockets of Scottish households, and publishing two Benefit Uptake Strategies to ensure people can access the support they are entitled to

- Increasing the School Clothing Grant to at least £120 per primary school child and £150 per secondary school child as well as expanding Free School Meal provision during school holidays for children who will benefit most
- Continuing to lead the way on affordable housing with 105,755 affordable homes delivered since 2007, of which over 73,000 were for social rent
- Publishing our National Transport Strategy and expanding our concessionary fares offer to deliver free bus travel for all children and young people under the age of 22, reducing costs for thousands of low income families;
- Providing world-leading access to free period products across a range of settings including schools, colleges and universities, and targeted access for those on low incomes through community groups
- Action through our Fair Work Action Plan, including driving high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland through our Fair Work First approach to public spending

We will publish our final progress report, setting out delivery against the targets and on implementing the actions committed within 'Every Child, Every Chance' by the end of June 2022.

This second plan represents the next chapter of our work to tackle and reduce child poverty in Scotland, moving forward with increased urgency, stepping up our action and ambition across all of Scotland.

Best Start, Bright Futures takes into account the wider factors impacting on poverty and the standard of living for families

The impact of COVID-19 on child poverty levels is still largely unknown, particularly the long term effects on families and our economy, however we know that the impacts have been felt most acutely by the most disadvantaged in our society.

The economic outlook is uncertain but could result in slow economic growth¹. It is anticipated that typical incomes will fall most significantly at the lower end of the income distribution². Compounding this families continue to face a range of pressures including the ongoing impacts of UK Government welfare reform and EU exit, and significant increases in the cost of living – with rising prices for essentials such as food and energy. All of these factors risk pushing those who are already struggling into crisis and destitution.

To drive progress in tackling child poverty and to support families through the cost of living crisis this second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan focuses on: immediate action to support families now; sustained action to create the integrated support that families need to move into work; changing the system to provide the support parents need; and, investing long term in both children's outcomes and economic transformation that will create a fairer, more equal Scotland.

1 <https://www.niesr.ac.uk/publications/economic-costs-russia-ukraine-conflict?type=policy-papers>

2 <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/01/Living-standards-outlook-2021.pdf>

Best Start, Bright Futures underlines our shared commitment to working together to tackle child poverty

No Government alone can tackle and reduce child poverty, it takes all of us, across Scotland, working together - united in focus and purpose - to deliver the change to how public services are delivered, moving to a person-centred holistic approach to supporting families.

Our collective response to COVID-19 demonstrates clearly that ambitious action, delivered at pace and scale, can be achieved across Scotland when all partners are delivering against shared outcomes. It is this spirit which is encapsulated in Scotland’s Covid Recovery Strategy, setting out a vision for recovery which tackles inequalities and calls for urgency and action across all of society to deliver the change needed.

There is a clear role for government in setting the strategic direction and ensuring that our actions and resources deliver the positive progress needed. We are committed to working differently with the public sector, business and the third sector to achieve our ambitions and to tackle child poverty in Scotland.

That is why, alongside the action that the Scottish Government will take, this plan sets out how we are working with others to deliver the change needed – building on the strong action reflected in Local Child Poverty Action Reports published since 2019 and wider strategic approaches.

By changing how we work with others, and making clear the impact that all parts of society can have, we can maximise our collective impact on child poverty.

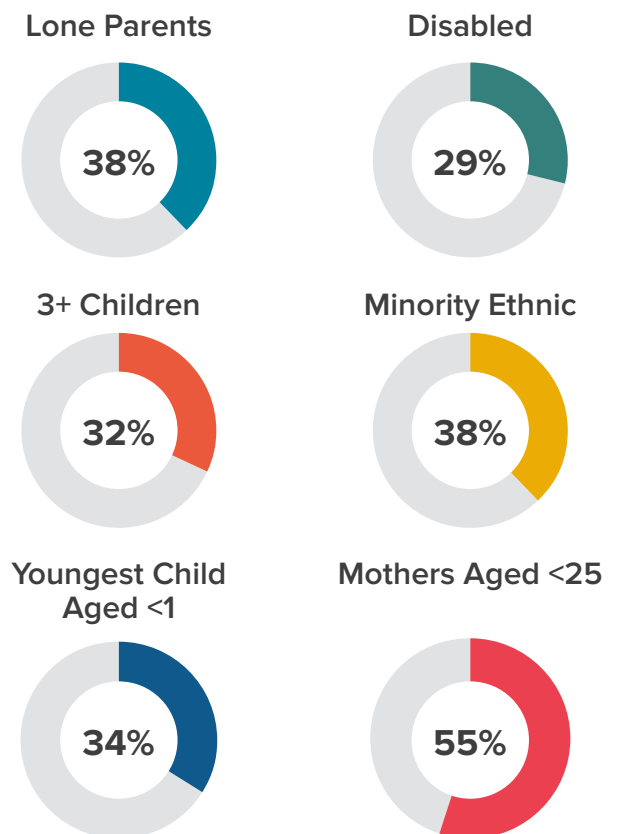
Best Start, Bright Futures strengthens the focus on the families at greatest risk of poverty

To tackle child poverty successfully, we will ensure that our actions deliver for the families at greatest risk of poverty.

We remain firmly focused on supporting the six priority family types identified within our first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Almost 90% of all children in poverty in Scotland live within these six priority family types and we have built our knowledge and understanding of the barriers that these families face in moving out of poverty.

These groups are set out below, with each more likely to experience poverty than all children in Scotland (24%) and households which do not have any of the priority family characteristics (10%).

Figure 1: Priority families children in relative poverty:



Whilst quantitative data will enable us to track progress towards our outcomes, families will often not fall into one priority group and in reality many face a combination of barriers and discrimination. We will ensure we use lived experience and a deeper understanding of the impact of intersection of characteristics in the design, implementation and monitoring of our actions and policies to ensure delivery of approaches which are increasing tailored and, ultimately, more effective.

By focusing on the impact of all interventions through the lens of our priority families and seeking to ensure that systems work for these families in particular, we will be able to drive down levels of child poverty whilst delivering significant progress on our wider equality and human rights ambitions – particularly in relation to advancing equality and human rights for women, disabled people and minority ethnic people.

Best Start, Bright Futures is rooted in dignity, equality and respect for human rights

Whilst we will focus our efforts on those most at risk of experiencing child poverty, we will use these as lenses through which we address the key barriers and struggles experienced by different groups.

We acknowledge that poverty and inequality are the outcomes of interconnected social categories and power relations, and that child poverty impacts most on people whose lives are shaped by deep rooted power imbalances.

The commitments set out in this plan will be strengthened by our Human Rights Bill, which will incorporate the International Covenant on

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as specific UN treaties for the protection of women, disabled people and minority ethnic people into Scots Law, as far as possible within devolved competence. This will ensure that the right to an adequate standard of living, which relates to poverty, adequate food and housing, will be at the heart of Scottish law, policy and services. The Bill will strengthen domestic legal protections by making these economic and social rights enforceable in Scots law.

We also remain committed to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law to the maximum extent possible as soon as practicable – strengthening the protection and enforcement of children’s rights across Scotland.

We will further embed a human rights approach to tackling child poverty through the development of a strategy to better mainstream equality and human rights through policy and delivery. The strategy will focus on improving leadership and accountability, the collation and use of evidence, and strengthening policy coherence including through reforming the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland, and embedding equality and human rights throughout the Scottish Budget process. Action in this space will help deliver impact of policy on those with protected characteristics, including the six priority family types.

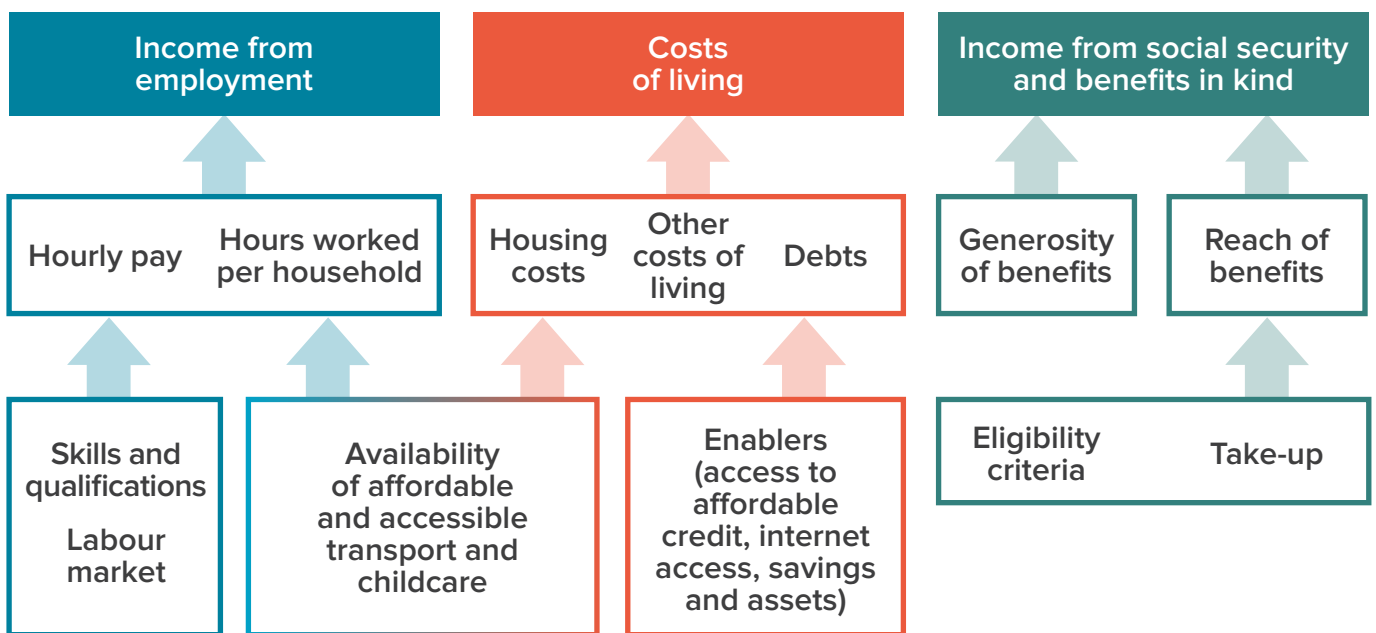
Across the four years of this plan we will seek to strengthen our evidence, evaluation and understanding in order to better understand the impact of our interventions on the priority families, to refine our approach and ensure we deliver for those at greatest risk of poverty.

Best Start, Bright Futures focuses on action to tackle the drivers of poverty reduction and improve the lives and outcomes of families

The evidence underpinning our approach has not changed, and we remain firmly focused on impacting on the three drivers

of child poverty reduction. However, we also recognise the need to strengthen the wider supports provided to families, providing the holistic services families need to move out of poverty, and the need to mitigate the impact of poverty on children today in order to improve their lifelong outcomes and stop them becoming the parents of children in poverty.

Figure 2: Drivers of child poverty reduction



By continuing to focus on increasing household incomes and reducing household costs we will improve families’ standard of living and deliver progress against the ambitious targets.

Best Start, Bright Futures is clear on the impact of actions

Alongside this plan we have published our updated evaluation strategy and measurement framework. This includes the first outputs of our Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA), estimating the impact on child poverty of key actions we have taken to date, and selected actions that we have committed to within this plan. Whilst this analysis cannot include all of the action we have taken, it is the first analysis of its kind produced by the Scottish Government.

Our overall evaluation strategy is based on several elements. The targets are assessed annually through published statistics and changes in the drivers are assessed through the child poverty measurement framework. Action is also taken to monitor the delivery, and evaluate the impact of individual policies. But, in addition to understanding individual policy impact we fully recognise the need for policies to work seamlessly together. We are increasingly using innovative modelling and qualitative system assessment to help us understand the cumulative impact of policies in theory and in practice. Full details of our evaluation strategy, measurement framework and summary of the impacts of policies on child poverty are set out in [Annexes 2, 3, and 5](#).

Economic modelling can provide us with an indication of what impact policies may have on child poverty but, given the complexities – particularly in the context of the cost of living crisis and inflation rises coupled with increasing international instability - cannot precisely account for what may or may not happen. The absolute poverty target, which measures whether household incomes keep pace with inflation over time, is particularly subject to these types of changes – as changes to inflation, beyond those currently projected, could result in significant changes to projections undertaken.

Our current modelling projects that, based on measures announced to date and included within this plan, we anticipate that relative child poverty will fall to around 17% by 2023-24, in line with the target, with over 60,000 fewer children living in relative poverty compared to 2017-20. However, in part due to significant rises in inflation, on current projections around 16% of children are expected to live in absolute poverty by 2023-24, over 50,000 fewer compared to 2017-20. Both of these results are subject to a degree of uncertainty as is the case with any economic modelling. Full detail of our Cumulative Impacts Assessment is set out at [Annex 4](#).

Best Start, Bright Futures is informed by what children, parents and our partners have told us

In developing this plan we have heard from partners across Scotland, including parents with experience of living on low incomes and from children and young people themselves. They have shared their thoughts on what progress has been made, and their frustration where this has not been enough, their concerns about the barriers faced by too many families in Scotland, and, crucially, their ideas for what can make a difference.

Whilst those we spoke to welcomed the action taken to date, they were clear that more needs to be done, and that we must be bolder and operate at greater scale if we are to deliver the change needed.

Our consultation highlighted the desire for more holistic family support services, bringing together financial, practical and emotional support in one place, which ensure families receive the right support at the right time. Those we spoke to also made clear the need for greater support into quality employment, linked to the key enablers and infrastructure needed to make this possible; tailored employment support for priority groups and a greater focus on how public spending can help drive the changes needed in our labour market.

Those we spoke to were also clear about the need to ensure that the action we take has the impact needed on the priority families identified – helping to tackle the inequalities they face, including discrimination, through immediate action and long term structural transformation.

This, and wider feedback, has been critical in shaping our offer to families, but this is not the end of the story – we will continue to engage and ensure our partners, and families themselves, help to shape the delivery of the ambitious actions this Plan commits to.

Best Start, Bright Futures will drive forward progress toward 2030

This Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan is for 2022-26. It sets out new policies and proposals to help us make strong progress towards the targets and to sustain reductions in child poverty over the longer term.

The way in which actions are delivered will be critical to the plan's success.

That is why we are putting in place improved processes to support and embed Scotland's unique approach and oversee the delivery of the plan. We will bring together leaders, decision-makers, delivery partners and those who will champion change across Scotland to ensure we hold ourselves to account on our performance against the plan, challenge our ambition, maintain a focus on our priority families and implement learning from the new approaches we are taking and testing. This will ensure that not only do we collectively deliver on our responsibilities but we keep a continuous focus on outcomes, leading and driving the step change needed to break the cycle of child poverty.

Partnerships across all levels of government, the public, private, and third sector will play a key role in driving progress on our national mission. Local and regional partnerships in particular – including Community Planning Partnerships, Children's Services Planning Partnerships, Local Employability Partnerships – will be essential to delivering greater alignment between and across support systems for families. Children's Services Planning Partnerships will also have a central role in driving local collaborative approaches which will deliver on the ambitions of this Plan and our shared work to Keep The Promise.

The Plan is set in the context of uncertainty and following a period of shocks and shifts which have changed the world we live in, with significant financial implications.

The 2022-23 budget settlement for Scotland is challenging, and modelling detailed in our Resource Spending Review Framework (published in December 2021) outlines immediate and longer-term pressures on public spending. Tough choices must be made in order to resource the ambitious action needed to deliver on our statutory commitments, including those in relation to child poverty and climate change, as well as core government priorities. Our Resource Spending Review includes tackling child poverty as one of the priorities set out in the framework to guide the process and inform decisions about the allocation of funding. We will set out more detail on our spending plans once the Spending Review concludes later in spring 2022.

The action we will take together is set out in **'Scotland's offer to families'**.

Scotland’s offer to families

We want families to be financially secure and have access to the services and support they need to thrive – helping to make material improvements in the lives and wellbeing of families across Scotland.

Scotland’s offer to families sets out actions which directly impact on the drivers of poverty reduction and which are designed to improve engagement with the drivers.

- **Part A focuses on providing the opportunities and support needed to enter, sustain and progress in work** – delivered through a new employability offer to parents, improvements to the support structures needed including through childcare and transport, and wider changes to transform our economy and deliver a fair work future for Scotland.
- **Part B focuses on maximising the support available for families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs** – delivered through a transformational approach to people and places, strengthened support through social security and income maximisation and delivery of warm and affordable homes.

To tackle child poverty beyond 2030, Scotland’s offer to families also sets out actions to improve the lives and experiences of children and young people, preventing them becoming the next generation of parents with children in poverty.

- **Part C focuses on supporting the next generation to thrive** – ensuring the best start to life, supporting children to grow and learn and on post-school transitions – delivered through a range of interventions underpinned by our GIRFEC approach, commitment to Keep the Promise and tackle the poverty related attainment gap, and through investment in the Young Person’s Guarantee.

For these actions to have the desired impact, they must come together and offer a seamless package of support to families in Scotland.



Scotland working together to deliver differently

At the heart of this plan is the recognition that to tackle child poverty, we must come together as a nation and work differently to focus on the needs of our priority families. Only by doing so, and ensuring that systems work for the people who need them most, will we be able to deliver the transformation needed to reach the ambitious targets set for 2030.

We have heard from parents and stakeholders that, whilst many of the building blocks for tackling child poverty are in place, the system of support is complicated to navigate, and is not delivering the optimal outcomes for families. Across all elements of Scotland's offer to families we know we need to focus on delivery, and that realising the transformational change needed will be challenging.

We will seek to test this transformation through the following two approaches:

- Local pathfinders
- Supporting innovation

Local Pathfinders

In the coming year, we will identify a small number of pathfinder areas to commence work on a new phased approach to whole system, person-centred support, delivered with dignity, respect and kindness.

Within these pathfinders, we will work with partners to refine, test, adapt and scale different approaches to provide person-centred solutions. We will underpin these pathfinder projects with evidence and learning to inform and improve our delivery approach, with the ambition to deliver at scale over the life of this plan.

We will invest up to £5 million in 2022-23 from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund to support the work of pathfinders. We will also seek to leverage Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to support the aims of pathfinders, and increase the impact of existing funding through identifying and removing barriers to effective delivery. The lessons learned and evidence generated will inform future delivery of the plan, and ensure we are making the most of our investments and assets to have the maximum impact on child poverty.

We acknowledge the risks that some stakeholders raised, that place based approaches have often not adequately understood, incorporated or delivered on equalities priorities – with particular concern on the relationship between place based approaches and disability, gender and racial equality. To address this, **we will look to further develop an intersectional approach to inequalities through the pathfinder approach, working in partnership with representatives of priority family types and equality stakeholders,** and, as far as it is possible, strengthen our understanding of intersectional inequalities through pathfinder activities.

A key element of this will be a focus on data collection, analysis and use to understand if the policies contained in this plan are making a difference for the priority families.

Local Approach – Glasgow Pathfinder

During the pandemic, people across Scotland came together to tackle problems, working across barriers in order to give people the help they needed.

Child poverty is no less of a crisis than the pandemic, and to tackle it we need the same commitment from every level of organisations, to empower people at the front line to act to help the person in front of them.

Glasgow City Council, the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Improvement Service have agreed to work together to integrate child poverty interventions from partners across the city – tying together services that work and are focused around the individuals and families who need them.

Rather than individuals in poverty needing to actively seek out support from several different avenues, we will bring together the services they need – so families in contact with services in the city will be connected with the benefits and support they are entitled to, as well as employability and other support to thrive, live well and maximise independence.

We will establish ways to share data so that we can proactively offer services to those that need them, and can ensure every contact counts in getting the help and support that families need.

Doing so will inevitably flush out barriers and problems, and we will put in place shared leadership to tackle them as they arise, ensuring the programme improves – but starts to make a difference to people's lives right away.

We will evaluate the project to take lessons from it to inform other work across the city, the region and more widely, which can be adapted to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate in each place.

Local Approach – Dundee Pathfinder

To break the cycle of child poverty we know we need to do things differently. We also know that families' stories, needs and circumstances are individual and specific to them, that one approach across Scotland will not suit everyone, and that local approaches are able to support improved and sustained positive outcomes.

Through a partnership approach, Dundee City Council, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Scottish Government will work together to deliver a pathfinder project in Dundee. We want to test how we can do things differently and in a more person-centred way, drawing on the experience of local partners and grassroots organisations to understand how we can do that. We will apply what we know works in tackling child poverty, but also seek to better understand what we don't know and how we can do better.

Most importantly, we will listen closely to the experiences shared by those families working with us, to understand individual stories and barriers to identify gaps in services or barriers to access, using what we learn to drive change and create opportunities to resolve these in a person centred way.

In doing so we will make best use of the information and intelligence available to us as a partnership, using this to help us plan and to track progress and outcomes, changing or stopping approaches if they do not work for the family. This will allow us to ensure families are aware of and have access to all of the support available to them, including financial support.

We are committed to tackling child poverty together through this local approach, and to test new ways of working, sharing the learning and building on what works in Dundee to inform other work across Scotland.

We are clear that this is about all of Scotland, and recognise that many of our rural and island communities face different challenges and barriers, and have unique assets that can be brought to bear in tackling child poverty.

We will act on the findings of our recent Rural and Islands Child Poverty research, and take early, targeted action to tackling child poverty in rural settings, focusing on unique solutions rooted in these communities. This will follow the pathfinder approach, supporting local actors to test different community based solutions, building partnerships, improving data and monitoring of actions.

Supporting innovation

We have invested approximately £11 million in the Social Innovation Partnership (SIP) since 2016 alongside our partner the Hunter Foundation, testing, scaling and learning from a range of innovative approaches to tackling poverty and inequality. By drawing on learning from SIP investments, we have developed a distinctive wellbeing and capabilities approach to tackling poverty and inequality that is about supporting people to live flourishing lives based on what matters to them. The approach recognises the importance of personal wellbeing, human connection, a sense of belonging and tailored support towards positive destinations based on what matters to people as key foundations for a good life.

We will scale this approach through our Flourishing Lives model that brings these elements together to deliver holistic and person-centred support pathways out of poverty, enabling families to thrive. We will also seek to address systemic barriers that prevent people from living a flourishing life by working strategically with a number of local authority partners to create more capability-enhancing systems and infrastructure. Backed by up to £9.75 million of investment in 2022-23 our action will focus on the following key steps.

We will seek to work with 300 people in 2022-23, to further test and scale our Flourishing Lives Model of providing adaptable, relational and person-centred support that strengthens personal wellbeing, addresses short-term needs and supports longer-term aspirations including readiness for employment and other positive destinations. We will scale this approach in future years, aiming to extend support to up to 3,000 people by 2026, drawing on the assets of local authority partners, communities and social impact organisations.

We will work with a range of partners to design and deliver more accessible funded childcare options that are responsive to the needs of families within their communities.

We will target families and communities with greatest need, engaging with trusted community organisations and using existing infrastructure where we can.

We will also work closely with a selection of employers to promote flexible working and wellbeing in the workplace to enable parents to make choices they value around achieving a good work-life balance.

We will work with a selection of local authorities to transition to more enabling models of support through Family Wellbeing Partnerships – drawing on existing partnerships with Clackmannanshire Council and the Tayside Collaborative, where we are using a programme of values-based leadership to help create the enabling conditions for change.

Through these approaches we will ensure that services operate in a seamless and person-centred way for those we are seeking to support. We will encourage and test innovative approaches and leverage in the expertise of partners, learning from what works and sharing best practice to inform wider system change.

Case study: MsMissMrs – wellbeing and capabilities

Annabelle* is a young mother who has experienced a family breakdown, homelessness, unemployment, and poor mental health and self-esteem.

When her little girl was around two, Annabelle was introduced to MsMissMrs, a project which supports and promotes the wellbeing of women and girls experiencing challenges in their lives. Annabelle received support from MsMissMrs around her social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing, including how to manage social boundaries and learning about the importance of self-care.

With increasing confidence and self-esteem, Annabelle was able to take up part-time employment with MsMissMrs through permitted work, which allowed her to manage the pace at which she move back to full employment without affecting critical benefits.

** name changed*



Thanks to this additional income Annabelle was able to decorate her flat, reduce her debts, go on her first ever holiday and get her driver's licence. Through her work Annabelle is also building relationships with new people and her wider community.

Annabelle has increased her working hours and income and recently completed a college course, and feels she now has a purpose and has been able to make a better life for herself and daughter.



Part A:

Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work

Work offers a sustainable route out of poverty for many families and has a strong role to play in a balanced approach to tackling poverty.

For this to be possible a wide range of systems need to align. A strong labour market is needed which offers fair, flexible employment. Parents need access to the right employability and skills interventions to support them on their journey into and within work. These must be underpinned with the wider support families need – focusing on wellbeing, financial security and access to warm and affordable homes – set out in Part B of this plan.

Currently too many families are locked in working poverty and unable to progress in the labour market, whilst others are unable to access the labour market at all due to structural barriers. We are committed to changing this by ensuring that parents are supported to access,

sustain and progress in employment where this is the right choice for their families through a new employability offer to parents.

Through the actions set out in this plan, we aim to support up to 12,000 parents to enter and sustain employment to achieve up to a 2 percentage point reduction in child poverty, subject to the effectiveness of any targeting, success rates of the interventions, and the time it takes to achieve outcomes. By further enhancing our holistic support to parents, we hope to further stretch this ambition over the lifetime of the plan. This will require a huge increase in the scale and intensity of our current approach, alongside new partnerships to support this ambition. We will do this through action in:

- A strengthened employment offer to parents**
- Connectivity and childcare to enable access to employment**
- Transforming our economy**

PART A -

SUMMARY OF ACTION, IMPACT AND RESOURCES

Within this section we commit to the following key actions to strengthen Scotland's offer to families:

- Developing a new offer to parents providing access to holistic support through a dedicated employability keyworker with local employability partnerships providing access to upskilling and supported opportunities
- Making child poverty a central pillar of our Lifetime Skills Offer, with enhanced support for the priority groups
- Working to further develop our funded offers for early learning and childcare for children aged one and two, starting with low-income households within this Parliament
- Building a system of school age childcare, offering care before and after school, and during the holidays, by the end of this Parliament
- Reviewing how Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) can be used to support low income families
- Stepping up our ambition on Connecting Scotland to bring 300,000 people online by the end of 2026
- Targeting new public and third sector employment opportunities, including up to 200 funded placements for parents in the NHS in 2022-23
- Stepping up our ambition on tackling low pay and employment inequalities, setting out our refreshed approach in the Fair Work Action Plan

We anticipate that these actions will have the following impact:

- Up to 12,000 parents supported to ultimately access and sustain employment, and up to 3,000 in-work parents supported to ultimately increase their earning. For more detail on impact, see [Annexes 4](#) and [5](#)

Anticipated financial resource for 2023-26 will be subject to conclusion of the resource spending review and confirmation in the relevant budget. The following will be allocated to support key measures in 2022-23:

- Up to £81 million to deliver a new employability offer to parents, including keyworker, upskilling and supported opportunities
- Up to £2 million to deliver a new Challenge Fund, to test out new approaches to supporting parents into work
- Up to £15 million to deliver a new Parental Transition Fund to tackle financial barriers to entering the labour market, particularly in the initial period of employment
- £13 million for the Summer 2022 holiday programme and initial investment to support development of school age childcare
- £1.5 million of resource for Connecting Scotland, capital resources will be confirmed later in 2022
- Up to £800,000 to work with employers to reduce labour market barriers and address inequalities for disabled workers, minority ethnic workers, women and the over 50s workforce
- Up to £1 million to support women who have taken a break from paid work back into jobs that match their skills and experience

A strengthened employment offer to parents



To enable parents to take up employment and progress within the labour market we must ensure they are equipped with the holistic support, skills and confidence they need to thrive.

We heard strongly through our consultation about the need to ensure that skills and training respond to the needs of the individual, economy and environment, and that support provided creates pathways to high quality jobs. Those we spoke to were also clear on the need to invest in parent and carer specific employability services, backed by specialist support services that met their whole needs, and which provide peer and relational support from people who understand the specific barriers faced by the priority families.

The following actions focus on how, with partners, we will support parents to access and progress in work through a new single integrated service offer for parents focusing on:

- Significantly increasing the scale of support available
- Increasing awareness and uptake of support
- Access to training, skills and opportunities

Significantly increasing the scale of support available

In Scotland we are already delivering unique devolved employment services, built on the principles of dignity and respect, and without fear of sanctions for those participating. Developed and delivered over the life of *'Every Child, Every Chance'* our Fair Start Scotland and Parental Employability Support Fund services have provided new and enhanced support for thousands of parents.

Through Scotland's No One Left Behind approach, we are placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services. No One Left Behind offers a long-term, scalable and flexible place based model of delivery where Scottish and Local Government work with partners from across the public, third and private sectors to deliver person-centred solutions to labour market challenges as they arise. This approach delivers an all-age approach to employability support that is flexible and person-centred and which aims to integrate and align with other key services including health, justice, children's services social work, education, housing provision and advice services.

However, to deliver the change needed for parents we must expand the reach and impact of services – enabling them to deliver at the pace and scale required to tackle child poverty.

Our investment in 2022-23 will support delivery of a new offer to parents. This will include additional investment for our No One Left Behind approach with Local Government to provide integrated support for parents from the priority family types.

Led by Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) this will enable the provision of locally

tailored responses, focusing on meeting the range of complex needs that parents from priority families often experience as barriers to employment and providing further enhancement of holistic keyworker support for parents. This will provide support to access to the training and skills parents need to enter and progress in work, as well as the ability for LEPs to create supported labour market opportunities. Through this approach we will seek to create a 'no-wrong door' that links families to wider elements of our offer including accessible childcare, support to access transport, whole family wellbeing and financial advice.

As an immediate step, national and local governments will also work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver Test and Learn Pilots for lone parents.

Through this work we will seek to develop stronger relationships between partners to better align support and inform our future activity.

To complement these actions, we will work with Local Government and partners including the third sector to reach those who are economically inactive and are not currently supported by either the Scottish Government or the UK Government to access work.

We will deliver a new £2 million Challenge Fund, to test innovative approaches to supporting parents from priority family types into work, to learn from these approaches and embed them into No One Left Behind in the future.

We have heard from both parents and employers that, despite supports available, many parents will face financial barriers when transitioning into work, which will be hard to overcome for many on the lowest incomes – this includes meeting upfront childcare costs, travel to work and wider costs of living. **As a part of the package of enhanced support, we will deliver a new Parental Transition Fund to tackle the financial barriers parents face in entering the labour market, particularly over the initial period of employment, investing up to £15 million in this support each year.** In 2022 we will work with Local Government and partners to develop and implement this new fund, ensuring that financial barriers are removed for parents as quickly as possible.

We will **build on our Governance structure and agreements between the national and local governments and DWP to observe and absorb knowledge from local activity**, to apply knowledge concurrently across Scotland and to continuously improve delivery and outcomes. This will complement a robust approach to evaluation and learning, ensuring the rapid sharing and use of best practice.

In taking this action it is important that we get it right and meet the needs of parents. **To do so we will establish a dedicated lived experience panel by summer 2022 to inform the development of employability activity.** This will include parents from across the six priority family types, including disabled parents and parents with long term health conditions, those caring for a disabled person and parents from minority ethnic communities – ensuring these users are at the heart of policy and service design.

Case study: North Lanarkshire Council's Employability Services

North Lanarkshire Council's Employability Service launched Prospects for Parents during June 2020. Having noticed the impact COVID-19 restrictions were having on the lives of parents, this initiative aimed to provide additional peer support to build confidence, increase engagement and improve parents' wellbeing.

By focusing on building these soft skills, project case workers created a safe space for parents to engage with services, introducing Economic Development and Welfare Rights officers to the group to create personal connections and allow parents to feel more comfortable to share more about their lives and the personal challenges they and their families are facing, including the impact of employment.



The employment service is already seeing a marked difference in their clients' journeys, with greater engagement leading to more confidence, in turn leading to more positive steps towards employment. This has included accessing skills training, securing job interviews and job offers, with parents having overcome some of their fears around moving into, or back into, work. This has seen parents engage more with services and encourage one another to take small but crucial steps to start to get employability support, and feel ready to progress into the labour market.

Increasing awareness and uptake of support

In order for our approach to be successful we will need to engage the parents who stand to benefit most from the integrated service offer available. To support local partners in their engagement with families in their areas we will take the following actions:

To enable better targeting of support locally, we will work with LEPs to help them to identify and exploit available data. This will help to ensure that services reach families in poverty in local communities and are better informed about the type of support they may need and will inform co-design and delivery of services through each area's Children's Services Plan – linking to the joint Strategic Needs Assessment undertaken to inform each three year Children's Services Plan based on the local needs of children and families.

Linked to our focus on whole family wellbeing, we will develop an Every Contact Counts Pledge. Focusing on delivering a 'no wrong door' approach, the pledge will encourage key-workers to unlock access to the full range of support and interventions required not only to address the symptoms of poverty but also to tackle the causes for families. For parents, this will provide a holistic approach for them to access the support they need, including employability support, job opportunities, childcare and financial and benefits advice.

To improve the reach and engagement of services with the most excluded groups we will build on good practices such as a peer ambassador approach. We will work with partners to engage with grassroots and community-led organisations to help enhance this approach to help ensure experts with experience can support their peers to engage with the new offer to parents.

Through the new Challenge Fund, we will extend our successful relational based approaches and enable greater creativity and innovation across delivery partners, including

the third sector, to reach more parents experiencing poverty. This will provide crucial support to families now and generate the partnerships, evidence and learning needed to scale up effective systems change across Scotland.

Training, skills and opportunities

We want to ensure that parents – both in and out of work – are able to access the training and skills they need to progress in their career. We are already delivering a range of support, including through the Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF), however we are committed to strengthening the impact of skills provision on child poverty.

The following actions are focused on maximising the impact of our investment in training and skills for parents experiencing poverty. They will sit alongside and complement the bespoke support available for helping around 2,500 parents to access skills opportunities as part of our enhanced employment offer.

We will make child poverty a central pillar of our new Lifetime Skills Offer being developed as part of the Skilled Workforce programme in our National Strategy for Economic Transformation. Access to training support can help individuals transition to higher paid jobs, lifting them out of household poverty. We will target our support for upskilling and reskilling on those who need it most including the six priority family types.

Following the results of evaluations of our ITAs and FWDF programmes, due in summer 2022, we will develop and set out our plans for strengthening our adult upskilling and reskilling offer including how this will support parents experiencing household poverty and target better outcomes. We will specifically consider what changes to eligibility could be introduced as well as the level of funding available to priority families to enable parents to access higher level skills training through these routes.

We will publish a new Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland in spring 2022. Through this we will increase access to, and support for, accredited learning and connect community-based adult learners with employability services to help increase incomes from work and earnings. This will focus on a targeted approach to supporting priority families and delivering specific key programmes and services based on local needs.

We will consider how the delivery of the Adult Learning Strategy can maximise the impact of our investment in Community Learning and Development interventions for parents and priority families.

In addition to these measures to provide parents with the skills they need, we will create additional subsidised opportunities for parents to enter the labour market, easing the path between employability support and good quality employment.

Levels of funding for our employment offer to parents could support around 600 parents to enter opportunities in the third and public sectors, and 2,500 to benefit from bespoke support to access our skills offer focused on sectors with growing demand. This funding recognises the additional barriers many parents experiencing poverty face in accessing skills opportunities, and could provide for example, mentoring support as they participate in training. In 2022 we will work with the third and public sectors to create supported opportunities and bespoke support to access our skills offer, focusing on sectors with growing labour market opportunities, including Health & Social Care, Green jobs and sectors where there are replacement demands.

Over the course of 2022-23 we will work with health boards and local authorities to provide up to 200 funded placements for parents on a new NHS Demonstrator Project for those experiencing long-term unemployment, and up to 500 Apprenticeship opportunities, as well as continuing our partnership with the Prince's Trust to support those furthest from the labour market into the NHS. We will provide additional funding of £1 million to support boards to help create the right infrastructure to support delivery of these placements.

We acknowledge the structural economic changes that are needed to meet our net zero ambition. **We will ensure that these changes create new opportunities for low income families, working collaboratively to pilot new ideas and test solutions that contribute to our net zero and child poverty targets** – starting in 2022-23 as part of our £20 million investment in the North East and Moray through the Just Transition Fund. We have committed to develop a series of Just Transition plans across all sectors and regions in Scotland. The National Just Transition Planning Framework explicitly requires these plans to set out their contribution to tackling child poverty, and we will work across government, with sector and regional stakeholders and the Just Transition Commission, to ensure these plans support meaningful action on child poverty. Learning from initial pilots will inform future investment to maximize the impact of just transition on child poverty.

Connectivity and Childcare



We recognise that for parents to take advantage of the wider support available, and to engage in training, learning and employment, it is essential that the right infrastructure is in place to support them. This includes high quality affordable and accessible childcare that meets the needs of both children and their carers, affordable and accessible public transport which connects parents to essential services, employment centres and schools, and digital connectivity to access online services and information.

The following actions focus on how, with partners, we will strengthen the support on offer to families by:

- Improving access and availability of childcare
- Enhancing access and affordability of public transport
- Expanding Connecting Scotland

Improving access and availability of childcare

As of August 2021, 1,140 hours of high quality funded early learning and childcare (ELC) is available to all three and four year olds, and to eligible two year olds. As well as benefitting children themselves, this significant expansion of ELC is already making a direct contribution to reducing household costs, with the full offer of 1,140 hours saving households up to £4,900 per eligible child in 2021. It also gives parents greater opportunity to access training, employment and learning. Through the 1,140 hours programme, we will continue to work in close partnership with local authorities and the wider childcare sector to maximise the opportunities to support parents and carers to develop their skills and experience, to find a job or to expand their hours when they are ready.

We know how important accessible and affordable childcare is in supporting parents to take up these opportunities to the fullest extent possible. That is why we are going further.

In summer 2022, once the outcome of the Resource Spending Review is known, we will develop and publish a strategic plan for the remainder of this Parliament. This will set out our approach to delivering all of our ELC commitments, including those set out below.

We will further develop our funded offers for ELC for children aged one and two, starting with low-income households within this Parliament. In the coming year we will engage with families, the sector and academics to design how the new offer will work.

We will continue to work with partners to maximise uptake of the existing offer of funded ELC for eligible two year olds. This includes considering where we can adapt the offer and who can access it. In 2022-23, once necessary data sharing regulations and mechanisms are in place, local authorities will be able to access data on eligible households in their area for the first time, enabling them to reach out to more families with specific information on the local offer in their area. As part of our ongoing work with local authorities and partners, we will provide support to make best use of this new data and the discretionary powers available to local authorities to provide families in need of particular support early access to funded ELC.

We will also build a system of school age childcare, offering care before and after school, and during the holidays, by the end of this Parliament. Those on the lowest incomes will pay nothing. This will remove one of the key barriers preventing parents - particularly those on low incomes - from gaining access to training, study or secure and stable employment.

Backed by initial investment of £3 million, we will begin work in 2022-23 to understand the demand for services and the delivery capacity within the existing system. This early work will build on learning from our Access to Childcare Fund projects, which are testing innovative models of school age childcare for families most at risk of poverty and focusing on addressing the specific needs of priority families. Input from our People Panel will help us test and understand how we can build a system of school age childcare to support a community. We will seek to scale this model nationally over the remainder of this Parliament, aligning with wider support for families.

We will also invest £10 million in a summer 2022 holiday programme, aligning funding in this first year to support the priority family types in particular. We will scale this offer progressively, adapting to meet families' needs, over the course of the parliamentary term as part of our wider year-round school age childcare offer.

In developing our future system of school age childcare, we are taking a person-centred approach to designing services - working collaboratively with families, childcare providers and the wider public sector - to build a system that meets individual needs. We will also take a place-based approach, recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to providing childcare solutions within communities.

To guide this significant new expansion, we will undertake an eligibility review that will identify the best approach to expanding access to funded childcare for more of the priority groups. As part of this, we will consider how to develop consistent approaches to eligibility for all of our childcare offers that will ensure a simple, joined up approach for families, maximise the opportunities to support children and families out of poverty, and respond to evidenced, place-based need.

Case study: Supporting access to School Age Childcare: SHIP

Sara's* parents needed to find an after-school club that would be able to cater for her complex support needs. Her dad is self-employed, working long hours to help provide for the family, and her mum wanted to return to work now Sara had started school.

The family really struggled to find an out of school club that would be able to provide adequate care for Sara as she requires one to one supervision and support to keep her safe and included. Sara's mum thought that she might not be able to go back to work as she couldn't find suitable childcare, but was then recommended SHIP.

Following a visit, Sara's mum knew that she had found a suitable place for her to be safe and happy, and Sara joined the SHIP after school club in 2020.



Sara is now collected from school and attends the SHIP after school club four days a week (term time), and attends the holiday club programme. Sara's mum has said:

“

If I had not found SHIP, I would not have been able to go back to work. If the After School Club were to stop, I would have to give up my job as I cannot send my daughter to mainstream after school clubs as I'd have huge concerns over her safety. This would be a massive financial issue for our family and we would be under a lot of pressure. At SHIP, my daughter feels safe, included and has made some good friendships (which she struggles to do in her mainstream school class). There are so few services out there specifically for children with additional support needs, and I'm so glad we have SHIP. For us as a family it has meant that I can work and add to the household income, without this we would be struggling. Life is stressful enough looking after Sara without having to worry about money or worrying about the care she is receiving from a childcare provision.”

* Name changed. SHIP – Support Help and Integration in Perthshire – is a parent led charity that has been running since 1986, providing youth clubs, sports groups, holiday and after school clubs for children with complex additional support needs. SHIP is being supported through the Scottish Government's Access to Childcare Fund – informing development of our school age childcare offer.

Enhancing access and affordability of public transport

Our National Transport Strategy, published in February 2020, outlines our ambitious vision for Scotland's transport system for the next 20 years and sets out our commitment for the transport system to play a key part in tackling child poverty. We are currently investing over £500 million to improve bus priority infrastructure to tackle the negative effects of congestion, so that bus journeys are quicker and more reliable. This includes grants through the Bus Partnership Fund, which is supporting local authorities in partnership with bus operators, to deliver bus priority infrastructure to encourage more people to travel by bus. In addition, our Network Support Grant will provide up to £93.5 million over the next financial year to benefit passengers by protecting the bus network whilst passenger numbers and revenue remain suppressed due to the pandemic. The additional subsidy allows operators to run more services at lower fares than might be otherwise be possible.

However, despite considerable investment we know that more must be done to deliver the services families need, where and when they need them. Research, commissioned by Transport Scotland exploring the relationship between priority families and transport³, and reinforced by the consultation for this plan, highlights that access to public transport is critical in terms of shaping families' experience of poverty and supporting them to move out of poverty.

To deliver the change needed, we are taking a range of action focused on improving the affordability, availability and connectivity of our transport system.

To improve affordability, we will continue to deliver support through concessionary fares for eligible groups. This includes providing free bus travel for all under 22s, supporting young mothers and larger families in particular, and for disabled people. This will help connect these priority families to essential services, training, employment and childcare and also reduce the costs they face in making these journeys.

To ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to transport fares for others, we are taking forward our Fair Fares Review. The review is being undertaken to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares and services for the future. It will look at the range of discounts and concessionary schemes which are available on all modes including bus, rail and ferry. It will also take into account the cost and availability of services, and will consider options against a background where the cost of car travel has declined and public transport costs have increased. Findings will be shared as they emerge during the review.

To improve the connectivity of public transport, we are procuring the next generation digital travel data systems needed for users to plan their journey across all public transport. This service will provide open data to third party providers, like Traveline Scotland, to include enhanced information around different journey options, including cost, as well as available routes, timetabling and duration – helping parents and carers to get where they need to go.

3 [Transport and Child Poverty – Beyond the pandemic](#) – Poverty Alliance, June 2021

We will work to improve availability, introducing a £1 million Community Bus Fund to support local authorities to improve public transport in their areas. This will also support transport authorities to explore the full range of options set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, including local authority run bus services.

And, in recognition that public transport is not always available where and when it is needed, we will review how Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) can be used to support low income families. Together with partners we will consider how we take forward the second Strategic Transport Projects Review recommendation to invest in sustainable DRT that meets people's needs and circumstances. We will invest an initial £120,000 to support two projects: a feasibility study exploring the potential for flexible Demand Responsive Transport to improve public transport network coverage and accessibility for the residents of and visitors to Shetland; and the development of a DRT software application suite that will simplify the booking and management of current DRT services on the islands and also increase awareness and accessibility of the services to all potential users. This work is delivered alongside our wider DRT review and through a shared Islands, Rural and Transport Scotland commitment to identify carefully considered, evidence-based, and practical solutions with the potential to positively affect children and young people and their life chances.

Expanding Connecting Scotland

Digital access links families to a wide range of services essential to reducing household costs, increasing earnings and improving wellbeing but we know that the costs can be prohibitive for some families. Access to a device and connectivity gives opportunities to improve digital skills, access online financial and benefits information, training and education, and to get access to better deals on goods and services.

Delivered in partnership with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Connecting Scotland has already delivered over 60,000 packages of support to users by the end of 2021. This has provided individuals with a device; connectivity; and training and support through the Digital Champions model.

We will step up our ambition on Connecting Scotland and will bring 300,000 people online by the end of 2026, backed by £200 million. The new programme will focus efforts initially on digitally excluded low income families from the six priority groups, working with key partners across the public and third sector to reach those who need it most.

In targeting this support we will help to maximise the impact of other interventions across this plan, connecting families to the range of support available. We will seek to challenge the programme to find innovative new ways of opening up the digital world for people.

The programme will equip priority families with the kit and the skills, training and support they need to take advantage of essential online services and key interventions such as childcare, transport, employability services.

Case study: Connecting Scotland

“

The device is wonderful; I can do the things I need to so much more easily. I've been able to change providers to help save money at home. Look at the benefits that the kids are entitled to, and my kids are able to do the same activities their friends are doing online for school. They are happier and that helps. I don't feel so useless or powerless.”

Michael is a 45-year-old man living in Arbroath. He has a wife and two children aged 7 and 14. He has been out of full time work for the past 10 years due to a physical disability caused by an accident in his workplace. He experiences periods of significant challenge with his mental health. He is very technically minded and understands a lot about computers and general IT.

He volunteers his digital skills whenever possible, but has been finding this more difficult recently as his old personal device has broken and requires a new hard drive. The cost of a second hand hard drive is more than he could save in a year.



His wife works but is on minimum wage and is not able to look for better paid work as there is no time available and the only access they had to the internet was through a single smart phone. They live day to day and occasionally rely on foodbanks when faced with unexpected or very high bills.

Michael's biggest challenge has been trying to apply for suitable jobs through his old phone, whilst also trying to support his children to complete homework and lessons through the same device. It's impossible to put together a CV, undertake training or to attend interviews from this one device.

He was provided with a device from Connecting Scotland and two years of mifi service. This has reduced the household outgoings by covering the cost of internet connectivity and has provided a usable device through which Michael can support his children's learning. In addition, it allows him and his wife to explore roles where their expertise would be valued and could aid others.

Transforming our economy



Strengthening our employment offer will enable parents and their older children transitioning out of education to take advantage of employment opportunities, however, we know that it is not enough for parents to enter any job. To sustainably reduce poverty all jobs must offer the wages, hours and conditions needed to allow parents to support their families, these jobs must be available to all, regardless of gender, race or disability, and these jobs must be available throughout all of Scotland's urban, rural and island communities.

We heard from our consultation that providing individuals with employability and skills support will be of limited use if the jobs they are moving into are poor quality, underpaid and undervalued. This is particularly the case for minority ethnic parents, especially women, who are more likely to experience insecure contracts, underemployment, low pay and discrimination.

With the cost of child poverty in Scotland estimated to be more than £3 billion in 2021⁴, including lower productivity and higher unemployment levels of those who have grown up in poverty, we cannot afford to continue with the status quo. Scotland needs a strong future economy where secure and well-paid jobs and thriving businesses help drive a reduction in child poverty.

Our National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) sets the vision and roadmap for the actions we will take, with partners, over the next ten years to create a wellbeing economy, thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions. Central to that is how economic transformation can support our national mission to tackle child poverty. NSET makes clear that we are taking a broader view of what it means to be a successful economy, society and country and putting people and the planet at the heart of our economy.

The following actions focus on how we will strengthen Scotland's economy to ensure that parents have fair work employment prospects – contributing to Scotland's economic future with their skills and expertise – by:

- Working in partnership with employers
- Tackling structural inequality in employment
- Becoming a Fair Work Nation
- Ensuring the public sector plays our part

⁴ Based on a UK figure of £37.7 billion, estimated in 'Hirsch, D. 2021, The cost of Child Poverty. Loughborough University'

Working in partnership with employers

In December we published our Business Principles Agreement, committing to work with business in co-development, collaborative delivery and collective assessment of policies impacting business, and to work collaboratively with business and employers to address challenges that impact across Scotland. We have heard from employers that tackling child poverty is an important issue for them, as both an economic and social imperative, and we agree that we need to be bold and ambitious to deliver on our national mission.

We will build on our existing strategic engagement with business to develop a shared vision for tackling child poverty in partnership with business and employers

from the private, public and third sectors and from small enterprise through to multinational companies operating in Scotland. Tackling child poverty is a national mission, and we will work with business across Scotland to better understand how we can create the right conditions to collectively support parents to get closer to the labour market, create more fair work opportunities, and support low income parents to sustain and progress within work. In turn, this will unlock a valuable resource to a labour market struggling to keep pace with demand. We will increase the impact of our partnership with business, reviewing existing forums and engagement platforms and, where appropriate, amending these to reflect our national mission.

We will showcase good practice where businesses are already contributing to tackling child poverty, and recognise leaders in this space, such as those signed up to the Scottish Business Pledge. We will seek to build on existing partnerships to foster a community of businesses who are actively pursuing their part in the national mission to tackle child poverty, and through this share good practice and learning, surface any

additional barriers and collectively identify solutions to strengthen the role of business in tackling child poverty.

Tackling structural inequality in employment

We know it is not enough to create new jobs, when existing data shows that parents from priority families are least likely to benefit from them. Women, minority ethnic people - in particular minority ethnic women - and disabled people all face disadvantage in the labour market, with challenges in entering and sustaining employment, lower pay, more precarious work and discriminatory hiring and firing practices. Intersectional experience of employment inequality further exacerbates these challenges.

We will build on our existing work to remove barriers to employment, taking a strategic and intersectional approach to tackling employment inequalities in 2022. We will do this through the coordinated implementation of the refresh of the Fair Work Action Plan – as part of becoming a Fair Work Nation – which will include commitments focusing on tackling structural barriers and inequalities, specifically on the Gender Pay Gap, Disability Employment and halving the disability employment gap, as well as a new ethnicity pay gap strategy.

This action plan will support employers to understand the issues driving labour market disparities for women, disabled people and minority ethnic communities and improve equalities data management and pay gap reporting to better inform actions and outcomes that will drive change. It will also help employers to understand if there are unfair pay disparities and disparities in employee experience and help drive improvement for the better recruitment, retention and progression of disabled people, women, and minority ethnic groups.

The Workplace Equality Fund will invest up to £800,000 per year from 2022-2024 to fund projects to support employers to reduce labour market barriers and address inequalities for disabled workers, minority ethnic workers, women and the over 50s workforce.

We will continue to take targeted action to tackle the gender pay gap, raise family incomes and grow our economy through the Women Returners Programme. We will invest up to £1 million in 2022-23 to support women who have taken a break from paid work back into jobs that match their skills and experience. Through our expanded partnership with the SIP, we will continue to encourage more employers to adopt flexible working practices, and support employees to secure more flexible working agreements.

We will raise the profile of Supported Businesses⁵ and take action to realise the potential of Supported Businesses to access public contracts. We will continue to help these businesses make an important contribution to the economy, not only through the goods and services they deliver, but also by providing meaningful employment, training and social support. We will continue to strengthen their commercial viability. Through sourcing goods and services from these businesses, public and private sector organisations alike can play an influential role in supporting those most disadvantaged in the workplace and in turn supporting the national mission to tackle child poverty.

Becoming a Fair Work Nation

Our actions to create more opportunities and tackle structural inequality will help more parents, particularly from the six priority families, to enter and sustain employment, but this must be matched by more action to tackle low wages and in-work poverty if it is to have the desired impact in reducing child poverty. We will step up our Fair Work actions to ensure that the work parents are moving into increasingly offers the wages and conditions necessary to exit poverty.

The number of accredited Living Wage employers in Scotland has increased from 14 in 2014 to over 2,500 in 2021, with over 52,000 workers getting a pay uplift to at least the real Living Wage. **We will work with business leaders to expand the number of employers paying at least the real Living Wage and offering Living Hours** through the Scottish living Wage Employer Accreditation Scheme and the Scottish Business Pledge, and offering security of working contract through the Living Hours Accreditation Scheme for Scotland.

We will take specific action to improve pay and conditions in low paid sectors, including delivering a Fair Work Agreement in the forthcoming Retail Strategy, and working with employers and trade unions in sectors where many low income parents work, and where low pay and poor conditions can be most prevalent. This will have a positive impact on our priority families, working in sectors where women and minority ethnic people are overrepresented.

⁵ A 'Supported Business', for procurement purposes, is a business whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled and disadvantaged persons, and where at least 30% of the employees are disabled or disadvantaged

We are committed to Fair Work as a key aspect of our approach to delivering funded ELC. To support this, we are providing the funding to enable all private and third sector providers delivering funded ELC to pay at least the real Living Wage to all childcare workers delivering the funded entitlement. We will build on this through the Fair Work Action Plan commitment to create an ELC forum to explore sectoral bargaining as a long-term aim.

The proposed National Care Service will be developed with Fair Work Principles at its heart, including a commitment to delivering national pay and sectoral bargaining. In the 2022-23 Scottish Budget we increased the hourly rate for those providing Adult Social Care to £10.50 per hour, representing a 12.9% increase for these workers in the course of a year.



In collaboration with key stakeholders, we are taking forward recommendations from the Fair Work in Social Care Group as part of our commitment to improving the terms and conditions of the adult social care workforce. These include recommendations for minimum standards for terms and conditions reflecting Fair Work principles, and the development of local standards that employees should expect.

Ensuring the public sector plays our part

Our consultations were clear on the desire for the Scottish Government, and the public sector more broadly, to use our position as an employer and funder to deliver greater impact on child poverty in Scotland, and we are committed to maximising the impact of all government spend on our national mission.

We will promote fair work practices through public procurement policy and practice.

Fair Work First has been a core element of our public procurement policy since 2015. In October 2021 we [announced](#) that companies bidding to win Scottish Government contracts must pay at least the real Living Wage to those involved in delivering contracts. Our forthcoming construction frameworks, including the £600 million Civil Engineering Framework, will pay workers at least the real Living Wage. Fair Work First criteria is also being applied to grants and other funding across the affordable housing sector.

Building on Fair Work First implementation, **by summer 2022, we will go further and introduce a requirement on public sector grant recipients to pay at least the real living Wage to all employees** and also to provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition – within the limits on devolved competence.

We will connect this dual action on fair work and public investment in all of our local and regional economies, **through the development of Community Wealth Building (CWB) action plans in each Local Authority area**. These will implement tangible actions that will direct and retain wealth generation in local economies so that wealth is not extracted, but is held locally and income is recirculated for the benefit of local people and communities. **To further enable this we will introduce CWB legislation** that builds on the successes and learning of all five Scottish Government CWB pilot areas.

As a significant employer and major procurer of goods and services our health and social care providers can play a significant role in tackling child poverty. **We are supporting Scotland's Health and Social Care providers to become active 'anchor institutions' as part of CWB to mitigate some of the drivers of socioeconomic inequalities within their local community**. This includes encouraging a greater focus on employment opportunities for the six priority family types.

We will seek to build child poverty into our processes for assessing and planning future major events, Themed Years and Scotland's Winter Festivals from the earliest stages, ensuring that Fair Work principles are embedded in the development and delivery of Scottish Government funded major events, and that we can capitalise on opportunities any major events that we host present in tackling child poverty.

Through the Public Sector Pay Policy we will help reduce inequalities and promote wellbeing. The policy directly applies to 50 public bodies, and acts as a reference point for all major public sector workforce groups, including NHS Scotland, fire, police and education workers. In 2022-23, the public sector wage floor and £775 basic pay increase for those earning less than £25,000 will help to protect the lowest paid and most vulnerable as we work towards rebalancing our economy. From the data available there is a higher proportion of women, disabled people, minority ethnic people and younger employees as well as part-time workers among lower paid employees.

We will further strengthen the role of the public sector, including the Scottish Government, as a fair work employer offering quality jobs to priority families. We will work with Fair Start Scotland (FSS) to support participants to apply for employment within the Civil Service via the Going Forward into Employment Programme, with a streamlined recruitment process and 12 months of in-work support from FSS to both the candidate and line manager. To date, 56 FSS participants have had Civil Service job offers, we will seek to grow this number and expand the programme to include No One Left Behind participants.

Case study: Civil Service employment offers an important route out of poverty for families, particularly the six priority family types.

As an employer, the Scottish Government actively targets opportunities to individuals who are in the child poverty priority family types. We are an accredited Living Wage, Disability Confident, Recruit with Conviction and Carer Positive employer, and have set a corporate objective of having a workforce that is representative of the people of Scotland.

We aim to prioritise work placement opportunities for disabled people, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and people experiencing poverty, and have established a range of opportunities that specifically target those most at risk of child poverty. This includes our Care Leavers Internship, offering 12 month paid internships for care experienced 18-30 year olds. Last year we facilitated 13 internships and will be offering 15 this year. We offered 17 Career Ready mentoring and summer work placements for school pupils facing potential barriers in education and employment in 2021, and will be offering 33 in 2022. We also offer over 100 Modern Apprenticeships each year, appointing people on a permanent basis, providing vital job security for individuals with fewer qualifications or who are at the start of their careers.



Our biannual Graduate Development Programme actively targets disabled people and individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds, and we have a strong ambition to expand and improve on this work. This will include updating recruitment methods to ensure all early career entry points to the Scottish Government are accessible and attractive to minority ethnic and disabled people and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

We also work with Fair Start Scotland, supporting people facing barriers to work with real world paid work experience for 12 months, with the option for a permanent contract at the end of this period. In 2021 we offered 43 Fair Start Scotland placements.



Part B:

Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs

Part A of this plan has set out how we will support parents into more and better employment, with the connectivity and childcare, employability and skills support and transformation in our economy combining to offer a sustainable exit from poverty for many households.

We recognise that this, on its own, will not be enough. We know that many of the changes outlined in Part A will take time to bed in, some over many years, and we also know that for some parents paid employment is not currently, or may never be, a feasible option.

Crucially, we understand that a sustainable exit from poverty will never be just about securing and retaining a job. The section below outlines the steps we will take to ensure that families are able to access a holistic package of support and entitlements when they need it – from housing to social security and wider financial, emotional and practical support.

This section of the Plan focuses on how we deliver public services in a holistic way which enables choice and support for everyone to flourish through:

- **A transformational approach to people and place**
- **Enhanced support through social security**
- **Income maximisation**
- **Access to warm and affordable homes**

PART B -

SUMMARY OF ACTION, IMPACT AND RESOURCES

Within this section we commit to the following key actions to strengthen Scotland's offer to families:

- Investing £500 million of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, helping transform services so that families can access preventative, holistic support which is wrapped around their needs, and provided when they need it and for as long as they need it
- Doubling the value of the Scottish Child Payment from April 2022, delivering the benefit in full to all eligible children under the age of 16 and further increasing the value to £25 per child, per week, by the end of 2022
- Increasing the value of 8 Scottish social security benefits by 6%, including Best Start Grants and Carer's Allowance Supplement, to keep pace with rising costs
- Working with local government to mitigate the benefit cap as fully as we can within the scope of devolved powers
- Expanding the Family Nurse Partnership to reach all first time mothers aged 21 and under by 2025 and continue to target 22-24 years olds where capacity allows
- Delivering 110,000 more affordable homes by 2032 with 70% for social rent and strengthen housing planning processes to ensure that larger family homes are delivered where they are required

We anticipate that these actions will have the following impact:

- Direct financial support provided to low income parents, including up to 300,000 through the Scottish Child Payment, estimated to reduce relative child poverty by 5 percentage points in 2023-24, lifting 50,000 children out of poverty. For more detail on impact, see [Annexes 4](#) and [5](#)

Anticipated financial resource for 2023-26 will be subject to conclusion of the resource spending review and confirmation in the relevant budget. The following will be allocated to support key measures in 2022-23:

- £50 million of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, with £500 million to be invested over the course of this Parliamentary term
- £225 million for the Scottish Child Payment in 2022-23
- £1.5 million for the expansion of welfare advice in accessible settings, with £10 million committed over this Parliamentary term
- £830 million for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, with £3.6 billion committed over this Parliamentary term

A transformational approach to people and place



Through our consultation there was widespread recognition of the role of holistic family support in addressing multiple needs. This was recognised as important for providing financial, practical and emotional support, helping to tackle and mitigate the impact of poverty as well as preventing it, and supporting families to navigate an increasingly complex set of support services. Many respondents pointed to the mental health impacts of the pandemic, compounding existing stresses around living in poverty, and emphasised the importance of integrating mental health and wellbeing support into family support services. Those we spoke to also highlighted the need to draw on community assets and to ensure communities are connected to the services and opportunities they need.

We recognise that people and families do not exist in policy siloes, and are often not aware of the kinds of support that are available given the multiple channels through which this support can be delivered. We will strive across government and with all of our partners to take a more holistic, person-centered approach. There is a critical role here for community planning, and Children’s Services Planning Partnerships, in driving this change locally to improve outcomes through addressing the causes and impacts of child poverty in communities across Scotland.

As part of this, we will aim to create a ‘no wrong door’ culture, where families are supported to access the right support at the right time, and to navigate the system of third sector, local and Scottish government supports by trusted professionals, without stigma or discrimination. By doing so we will not only tackle the depth of poverty and improve people’s lives, we will strengthen the platform from which families engage with the drivers of poverty reduction. This approach underpins our wider action on employability and support for children themselves.

Our focus on delivering our regeneration vision for Scotland will give support to disadvantaged communities and families in order to enable people to live well locally – helping to create the conditions for increased access to work opportunities, affordable living, and targeted support.

The following actions focus on how, with partners, we will provide access to the holistic person-centred, trauma informed services families need to thrive:

- Providing holistic and whole family support
- Improving access to mental health services
- Working in partnership with third sector and community organisations
- Delivering our vision for place and regeneration

Providing holistic and whole family support

We are committed to delivering a ‘no-wrong door’ approach to public services across Scotland to ensure that all people – including those in poverty and at risk of falling into poverty - receive the right support at the right time.

This includes recognising that family wellbeing is fundamental to creating the conditions

for families to be able to navigate their way out of poverty. Ensuring all families have the support that they need to address the challenges that comes their way – regardless of what those might be – is essential if we are to enable families to thrive in all aspects of their wellbeing. Taking a holistic, whole family approach to support is central to our ambitions for keeping the Promise; our National Covid Recovery Strategy; and supporting our approach to child poverty.

We are investing at least £500 million of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding over the course of this Parliamentary term. This will help transform services that support families to ensure that all families can access preventative, holistic support which is wrapped around their needs, provided when they need it and for as long as they need it. This preventative, universal approach will rely on a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach across adult and children's services, so that families experience support which is seamless, and flexes in response to their individual and holistic needs. Given the statutory responsibility to deliver family support through a multi-agency approach, it is currently proposed that the main co-ordinating mechanism for agreeing local priorities should be Children's Service Planning Partnerships.

This significant investment will build on the local good practice already in place and enable the transformational system change and service re-design necessary to shift the balance of family support investment from crisis intervention to prevention.

It will not impose a single model for delivering family support, nor will it support business as usual. Rather, it will support local services – including those providing more targeted support to those in greater need – to work collectively, and in line with our National Principles for Holistic Family Support, to ensure that a holistic approach is fundamental to their interactions with families, regardless of need.

We will invest the first £50 million of this transformational funding in 2022-23, setting out our plans to scale up investment following the conclusion of the Resource Spending Review and in light of ongoing learning in the first year of funding.

We understand that poverty is experienced differently in rural and urban areas, and the design and delivery of holistic services needs to be based in the needs of the community. To support appropriate place based approaches, we will collate evidence from Shetland Islands Council's highly successful multi-agency child poverty project, 'The Anchor Project' which wraps support from existing frontline services around the needs of families to directly tackle poverty and inequality, while avoiding the stigma associated with support provided through other services. This research will deepen our understanding of what elements of the model could and should be replicated in other rural and island communities.

Examples of how we are working with partners to transform public services are set out below in relation to the Justice Sector and work through health services.

The Justice Sector

There is a strong interaction between poverty and deprivation and engagement with the justice system, and we recognise that the justice system can play a stronger role in tackling child poverty. There are an estimated 20,000 children who are affected by parental imprisonment each year in Scotland. Parental imprisonment is an adverse childhood experience (ACE) and is known to significantly impact long-term health and wellbeing and negatively affect both attainment in school and later life experiences.

Our long term aim is for imprisonment to only be used for those who pose a risk of serious harm and for community-based interventions to be the default for those who do not. As we

move towards this objective we continue to make strong investment in community justice services and are taking a number of short to medium-term actions to reduce the use of imprisonment and also to contribute to our national mission on tackling child poverty. Key actions are set out below.

We will introduce a Bill in this Parliamentary session to reform the law governing bail decisions and the mechanisms around prison release. This Bill is intended to start a wider debate on how custody should be used now and in the future in Scotland – with an immediate focus on reassessing how remand is used and on ensuring that people leaving prison have improved support for their reintegration to reduce the risk of future offending so they can move on towards more positive outcomes.

We are committed to making the Barnahaus model of holistic, wrap-around, trauma informed services available to all child victims and witnesses as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse, by the end of this parliament. This will provide children with therapeutic support, including helping services to identify broader welfare issues such as addiction and poverty, and will play an important part in a ‘no wrong door’ approach and aid joining up of services to focus on children and their family’s needs. We will convene an independently chaired National Bairns’ Hoose Governance Group in spring 2022 bringing together cross-sector expertise to develop the model for Scotland.

We will further support a ‘no wrong door’ approach through efforts to divert children and young people from formal measures, with early and effective measures to support children and families at an early stage through addressing wellbeing and opportunities for education, gaining employment and stable housing options.

As we develop the next phase of our unique CashBack for Communities programme we will explore all options to enhance its contribution to tackling child poverty, particularly for young parents.

The programme, which reinvests money recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act into community projects, currently funds 24 third sector organisations to support children and young people, families and communities. It has already helped thousands of young people into training, learning and employment since 2017 and will continue to provide the support needed to transform people’s lives.

Through implementation of The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 we will strengthen immediate protections for the victims of abuse and any children, to remain in the family home or social housing.

We know that there is a strong relationship between domestic abuse and poverty, with women in poverty particularly likely to experience the most extensive violence and abuse in their lives. By taking these steps, we will better protect many parents, particularly women, reducing the risk that they will experience homelessness as a result of domestic abuse.

Where there is no alternative to custody, we will provide support for families impacted by imprisonment, providing £800,000 to Prison Visitor Centres in 2022-23. This support is aimed at meeting the specific needs of families impacted by imprisonment including the alleviation of poverty and mitigating loss of income, including practical and emotional help and referrals for income maximisation and housing support.

A new approach to health services

Addressing health and social care support needs will be critical to the package of integrated support needed to improve family outcomes and enable parents to move into employment or to increase earnings.

Through the trusted relationships with medical professionals and third sector partners we will ensure families get access to the right support at the right time.

Delivering person-centred care is a strategic priority for NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government. Jointly we are committed to ensuring that development of health and social care services, post-pandemic, involve, as far as possible, designing new services with those who access them as well as with the staff who deliver these vital services, to ensure they best meet people's needs.

Through our preventative work we are developing Getting it Right Together (GIRT) across health and social care and working with partners across the public sector. A critical aspect of the new approach is a single adult's plan and a single planning process. A single adult's plan will cover all aspects of care planning from the point that it is identified that care and support may be needed, through to agreement of the care and support to be provided and its delivery. The adults plan will be designed and co-created with adults with a lived experience and carers. The plan will contain the key elements of information they consider important to share and will contain key health and social care support needs to enable them to be supported on an individual basis to meet their personal needs.

We will commence delivery through pathfinders by June 2022, focusing on a range of settings including targeted support for Deep End GP practices⁶. Through this new approach we will support the most deprived communities and develop a 'no wrong door' approach to support, linking into wider elements of action across this plan.

We will implement the Primary Care Health Inequalities Short Life Working Group recommendation for enhanced general practice services in areas of deprivation, following conclusion of the Resource Spending Review. This will aim to significantly enhance GP practices' capacity and capability by bolstering multi-disciplinary teams in areas of poverty. It will offer a more targeted approach that will aim to unlock general practice's unique contribution to proactive and preventative continuity of care, improving our citizens' health, wellbeing and ability to enter employment.

Working across health and education, we will also develop a model of family support clustering services around families, aligning this with the change being driven by the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding. Based on integrated multi-disciplinary teams this approach will seek to provide accessible drug and alcohol services, community mental health services and family support wrapped around GP practices and linked to employability support.

We will also develop family focused services for people with alcohol and drug problems. We have published a [Framework for Holistic Family Support](#) to support the development of family inclusive practice within alcohol and drug treatment services, and to ensure that family members, both adults and children, receive support in their own right.

⁶ Surgeries which cover the 100 most socio-economically deprived patient populations

Improving access to mental health services

We know that supporting good mental health and wellbeing is important to helping parents to access and sustain employment, but also to engage with the wider drivers of poverty reduction. Early intervention and prevention are the cornerstone of our approach, and we aim to support people to positively engage with their mental health at an early stage, promoting and supporting the conditions for good mental health and wellbeing for all families.

In recognition of the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact on disadvantaged communities in particular, we will continue to drive forward priorities within the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan – strengthening alignment of this work with our national mission on Child Poverty. We will build on the Transition & Recovery plan with a refresh of our Mental Health Strategy during 2022, this will include a consolidated set of mental health commitments to reflect the current mental health and wellbeing needs of the people of Scotland.

To support better access to the support families need, we are investing £36 million over two years through our Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. The fund, which is being distributed through 32 local partnership groups, aims to tackle the social determinants of mental health by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality. The Fund will support the development of an integrated culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland.

Reflecting that GPs are usually the first port of call for people seeking professional support and treatment, we have committed to ensuring every GP Practice will have access to a mental health and wellbeing service.

Between 2021 and 2026 we will fund 1,000 additional dedicated staff who can help grow community mental health resilience and direct social prescribing. This approach has the potential to be truly transformative – fundamentally changing the way services are delivered. It provides the opportunity for truly person-centred services with more help for people when, and where, they need it.

Working in partnership with the third sector and community organisations

Government cannot tackle poverty alone, and neither would we want to. In order to provide the support that families need we must draw on the experience and knowledge of our third sector partners and community organisations across the length and breadth of the country – empowering them to take action and support those in need.

The Scottish Government provides a range of funding to organisations, however we want to ensure that this investment provides not only sustainable action but complements the action taken across Community Planning Partnerships and responds to community needs.

We recognise the capacity and resource constraints faced by many of our partners, including frontline workers and third sector organisations, and commit to doing all that we can to remove policy and funding siloes created by the Scottish Government.

Whilst we are constrained by UK budgeting arrangements, we will use the ongoing Resource Spending Review to provide multi-year funding for the third sector where possible to do so, enabling more sustainable, joined up, strategic planning for the sector.

We will pilot and test new ways of working, seeking to fund outcomes rather than inputs, enabling partners to work together, play to their strengths, and deliver the services that they know their communities need.

Our partnership with COSLA, SCVO and Third Sector Interfaces through the Strengthening Collaboration Programme will explore ways to overcome barriers to engagement, including through building trust, reducing bureaucracy and supporting effective partnership working to enable the third sector to engage more fully in tackling child poverty.

We will develop a new Third Sector Fund aimed at providing support to families and children and young people, to replace the CYPFEI & ALEC Third Sector Fund. Due to commence in April 2023 and backed by up to £16 million each year over the following two years this fund will help to support action at a national or community level to support children and families, including the six priority families who are most at risk of poverty.

Building on our work with the STV Children's Appeal since 2011, **we will make a further £1 million available in 2022-23 to allow the Appeal to continue its work to tackle both the causes and consequences of poverty.** This investment will continue to enable it to reach thousands of children, young people and families across the country and to leverage millions in additional funding.

We will continue to invest in the Family Fund in 2022-23, providing almost £2.97 million of funding to enable the provision of support, advice and direct grants to families on a low income across Scotland who are raising seriously ill or disabled children and young people. This funding will continue to reach over 6,000 families, enabling them to access the support they need to improve their quality of life.

We are committed to working with partners to tackle inequality and discrimination, further equality and advance the realisation of human rights in Scotland. Through the Equality and Human Rights Fund we are providing more than £21 million over three years (2021-2024), supporting 48

organisations, delivering work in this area. Amongst other things, the Fund supports the Poverty Alliance to deliver the Rights in Action project, which aims to support organisations and individuals to better understand and use their economic, social and cultural rights to address poverty.

Delivering our vision for place and regeneration

The places we live have a direct impact on our health and wellbeing, and on the environment. Through partnership and collaboration, place based planning and regeneration aims to improve the lives of people in the places they live. It is an approach which intervenes in the cycle of complex challenges that areas of long ingrained poverty become trapped in. Place based regeneration therefore seeks to be both a policy of prevention and of transformation by addressing the key issues at a local level that contribute to poverty and inequality.

This is not about quick wins, it is about action that delivers across the short, medium and longer term, working together to support resilient and sustainable communities. We will do this through empowering people in communities to take action, supporting communities to develop community assets, enabling them to increase their leverage of investment, encouraging local economic development, enterprising activity and delivering more services and activities locally. This will provide an essential platform to support and deliver Community Wealth Building and to deliver on our commitment to support 20 Minute Neighbourhoods - where people can have their everyday needs met locally within a walk, wheel or cycle of around 20 minutes from their homes.

All of our work to redesign our communities will be underpinned by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The following action will help to drive forward progress in the coming years.

We will invest £325 million over the course of the Parliament in the Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP), which includes continuation of the £25 million Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. The programme, underpinned by the Place Principle, will support the delivery of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods and is designed to make sure that all place based investments understand the place in which they are made, how their contribution will help deliver the changes needed, and how local communities shape their future. It seeks to better link and align investment and resource within places for the benefit of those with the greatest need.

The PBIP, along with our £50 million Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme, Town Centre Action Plan, support for Business Improvement Districts and investment in Scotland Loves Local, enables the development of core community infrastructure, helps to create new community assets, brings existing assets into community use and develops land for new use. These programmes directly create new jobs, provide spaces for new enterprise and spaces for community organisations to deliver activities their communities need.

Through the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, the 22 recommended projects for 2022-23 are projected to support or create more than 2,900 jobs as well as thousands of training places, refurbish and bring back into use 29 buildings, create more than 15,000 sqm of business space and support over 50 community facilities which will benefit more than 470 businesses or enterprises.

We will also continue investment our Empowering Communities Programme investing up to £18 million per year, strengthening the focus on action which tackles child poverty. This investment complements our capital Place Based Investment Programme, supporting work both at individual level through strategic partnerships and the Investing in Communities Fund (ICF) and at community level through the Strengthening Communities Programme (SCP) to build capacity, resilience and sustainability.

Through the Empowering Communities Programme over 350 community organisations are being supported, reaching thousands of people in our least advantaged and our most fragile rural and island communities. It is creating jobs and opportunities for people to gain or maintain work and makes a vital contribution in the delivery of public services that communities need.

Social Security



Although our powers are limited, in the three years since we have had the powers and laws to deliver social security, we have introduced 12 benefits, seven of which are completely new⁷. In the coming year, to tackle the cost of living crisis, we will also increase the value of a number of Scotland-specific benefits⁸ by 6%, including Best Start Grant and Carer's Allowance Supplement, to enable this financial support to keep pace with rising costs. Our replacement benefits are more generous and easier to access and as a result the Scottish Fiscal Commission has estimated that, by 2026-27, we will be investing £5.5 billion a year in social security⁹, a full £764 million more than the funding we expect to get from the UK Government to pay benefits. This is an investment in the people of Scotland and is key to our national mission to tackle child poverty.

We want to ensure that everyone in Scotland has enough money to live with dignity. We are committed to begin work to deliver a Minimum Income Guarantee for Scotland and have established a cross-party steering group. We anticipate the initial report from this group in autumn 2022, with the group expected

to run until at least August 2023, producing recommendations which will be designed to be achievable and implementable, and intended to tackle poverty, inequality and insecurity. We will look to implement these recommendations as far and as quickly as practicable, within the limits of devolved competence.

The following actions focus on the immediate steps we will take within the life of this Plan to deliver on this ambition, including through:

- Our package of five family benefits
- Strengthened support for carers
- Scottish Disability Assistance
- Help with heating costs
- Tackling the cost of the school day
- Additional delivered by local authorities

Our package of five family benefits

Across the life of the first Plan we launched our package of five family benefits comprising Best Start Foods (BSF), three Best Start Grant (BSG) payments and the Scottish Child Payment (SCP). Collectively these already offer financial support to families which is unparalleled across the UK. Our plans to strengthen these over the life of this Plan are set out below.

We will double the value of the SCP to £20 per week per child from April 2022, immediately supporting an estimated 111,000 children under the age of six, and will further increase its value to £25 per week per week by the end of 2022. This will bring the maximum value of financial support available through our package of five family benefits to over £10,000 by the time a families' first child

7 Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment, Best Start Grant School Age Payment, Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child winter Heating Assistance, Job Start Payment, Scottish Child Payment, Young Carer Grant.

8 All Best Start Grant Payments, Best Start Foods, Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Assistance, Funeral Support Payment, Job Start Payment, Young Carer Grant. Scottish Child Payment will be doubled from April 2022.

9 Scottish Fiscal Commission, [Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts](#), December 2021

turns six, and over £9,700 for each and every subsequent child. Increasing the value of SCP will help tackle child poverty head on for eligible families and offer relief in the face of the cost of living crisis.

Subject to receipt of the necessary data from DWP, we will roll out the SCP in full to eligible children under 16 by the end of 2022 child. We will continue to engage with DWP to enable the expansion to proceed as planned and ensure that essential data is available in order to complete assessments and commence awards. Following this expansion, it is estimated that 430,000 children will be eligible for this support, lifting an estimated 50,000 children out of poverty in 2023-24.

Working with local authorities we will continue to provide immediate support for school age children by delivering Bridging Payments worth £520 in 2022. Reaching around 144,000 school age children as of December 2021, four payments of £130 will be made over the course of 2022 aligning with school holidays for every child in receipt of Free School Meals on the basis of low income. We will work with our partners in local authorities ahead of the full roll out of SCP to ensure a smooth transition for those children receiving bridging payments who will be eligible for SCP and will explore options to streamline application processes for these children.

We will legislate to remove all income thresholds from BSF by 2023-24, bringing eligibility in line with both BSG and SCP. In addition to expanding the reach of this support to around an additional 30,000 people, we will also move to a cash payment instead of pre-payment cards at the same time – giving parents greater flexibility and choice in how they use this financial support.

To make it easier to access the support available, we will explore systems of automated payment for devolved social security benefits to maximise take-up, and deliver new signposting and referral processes to remove the burden on parents of navigating multiple systems and schemes. This exploration will include linking Scottish Child Payment with Best Start Grant.

As part of this work, **we will seek to introduce regulations which will allow us to automatically award the Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment to qualifying individuals in receipt of Scottish Child Payment** when we roll out Scottish Child Payment to under-16s at the end of 2022.

Strengthened support for carers

Carers make an immense contribution to our society, which is why improving support for carers was one of our first priorities with our new social security powers. Since September 2018, our Carer's Allowance Supplement (CAS) has increased Carer's Allowance (CA) by around 13%, supporting more than 126,000 carers on lower incomes, many with some of the most intense caring roles. We have also introduced a Young Carer Grant for young people aged 16, 17 and 18 who spend an average of 16 hours a week caring for someone who receives a disability benefit.

By the end of this Parliamentary term we will go further to support carers, replacing Carer's Allowance in Scotland with Scottish Carer's Assistance. We will work together with DWP to see how quickly we can deliver this new benefit. The key changes we will implement are set out below.

We will improve how support is provided to carers and make links to wider services.

This will include working with carers to design systems that work for them, processes that treat people fairly, with dignity and respect, and making links from Social Security Scotland into wider services for carers.

To better recognise the different impacts of different caring situations, we plan to introduce an extra payment of over £500 a year for people who will get Scottish Carer's Assistance who are caring for more than one disabled person.

The extra money from the Carer's Allowance Supplement and our Young Carer Grant will continue. We also intend to pay Scottish Carer's Assistance to carers when the person they care for is in the process of challenging a disability benefit decision, and receiving short-term assistance, where no support is currently available. This will help provide more financial stability for carers.

We will continue to extend support after launch of Scottish Carer's Assistance, starting with five proposed priority actions.

To protect carers' existing support and ensure everyone can benefit from these changes at the same time, we will bring forward these changes once we have safely and securely transferred carers' benefits from Carer's Allowance to Scottish Carer's Assistance. Our five priority actions are: removing education restrictions; increasing the run on of support after the death of a cared for person; increasing the earnings limit, allowing carers to add together hours spent caring for more than one person, and a payment for long term carers.

Scottish Disability Assistance

With the devolution of disability benefits to Scotland we are committed to taking this opportunity to delivering a new, simplified, compassionate system that treats everyone with dignity, fairness and respect, and provides an improved experience.

We successfully launched Child Disability Payment last year and we have begun transferring the benefits of people getting Disability Living Allowance for children. **We will complete this transfer by spring 2023, automatically transferring all children and young people in Scotland who currently receive Disability Living Allowance to Child Disability Payment in a phased approach.**

Over the life of this Plan we will deliver the new Adult Disability Payment (ADP), replacing Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for people in Scotland. Following a launch in pilot areas this spring, the new benefit will be available across the country from summer 2022.

In contrast to the DWP system, we are removing the burden from individuals to provide supporting information. Instead, clients have the option to ask Social Security Scotland to collect the information they require on their behalf. Our new, person-centred decision-making process will ensure everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect and people will be able to apply in the way that's best for them.

We have abolished controversial DWP assessments. Instead, and only where required, for ADP clients we will hold person-centred consultations between the person and a Social Security Scotland health or social care practitioner, starting from a position of trust. Our consultations will not involve functional examinations and the criteria will be applied fairly to all clients. Consultations will not be carried out for Child Disability Payment clients.

As a result of these and other changes, the Scottish Fiscal Commission forecast that by 2026-27 we will invest more than £500 million per year in ADP over and above the level of spending on the payment being replaced, Personal Independence Payment (PIP), with more people forecast to be eligible for and awarded ADP than PIP.

Help with heating costs

Following the introduction of Child Winter Heating Assistance in 2020, we have provided financial support to help disabled children and young people and their families with additional heating costs in the winter months. We will continue to deliver this unique Scottish payment over the life of this Plan, worth £202 in 2021-22. Further action to support low income families with heating costs are set out below.

Beginning in winter 2022-23, we will introduce Low Income Winter Heating Assistance which will replace Cold Weather Payments in Scotland. It will guarantee an annual payment of £50 to around 400,000 low-income households currently eligible for Cold Weather Payments – an investment of around £20 million every year.

Breaking the current link with the weather will give households more certainty about what support they will get. The proposed new allowance is the equivalent to two Cold Weather Payments and should ensure that most people will be better off.

Tackling the cost of the school day

Together with local authorities we are providing a range of targeted support to tackle the cost of the school day for children from low income families. This includes providing a School Clothing Grant of at least £120 for every eligible child in primary school and £150 for eligible children in secondary school, delivering an Education Maintenance Allowance for older pupils and providing Free School Meals for those who need them most – with targeted support throughout the holiday periods.

Over the life of this Plan we will further strengthen the support available, and help tackle the cost of the school day for low income families.

To increase uptake of targeted support, we will work with local authorities, DWP and HMRC to improve data sharing and work toward automation where possible. This will extend to key support including Free School Meals, School Clothing Grant and Education Maintenance Allowance, improving uptake, reducing the burden of evidence on families and ensuring families receive the support they are entitled to.

Aiming to reduce the cost of uniforms for families we will bring forward national guidance on school uniforms. Consultation on this change will be undertaken during June 2022 and we will seek to make guidance statutory during the course of this Parliament.

In addition, we will further expand universal Free School Meal provision to all children in primary schools. This change will tackle stigma and ensure high uptake of healthy and nutritious food for those that need it most. We will continue to deliver alternate provision during school holiday periods for around 144,000 children who need it most.

Support delivered by local authorities

We will continue to invest in key support delivered by local authorities through the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF), Council Tax Reduction scheme and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) and will work together with local authorities to focus on how we can strengthen the impact of these measures on child poverty.

To ensure the SWF is working effectively and providing the support needed, we will undertake a comprehensive, independent review. The review will examine many aspects of the SWF including local authority administration, funding levels, accessibility, promotion, take-up and outcomes for applicants. Findings from the review will be published in early 2023 and will inform any future changes to Scottish Welfare Fund policy or administration.

To strengthen the impact of DHPs, we will publish Scottish guidance for highlighting the potential for these payments to contribute to our national mission on child poverty.

We will also work with local authorities to mitigate the Benefit Cap as fully as we can within the scope of devolved powers, taking immediate steps to support as many families as possible in 2022. We know that around 97% of the households impacted by the cap are families with children, with lone parent families disproportionately impacted, losing an average of £206 per month as of November 2021. Mitigation of the cap will raise the incomes of families hardest hit by UK Government welfare reforms and help them to meet their housing costs.

We want to make it easier for people to access the support available to them and will work together with local government to explore automation of support linked to devolved social security entitlements. **We will establish a data sharing and automation project in summer 2022, its scope will include all benefit data held within the social security platforms.** This will explore, with local government, how we can make systems work better for those that access them – increasing uptake of support and reducing the burden of evidence on families.

We are providing immediate support to tackle the cost of living crisis in 2022-23 by delivering a £150 payment to all households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and those in Council Tax bands A-D. Reaching 73% of all Scottish households this will help meet the increasing costs of essentials such as energy and food. This support is administered by local authorities who will largely deliver it as a credit to Council Tax Bills issuing in March and April for 2022-23. In line with the previous Low Income Pandemic Payment, this additional support will also be provided to certain households exempt from Council Tax. Councils have discretion to make these payments in cash rather than as a credit which will ensure support reaches those at greatest risk, including those in temporary accommodation,

Case study: Glasgow Helps

Hanna* is a single parent of five children aged between 4 and 15. She has lived in Glasgow from October 2019, when her relationship ended due to domestic abuse, at which point her only income was Child Tax Credits.

Hanna struggles with mental health as a result of domestic abuse and takes prescribed medication - but doesn't cope well with additional stress or pressure. It wasn't until May 2021 that she made a claim for Universal Credit following advice from friends. However, this claim was refused as Hanna failed the Habitual Residence Test. This decision also stopped her Tax Credits award, leaving Hanna with no income at all. When Hanna contacted One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS), she was relying solely on Crisis Grants from the Scottish Welfare Fund.

The advisor at OPFS assessed Hanna's right to reside status and submitted a Mandatory Reconsideration, challenging the Universal Credit (UC) Habitual Residence Test decision, and arranged access to crisis support to help Hanna and her family through this traumatic period. They then conducted a benefit check; identifying entitlements to other support including Child Benefit, Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grant.



Hanna holds ambitions of working in the future and feels that part time work would help her mental health giving her 'focus and purpose again'. Through the OPFS Employability service, she received support to progress toward work, including providing a new digital device, digital training, and assistance with connectivity. This was crucial to enabling Hanna to stay in contact with OPFS, access her UC claim, and find training and employment opportunities.

Hanna reports feeling more confident of finding work within the hours she is available and is comforted that OPFS employability support would continue to be available to her once she secures further training or employment.

Through the support received from the OPFS Financial Inclusion service Hanna now receives her full benefit entitlement, including backdated entitlement, providing the financial stability she needs to help her focus on the future.

*Name changed

Income Maximisation



Strengthening the package of benefits and financial support will help thousands of families in Scotland to meet their household costs, and to provide for their families with dignity and respect. However, we recognise that, on their own, benefits are only part of the story and need to be complemented with ongoing and concerted effort to ensure families access all the support they are entitled to.

We are building from a strong foundation, including the successful delivery of commitments under ‘Every Child, Every Chance’. Under that plan we expanded access to advice and support, and worked with partners to successfully deliver the Money Talk Team service, with an investment of £5.4 million resulting in putting almost £42 million into the pockets of more than 19,600 clients, including nearly £12 million in financial gains for over 3,300 low income families, including the priority groups.

In the last four years, we have published two Benefit Take-Up Strategies to ensure people are aware of, and enabled to access, the financial support that they are eligible for and entitled to. The strategies set out our commitment to promote the take-up of Scottish benefits, and acknowledge that this must be part of a holistic approach to income maximisation, supporting poverty reduction and Covid recovery.

Through the implementation of our second Benefit Take-up Strategy, we will continue working to maximise the take-up of Scottish Benefits, including those which require a reserved qualifying benefit.

The following actions focus on how, with partners, we will ensure that families are maximising their income through:

- Providing support to overcome barriers to accessing services
- Improving quality and availability of advice services

Providing support to overcome barriers to accessing services

We want to build on our success to date, and go further to achieve a Scotland where all people are able to access all the support that is available to them, where the additional barriers faced by families most at risk of poverty are removed to enable them to access the support they are entitled to.

We will work across government to set out our collective ambition and framework for cohesive action to maximise incomes. This will cut across a wide range of policy areas where maximising incomes is an explicit or implicit objective, including benefit take-up. By fostering this greater cross-government collaboration, we plan to leverage action and impact across the Scottish Government and our partners to ensure people are able to access the services available to them and are supported to access the benefits they are entitled to.

We will build on our commitment to mainstream good practice in driving benefit take-up, learning from effective approaches as part of the child poverty pathfinders, and scaling these as part of a holistic package of support to families.

We will shift more of the complexity of navigating the benefits system away from potential applicants, making it easier for people to access support when they need it.

We will work to systematise more person-centred referrals and warm handovers between services, and further explore systems of automated payment for devolved social security benefits, beginning with the Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grant.

We will take targeted action to overcome the additional barriers faced by the six priority family types and others most at risk of poverty.

This will include working with a range of seldom-heard groups to better understand and address non-take-up of benefits among particular populations. In taking this forward, we are currently expanding the membership of our Stakeholder Take-up Reference Group. We know that one of the best ways to identify the real issues within Seldom Heard groups is to listen to the people that belong to these groups, including people with lived experience of accessing the benefit system, and equally of those that have not yet accessed the benefit system.

In addition, we will take targeted action focused on the priority families. We will support the newly launched and independent Social Security Advocacy Service to bring free support to disabled people to help them access devolved benefits, to better understand and communicate their needs and concerns, and to participate in the processes and decisions which affect them.

We will expand the Family Nurse Partnership local pathways, increasing access to money advice, income maximisation and community support. The Family Nurse Partnership provides support to younger, first time mothers, providing advice and guidance to improve sensitive, responsive care-giving, and increase the economic stability of the family. We will expand this support to all young first time mothers aged 21 and under by the end of

2024, and, where capacity allows, target first time mothers under the age of 25 who are care experienced or from the most deprived communities. This expansion will support up to an additional 500 families per year by 2025.

We will work with Health Visitors to ensure all families receive the financial advice they need.

All families have access to a health visitor who delivers the Universal Health Visiting Pathway, which consists of 11 home visits, eight of which are in the first year of life. This allows health visitors to build relationships with families, provide tailored support to the child and parents and a route into other services. We will strengthen this support, including more systematic benefits training, as part of the Universal Pathway, rolling this out by the end of 2024 to ensure that all parents receiving the advice they require.

Improving quality and availability of advice services

We know advice services are essential in supporting families to maximise their incomes, from understanding benefits entitlements to accessing better internet or energy deals or receiving help with managing debt, advice services can provide a lifeline to families struggling to navigate a complex system of supports. We heard from our consultation the benefits that advice services have delivered to families, and are committed to stepping up our support to ensuring families are able to access quality advice, when and where they need it.

We will enhance access to advice and support, in places where families already go.

We will invest £10 million to increase access to holistic advice services in the current parliamentary term. This includes £3 million already committed to a partnership between Health and Social Security to expand Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships – placing money advisors in up to 150 GP practices in some of Scotland's most deprived areas. We will expand further into other health and

education settings, building on existing pilots and filling identified gaps. We will continue to support the provision of free debt advice, investing up to £6.5 million from debt advice levy funding in 2022-23.

We will work in collaboration with national, local and third sector partners to maximise the opportunities families have in accessing the support they need. We understand close and trusting relationships are an important part of having difficult conversations about finances, and that different families have different preferences for where they receive support – from a school to a GP, a community based or religious organisation, housing association, website or friend. We will work across government to maximise the number of points where families can get advice and referrals to support services.

This will include building on the unique and key role of General Practice in supporting families who may not be in touch with other services, further embedding roles such as Community Links Workers, Welfare Rights Advisors and Mental Health Workers, to provide non-clinical and social support advice to families experiencing social and financial disadvantage and exclusion, co-ordinating links to other services including financial inclusion and employability

We will continue to provide funding to the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) for its second tier advice line, which supports advisers from other organisations with the most complex queries. This funding also supports the provision of training for advisers on specialist areas such as migrants' access to benefits, and will help people with No Recourse to Public Funds to access the services they are entitled to.

This work will be underpinned by a reinvigorated, strategic approach to communications, enabling families, and those working to support them, to understand and navigate the services available. This will go beyond information on entitlements, embedding our wider approach to income maximisation, focusing on how individuals and families experience services, with dignity, respect and provision of accessible, person-centred services at its heart. We will undertake scoping work to understand how to make better use of existing tools, and whether additional resources are required to support individuals, families and the organisations who work with them to access the information, referrals and in-person support needed to maximise their income.

We will publish our plan for ending the need for food banks in autumn 2022. This will set out our human rights approach to the issue of food insecurity and outline what more we will do using the powers we have to strengthen cash-first responses to hardship. Actions will include investing in local cash-first partnership working that improves pathways between sectors and services and makes food banks the last port of call, and piloting the use of shopping cards as an alternative to food bank referrals alongside money advice to help prevent future need.

Case study: Our Income Maximisation efforts go beyond traditional advice services

The Scottish Government has been funding Sistema Scotland since 2012 and has provided £1.1 million for 2021-2022 from the Culture budget, to support existing Big Noise projects in Raploch, Govanhill, Torry and Douglas, along with a new satellite Big Noise in Fallin and a new Big Noise project in Wester Hailes.

The programme aims to tackle poverty and deprivation, and also increases access to culture. By working with children, Sistema Scotland increase well-being, skills, ambition, confidence and resilience, contributing to longer term, sustained economic and cultural change.

The close and trusting relationships Sistema staff develop with children, their parents and broader families enables them to identify areas of need, and signpost parents to other services for assistance in maximising income, and provides a reliable, fun and safe environment for children to enable parents to take up work or training to increase their incomes.



Warm affordable homes



Housing has a vital role to play in tackling child poverty, it forms not only the foundation for family life – as a safe place for children to grow and learn, and for families to come together – but it also one of the most of the most significant costs which families must continue to meet on an ongoing basis. If families lose their home the effects can be devastating – and cause lasting damage to children’s lives.

Since devolution, Scotland has continued to invest strongly in delivering more warm and affordable homes and lower housing costs in Scotland is now one of the main reasons why poverty rates are lower in Scotland than the rest of the UK. However, we know there is more that housing can do to further reduce child poverty over the next four years.

We are committed not only to preserving Scotland’s lower housing costs, but taking every opportunity to go further to help families through action focused on:

- Access to affordable homes
- Tackling fuel poverty
- Preventing homelessness

Access to affordable homes

Scotland has led the way with affordable housing across the UK, delivering 105,755 affordable homes since 2007, over 73,000 of which were for social rent. Over the last four years, in addition to continuing delivery of more affordable homes, we have worked with partners in the social housing sector to keep rents affordable, and, through the introduction of the Private Residential Tenancy, have provided households in the private rented sector a greater degree of rent protection, longer notice periods and compensation if rights are not met.

In 2021 we published Housing to 2040, setting out the Scottish Government’s ambition that everyone in Scotland should have access to a warm, safe, affordable and energy efficient home. We will deliver progress against this vision for families through the following action:

Over the next four years, we will continue to invest in the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. We will deliver 110,000 more affordable energy efficient homes by 2032, including 70% available for social rent, and 10% in our remote, rural and island communities.

We will place the prioritisation of tackling child poverty at the heart of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme through further strengthening our housing planning processes to strengthen the focus on housing needs by size and location to ensure that larger family homes are delivered where they are required, including through the targeted purchase of appropriate ‘off the shelf’ properties. We will also introduce an updated Housing for Varying Needs design guide in 2023, for council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) homes delivered through the Programme, and we will build on this to inform the future development of a new Scottish Accessible Homes Standard.

We will develop a Remote, Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan to ensure that we meet the housing needs of those communities, and help to retain people and attract them to these areas, recognising that the delivery of housing in rural and island communities can be more complex than in urban areas. The development of the Action Plan provides a vital opportunity for further collaborative working – to pull together to do more of what is working well, to create solutions, and to address challenges where they arise to support the delivery of more homes in the right places for our rural and island communities.

In addition to supporting families in the social rented sector, we will take action to reduce costs for families in the private rented sector. We will invest an initial £2.75 million in 2022-23 to begin private rented sector reform. Over the course of this Parliament this reform will introduce rent controls and a new private rented sector regulator, both of which will have a specified aim of reducing child poverty by improving the quality of provision and improving housing affordability for families.

We will also make specific provision for housing that is appropriate for all communities in Scotland, including investment of up to £20 million in the Gypsy/Traveller accommodation fund over five years from 2021-22. Census data shows that Gypsy Traveller children are more likely to live in priority families, and this support has potential to have a direct impact on family finances, for example by reducing heating costs through better insulation and providing digital access to work opportunities and a range of services including money advice and education.

Tackling fuel poverty

In 2019, of the 100,000 families in fuel poverty, around 80,000 were also experiencing child poverty. As the cost of living crisis continues to

see energy prices soar, we know the struggle for many low income families faced with an unacceptable choice of rationing fuel or food just to get by. Our Fuel Poverty Act 2019 is the most ambitious fuel poverty legislation in the UK, setting us challenging but achievable targets, that in 2040 no more than 5% of households are fuel poor, and no more than 1% are in extreme fuel poverty.

Beyond the provision of new affordable housing and support with heating costs through social security, we will also support families to make homes warmer and easier to heat, and to reduce the impact of any increases costs from zero emissions systems.

Our Fuel Poverty strategy, published in December 2021, commits to actions to tackle each of the four drivers of fuel poverty: poor energy efficiency of the home; high energy costs; low household income; and how energy is used in the home.

In 2022-23 we will provide up to £42 million for Home Energy Scotland (HES) Loans and Grants scheme – double the 2021-21 level – and will expand the HES advice service, which provides impartial advice to all households on making homes warmer, greener and easier to heat. This expansion will support an additional 12,000 households, and boost the energy-carers element of this service, providing specialist in-depth advice to an additional 1,400 vulnerable households.

We have committed a further £10 million to continue our Fuel Insecurity Fund in 2022-23, as part of a wider package of funding to tackle the cost of living crisis. This will continue to deliver direct support for people at risk of self-disconnection, or self-rationing their energy use due to unaffordable fuel costs.

We will build on the commitment to invest at least £1.8 billion over this parliament to kick start the heat transition and support those

least able to pay, and deliver a new, enhanced successor to Warmer Homes Scotland – providing support for fuel poor households. **We will invest up to £55 million in 2022-23 to provide heating and energy efficiency measures to eligible households, including households with a pregnant woman or child under 16 in receipt of an income based benefit.** We will explore opportunities for our marketing to better target priority families as part of the development of the successor to Warmer Homes Scotland, to contribute to reducing energy costs for priority families. This investment will make our homes warmer and more energy efficient – progressing our commitments both to decarbonise the heating in one million homes by 2030 and to remove poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.

We know that decarbonisation presents additional challenges for low income households, and have committed to only take forward actions where they will have no detrimental impact on fuel poverty rates. Zero emissions systems are often more expensive to run, and we are committed to taking these actions to ensure that our move to net zero does not disproportionately impact those least able to pay.

Preventing Homelessness

Homelessness has a devastating impact on families and children, increasing barriers to accessing employment and education, disrupting social support networks and negatively affecting mental and physical health. Whilst its causes are complex, we are committed to ending homelessness, and learning from the lessons of the COVID-19 response to focus on stopping homelessness before it happens.

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 there were 11,804 children associated with homelessness applications assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, and on average, households with children spent longer in temporary accommodation than those without. 21% of all households assessed as homeless/threatened with homelessness were single parent households, with the most common reason for single female parent households becoming homeless being violent household dispute.

We are committed to continue investing £100 million in Ending Homelessness Together. We recognise that prevention is the most effective way to end homelessness, and will continue to invest in projects that contribute to reducing child poverty and preventing homelessness for example projects supporting tenancy sustainment and income maximisation.

We will work in partnership with housing associations to break the cycle of homelessness, and have committed to funding Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans for 2022-23 and 2023-24 to enable local authorities to scale up Housing First in their areas. Projects funded to date have focused on the priority families, people experiencing mental health and addiction issues and women and children facing domestic abuse.

We will also ensure that families in temporary accommodation receive the appropriate support to address the issues that may have contributed to their homelessness or their experiences of poverty, assessing their needs when the family first enters temporary accommodation to enable local authorities to identify the services best suited to meet these needs and support families in relation to the three main drivers of child poverty.

We recognise that housing is only one part of a package of support that many families will need to exit poverty. We will work on a cross agency basis to ensure that where housing support is required to lift a family out of poverty it is available as part of the package of support. We will support partners to ensure a central focus on the best interests of children

experiencing homelessness, including, amongst other things, proximity to facilities and social networks. We will also work in partnership with local authorities and housing associations to maximise the role housing can play in supporting a ‘no wrong door’ approach, recognising the often unique role of housing providers in their communities.

Case study: Queens Cross Housing Association, role of housing in the community

“

Without these interventions this flat would just have been another fail and meant nothing to me. I now feel I have a home which is safe and secure and am enjoying putting my own stamp on it. I feel better in myself knowing my budgeting is improving and with the advice and assistance provided I feel more confident dealing with things”

Mandy is a 30-year-old housing association tenant and has a one-year old daughter. She moved into her own tenancy when she was 17 has struggled to maintain her tenancy, to furnish it and make it a home. The Housing Association’s Family Wellbeing service provided a range of bespoke support.

Making a Home – Support was given to apply for the Scottish Welfare Fund and other grants to get essential household items and for the provision of video

doorbell via police. She was also provided with access and support to free wifi and a tablet to ensure digital inclusion.



Managing Money – Mandy is on benefits and struggles financially. The Financial Inclusion team helped her set up affordable repayment plans and reduce the deductions coming from her benefits. She was given Energy Advice and fuel vouchers which help her to heat her home. She was also supported to use the association’s local Pantry service with a lifetime membership of £1 allowing weekly access to £10 – 15 of groceries for £2.50.

Developing Parenting Skills – Since feeling more settled in her home Mandy has engaged with her GP and other family resources about supporting her with child’s development and advice around routine.



Part C:

Supporting the next generation to thrive

Scotland has a clear vision to be the best place for children and young people to grow up. We want every child to grow up loved, safe and respected so they realise their full potential, and this means creating an equal society which treats children and families with dignity and kindness. Upholding rights is the foundation for improving wellbeing. This creates the conditions in which wellbeing will flourish, with children's rights at the heart of everything we do.

By mitigating the impacts of poverty on children today and helping them to realise their full potential, we can reduce the risk of them becoming the parents of children in poverty in the future. This element of our overall approach is not expected to impact upon the child poverty targets by 2030, nevertheless it is essential to tackling child poverty in the

longer term and sustaining lower levels of child poverty for future generations.

This builds upon the wide ranging action taken across government, for example on population health and addressing health inequalities. It also follows on from actions taken across the life of our first delivery plan, including expanding funded early learning and childcare, investment of £750 million of Attainment Scotland Funding and expanding free bus travel to every young person under the age of 22. Children and young people will also benefit from the range of measures outlined in Parts A and B, including those targeted at tackling the cost of the school day.

The following actions outline how, with partners, we will strengthen Scotland's offer to children and young people focused on:

- Best start to life
- Supporting children to grow and learn
- Post school transitions

PART C -

SUMMARY OF ACTION, IMPACT AND RESOURCES

Within this section we commit to the following key actions to strengthen Scotland's offer to babies, children and young people:

- Publishing a suite of refreshed materials throughout 2022 to provide practitioners with the confidence, clarity and practical support to continue to implement GIRFEC in well-planned, joined-up and streamlined ways, helping to prevent or mitigate childhood adversity and trauma
- Investing a further £1 billion over the course of the Parliamentary term in the Scottish Attainment Challenge
- Publishing a new Youth Work Strategy focused on providing services to young people most in need
- Continuing to invest in the Young Person's Guarantee, including Our Future Now and Discovering Your Potential, in 2022-23
- Enhancing the total student support package over the next three years so that it reaches the equivalent of the Living Wage, including for estranged students

We anticipate that these actions will have the following impact:

- Action in this part is not expected to have a direct impact on the targets, but will mitigate the impacts of poverty, secure better life long outcomes for children and young people and prevent them becoming parents of children in poverty in the future. For more detail on impact, see [Annexes 5](#) and [8](#)

Anticipated financial resource for 2023-26 will be subject to conclusion of the resource spending review and confirmation in the relevant budget. The following will be allocated to support key measures in 2022-23:

- £4 million for the Promise Partnership Fund
- £200 million for the Scottish Attainment Challenge, with £1 billion to be invested over the Parliamentary term
- £15.2 million for devices in schools
- £45 million for the Young Person's Guarantee
- £1.9 billion in further and higher education

Best Start to Life



Through our **Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)** approach we aim to provide consistent and holistic, rights-based, child, young person and family centred, early, co-ordinated support. GIRFEC connects workforces and policies to provide the right support at the right time for children from birth through to adulthood.

Collaborative and integrated approaches to the planning and delivery of support for babies, children and young people remains essential to improve outcomes and Children's Services Planning Partnerships in each area of Scotland are key to the delivery of collective local approaches to safeguard, support and promote wellbeing. This is delivered through a range of universally available support and preventative action, early intervention and more intensive help when this is needed.

Through the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, outlined in Part B, we are driving a change in how we deliver services so they provide seamless help to meet the needs of the whole family, including ensuring support is provided for both the children and the adults in a family. This is an important part of how we will Keep the Promise and drive our ambition of investing at least 5% of all community-based health and social care spend in preventative whole family support measures from 2030. This will enable us to create a Scotland where more children will only know care, compassion and love, and not a 'care system'.

We continue to invest in delivery of the Best Start programme, which will improve maternity and neonatal care for all pregnant women and their families. The programme introduced the Young Patients Family Fund, building on the success of the Neonatal Family Fund to provide financial help with travel and food costs for families with children in hospital, including in maternity care. Best Start has introduced relationship-based continuity of midwifery care, ensuring pregnant women with complex needs are supported to access the help and care that they need, including mental health and addiction services and financial advice. The programme delivers care as close to the home as possible, reducing the cost of travel for pregnant women,

Since its introduction in 2017 we have delivered over 200,000 Baby Boxes to families in Scotland. Packed with a range of essential items for their first six months, this symbolises the equal start we want for every child. [The independent evaluation](#) published in 2021 highlighted financial as well as wider non-financial benefits of the programme particularly for younger parents, first time parents and families on lower income. The Baby Box is part of a wider package of support available to families in the early years, including the PlayTalkRead programme. This is in addition to the package of financial support through our five family benefits.

All families have access to a health visitor who delivers the Universal Health Visiting Pathway, which consists of 11 home visits, eight of which are in the first year of life. This allows health visitors to build relationships with families, provide tailored support to the child and parents and routes into other services. Younger, first time mothers receive support through the Family Nurse Partnership, providing advice and guidance to improve sensitive, responsive care-giving, and increase the economic stability of the family.

To help children to learn and grow, we provide 1,140 hours of fully funded Early Learning and Childcare for every three and four year old child – with children experiencing the most disadvantage able to access this offer from age two. All preschool children attending a registered setting are eligible to receive a funded portion of milk (or specified non-dairy alternative) and a healthy snack each day they spend two hours or more in childcare. In addition, we provide all children four free packs of books through the Bookbug book gifting programme, helping children to read with their families from an early age.

In recognition of the importance of outdoor play to children’s health and wellbeing, **we will deliver on our commitment to invest £60 million in renewing play parks in Scotland**, to ensure all children have access to quality play in their own community. We will also continue supporting the third sector to ensure that children in our most disadvantaged communities can access outdoor play.

A highly skilled and well supported workforce is essential to the GIRFEC approach.

Throughout 2022, we will publish a suite of refreshed materials to provide practitioners with the confidence, clarity and practical support to continue to implement GIRFEC in well-planned, joined-up and streamlined ways, helping to prevent or mitigate childhood adversity and trauma. This will include practice exemplars specifically focused on how the effective implementation of GIRFEC supports tackling child poverty.

We will also continue to invest £4 million each year until 2025 for The Promise Partnership Fund, to help organisations with early intervention and to deliver changes to better support children, young people and families in, or on the edges of, care. The Promise Partnership offers funding and support to organisations and collaborations

to #KeepThePromise and help drive forward change that matters to children, young people and families. Care experienced young people are involved in the decisions for where funding is allocated through The Promise Partnership Advisory Group.

Keeping the Promise

Just over two years ago the Independent Care Review published [The Promise](#) and in February 2020 the Scottish Government signed up to the actions and that are set out within the Review. **We have made The Promise to our children and young people who are care experienced and we intend to keep it.**

Keeping the Promise requires both immediate action to improve experiences and outcomes for children, young people and their families who are currently in or on the edge of care; and action over the longer term to improve the level of support for families from birth through to adulthood to significantly reduce the numbers of families coming into the care system.

It requires us to join up and work with partners in the public and third sectors to bring transformational change to the lives of care experienced children and young people and their families, by placing love and relationships at the centre for every child with experience of Scotland’s ‘care system’. It is this spirit of partnership and focus on driving positive changes that underpins our wider action in child poverty – our commitment to keeping The Promise and delivering on our national mission on child poverty go hand in hand.

The Keeping The Promise Single Implementation Plan¹⁰, connects the commitments and actions across Scottish Government policy that will support our progress to 2030.

¹⁰ To be published end March 2022.

Supporting Children to Learn and Grow



As we progress through this new Parliamentary term, our mission to tackle the poverty related attainment gap is as important as ever and we are committed to strengthening the links between this and our national mission on child poverty. The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge Programme has a new mission: *'To use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.'*

By removing barriers faced as a result of low income we can ensure children and young people have the same opportunities to succeed, regardless of their backgrounds – improving their outcomes now and in the future and breaking cycles of poverty. This work includes our investment in the likes of the Young Scot National Entitlement Card – which offers discounts, rewards and opportunities nationally and locally – and in the Youth Music Initiative, which provides children and young people with opportunities to be creative and imaginative, to experience inspiration and enjoyment, and to develop skills for learning, life and work.

The next phase of our Scottish Attainment Challenge builds upon the considerable evidence developed since 2015, and the £750 million invested through the Attainment Scotland Fund, in order to strengthen recovery, accelerate improvements and encourage more collaborative work across the many services that will contribute to the narrowing of the gap. This is in addition to our continued investment in financial support to 16 to 19 year-olds from low-income households through the Education Maintenance Allowance programme.

The following actions will deliver further progress on our ambition to achieve equity and excellence in education.

Working together with local authorities, Education Scotland and schools themselves, we will invest a further and increased investment of £1 billion over the course of the Parliamentary term in the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge programme. Pupil Equity Funding will continue to empower head teachers so schools can support the children and young people who need it most. Local Authorities and schools will continue to make local decisions on how best to support children and young people impacted by poverty – with funding for the first time allocated to each and every local authority to drive forward our joint national mission. Funding will support approaches in the classroom and approaches that reach beyond the school gates to mitigate the barriers to learning caused by poverty. This is expected to have a long term impact on the readiness of children and young people impacted by poverty to enter and sustain positive destinations – contributing to efforts to break the cycle of poverty.

We have already removed charges associated with core curriculum subjects and will work with our partners in COSLA to develop guidance and to make this change permanent. Doing so will create a more level playing field for young people from lower socio economic backgrounds, reducing the impact of poverty on their lives and experience of education.

In recognition of the importance of digital technology in education, we will ensure access to a device for every school aged child by 2026. This builds on the £25 million of investment made by the Scottish Government since 2020, delivering 72,000 devices and 14,000 connectivity solutions targeted to disadvantaged pupils to support their learning. By 2026 we will reach 700,000 pupils across 2,500 schools ensuring equitable access to learning through technology regardless of background.

Continuing to work with our third sector partners, we will scale up approaches focused on improving the outcomes of disadvantaged children and young people. Together with the Hunter Foundation we will invest £26 million to reach up to 15,000 care experienced and disadvantaged young people across 300 schools by 2027 through the Scottish Mentoring and Leadership Programme (SMLP). The programme will enhance young people's capabilities and build self-esteem, self-confidence and aspiration to help them move on to positive destinations so they do not become parents or carers in poverty in the future.

Supporting children to grow and learn goes beyond education. The actions below outline key steps we will take to promote the wider emotional, social and physical wellbeing of children and young people.

Drawing on the learning from ten pilots underway, we will consider different models to deliver on our commitment to provide free bikes to school aged children who cannot afford them. By improving access to bikes for children and young people we can remove cost barriers and help to develop healthy travel habits in the long term.

We will double investment in sport and active living to £100 million a year by the end of the Parliament. This will ensure more children and young people can enjoy active lives as we recover from the pandemic, improving physical, mental and social health. We will continue to work with sportscotland and partners to understand how best to use this investment to address inequality of access. This includes ensuring that Active Schools programmes are free for all children and young people by the end of this Parliament, providing them with more opportunities to take part in sport before, during and after school.

We will also publish a new Youth Work Strategy focused on providing services to young people most in need. A renewed focus on delivering outcomes through youth work will help to alleviate poverty by ensuring young people have the support they need to make informed positive life choices that lead to a better future.

Case study: 2021 Summer Offer for Children and Young People – Angus Council

Angus Council was allocated funding to support the implementation of the 'Summer Offer for Children and Young People,' also known as 'Get into Summer' in 2021.

Building on an existing programme, the funding supported a co-ordinated approach which catered for the specific needs of families in the local community. Families had access to welfare rights information and advice, resulting in additional successful benefits applications, helping to reduce child poverty. Community engagement was improved by bringing many voluntary and community-based partners together and establishing new and lasting links and local businesses benefitted in a rise in turnover as a direct result of the additional investment in the local economy.

The offer of this informal provision, had a long-lasting positive effect for some of the most vulnerable families. Relationships between parents and staff were nurtured and as a direct result family engagement with services had a marked improvement. 155 new volunteering and employment opportunities were created over the summer holidays, 17 of which have turned into either full or part-time permanent positions.



Evaluation has shown that investment in holiday provision can have a far-reaching positive impact on not only children, young people and families, but also on local business, employment opportunity, education, community engagement and recovery.

Speaking of the support made available, one mum said:

“

These trips allowed me to spend some quality time with my child. I would never have been able to afford to do this.”

Post School Transitions



The Young Person's Guarantee aims to provide young people, aged 16-24 years, with an opportunity, based on their own personal circumstances and ambitions, of: enrolling in education; joining an apprenticeship programme; undertaking training; accessing fair employment including work placements; or participating in a formal volunteering programme.

November 2021 marked the first anniversary of the launch of the Young Person's Guarantee. Since the launch, we have provided additional funding of up to £130 million with the aim of supporting over 24,000 new and enhanced employment, training and educational opportunities for young people, with a particular focus on supporting those who face additional challenges in participating in the labour market.

To measure how well we are meeting the Young Person's Guarantee we have published a set of [Key Performance Indicators](#) (KPIs), including a specific equality KPI, and have published our [monitoring and evaluation Framework](#). As we look ahead, we will continue work with partners to deliver transformative interventions for young people, taking forward the actions set out in the Young Person's Guarantee [Activity Plan](#) and Equality Action Plan. That includes a commitment to support new green and nature based

skills activity, particularly on the islands, and maximising apprenticeship starts this year, seeking to work back up to 30,000 starts in future years.

To ensure young people are able to access higher and further education, we are investing around £1.9 billion in higher and further education in 2022-23

and remain committed to implementing the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Widening Access, ensuring that, by 2030, admissions to university reflects our population with at least 20 per cent of university entrants coming from our 20 per cent most deprived communities. The Higher Education Student Support budget continues to provide bursaries and access to student loans and free tuition for young people and adult learners. We also deliver wider investment to support young people, through the recent introduction of free bus travel for all under 22s and the Job Start Payment, both aimed at moving young people towards a positive destination.

To strengthen young people's access to opportunities, we will take the following additional actions.

To support young people after they leave school, and throughout their transition into the adult world, we will develop a School Leavers' Toolkit. The toolkit will bring together practical information about budgeting and finances, as well as guidance for school leavers on how to exercise their full democratic rights as citizens.

We will invest £5 million in 2022-23 to tackle any digital divide in further and higher education. This money will enable universities, colleges, and community learning providers to purchase digital equipment and provide access to WiFi to enable students who, because of being on a low income, can't otherwise access online learning.

Over the next three years, we will enhance the total student support package so that it reaches the equivalent of the Living Wage, including for estranged students. Scotland already provides the most generous bursary support in the UK for college students, and delivering this increase will provide even greater support for those in need.

We will invest another £45 million on the Young Person's Guarantee, including Our Future Now and Discovering Your Potential, in 2022-23. This will provide new and enhanced education, skills, employability and employment opportunities as well as relationship based support to young people who are at risk of not participating in opportunities and face significant barriers in entering the labour market.

We recognise that young people with experience of care will face additional financial challenges in young adulthood. **To provide additional support we will deliver a new Care Experience Grant over the life of this plan.** Worth £200 annually this will support around 50,000 young people with care experience, aged 16-25, who may not have access to the same family support networks as many of their non-care experienced peers. This grant will help remove some of the barriers care-experienced young people face in their transition to adulthood and more independent living.

In recognition that not all young people will be able to live in their family home, we will legislate over the life of this Plan to exempt them from Council Tax until they reach the age of 22.

Case study: Providing relationship based support to young people (Inspiring Scotland)

“

Having the same person with me to help me to sort out all the different issues that come up in my life has helped a lot. They (trusted worker) get me and make me feel like I can cope when it's hard. I don't want someone to fix everything – I know some of the stuff can't be fixed. I just want someone who I can talk to so I can manage. My mum would never let anyone know our problems but even she likes them and trusts them. She's happy that they help me, and they are not from the 'social' or anything. I think my life will always be hard, but I think I can be happy and do alright now.”

James aged 17 years old engaged with an Our Future Now (OFN) venture just prior to leaving school in May 2020. James' average attendance at school had been poor (42%) and he did not achieve many qualifications. James was demotivated and unhappy when he engaged.

When he was 14 years old, James' dad died because of drug misuse. His mum has issues with mental health. As the eldest of three children, James is a carer for his mum and his two younger siblings. James' family lives in poverty and there has not always been adequate food or heating at home.

Through the support provided by the OFN venture it was identified that James needed



help with literacy and numeracy. This was discreetly provided on a one to one basis and James progressed well. James' mum was reluctant for him to engage with any 'services' as she is fearful of authority, however the independent nature of the OFN venture enabled family support to be provided. Help with form filling and money management stabilised the family. James' mum would only engage with the trusted worker. This made life easier for James and he was supported to undertake certificated training.

James was provided with a tablet and a data package that enabled him to maintain contact with the OFN venture throughout periods of lockdown. His trusted worker would also drop by and check on James and his family from the garden. James' mum's mental health has deteriorated significantly over the past 18 months, and it has been difficult for James to make progress in his own life as a result. He has however improved his literacy and numeracy and gained qualifications which has improved his self-esteem.

The OFN venture arranged for James to undertake a work placement with a landscaping company. This proved challenging for James but with support, he progressed and completed the placement. He has been invited back to work on an extended placement with certificated training. The small, local employer has also been adversely affected by the pandemic and is not able to offer James a job at this stage. The OFN venture is supporting both James and the employer to look at Kickstart.

Conclusion – Our vision for Scotland

Taken together, with our actions to date combined with those set out in this plan, we anticipate that around 17% of children will live in relative poverty in 2023, with more than 60,000 fewer children living in poverty than when the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act was passed in 2017. Crucially, these actions also set us on a clear path to deliver the final targets in 2030.

For this plan to have the intended impact, all parts of the system must work together for the priority families and those who face the greatest disadvantage.

Scotland will successfully tackle child poverty when families are supported by holistic, person-centred services to access all the financial, emotional and practical assistance required to meet their needs. From an enhanced package of social security benefits to preventative mental health, wellbeing and homelessness support, when delivered well, at scale, the actions contained within this plan will enable families to live safe, secure lives confident in the knowledge that they are able to access the right support, at the right time, for as long as they need it.

Building from this secure foundation, all parents, regardless of their gender, race or status will be able to access high quality skills and employability support that is geared towards securing good quality employment, with the connectivity and childcare in place to make this possible.

We do not underestimate the challenge in delivering this, but nor do we underestimate the need, and the willingness, for partners across Scotland to play their part in making this change happen.

Partnerships across the public, private and third sectors are essential to delivering on our national mission. Partnerships with the families

who are in most need of this support will be critical to the success of this joint endeavour. Underpinning the approach set out in this plan is a renewed focus on delivery, from our pathfinder areas to a national delivery board, we will bring together leaders, decision makers, parents, children, and anyone who is willing to partner with us on this journey.

The years ahead present both challenges and opportunities to achieving our vision. Our commitment to Keeping the Promise will require us to be bold and ambitious in delivering stronger services for families who need them. Delivering a just transition to net zero can deliver positive employment, revenue and community benefits if we do so in the right way. And delivering our child poverty targets can transform the lives of families and our economy.

Sustaining lower levels of poverty and maximising outcomes for the next generation and future generations will be vital in delivering the change we want to see, and to ensure every family in Scotland has a brighter future. That is why the actions in this plan are aligned with wider, long-term work being undertaken across the Scottish Government, including our Population Programme which sets out a vision for Scotland to be the best place to raise a family.

We have also committed to considering a new approach to ensuring the interests of future generations are taken into account in decisions made today, through a Future Generations Commission. In developing these proposals, we will ensure that these reflect Government priorities, including to reduce child poverty, and compliment the work of the Poverty and Inequality Commission.

Together we can achieve our national mission, and tackle child poverty in Scotland.

Additional information

[Annex 1: Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017 Requirements](#)

[Annex 2: Child Poverty Evaluation Strategy \(updated\)](#)

[Annex 3: Child Poverty Measurement Framework – \(updated\)](#)

[Annex 4: Cumulative Impact Assessment](#)

[Annex 5: Impact of Policies on Child Poverty](#)

[Annex 6: Evidence Review on What Works](#)

[Annex 7: Equality Impact Assessment](#)

[Annex 8: Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment](#)

[Annex 9: Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment](#)

[Annex 10: Islands Impact Assessment](#)



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