North Lanarkshire Council Report

Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee

Does this report require to be approved? \boxtimes Yes \square No

Ref AG/JC Date 26/04/24

Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022/23 – Internal and External Feedback

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Executive Summary

In line with the Plan for North Lanarkshire Programme of Work, the purpose of this report is to cover the following aspect of the Resilient People (Programme of Work);

 To provide an update on the feedback received via the Improvement Service on the North Lanarkshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022/23

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee:

(1) Approve the update of the feedback received on the North Lanarkshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022/23 and the self evaluation outcome, and agree that the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group consider and identify any related improvement actions.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities

Programme of Work Resilient People

1. Background

- 1.1 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 placed a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR).
- 1.2 North Lanarkshire took the approach of integrating the local child poverty action plan and reporting into its overall Tackling Poverty Strategy in recognition that tackling child poverty is inextricably linked with tackling poverty in our families and wider communities and to help ensure that tackling poverty is an area that is considered in decision making across the Partnership.
- 1.3 The LCPAR is produced by the Tackling Poverty Writers' Group which consists of officers from the Council and NHS Lanarkshire. The Group is overseen by the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group.
- 1.4 The LCPAR reflects on work carried out across services to tackle child poverty and financial insecurity, with an Action Plan that looks forward to future activities.
- 1.5 An arrangement is in place for the national partners on child poverty including leads from Scottish Government, Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland to review and provide feedback on local reports to support and monitor progress in this area.
- 1.6 The Improvement Service was allocated North Lanarkshire's 2022/23 LCPAR for review.
- 1.7 Local authorities are also invited to carry out a Self Assessment exercise using a template on the LCPAR, this was carried out by the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group at a meeting held on 26th January 2024.

2. Report

- 2.1 At the Policy and Strategy Committee held on 28th September 2023 the Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022/23 was approved.
- 2.2 As noted above following submission of the Scottish Government in line with the statutory requirement. North Lanarkshire's Report was allocated for review to the National Child Poverty Co-ordinator from the Improvement Service. Feedback from this review is attached (Appendix One) with the principal findings outlined at 2.3 2.8 below.

Improvement Service Feedback

- 2.3 Positive feedback highlighted that North Lanarkshire had produced a strong Local Child Poverty Acton Report, noting that "the work of the Tackling Poverty Team, particularly the reach of the referral network is really outstanding reaching across health and other sectors including justice, social work, emergency food provision etc"
- 2.4 The evaluation also reflected on the strong partnership approach between the Council, NHS Lanarkshire, the third sector and the wider community planning partners.
- 2.5 In particular the approach of introducing the 4th driver of Holistic Supports was commended as an interesting approach that other areas may wish to replicate, noting

that adopting this approach as a driver ensures interventions are not delivered in a siloed way.

- 2.6 Other areas of practice highlighted as interesting and innovative were;
 - The Pledge This relates to NLC's longstanding Food Referral Gateway, whereby partners who can refer to a food bank (e.g. social workers, advisors etc.) are asked to refer to the Scottish Welfare Fund in the first instance.
 - Poverty Awareness Sessions noting that the sessions not only raise awareness of poverty but provide an opportunity to explore developing referral gateways with each specific Service. It was recognised that this not only helps make services more aware of the needs of low income families but opens up the possibility of income maximisation.
 - Birth Registration as an opportunity to increase the uptake of benefits, in particular Scottish Child Payment.
 - Community Wealth Building again the commitment to ensuring that wealth is generated, circulated and retained in communities and localities was highlighted as an area of good practice.
 - The strong links made to the Promise, UNCRC and Whole Family Support
- 2.7 'The Three Questions' approach was considered "a really effective way to reach and engage children and young people", with the National Child Poverty Co-ordinator raising the question as to whether Pupil Equity Funding could contribute toward the tackling poverty measures identified within the Action Plan.
- 2.8 A small number of areas were identified as ones in which there may be opportunities to further strengthen practice and integrate actions either to enhance impact or to give a more comprehensive picture;
 - Child Care it was noted whilst reference was made to child care it was in the main in relation to parental employability support, it was recommended that consideration should be given for example to the rate of uptake or eligible places among low income families and/or whether access to childcare is widely reported as a barrier to employability support, employment etc.
 - Housing and the provision of affordable homes the feedback recognises that this is mentioned but not expressly linked with the housing needs of families with children. The LCPAR did not discuss the number of children in temporary accommodation. It was recommended that in conjunction with our Housing colleagues we should explore and consider the potential fof drawing links between the LCPAR, the overarching Tackling Poverty Strategy and Local Housing Strategies.
 - Whilst complimentary around the Council's approach to Community Wealth Building
 the feedback report posed a question of whether discussions are being had to ensure
 the benefits of this approach flow to families with children. Asking the question; "are
 jobs being created with the skills, caring and responsibilities and location of families
 with children in mind?"

Self Assessment

- 2.9 The purpose of the Self Assessment is for the partners to consider strengths and any areas for improvement within their approach to addressing child poverty.
- 2.10 The Self Assessment Process identifies four main areas to consider;
 - Understanding Local Need
 - Using a Wide Range of Policy Levers
 - Understanding Our Progress
 - Ways of Working
- 2.11 Locally this is undertaken through each partner completing a survey based on key aspects of work to tackle child poverty, these are then analysed and fed back to the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group.
- 2.12 Consideration of the Self Assessment informs areas for improvement and in turn our local action plan.
- 2.13 The recent Self Assessment was a very positive experience with partners in agreement that in the four areas, the partnership delivering child poverty services were performing well. Full details of the self assessment for 2022/23 are detailed in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2.14 Going forward the Self Assessment process will be completed on an annual basis by the Tackling Poverty Officer Action Group

3. Measures of success

3.1 The successful delivery and outcomes of 2022/23 Local Child Poverty Action Report

4. Supporting documentation

- 4.1 Appendix 1 Improvement Service Feedback
- 4.2 Appendix 2 Child Poverty Self Assessment Feedback

Alison Gordon

Chief Social Work Officer

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5. Impacts

5.1	Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Does the report contain information that has an imp Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes ⋈ No □	
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impac	t?
	The Council's Towards a fairer North Lanarkshire Taligned with the requirements of the Fairer Scotland reduce the inequalities caused by socio economic described in the control of the council of the co	Duty, its purpose being to
	If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and pul website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes No	
5.2	Financial impact	
	Does the report contain any financial impacts?	
	Yes □ No ⊠	
	Governance arrangements for the grants referenced the Enterprise and Fair Work Committee.	d above have been referred to
	If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been disciplinance?	ussed and agreed with
	Yes □ No □	
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impac	t?
5.3	HR policy impact	
	Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure	impacts?
	Yes □ No ⊠ If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed	l and agreed with People
	Resources?	and agreed with copie
	Yes □ No □	
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impac	t?
5.4	Legal impact	
	Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as considerations (including employment law considerations)	
	Yes □ No ⊠	ations), or new legislation):
	If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discusse	ed and agreed with Legal and
	Democratic?	
	Yes □ No □ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impac	t ?
		••
5.5	Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involved.	a the processing of porsonal
	data?	the processing or personal
	Yes □ No ⊠	

	If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes □ No □ If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk
	Yes □ No □
5.6	Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes □ No ⊠ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
	Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)? Yes □ No □
5.7	Environmental / Carbon impact Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters? Yes □ No ⊠ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.8	Communications impact Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities? Yes ⊠ No □ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? The TPAG has a Communication Subgroup who takes forward any communications/activities for residents/staff on behalf of the TPOAG
5.9	Risk impact Is there a risk impact? Yes ☑ No ☐ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed? Tackling Poverty has been identified as a Corporate Risk, with the Chief Social Work Officer as the risk lead. Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire - Tackling Poverty Strategy sets out a planned approach which seeks to eliminate poverty or make very significant reductions in the level of poverty resulting in benefit to the residents and including improvement in the overall level of health and wellbeing of communities.
5.10	Armed Forces Covenant Duty Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)? Yes □ No ⊠ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the

	Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.
5.11	Children's rights and wellbeing impact Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these? Yes No □ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In North Lanarkshire we recognise that tackling poverty and inequality does not fall to one Service, or one Sector, we must therefore work together to use our resources effectively and efficiently to ensure that all our communities have access to opportunities that will lead to better outcomes for people in terms of employment, wellbeing and inclusive growth.
	If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?
	Yes ⊠ No □



Feedback on North Lanarkshire Year 5 LCPAR

North Lanarkshire have produced a strong Local Child Poverty Action Report. The work of the Tackling Poverty Team - particularly the reach of their referral network is really outstanding reaching across health (hospitals, GPs, health visitors, mental health) and other sectors including justice, social work, emergency food provision etc.

Both income maximisation work and membership of North Lanarkshire's Tackling Child Poverty Officers' Action Group (TPOAG) suggests a strong partnership approach including NHS Lanarkshire, the third sector, a wide range of council departments and wider community planning partners)

The report also gives the impression that child poverty has increased profile in North Lanarkshire as a result of the LCPAR being embedded in the wider Tackling Poverty Strategy and through the creation of the establishment of the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee.

The fact that the report has 4 main sections which relate to the three drivers - plus another which relates to providing holistic support to ensure interventions are not delivered in a siloed way - is very interesting and is an approach other areas might want to replicate.

The report draws clear links with other policy areas including the Promise, UNCRC, The Promise and Whole Family Wellbeing which will help ensure a strategic, joined up approach making best use of shared expertise and resource.

Action to tackle child poverty relates to all three drivers of child poverty (as well as an express intention to take a holistic approach). Interesting practice which other areas may wish to learn about includes:

- The Pledge This relates to NLC's longstanding Food Referral Gateway, whereby partners who can refer to a food bank (e.g. social workers, advisors etc.) are asked to refer to the advice team and/or SWF in the first instance. There is also funding in place for a 2 year project in partnership with the Trussell Trust to strengthen referral pathways to advice to ensure a cash first approach is embedded.
- Poverty Awareness Session: The Tackling Poverty Team have been delivering poverty awareness sessions to a wider range of teams within the council/CPP including social work, health and addiction services. This not only raises awareness of poverty but provides an opportunity to explore developing referral gateways with each specific service. This not only helps make services more aware of the needs of low income families but opens up the possibility of income maximisation. A good example is the Infant Minds Matter programme which is a multi-

- disciplinary team supporting infant mental health including psychiatry, psychotherapy, mental health nurses and Early Years practitioner. The team received poverty awareness training and are establishing a referral pathway.
- Birth Registration is highlighted as an opportunity to promote uptake of Scottish Child Payment. The Tackling Poverty Team will be working
 with registrars offices across North Lan to support them to promote the Scottish Child Payment when registering births. [Glasgow previously
 took a similar approach, it might be worth speaking to them to learn from their experiences if you haven't already. I think
 Gary. Devine@glasgow.gov.uk was involved in this.
- Uptake of Education Benefits Working is ongoing to facilitate online application and to cross-check and automate access to FSM and School Clothing Grants. The council is also trying to maximise uptake of free school meals through parental engagement (inviting parents of new children in for a meal), developing menu choices, ensuring practical arrangements are adequate (looking at sitting, overflow areas etc), surveys of parents and children. A new information management system has recently been implemented to give insights into trends of uptake, preferred meals etc.
- Community Wealth Building Statement: The report highlights "a commitment to ensure that wealth is generated, circulated and retained in communities and localities. The council is currently mapping further areas of development. Hopefully there will be a Community Wealth Building Commitment Statement early in 2024 whereby any relevant projects, programmes of work strategies and action plans must demonstrate how Community Wealth Building principles and approaches are applied."
- There is also an action to 'Identify employment pathways within labour market growth sectors'.
- The Parental Employability Support Fund (delivered through Prospects for Parents). This includes reference to a holistic approach with links to income maximisation and childcare ("The Prospects for Parents programme also provides access to child care advice and access to funds such as the child care development fund and the discretionary fund, as well as health interventions and access to training/work experience.")

In terms of data and intelligence, the report draws on a relatively narrow range of sources (largely SIMD and CiLIF data) there may be scope for data and intelligence to be given more consideration to ensure responses are targeted and responsive to local circumstances. While the report is clearly grounded in data and evidence relating to the local area, NLC might want to consider whether data work carried out in other areas would be of use. IS /PHS would be happy to discuss approaches taken in other areas relating to, for example, understanding uptake of FSM/SCG at a school catchment areas level.

In terms of the voice of lived experience, the Let's Talk: 3 Questions project appears to be a really effective way to reach and engage children and young people. Follow up question remain about how to engage parents and carers as well as children. A question for discussion is whether SEF/PEF have or could contribute towards this programme of work and/or the School Tackling Poverty plans referenced in the report. This would help to embed the project and ensure the views expressed by children and young people can be taken forward in a meaningful way, supporting both child and family wellbeing and attainment.

Areas for further consideration:

Despite being a strong report (with particular strength in relation to income maximisation services) there are several themes it might be useful to explore further in future reports.

- Firstly, childcare is mentioned very little in this report. While reference is made in relation to parental employability support there is no reference, for example, to the accessibility / availability / flexibility of the childcare offer or how it might support wider commitments within the report such as ensuring parents and those in the priority groups can access employment opportunities / training etc. Consideration might be given, for example to the rate of uptake or eligible 2 places among low income families and/or whether access to childcare is widely reported as a barrier to employability support, employment etc.
- Housing and the provision of affordable homes is mentioned but this is not expressly linked with the housing needs of families with children. Likewise issues such as the number of children in temporary accommodation is not discussed. Perhaps there is scope for North Lan to explore this issue in more depth with housing colleagues and consider the potential of drawing express links between the LCPAR/Tackling Poverty Strategy and local housing strategies.
- It is really positive to see community wealth building etc. referenced in the report and links being drawn between this and a long term reduction in child poverty. There is perhaps a question of whether discussions are being had to ensure the benefits of this approach flow to families with children and particularly those in the priority groups. Are jobs being created with the skills, caring responsibilities and location of families with children (and those in the priority groups) in mind for example?



Child Poverty Self-Assessment



The Self Assessment Process

- Understanding Local Need
- Using a Wide Range of Policy Levers
- Understanding Our Progress
- Ways of Working

 Each partner completes an online survey based on key aspects of work to tackle child poverty

The surveys are analysed and fed back to your working group

 The working group discusses the results collectively and identifies future improvement points



Understanding Local Need

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
The partnership has a clear understanding of the levels of distribution of child poverty in the area	9	5			
The partnership has a clear understanding of the reasons that child poverty persists in the area	8	6			
The profile of poverty includes information about the priority group and those with protected characteristics (either qualitative or quantative data)	8	5	1		
The partnership approach is informed by those who lived experience of poverty	5	8			
The Local Child Poverty Action Report articulates the profile of child poverty in away that conveys the importance of agenda to others e.g. elected members	8	6	1		



Understanding Local Need

Please provide details of where you
feel the partnership is performing well
in relation to "understanding local
need"

Please provide details of how you think the partnership can improve its approach to "understanding local need"

Please provide examples of how feedback from those with lived experience influences policy and action in your area

- Childrens services plan
- Joint strategic needs analysis/up to date data all linked
- Voice of children
- Local engagement via surveys/ The Three Questions
- Relationships across the partnership
- Understanding local need
- SIMD profile data is clear on child poverty

- Gathering data intelligence around protected characteristics
- Community boards/local improvement plans make better use
- Within NHSL improve engagement with wider health colleagues
- Look more at existing data we have e.g. health surveillance
- More local focus groups
- Further surveys and listening events
- Provide data on types of benefits recorded for priority groups – Use Stats Explore Data
- Comparisons with national data, suggest a survey of the people who have received benefit checks over the past year to provide qualitative data across all priority groups with lived experience

- The Three Questions / survey for the TP strategy / action plan
- The Promise Champions Board
- Engagement re Childrens Services Plan
- Communication and engagement via MH Strategy
- Recruitment of volunteers with lived experience from local areas



Using A Wide Range of Policy Leavers

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
An appropriate balance is struck between actions which might reduce poverty in the medium to long term (promoting access to employment, job creation) and those that might be described as more short term crisis intervention (such as emergency food provision)	10	4			
The activity described in the LCPAR draws all the specific impact that policy and practice will have for low income families with children	4	8			2
The activity described in the LCPAR draws the specific impact for those from the priority groups and those with protected characteristics	6	7	1		
Tackling child poverty is specifically reflected in broader covid recoverty and renewal plans	7	7			
The report identifies new or improved actions that wll make a significant and long term impact on child poverty locally	7	6			1

Using A Wide Range of Policy Levers

Please provide details of where you think the partnership is performing well in relation to using a wide range of policy levers.

Please provide details of how you think the partnership can improve its approach to using a wide range of policy levers to tackle child poverty (whether that's improvements to existing activities or new areas of activity).

- Routine enquiry which is established, but also expansion and new member of staff funded through partnership now in post to focus on this
- Mental health and suicide prevention training taken up by staff across all levels of the system
- Holistic Supports added as another driver to highlight the importance of additional supports (links with NHSL Health Promoting Health Service)
- Partners working well using a wide range of policy levers and tackling poverty drivers

- Making sure full system has awareness and opportunity to know and be involved across all the partners, not just Senior Managers or specific levels of staff
- TPT and partners working well to maximise income for children
- ❖ A conference/development session/workshops on identifying improvements or new areas for activity



Understanding Our Progress

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
The partnership has a clear long term outcomes set out in your LCPAR	7	4			3
The partnership has a shared understanding how your actions are contributing to the longer term outcomes expressed in your LCPAR	5	9			
There are suitable baselines and indicators in place that will help establish whether progress is being made that might contribute to tackling poverty	3	11			
Actions are described in the plan are being appropriately monitored and/or evaluated to understand the impact they are having for families with children on low income	3	11			
The partnership understands/are considering the impact of your policies and practices in those with protected characteristics and those from priority groups	11	3			
There are clear and appropriate mechanisms of accountability and oversight for the actions in the report? (ie there is a group or body clearly tasked with overseeing the project	3	11			

Understanding Our Progress

Please provide details of where the partnership is performing well in relation to Understanding Our Progress

- Clear governance structures and reporting cycles in place
- Improvements of Tackling Poverty Team systems to monitor priority group referrals
- Director of Public Health and other Senior Management involved and active around the agenda, strong leadership visible
- CAB performance stats
- ❖ The LCPAR would benefit from a summary of those indicators where the partnership is performing well to highlight where indicators improving, remain the same, not improving at the beginning of the report

Please provide details of how you think the partnership can improve the approach to Understanding Our Progress

- How can health do more to capture details around priority groups when looking at child poverty (learning from the TP Team)
- Improvements in how we capture case studies and other data on a regular, ongoing basis. We have Partnership Teams channel
- Could a repository be set up on the Channel and reminders at 12 weekly meetings for partners to "add as they go"
- Promotion of current successes
- ❖ Meet individually with each service to discuss progress our child poverty actions are strategically reflected in our Local Housing Strategy, Strategic Housing Improvement Plan and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. In terms of long term and short term outcomes, perhaps these could be highlighted early on in the LCPAR, as a summary as this would help to assess whether there is the correct balance and make it clear to the partnership/reader

Ways of Working

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
The right people/organisations are involved in your working group to take forward the post covid priorities for reducing child poverty. Think about a wide cross section of council services, third sector organisations & community planning partners	10	4			
The structure and governance in place to develop, implement and monitor the local plan involves people at a sufficiently senior level to influence strategic change where necessary	12	2			
The sign off process for your LCPAR gives you senior/strategic buy in to the agenda which further supports your work, including resource allocations	10	2			2
The culture of your organisation supports an approach where child poverty is considered a priority issue for all services to consider as part of their approach	10	4			



Ways of Working

Please provide details of where you consider your child poverty working group is performing well in relation to Ways of Working	Please provide details of how your Child Poverty Working Group can improve all its approach to Ways of Working
 ❖ Senior management buy in ❖ Workforce training and awareness ❖ Communications and consistency in campaigns across partners ❖ I can discuss service priorities with Senior Officers in the TPT out-with the TPOAG, the new approach of meeting individually with services to discuss priorities and actions will be beneficial 	 Continued focus/maintain alleviating child poverty as a priority using UNCRC as a lever Improve on work with seldom heard groups / those with protected characteristics – think about representation around the group – could we scope the reps around the group to ensure all groups are covered Keep working together, building partnerships having key contacts in each organisation to improve service and eliminate duplication of service The child poverty working group improving its approach by having individual meetings with relevant service colleagues

