

NORTH LANARKSHIRE

LOCAL **Child
Poverty**
Action Report
2022 - 2023



Foreword

Tackling child poverty in our communities remains a priority for North Lanarkshire Council, for NHS Lanarkshire and for our third sector partners.

We have demonstrated this through a number of measures we have taken over this past year, which are reflected in this Local Child Poverty Action Report.

For our families with children, who are living on low incomes and were already struggling, the onset of the cost of living crisis has caused even more difficult financial circumstances and for some families, this will have deepened their experience of poverty.

This report will highlight the work that has been carried out across our communities by all the partners to ensure that we are tackling poverty, using all the drivers and resources available, including the fourth driver; Holistic Supports, introduced in Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan "Best Start, Bright Futures".

We are delighted that this report and its action plan have been greatly influenced by the children and young people of North Lanarkshire who have taken part in "The Three Questions", a programme in itself, which will continue to be developed throughout our education clusters to ensure that our approach does not falter but continually develops to meet the needs of our young population.

Together with this report is the Councils' second Tackling Poverty Strategy which embraces the Plan for North Lanarkshire's Programme of Work, where Whole Family Support is a prevalent theme.

The three-year strategy will ensure that our shared ambition for North Lanarkshire to be the place to live, learn, work, invest and visit will be realised for the benefit of our whole population.



Councillor Jim Logue
 Leader of the Council



Councillor Geraldine Woods
 Convenor Wellbeing &
 Tackling Poverty Committee



Martin Hill
 Chair, NHS Lanarkshire

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“ Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent or buy the essentials for your children.

It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation - and even discrimination - because of your financial circumstances.

The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society. ”

Introduction

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR).

North Lanarkshire took the approach to embed the local child poverty action report into its overall Tackling Poverty Strategy to help ensure that tackling poverty is an area that is considered in decision making across the Partnership.

North Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group (TPOAG) has representatives from Council Services, NHS Lanarkshire and the Third Sector and this is the fifth LCPAR produced by the group.

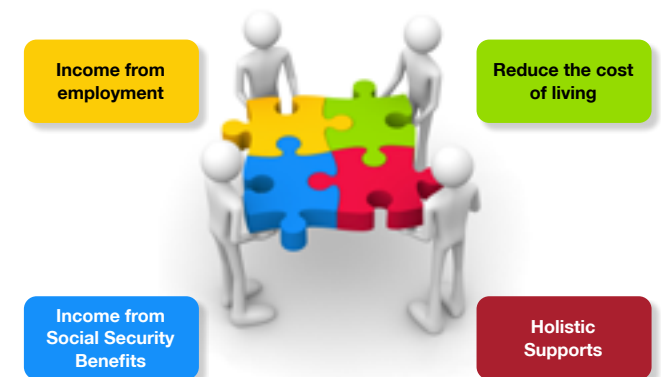
This report will identify work that is being carried out across North Lanarkshire using the drivers to tackle poverty and inequality across our communities.

Increasingly, in North Lanarkshire, we are taking a rights-based approach and giving consideration to the relationship between children’s rights and poverty.

This report aligns with the Best Start, Bright Futures; tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 - 26

and using this approach we have introduced “holistic supports” as the fourth driver to tackle poverty and inequality.

In recognising Holistic Supports as a driver, we will ensure that people and families do not exist in silos, often unaware of the kinds of support that are available given the multiple channels through which this support can be delivered. The holistic support driver to tackle poverty embeds the “no wrong door” approach to ensure that those in poverty and those at risk of falling into poverty, receive the right support at the right time.



North Lanarkshire Child Poverty Profile

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation across 6976 small areas in Scotland known as datazones.

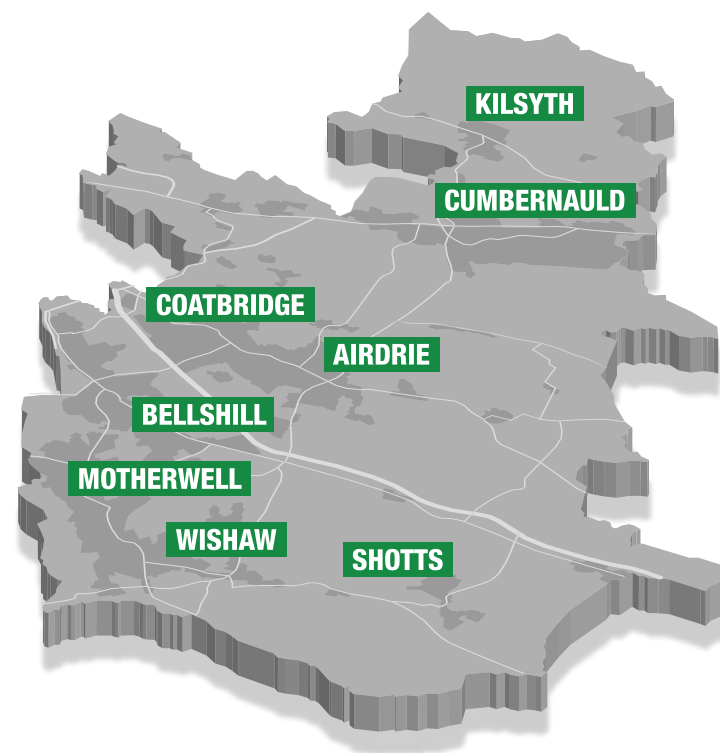
SIMD measures on seven domains; income, employment, health, education, housing, crime and access to services.

North Lanarkshire with a population of 341,400 (2021 mid year estimate) has 447 datazones, 144 (35%) of those datazones are within 20% of the most deprived communities in Scotland.

Historically, the local authority has experienced higher than average levels of deprivation. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 identified across North Lanarkshire 50,897 people are income deprived, equating to 15% of the population. The Scottish average is 12%.

Around 22,426 of the 50,897 income deprived people mentioned above, live in neighbourhoods, spread across North Lanarkshire, that are not classed within the 20% most deprived. Income deprivation is defined as those of working age (and their dependants) who are on low incomes.

North Lanarkshire remains 6th in terms of its share of datazones in the 20% most deprived in Scotland, sitting behind, Inverclyde, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire and Dundee.



Ward	No of children living in poverty	% of children living in poverty
Airdrie Central	679	23.4%
Airdrie North	772	20.4%
Airdrie South	616	16.3%
Bellshill	535	20.8%
Coatbridge North	541	22.9%
Coatbridge South	708	21.2%
Coatbridge West	545	20.3%
Cumbernauld East	595	20.8%

Ward	No of children living in poverty	% of children living in poverty
Cumbernauld North	324	10.6%
Cumbernauld South	547	19.7%
Fortissat	576	20.7%
Gartcosh, Glenboig & Moodiesburn	360	11.7%
Kilsyth	491	18.4%
Mossend and Holytown	493	21.1%
Motherwell North	697	19.0%

Ward	No of children living in poverty	% of children living in poverty
Motherwell South East & Ravenscraig	790	22.5%
Motherwell West	497	18.9%
Murdostoun	667	17.4%
Stepps, Chryston & Muirhead	251	10.6%
Thorniewood	464	19.1%
Wishaw	549	19.2%

Priority Groups

The Scottish Government identified “priority groups” where evidence indicated that it was children in these groups that were at the highest risk of experiencing child poverty. To help measure the impact and support provided to these priority groups, adjustments were made to North Lanarkshire’s Tackling Poverty Team recording system where all financial assessments/benefit checks are recorded.

Within these screens the following groups were added;

- Lone Parent Families
- Minority Ethnic Families
- Families where a member of the household is disabled
- Families with a mother under 25
- Families with 3 or more children
- Families where the youngest child is under 1



This then allows us to track any work we are doing with the priority groups. In 2022/23 the Team carried out over 22,700 benefit checks.

6207 benefit checks were completed for families within the priority groups;

- 2886 for lone parent families
- 218 for ethnic minority families
- 1774 for families where a member of the household is disabled
- 232 for families where the mother is aged under 25
- 742 for families with three or more children
- 355 for families where the youngest child is under one

Referral routes to the Tackling Poverty Team set up with One Parent Families Scotland, may account for 46% of the referrals from the priority groups coming from lone parent families.

Further work has to be done to ensure that services to tackle child poverty are directed to priority family groups within North Lanarkshire.





North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership

In North Lanarkshire, our vision is to support all children and young people to achieve their potential, ensuring they are loved, nurtured and empowered to thrive in all aspects of their lives, including upholding the rights of each and every child and young person as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

We will work collaboratively with children, young people, their families and our partners to ensure they get the best start in life and support families to provide loving care. We will do this by making sure we have the right supports available, at the right time, for as long as needed, and delivered in the right places to ensure equity for all and reducing inequalities throughout.

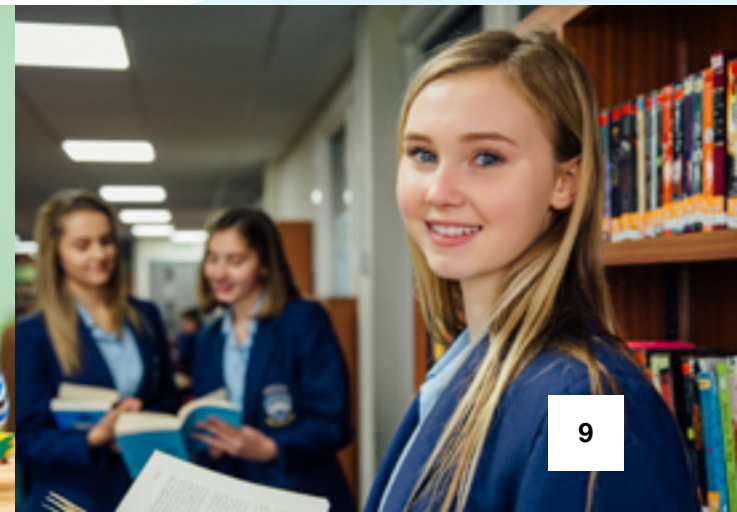
North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership is where the key agencies and organisations work together to identify shared priorities and to plan, deliver and improve services and supports for children, young people and their families. Partners include children, young people and families, key public sector agencies, independent sector organisations and the community and voluntary sector.

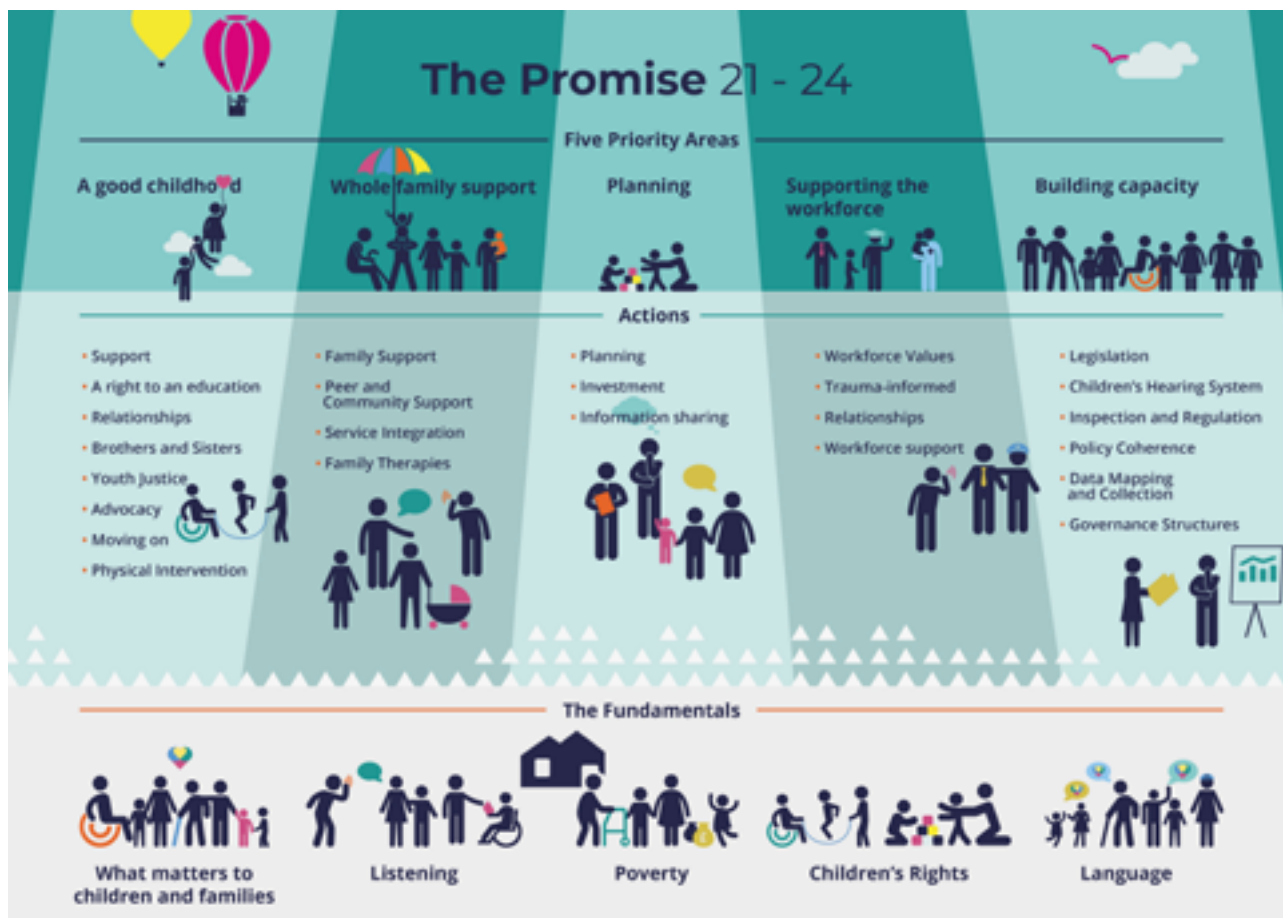
Key to this Partnership, members of the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group (TPOAG) are represented on this group and likewise members of the Children's Service Partnership are represented on the TPOAG, this ensures a crossover at an operational level and shared ambitions, workstreams and

outcomes and that tackling poverty is seen not only as a measure to lift people out of poverty but also as a preventative measure in ensuring we have resilient communities.



getting
it right
for every child
in Lanarkshire





All task groups progressing the work of the Children's Service Partnership have an impact on child poverty. The priority to embed children's rights, as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, includes actions to make clearer the relationship between poverty and UNCRC and to develop and apply a 'poverty proofing' tool. There are close links with the Family Support Task Group, with the Partnership aim to strengthen the ethos of Whole Family Support, working with families in a preventative way and supporting parents and carers to build on their strengths.

Tackling poverty will be a central feature of the approach to family support; providing help to maximise income; develop skills for employment and taking a cash first approach where necessary. The principles of family support outlined in The Promise, will underpin the work to improve outcome for our families, children and young people within North Lanarkshire.

Staff from all sectors involved in providing support and services to children and young people will be provided bespoke Poverty Awareness sessions which promote discussion about the impact of poverty together with easy referral routes to ensure people have access to professional support to help maximise their income and reduce the cost of living, whilst receiving the holistic supports which builds on the strengths of the family.



The Drivers of Tackling Poverty

1. Increase Income via Employment

Driving up income from employment remains one of the mechanisms in North Lanarkshire which offers real opportunities to support unemployed and underemployed residents out of poverty.

Employability is integrated within Education & Families and contributes to the Brighter Future Programme of Work within the Plan for North Lanarkshire. It has the aim of transforming how we prepare young people and other residents for the world of work by delivering an interconnected programme of education, volunteering, and entrepreneurship throughout various stages of their life.

The aims and objectives of this are to:

- Drive the recovery of North Lanarkshire's labour market to pre-covid levels
- Deliver significant jobs growth
- Shape innovative employment pathways in key growth industry sectors
- Provide inclusive and accessible support to boost entrepreneurship
- Embed volunteering programme as a normal part of life
- Transform how young people experience learning and teaching

The post pandemic labour market that has emerged is characterised by low unemployment levels but increased economic inactivity and within North Lanarkshire the employment rate is still below the pre-pandemic levels. The North Lanarkshire claimant count, which acts as a measure of unemployment, was 14,415 (6.6%) people in March 2021 compared with 8,225 (3.8%) in March 2020, a 75% increase on the pre-pandemic level. However, in May 2023 it had decreased to 7,640 (3.5%) and **average earnings in North Lanarkshire are now above the Scottish and UK averages for the first time.**

This is good news, but real challenges remain due to levels of economic inactivity. The number reported as 'long term sick' in North Lanarkshire has increased from 14,900 in the 12 months up to December 2019 to 26,300 in the 12 months up to December 2022.

While unemployment is lower than pre-pandemic levels the number of people in the workforce in North Lanarkshire has reduced from 174,000 (78.1%) in December 2019 to 157,100 (70.1%) in December 2022.

The forecast for unemployment currently is uncertain as the UK remains within a period of high inflation and with further expected rises in interest rates which will have an impact on business.

From an employability perspective this simply reinforces the long-term strategy of continuing to support those further from the labour market in North Lanarkshire to gain the skills needed to get a job and be part of the economic growth of the area.

Alongside this we will continue to work with local employers to create opportunities for our unemployed residents, including those who are economically inactive.

All employability programmes delivered by or on behalf of North Lanarkshire Council are based on the **No One Left Behind Policy** which is aimed at inclusive growth, economic transformation and tackling child poverty; and aims to deliver a system that is more tailored and responsive to the needs of people of all ages who want help and support on their journey towards, into and in work - particularly people with health conditions, disabled people and others who are disadvantaged in the labour market.

Case Study 01

Joe was 17 and under the care and supervision of the authority when his support worker referred him into Roots. His only income was £15 per week pocket money.

Joe received bespoke 1:1 support from his job coach, who introduced him to a number of work tasters and opportunities. Joe then gained his full time Roots placement in June 2021, working in an area he felt very passionate about (Gym and fitness) earning modern apprenticeship rate of pay.

Joe gained independence and confidence and could purchase items for himself and go out for meals with friends. He became a valued member of the team within his workplace and received fantastic feedback. Roots continued to work closely with Joe and his employer to create a paid opportunity within the business.

He is now a fully qualified personal trainer working in a full-time position, earning £9.50 per hour for 30 hours per week. In addition, he already has a few of his own clients which increases his wage further.

Joe's support worker

"It's made a huge difference to his life in every way imaginable. Joe keeps in touch with us and will happily come along and speak to future Roots clients to share his journey with them. He has gained so many skills on the programme including formal qualifications and leaves roots a far more confident young man than when he first walked through the door."

Joe says

"I feel from everything I have learned I am a lot more confident now, I love helping others and working hard.
 I have my own flat now and I am doing well.
 I want to help others feel happier and healthier."



Prospects for Parents

The aim of Prospects for Parents is to help families in North Lanarkshire become better off, by supporting parents to get into work or by helping those in low paid work to increase their wages.

The programme is supported by a Welfare Rights Officer who ensures that any parent entering the programme has their income fully maximised prior to entering employment and during employment, the welfare rights officer is also able to offer money/debt advice and refer on if more in depth support is required in this area.

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.

The Prospects for Parents programme is specifically for the priority groups:

- Lone Parents
- Disabled parent, or the parent of a disabled child
- Parent with more than three children
- Parent with a child under 1 year old
- Parent under the age of 25
- Parents from an ethnic minority

The programme is a key tool in tackling poverty and inequality for our children and young people in our communities.



Case Study 02

The welfare rights officer met with a woman who was living in refuge following domestic abuse.

She had two young children, one starting nursery, she wanted to go back to work but didn't think due to her benefits she would be able to do this. The welfare rights officer completed a "better off" calculation to show what the impact would be on her income were she to take a 16 hrs pw job.

The woman was delighted with this and explained to the welfare rights officer that she also had debt issues with catalogues, housing, loans and council tax.

The WRO advised of Debt Advice & Assistance available which could remove the burden of creditors harassing at a difficult time and contact was made with creditors on her behalf. The woman is currently working with a Debt Advisor to manage her debts.

Case Study 03

A woman was referred to the welfare rights officer seeking a "better off" calculation and advice around the minimum income floor for universal credit if she became self-employed.

Following the advice and reassurances that the welfare rights officer was always there to assist, she took up employment as a self-employed delivery driver for Just Eat.

After one year, the DWP implemented the minimum income floor, meaning she could lose essential income. She advised the welfare rights officer that

DWP were refusing to offset her tyre repair costs to her car as an expense, stating that her car was essential to allow her to do her job.

The welfare rights officer successfully argued that this should be an allowable expense and her Universal Credit amount was protected.



2. Reduce the Cost of Living

Helping People to “Quit Your Way”

Research by Ash Scotland showed that 63,000 households in Scotland would no longer experience relative poverty if people were empowered to successfully give up tobacco.

42% of all households in Scotland containing people who smoke are currently living in relative poverty, a figure which could be reduced by around 10% if tobacco was not a factor. Reducing smoking prevalence in Scotland by just one percent could lift more than 3,700 households out of relative poverty.

The percentage of pregnant women smoking at booking appointment in North Lanarkshire is 12.6% for year ending December 2022. This is above the Scotland figure of 11.9%. The Quit Your Way service targets pregnant women who live in areas of higher deprivation and between April 2022 and December 2022, 24 pregnant women living in the 40% most deprived areas successfully quit smoking at 12 weeks. Collaborative work has commenced in Airdrie, Motherwell and Wishaw localities. Referral prompt cards have been developed to enable a more simplified referral route using a QR code.

This referral route can be used by clients, staff, third sector organisations or community partners. Very brief advice for smoking on smoking for pregnant women will be promoted via national centre for smoking cessation training for external partners.

A training module has been developed by ASH Scotland and NHSL Tobacco Control Team which will be used by ASH Scotland to facilitate training on smoking and poverty. The NHSL Tobacco Control team have already offered this training locally to advisors within the Tackling Poverty Team, so that Welfare Rights Staff and Debt Advisers can promote the “Quit Your Way” programme and signpost people to the service.



“I’ve been putting this cash by in a tin that I would spend on cigarettes. My Grandson wanted a football strip which I thought was too much money to buy him, but after 10 days of quitting smoking I was able to buy it for him. I’m also keeping the money I’m saving for Christmas and other bills. That was just a part of it though, my health was the main reason and I now have more energy and my house doesn’t smell of smoke anymore.”



NORTH LANARKSHIRE

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COMMITMENT TO TACKLING FOOD CRISIS OUR PLEDGE TO ACTION

In North Lanarkshire we are committed to taking a dignified approach to tackling food crisis via a **Cash First Approach**.

People in North Lanarkshire should not have to make choices between eating or heating, parents should not have to go without a meal in order to feed their children.

In North Lanarkshire it is **our pledge** that people are offered a sustainable approach by ensuring equal access to information and advice services.

North Lanarkshire are committed to ensuring a dignified approach to tackling food and fuel crisis and where possible will provide a **cash response**.

At it is our vision to live in a community where people are empowered and have the opportunity to access services to ensure a sustainable approach to tackling food poverty and insecurity.

OUR PLEDGE

- To work with Scottish Welfare Fund to access crisis grants as a first response to tackling food poverty
- Ensure people and families we are working with are referred to agencies who can assist with:
 - Increasing Income via Employment
 - Increasing Income via Social Security Benefits
 - Reducing the cost of living
- Ensure that people who continue to approach for assistance in purchasing food are given equal access to appropriate services to ensure a sustainable solution

Signed

on behalf of

Date

LIVE HERE

The Pledge

North Lanarkshire Food Poverty Referral Gateway was introduced in 2015, leading the way in Cash First approaches to tackling food poverty and insecurity in our communities. An approach now adopted by the Scottish Government.

To affirm the approach an event was held in 2022 asking emergency food providers to sign up to “The Pledge” where we will ensure that no one is left without food, and they will have access to income maximisation and budgeting services.

As we move through 2023, the Food Poverty Action Group are working to cement this approach, Trussel Trust and the Citizen Advice Bureau have attracted funding to augment the Gateway.



Promoting Free Travel For Under 22's

Since its launch in January 2022, the free travel for under 22's scheme has been promoted widely and continually across the region.



Free travel can make a big difference to a families income as shown by the table below:

The difference made by free travel for under 22s	
Scenario	Saving per annum
A 14 year old pupil uses the bus daily to commute to school	£442
A 17 year old student from North Lanarkshire commutes to New College Lanarkshire by bus	£711.10
An 18 year old student from North Lanarkshire commutes to University of Glasgow by bus	£863.20

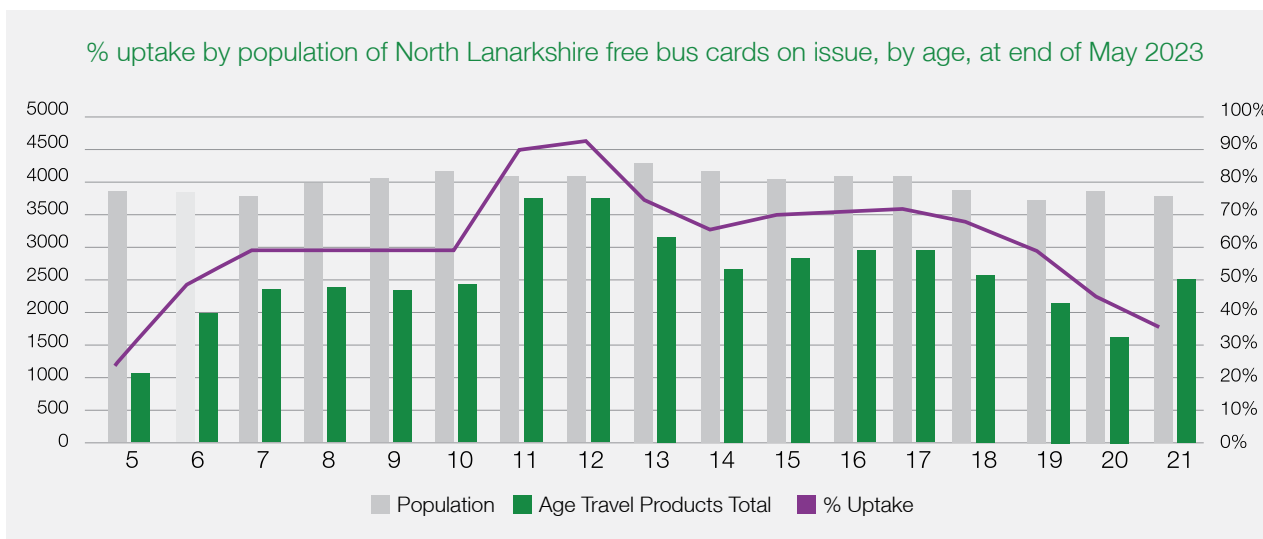
Parents and Carers have received text messages direct to parents and Community Learning & Development Staff continue to engage with applicants.

Efforts have been made to encourage applications from disadvantaged groups such as care experienced young people, refugees, families living in poverty, social work service users, and young job seekers, students and those working with partner agencies.

Uptake varies widely amongst different age groups.

At either end of the age spectrum 5 year olds and 21 year olds have taken up fewest travel cards but 80-90% of 10-12yrs have obtained a travel card.

% uptake by population of North Lanarkshire free bus cards on issue, by age, at end of May 2023



3. Increase Income Via Social Security Benefits

It Starts with a Benefit Check

“I don’t think I’m entitled to anything else”, and “I tried before and didn’t get that” are all too common phrases for the Tackling Poverty Team.

With over £99 million generated in the last 3 years, the Tackling Poverty Team’s response is always “let’s start with a benefit check.”

Through discussion with the person a benefit check identifies if there is entitlement to any other benefits and the Tackling Poverty Team will assist people to help make a claim, in the last 3 years the Team have assisted with 40,178 claims for benefit.

The following case study is a great example of how a benefit check can make a significant difference to people.

Case Study 04

The tackling poverty team received a referral from an MSP, the referral was for a family where a member of the household is disabled, who had received a bill for a sink repair and they were struggling to pay it.

A welfare rights officer from the First Point of Contact Team contacted the family who advised that the situation had been resolved, the WRO asked; **“Do you want me to check your benefits?”** and they agreed to this.

The welfare rights officer found that the family were short a premium in their Employment and Support Allowance claim and sought to get this put into payment. The work carried out resulted in the family receiving an additional **£76.40 per week (£3,972.80 per annum)** but through the diligence of the WRO, entitlement for the previous 4 years was also established, meaning the family received a **backdated payment of £13,000**.

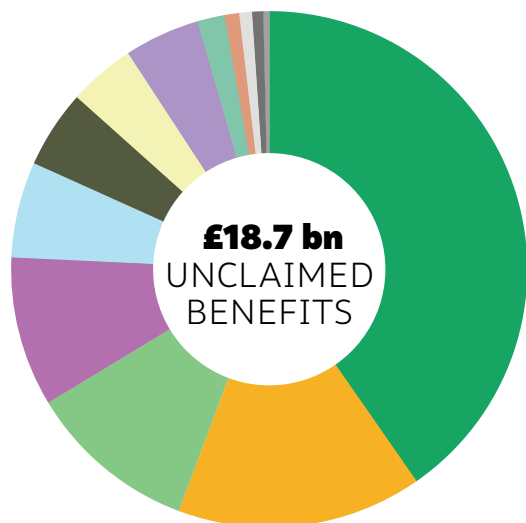


The family were delighted with the service they received

“The service from the Tackling Poverty Team is definitely worthwhile, they really know what they are talking about and they have done a grand job for my family”.

Increasing income via social security benefits is a key driver to tackling poverty in our communities, we know from recent analysis by Policy in Practice that the total amount of unclaimed income-related benefits and social tariffs is now **£18.7 billion** a year throughout the UK.

From these findings it is important that our Action Plan for Tackling Poverty ensures the “no wrong door” approach is embedded into our practice across all internal services together with our partners in NHS Lanarkshire and the Third Sector.



- **£7.57 bn**
Universal Credit
- **£929 m**
Housing Benefit (Pension Age)
- **£2.87 bn**
Council Tax Support
- **£900 m**
Water Social Tariffs
- **£2 bn**
Carers Allowance
- **£768 m**
Broadband Social Tariffs
- **£1.75 bn**
Pension Credit
- **£511 m**
Others
- **£1.13 bn**
Child Benefit
- **£314 m**
Warm Home Discount



How will we do this?

The Tackling Poverty Team has produced Poverty Awareness Sessions, which can be tailored not just to the Services we are delivering to, including; social work, health, education, addiction etc, but can also be drilled down to impacts in each Community Board area.

In doing this we can look at referral gateways and solutions that are bespoke to each service and locality, therefore supporting referrals to income maximisation services.

The Poverty Awareness Sessions have now been delivered to over 200 staff and practitioners to date, and the feedback has been really positive:

“ informative session and great examples shared today ”

“ I learned lots from the session that I didn't know ”

“ Seeing the information for my locality was hard hitting, but we were then told about the referral routes for us...

... I feel more confident to approach the issue of money now ”

The Tackling Poverty Awareness sessions are designed to ensure that the ethos within the Programme of Work where we muster our resources and recognise that poverty is not something that we can look at on its own is reflected in this.

Poverty impacts all areas of life, the Joseph Rowntree definition the report has adopted reflects this;

“Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent or buy the essentials for your children.

It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty and impossible decisions about money.

It means facing marginalisation, and even discrimination, because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.”

In recognising this, it is important to acknowledge that working to achieve our goal to reduce and tackle poverty in North Lanarkshire is not something that one service can do on its own. Referral pathways ensure that services have access to specialised advisors, investing in internal and external services ensure that people have access to those advisors.

Case Study 05

A grandmother in the Wishaw area was referred to the Tackling Poverty Team after the DWP had applied the two child limit to her Universal Credit therefore she was receiving no payment for her grandson who was in her care.

This was an informal kinship arrangement, the Welfare Rights Officer escalated the case with DWP who then agreed that the two child limit should not apply in this case.

The Universal Credit Child Element was backdated and a lump sum of **£1200** was awarded, in addition to an ongoing **£62.21** per week. The Welfare Rights Officer also made applications for child benefit and the Scottish Child Payment these payments will increase the grandmother's income by **£212.33** per week, this is a total increase in annual income of **£11,041.16**.

The woman stated that the assistance from the Tackling Poverty Team *“helped really a lot, made a difference for her grandson as they can now do things”*.

NHS Lanarkshire

The Health Foundation in 2020 stated that Income is associated with health; people in the bottom 40% of the income distribution are almost twice as likely to report poor health than those in the top 20%. Poverty, in particular, is associated with worse health outcomes. Income and health can both affect each other - lower income is associated with more “stressors” which can harm health and allow fewer opportunities for good health. Poor health can limit the opportunity for good and stable employment and so affect income.

NHS Lanarkshire has made significant investment in tackling poverty measures in North Lanarkshire including within income maximisation services. Recent investments include the funding of a Cost-of-Living Helpline hosted by the Councils’ Tackling Poverty Team giving people access to both income maximisation and money advice services.

Referral pathways have been established to make it easy for health staff to refer patients into the team to get the supports they need;

“ As a Health Visitor it is reassuring to know that the Tackling Poverty Team have the knowledge and skills to assist the families we work with both by providing advice and practical support. ”

“ It is very easy to make a referral to ensure our families receive the best support in maximising their incomes. ”

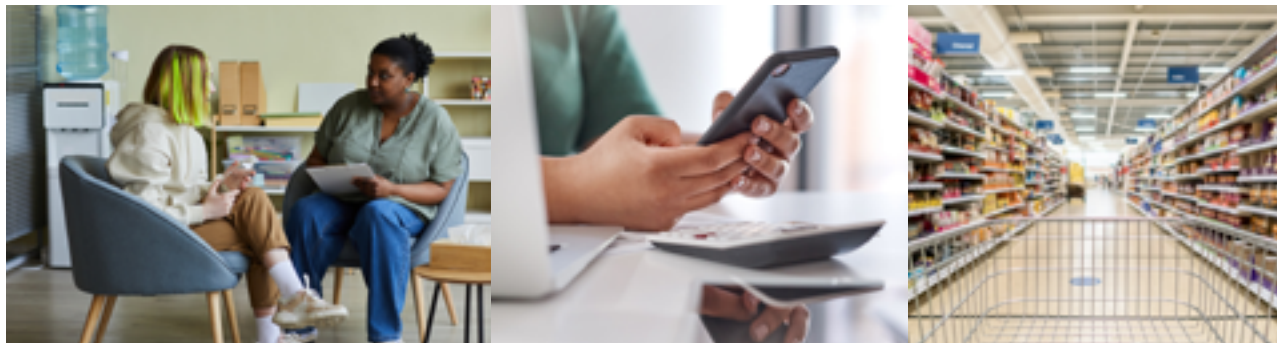


NHS Lanarkshire have established “GP Link Workers” with a referral route to their partners in both the councils’ Tackling Poverty Team and the Citizens Advice Bureaux. The Link Workers are available in various Health Centres and Surgeries across North Lanarkshire, over the last two years the link workers have referred **860 people for help with welfare rights and 252 people for help with money/debt advice**. The total income generated to date from these referrals is **£330,260**.

The Glasgow Royal Hospital for Children Project supports families and children who are either inpatients or outpatients. In 2022-23 the service supported 32 North Lanarkshire families, who received support with a total financial gain of **£169, 074.91** Most of the beneficiaries were families caring for children with a disability under the age of 19 years.

The Improvement Service have also funded a project within North Lanarkshire; **Welfare Advice and Health Partnership**, where we are improving access to money and welfare rights advice in health care settings. This is achieved by embedding advice workers in health settings and providing consensual access to medical records.

Based in three surgeries across North Lanarkshire this project has proven to be extremely successful, with 357 referrals received in one year generating **£715,865**.



Case Study 06

A 39 year old lone parent was referred to the Tackling Poverty Team via her GP.

Her physical health limitations, financial challenges and being a single mum of two children (aged 16 and 10), one with disabilities was having a significant impact on her mental health and she was finding it a struggle to work. The woman had her claim for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) refused and the GP referred to the Tackling Poverty Team to help her.

The Team challenged the decision, and she was awarded Standard Rate Daily living component of PIP, the welfare rights officer then assisted to have the disability element added to her working tax credit.



The woman received **£8643.88 in backdated payments of PIP and Working Tax Credit**, her weekly income was increased by **£132.42 (an annual increase of £6885.84 for the woman and her family)**.

The woman has returned to work and is able to deal with those financial challenges she was facing.

The Third Sector

The Tackling Poverty Team are responsible for the commissioning of external advice services to provide welfare rights and debt advice. The successful candidates for 2023-25 have been 5 local Citizens Advice Bureaux. The Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) are committed to working with the Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group in implementing the Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.

The CABx have contributed to maximising income across the local authority generating £22.6 million the last three years in additional income for residents.

The CABx are also committed to tackling food poverty by implementing the councils' Food Poverty Referral Gateway which promotes the **Cash First** approach. Trussell Trust are working in conjunction with the local CABx over the next 2 years focussing on enhancing access and engagement with the North Lanarkshire Food Poverty Referral Gateway. Augmenting the existing Gateway as the preferred route for cash first support and ensuring a dignified and holistic approach to tackling food poverty and insecurity.

The pilot will be delivered in communities with Motherwell, Wishaw and Airdrie in local community hubs working alongside community organisations in both one to one and group settings, providing advice, support and training.



Case Study 07

A 41 year old man with 4 children presented to Coatbridge Citizens Advice Bureau, he himself had health issues.

He contacted the Citizens Advice Bureau explaining he had a £12,000 benefit overpayment which had resulted as a clerical error by the DWP five years previous.

The man himself had tried to dispute this himself with DWP but was getting nowhere, he asked the CAB to help him. The case worker took the man's case to appeal and was successful in their argument meaning that the overpayment was written off.

Promoting Uptake of Benefits for Children in Education

Promotion and maximisation of those benefits which North Lanarkshire Council administers, including Free School Meals remains a priority detailed in the accompanying Action Plan. However, that is not the end of the story, we also need to look at whether those who are entitled to a free meal are actually taking up this offer.

Uptake of Free School Meals, whether children qualify for universal provision or due to their family's income, is at 65-70%. This is certainly lower than we would want but is a trend which is being experienced in other areas across the Country. The reasons why take up is low are many are varied and not entirely understood, particularly at a time when household budgets have never been tighter. The challenge for us is to fully understand the reasons why children are not taking up the offer of a free meal.



A new management information system has recently been implemented to give insights into trends amongst different age groups, most popular menu choices etc.

Changing the culture and stigma around free school meals is key to increasing take up and work is already underway:

- Invitations to children and their parents to come along and sample a school meal together as they move from Nursery to Primary
- Taster sessions across Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools
- A targeted exercise to educate parents who choose to provide packed lunches rather than take up a similar offering provided at school

Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships

North Lanarkshire was chosen to host one of the Improvement Service's Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships (WAHPs) that will provide access to welfare rights and money advice in health care settings. The approach by the Improvement Service is to embed advice workers in health settings and provide consensual access to medical records.

GP practices were selected by identifying those where the patients from SIMD 1 and 2 were highest; 6 practices were identified in North Lanarkshire, with 4 agreeing to take part in the project, however, only 3 practices came on board; Old Mill Practice, Bellshill, Waverley Surgery, Coatbridge and Coatbank Surgery, Coatbridge

Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships provide a simple, effective, person centred approach to tackling health inequalities, improving individual health and well-being. Providing advice in GP settings is one approach to delivering services out with the traditional routes ensuring that we can meet the needs of all our community.

In one year the project has dealt with **357 referrals and generated £715,865 in additional benefit income.**

The GP practices recognise the impact the Project is having on their patients:

“ The welfare rights officer joined the practice once a week to help with our patients and has been a great help to the patients not only from a financial point of view but also from a mental health and wellbeing perspective, some people are in a situation where they don't know what to do or what to turn too, the welfare rights officer goes over and above to help sort out their affairs or tries to make sure they are getting what is right, in turn patients seem relieved and feel light is at the end of the tunnel which often lifts the anxiety they have been living with ”

Waverley Medical Practice, Coatbridge

“ The welfare rights officer has been an amazing addition to our practice MDT. She is very hard working, approachable and a great team member. The project has been helping our patients greatly and easing their financial pressures, which has a very positive impact on their mental and physical health. This is more important than ever whilst in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. The project has been welcomed fully at Old Mill, patients are engaging well and getting the help they need due to their poor health and mobility. I would honestly say this project has been the most helpful and useful addition we have ever had, and patient feedback has been excellent.”

Dr Aimee McGinness - Old Mill Practice, Bellshill

Case Study 07

Ken was referred to the Welfare Rights Officer (WRO) based in the Waverley Practice as his claim for Personal Independence Payment had been refused.

The WRO using the medical records submitted an appeal which was successful with Ken receiving enhanced rate of both mobility and daily living, Ken received a backdate of **£5020.80** and an annual income of **£8983**. When carrying out the benefit check for Ken and his family, the WRO identified that the Scottish Child Payment was not in payment for his two children, the WRO assisted with this claim meaning the family had an additional **£2600** per annum. The welfare rights officer maximised the family income by **£11,583** per annum, making an incredible difference to them.

4. Holistic Supports

In North Lanarkshire we recognise that to deliver sustained reductions in child poverty over the long term we need to break that cycle of poverty, ensuring that our children living in poverty do not grow up to be adults living in poverty.

We will work with our partners to provide the integrated and holistic support parents need to enter employment, improve their wider wellbeing and engage with the drivers of poverty.

In North Lanarkshire we are committed to delivering a “No Wrong Door” approach to our services to ensure that all residents, including those in poverty and those at risk of falling into poverty receive the right support at the right time.

Ensuring all families have the support they need, regardless of what those supports may be, is **essential** if we are to enable families to thrive in all aspects of their wellbeing.



Infant Minds Matter

A new Infant Mental Health service has been established in Lanarkshire. The aim of this service is to provide an infant centred approach to Infant Mental Health in Lanarkshire through direct clinical intervention with infants and their families, and support to professionals working across Lanarkshire, who contribute to the mental health and emotional well-being of infants.

Infants are the most vulnerable group in society; however, they have often been omitted from mental health services and policies. There is a continued lack of awareness and understanding that infants can suffer from serious mental health difficulties and disorders, when in fact epidemiological research indicated that approximately 16% of 18-month-olds in the general population have serious mental health difficulties.

The Infant Mental Health Team is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency, and each discipline and agency brings its particular training and perspective to addressing the mental health of infants. Our team consists of: Lead for NHSL Infant Mental Health Service; Consultant in Infant Mental Health Psychiatry; Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist; Clinical Psychologist; Social Worker (North and South Lanarkshire); Early Years Practitioner; and Admin support.

The Tackling Poverty Team will deliver Poverty Awareness Sessions to the multi-disciplinary team and implement a referral route for parents to ensure parents and carers have access to income maximisation and money advice services.

Breastfeeding

NHS Lanarkshire have been working in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council to pilot the national Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Local Authority award - a 1st for Scotland.

This sees every department within the council receiving training, have staff policies in place for staff breastfeeding and returning to work and includes the education schemes within Early learning and Schools amongst others. Roll out of the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland scheme ensures premises and buildings signing up to the scheme create a supportive, welcoming environment for breastfeeding families when out and about as one of the main reasons many cite for not initiating breastfeeding or stopping before they wanted to, is feeding out with the home.

We have many local authority premises such as libraries and leisure signed up as well as many private cafes, third sector groups and other businesses.



Whole Family Support

The aim of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund is to provide additional resource to support the transformation of the system of support to children and families.

This is in line with the National Principles of Holistic Family Support and ambition of The Promise to provide flexible family support, enabling more children to remain loved and supported within their own families.

The Promise places a requirement on Local Authorities and their partners to transform whole systems and culture to ensure all children, in any aspect of care, thrive through nurturing and loving relationships with access to support that strengthens communities and families. The Promise places prevention and family support at the heart of its vision.

The Promise Plan 21-24 published on 31st March 2021 sets out 5 key priorities for the first phase of implementing The Promise including a focus on 'Whole Family Support'.

There is an expectation that the 10 key principles of family support outlined within the Promise are embedded into practice by 2024 and that there is a place in every community for families with children 'to stay and play with their children and get support and advice'.

This aligns closely with the Tackling Poverty strategy and the aspirations of the Plan for North Lanarkshire; and in particular plans to develop community hubs as a central vehicle to deliver support, enhance community capacity and support every child to reach their potential.



Research has shown there is a relationship between poverty and longer-term negative outcomes for children (Lewer et al, 2019) and that while the relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect is complex, studies have also shown that financial support and increased income lead to lower levels of child maltreatment (Bywaters et al, 2016).

North Lanarkshire Council, as part of the Covid-19 Tackling poverty plan, adopted a 'cash first' approach to supporting the most vulnerable families to address basic needs, which proved effective in promoting improved outcomes. By providing money directly to families North Lanarkshire's strength based and collaborative approach offered welcomed financial relief.

In order to provide holistic family support which truly aligns with the Promise and Tackling Poverty action plan, there is a clear need to join up services so that people can experience a seamless transition into additional and intensive level supports and services. This improves access to existing expertise within our services.

These national policy aims align with the Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Council's new Programme of Work which makes family support central to its operating model through the Resilient People workstream.



North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership

North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (NLADP) is a multi-agency strategic partnership focused on understanding and mitigating the impact of problematic alcohol and drug use in the local area.

The purpose of the ADP is to co-ordinate and lead a collective response to tackle harms and improve the lives of people who use alcohol and drugs, and those around them. The ADP is made up of key agencies and stakeholders with an interest in tackling harms and improving lives. This includes the wider community and those who have lived experience and families.

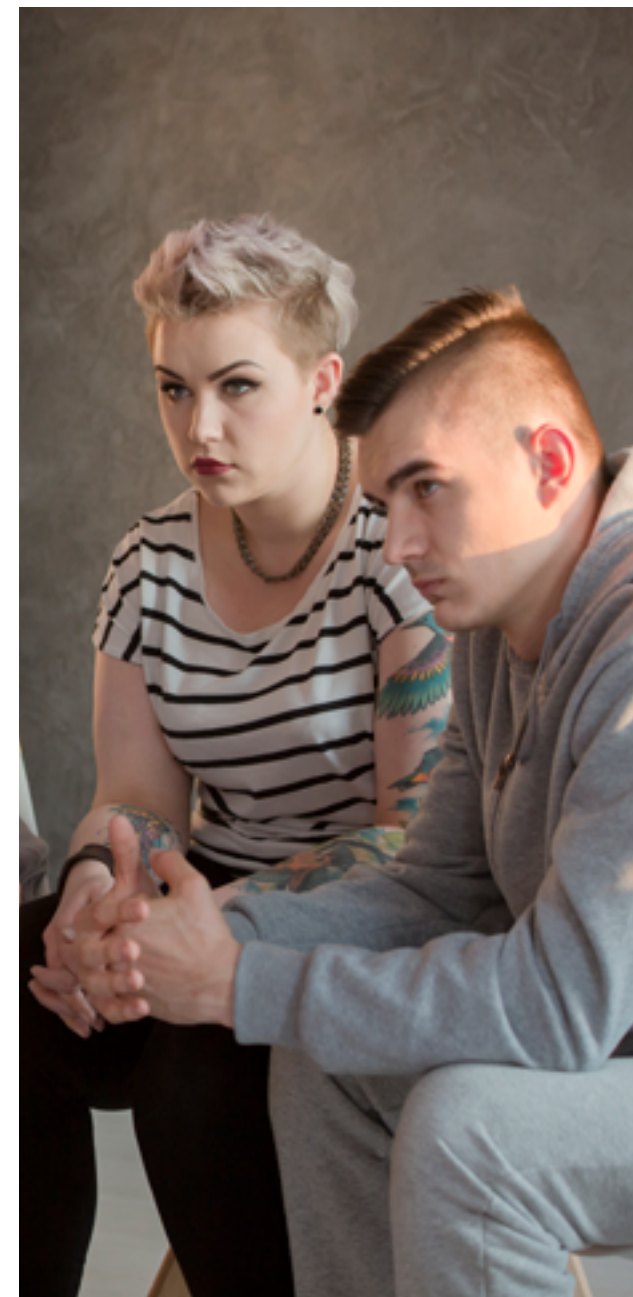
Much of our work involves bringing people together to plan and improve services whilst setting out what needs to be put in place to support change and keep people safe and well. The strong links between drug and alcohol related harms and poverty, inequality and trauma are widely acknowledged. Deprivation has been linked as a significant factor in drug and alcohol problems developing.

The ADP are tasked by Scottish Government to ensure the implementation of national policy and evidence-based practice. Improving Choice, Quality and Connections are key drivers underpinning the work of the ADP.

We have 5 key priority areas of focus for our work which include;

- Prevention,
- Education and Early intervention,
- Whole Family Approach,
- Treatment and Care,
- Public Health Approach to Justice and Reducing Alcohol Harms.

Each of our sub-groups are tasked with understanding and mitigating harms from substances, and poverty, and have a linked programme of work to support change and keep people safe and well across our communities.



Justice Services

Whilst The Tackling Poverty Team and others will support Services by providing debt and money advice, income maximisation and employment advice, the services themselves such as the Restorative Justice Service also contribute to tackling poverty and inequality through a number of initiatives, such as;

- Individuals who are subject to Unpaid Work can undertake work with the Bike Recycling Project. During the last reporting year over 650 bicycles were retrieved from recycling centres in North Lanarkshire. Some were scrapped for parts, however, over 320 bicycles have been reconstructed. These recycled and repaired bikes are donated to the Councils' Christmas Toy appeal as well as being donated low income families.
- Bikes are also donated to local schools to ensure that all pupils can take part in Cycle Safety Awareness Courses and the healthy living programme.
- A craft workshop has been developed to repair clothing and soft furnishings for low income families.
- A kitchen workshop has been developed to deliver a programme consisting of food hygiene, nutrition, budgeting and basic meal preparation. The workshop performs a platform to undertake placements in foodbanks and community cafes such as Shotts Healthy Living Centre and Newmains Community Trust.
- A laundry workshop has been created that provides a service to charity shops collecting clothing for laundering and returning to the shops for sale. In an effort to reduce poverty, a laundry service is provided to Craigneuk Family Centre and two charitable groups; "Cool School Uniforms" and "Airdrie School Clothing Bank", this involves the collection, laundering and distribution of recycled school uniforms to low income families.

These indirect supports contribute to supporting the Tackling Poverty Strategy and our communities across North Lanarkshire.

“ We got your delivery of the balance bike and the guys were very helpful. The children love it and have been having great fun on it today. Thank you so much again ”

Allanton Primary School



Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth Building is an internationally recognised approach to economic development designed to tackle long-standing economic challenges. It seeks to transform local and regional economies by considering the ways in which the public sector, in partnership with the private, third and community sectors, can ensure more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in communities and localities.

The approach is focussed on growing the influence communities have on the economy and ensuring communities receive more of the benefits from the wealth they help to generate. The council and local partners are currently mapping activity to identify areas for further development and improvement and are considering and consulting on the approach which will be adopted in North Lanarkshire to embed Community Wealth Building.

Community wealth building is a progressive approach for the benefit of the local population. This is achieved by harnessing the economic and social power of locally rooted organisations, often referred to as local anchors.

Anchor organisations are big and locally rooted organisations including the NHS, local authorities, colleges and universities, and private businesses with local HQs. Because they employ many people, spend substantial amounts of money, own and manage land and assets and often deliver crucial services, they have a considerable impact on local communities and economies. Further, they are historically rooted in the physical area, intrinsically connected to the local community and are pivotal to wellbeing.

Alongside its main function, NHS Lanarkshire recognises its role in making a strategic contribution to the local economy. Anchor organisations are pivotal to community wealth building as a result of the scale at which they operate. After a benchmarking exercise, NHS Lanarkshire has developed an action plan to maximise its role and are now working with other community planning partners in North Lanarkshire to maximise the collective impact, share best practice and identify areas where local anchors can work together.

It is proposed that this will be through the adoption of 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.



Let's Talk... The Three Questions

The Tackling Poverty Team have embarked on a communications programme called “**The Three Questions**” across all our schools, this will be a continuous programme which will become the heartbeat of our approach to tackling child poverty, shaping and underpinning everything we are doing across the local authority.

Welfare Rights Officers have met with pupils from both Primary and High School. The presentation starts with “poverty awareness” letting the children know the extent to which it is affecting their local area - and the children and young people are then presented with **The Three Questions**.

The children and young people are invited to put their experiences and thoughts on how to make things better by using post it notes and posters.

The post it notes were introduced to avoid stigmatising anyone who wanted to have their voice heard but did not want to speak out, but welfare rights

officers and debt advisors are also on hand, not just to provide advice but to write down any comments children and young people wish to make.

The format used has proven to be very successful in giving a voice to our children and young people.

The young people gave an insight into how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting them and their families, together with what they would like to be done around this.

When asked how the cost of living affected them, the impact of socialising was a major issue for the children and young people, whilst 21% stated that they could no longer afford after school activities and

“**The Three Questions**” have been shaped around the **cost-of-living crisis**, we simply ask:

“ **How is the cost of living impacting you?** ”

“ **How is the cost-of-living impacting others in the community?** ”

“ **What would you like us to do about it?** ”

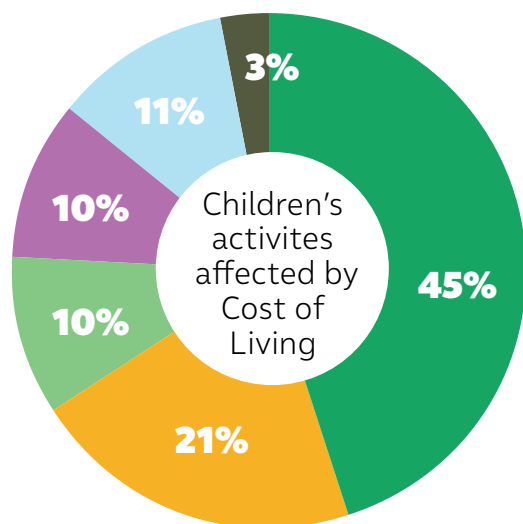
socialising with friends, 56% stated that they could no longer play their consoles or charge their phones as much, all forms of socialising for younger people.

The children and young people told us that the cost-of-living crisis was having an impact in their home and on themselves.

When asked what the children and young people wanted us to do about it, the top two answers from the children and young people were; **Free School Meals for everyone and financial education**.

The children and young people expressed that they wanted to learn about money.

COST OF LIVING



- I'm unable to charge my phone/games as often as I did
- I am unable to afford out of school activities and socialising with friends
- I am unable to afford driving lessons
- I spend less time watching TV
- I can't play on my consoles as much
- I have less or no money to buy things for the house

I AM POOR NOW

Grandpa who has grandchildren staying at his home has had to stop them staying as he cant afford to feed them

Dad is usually out of money when he is on full pay. I'm worried what will happen if he runs out of money half way through the month

People are being bullied

My gran has went for surgery and needs heating on all the time which is very expensive

I go to bed cold

More worry / stress for adults at home

Buying things causes arguments in my house

My aunty needs to stay over or wash at ours because she cant afford her bills or cousins needs

My house is cold

I only have one meal per day as its too expensive

I get anxious when i go to the shop to buy food. My dad is off work and is on sick pay. In the next couple of months, he will be on half pay and I am worried how we will be able to afford anything.

My neighbour is very sick and he is worried about the cost of his rent

I am cold in my room

Our gas isn't lasting as long as it used to, needing topped up more often

My mum panics and cries about money

What's going to happen when i need new clothes? We wont have enough money

My brother needs help to pay for his electricity

I worry about if we can afford my needs now rather than my wants

Harder to afford food and electricity as i now have a brother

Make everyone feel equal and understand more about poverty and money... learn about money, how to pay bills, budgeting and money management

You need to think about trips and how much they are

My clubs cost too much

During the strikes, students taking exams were struggling because teachers were off so much to get paid more because of rising costs



What Next for the Three Questions?

Following the response from The Three Questions, we will build upon the work we have done and ensure that the responses and ideas from the children and young people are at the heart of what we will be delivering.

The Team have been to 13 schools to date, speaking to 277 pupils however, in the next semester it is our intention to co-ordinate our three questions in line with the Cluster Model that is in place in North Lanarkshire. The cluster model identifies each Secondary School with their feeder primary schools and nurseries. The Tackling Poverty Team will meet with children and young people from each establishment within the Cluster.

Following the work they will do with the children, the welfare rights officers from the Tackling Poverty Team will identify each Clusters priorities. Together with the Tackling Poverty Team, the schools will identify not only these priorities but how they plan to address them in the Tackling Poverty Plan each school has.

Financial Education

In response to the children and young people, the Tackling Poverty Team and Education will develop a financial education package for all ages; early years, primary and secondary school pupils. The package will be developed, evaluated and reviewed by the Tackling Poverty Team with delivery in the main being done by education staff.

To involve the young people more in this, education will identify pupils in 4th, 5th and 6th year who are interested in delivering the programme in conjunction with the Tackling Poverty Team to early years and primary schools. This will give the young people an excellent opportunity to develop important lifeskills, such as those pupils from Coltness High School identified when they answered; “learning about money within schools, how to pay bills, budgeting and manage money”, when asked what do you want us to do to help?

The financial education package will be a reviewed and renewed version of the existing MACA programme; Money Advice / Consumer Advice providing pupils with the skills they need for the future.

The package will have an additional part to it where we can offer parents advice on the impact of family income when a child leaves school.



Parents and other adults can access financial education through the **Sum it Up Project**, which can provide up to 5 sessions taking adults through money management, budgeting and savings tips.

North Lanarkshire recognise that financial education is key in helping tackling poverty and inequality in our communities, offering packages from early years to any age across all of the authority.

“**Taught about money**” - Cathedral Primary School

“**Teach pupils how to manage our money**”
- Clydevalley High School

“**Get taught more about money in school**”
- Kildrum Primary School

“**Learn about money and how to budget for when we leave school**” - Kilsyth Academy

“**How to budget and handle money as part of the WPS course**” - St Aidan's High School

“**Learn about money management at school**”
- St Margaret's High School

Additional Support Needs Schools

North Lanarkshire's Supported Enterprise Team, work with our Additional Support Needs schools providing support to 5th and 6th year students who are ready to leave school and want to find employment opportunities.

Our Job Coaches start working in the schools around September/October to prepare the students for leaving the following summer. The job coaches will work with the young people to create a vocational profile with them, observe how they are in classroom settings and take them out of school for job tasters, giving them an opportunity to taste the world of work.

Students are also offered the opportunity to work in Sunnyside Café in Volvo Construction's staff restaurant where young people will gain valuable work experience in aspects of catering. Young people will be supported by job coaches from the Supported Enterprise Team to build skills and confidence in a real work setting and gain qualifications in catering and hospitality.

To ensure that the young person and their family are aware of the impact of leaving school, a Welfare Rights Officer (WRO) from the councils' Tackling Poverty Team links in with the job coach to set up meetings with the students to offer advice and support to the families.

Leaving school can have a huge impact on the families' income, to prepare for the student leaving school, the WRO will attend the school in December to carry out a general talk to ensure families are prepared. This is followed by the offer to all students and their families of a benefit check which will give them the full picture of the impact when the student leaves education. The WRO will support the family with all forms / correspondence and advocacy to ensure that their income is fully maximised.

Case Study 08

Belle is a summer leaver from an ASN school and has been given a place on the No Limits Project via Supported Employment and will work 25 hours a week and paid at an apprentice wage.

The No Limits programme is for ASN school leavers with the placement including more intensive support (including links to all other support services) with further training and development.

The WRO met Belle and her mother at their family home, where it became apparent that Belle's mum was going to lose money from her Universal Credit when Belle entered employment. During the home visit it was highlighted that Belle's mum had mental health issues and that neither Belle nor her mum were receiving any disability benefits. The WRO also identified that Child Benefit had also stopped as Belle went into 6th year. The WRO assisted both with a claim for Adult Disability Payment and with evidence from the school sought to have the child benefit reinstated.

The discussions also revealed that there were also £2000 of debt from rent arrears, mum had been trying hard to maintain payments but was struggling to do this, the thought of losing some additional Universal Credit when Belle left school was an additional worry to Belle and her mum. The WRO worked with the Debt Advisor, and they were able to make a claim to the Rent Assistance Fund and had the debt cleared off through this, this took an immense pressure off the family.

The WRO successfully assisted in getting the child benefit backdated and reinstated, this together with the debt cleared has enabled Belle's mum to feel better about things, the mother and daughter are awaiting the outcome of the ADP claims.

Achievements and Challenges

With the country facing the perfect storm of increasing prices, ever increasing bills, tax rises and mortgage increases; the cost-of-living crisis is having a substantial knock on effect on families and children, with those who were previously “just getting by” experiencing financial difficulties and others plunging deeper into poverty.

North Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire and our Third Sector Partners have worked to try and minimise the impact the crisis is having on our communities.

Since the first Local Child Poverty Action Report was produced, **over £139 million** in additional benefit income has been generated by the Councils’ Tackling Poverty Team, Social Work Services and Housing Solutions, this together with over £22 million generated via Citizens Advice Bureaux, means that over **£161 million has been generated by supporting people through the benefit system.**



Other notable achievements

- **North Lanarkshire Child Payment** has been made to families; **£125 payment to families for each child** who are in receipt of free school meals and/or school clothing grant, including nursery children. A total of **11,979 children from 7396 families** were assisted.
- **A fuel hardship payment** was developed to provide financial support to low-income households who would only receive the UK Government universal payment, payments of **£150** were made with applications exceeding 6000.
- North Lanarkshire Energy Advice Service was commissioned in early 2023 to provide mentoring, support and advocacy to our most vulnerable households to ensure no one has to struggle between choosing to heat or to eat. Energy Mentors will empower and equip households with the skills and knowledge to reduce energy costs and achieve sustainable outcomes.
- Recognising the impact, the cost-of-living crisis is having on our communities, the Integrated Joint Board funded a **Cost of Living Helpline** hosted by the Tackling Poverty Team, giving our communities access to advice and support.
- Educational attainment rates for all pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6, and for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas, have seen a steady year on year improvement.
- Improvements can also be evidenced in the number of leavers achieving a positive post school destination with North Lanarkshire achieving a high level of 94.2%. This reflects a drop in pupils not entering a positive destination from 8.2% to 5.5% (around 100 pupils).
- Overall school exclusion rates and exclusion rates for looked after children both show significant improvement with overall exclusion rates dropping by 56% and rates for looked after children dropping by almost 70%.
- The establishment of a Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee in North Lanarkshire was a clear indication of the Councils' commitment to the Strategy and working toward a fairer North Lanarkshire for everyone in our communities
- Net migration to North Lanarkshire has picked up again after a small dip in the trend and projections. Estimates predict that North Lanarkshire's population will grow and remain favourable up to 2028.
- Recent figures show the local economy continues to grow, reflecting a positive position in North Lanarkshire compared to a negative growth position nationally.
- The gross weekly wage for North Lanarkshire residents is now higher than the national average for the first time ever – an increase of 10% (£63.90 per week) from 2021
- The number of people claiming employment related benefits has decreased by almost 48% from 14,195 as at December 2020 to 7,420 as at December 2022 and this claimant count is now lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Challenges

- There is a need to build on these successes and minimise the impact poverty has on people and communities. Whilst there has been a 2-percentage point reduction in the proportion of children living in poverty (from 25.2% to 23.2%), we still have significantly high levels of child poverty. With 61,452 children aged 15 and below in North Lanarkshire, 14,256 of those children live in poverty. 5,455 children live in areas where the poverty figure is **over the national average of 24%** and 3,185 of those children live in areas where poverty **levels are over 30%**. The North Lanarkshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan details the actions the council and other services are undertaking to support the Scottish Government to achieve its stated targets for reducing child poverty by 2030.
- Although there is a downward trend in the number of working age population with no qualifications, there remains 12.8% of North Lanarkshire's working age population (around 27,600) who are restricted from accessing employment opportunities.
- The proportion of the working age population who are economically active had shown signs of improvement in the aftermath of the pandemic, however, this has stalled and will continue to be monitored closely for signs of stability. Other factors will require further investigation in terms of employability, as 69,100 people are currently recorded as being economically inactive, with 41% of these recorded as long term-sick and 84% recorded as not wanting a job.
- Within the Action Plan of the 2020 -23 Tackling Poverty Strategy, Funeral Poverty was identified as an issue for people within our community. There was a lack of engagement from Funeral Directors and as a result, this issue will be addressed in terms of accessing bereavement and funeral payments.
- Within North Lanarkshire there are other challenges which will impact upon our strategy and approach, a key factor being the continued impact of welfare reform from the UK and Scottish Government's with the migration of Personal Independent Payments to Adult Disability Payment and Disability Living Allowance to Child Disability Payment. Whilst the UK welfare reform changes estimates are that 20% of people won't remain on benefit following migration, the Scottish versions of the benefits have a more favourable qualification criterion. However, the migration process will have a significant impact on disabled people, their families and carers and will take at least until late 2024 to be completed.
- Whilst we had been able to reduce referrals to foodbanks by using the Food Poverty Referral Gateway in North Lanarkshire, evidence from the foodbanks indicate that referrals have started to increase again. Work carried out with the foodbanks has identified that the timescales and process around the administration of universal credit remains to be impacting on this, as well as the pandemic, recovery of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. The Cash First approach adopted by North Lanarkshire in 2015, continues to lead the way across the country with the Scottish Government, Trussell Trust and other Local Authorities adopting the model.

An example of how well the Cash First approach works is outlined by a resident who was assisted with the model;

“ I thought my only option was a foodbank the welfare rights officer helped me get a grant and I could choose what I wanted for my family...

When they checked my benefits I didn't know that I could get help with looking after my daughter...

...it has made a big difference ”

Mother with 3 children (Coatbridge)

Across Scotland, there are also some early reports of the impact of the Scottish Child Payment benefit on referrals to foodbanks reducing for families, since its introduction in November 2022, for all children under 16.

Over the next two years, North Lanarkshire Council are working in partnership with the Trussell Trust and the Third Sector Advice Services in a pilot to augment the existing Food Poverty Gateway, this together with embedding The Pledge and Scottish Government and North Lanarkshire's commitment to “cash first” approaches will ensure **no one is left without food**.

The strategy and action plan 2023-26 will build on our achievements and work towards meeting the challenges our communities face.



Appendix One

Cost of Living Survey - Quotes From Children and Young People In North Lanarkshire

HOW IS THE COST OF LIVING AFFECTING YOU?							
Comments made in respect of food	Number of comments	Comments regarding activities	Number of comments	Comments re energy/fuel	Number of comments	Comments on clothing & other issues	Number of comments
I can't really afford as much food as I used to, I must ration and save some	3	I am unable to afford out of school activities/socialising with friends	8	Being told to switch off lights and appliances to use less electricity	50	Cannot afford to buy clothing / buy clothing that I would like	7
Affording school meals is tough with how much everything costs	7	I am unable to afford driving lessons	5	Increase in heating prices and heating is on less	40	Less treats / treats are too expensive	4
I am unable to get the things I want in a weekly shop, like snacks or branded foods	22	Less time watching TV	5	Waking up cold and going to bed cold	40	Tutoring is expensive	2
Unable to heat food	2	Can't play on my consoles as much	21	Using more blankets to stay warm	1	I never get the treats that I used to get	5
Less money is given to me for lunch	2	Less or no money to buy things for the house	19	Being told to be quicker in the shower	45	Unable to replace things (school clothing/equipment)	3
Harder to afford food and electricity as I now have a brother	1	Unable to charge my phone/games as often as I did	20	I need to put on more clothes rather than using the heating	6	My pet food is really expensive	2
I am told not to waste food as it costs too much now	1	Less or no money when I am going out	1	Not able to travel as petrol costs too much	6	The strawberry and chocolate milk has been taken away at school	1
My food costs more	5	Prices have gone up at football	1	Energy saving hour	1	Vet bills are expensive	2
School dinners are too expensive	7	Travel costs to and from school are increasing	1	Put less water in the bath	1	I am not allowed to spend money in shops	4
There is not a lot of food in my house	14	Having less friends because you can't afford to go out	1	Told to always close the door to keep the heat in	11	More arguments at home	7
Food and drink is more expensive	13	Can't afford to do sports	1	No longer use heaters or dryers to dry clothing	1	More worry in the household to keep everything working	1
Not getting the food I want as it is getting dearer	2			I am not allowed to have the heating on	20	Cost of lunch is rising	5

HOW IS THE COST OF LIVING AFFECTING YOU?

Comments made in respect of food	Number of comments	Comments regarding activities	Number of comments	Comments re energy/fuel	Number of comments	Comments on clothing & other issues	Number of comments
Buying cheaper food, not branded, not good quality	7			More cautious about using electricity and lights	4	Travel too expensive	1
Buying less food and fridge rarely stocked	3			I am told that gas and electric is expensive	2	Not able to go out with friends	6
Food prices are rising	11			Wary about using heating	2	Less going out for meals	6
Takeaway food costs rising	3			Cant afford to heat home	4	Things cost a lot of money/ price increase	2
Smaller portion sizes	1					Lack of opportunities at school	6

HOW DOES THE COST OF LIVING AFFECT OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY?

Comments made in respect of food	Number of comments	Comments regarding activities	Number of comments	Comments re energy/fuel	Number of comments	Comments on clothing & other issues	Number of comments
People cannot afford to feed family and have 3 meals a day	31	People cannot afford to socialise	8	People cannot heat their homes	41	Unable to afford dental care	3
Students unable to concentrate on learning as they have not eaten	2	People cannot afford to pay for clubs	2	Elderly unable to heat their homes/bills	2	People are unable to purchase new clothing to keep warm	7
More people relying on foodbanks and having to choose whether to eat or heat their homes	17	House prices and rent increasing, so its harder to buy or keep houses, leading to more poverty	1	Unable to travel to work which leads to unemployment (maintain/ fix a care or afford travel)	2	People cannot afford to pay for their house or their rent	23
People are unable to heat their food	1	More unemployment	1	People are unable to heat their food	1	People are unable to give their kids treats	1
Hungry at school because the breakfast club has stopped	1	People are without jobs and cant pay for things	4	Too expensive to travel (public transport/petrol)	16	Unable to socialise due to costs of gas and electricity/petrol	3
Unable to help feed family members due to cost of food	1	Community no longer open	1	People cant heat their homes or their food	16	People can't afford school supplies	2
People are going days without food	2	House prices and rent increasing, so its harder to buy or keep houses,		Can't afford to wash themselves	1	People can't afford pet bills	2

HOW DOES THE COST OF LIVING AFFECT OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY?

Comments made in respect of food	Number of comments	Comments regarding activities	Number of comments	Comments re energy/fuel	Number of comments	Comments on clothing & other issues	Number of comments
People are unable to afford food or hygiene products	6	Cost of travel means unable to see family/friends	7	People are going to bed cold	2	More people becoming homeless	18
People can't feed themselves or their children	14			Unable to heat or feed themselves which makes them unwell and unable to work	10	More strikes People losing jobs	3 3
People are having to buy in cheaper shops	3			Costs more for fuel	16	Rise in crime	1
No money to buy lunch	5			Going cold	1	Not a lot of money	1
Rising food prices / branded foods are too expensive	4					Bills increasing Shops closing	1 3
People unable to afford food and relying more on foodbanks	18					More people taking on second jobs. People becoming stressed	3 2
Unable to help feed family members due to cost of food	1					Making people poorer Debt increasing	3 1

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

The cost of a school	Number of comments	Financial education	Number of comments	Transport, fuel and food	Number of comments	Other comments	Number of comments
Lower the cost of school meals	39	Financial Education	36	Free transport	18	Free child care	2
Ensure students get a free meal (Breakfast during or after school)	16	Learning about money within school (how to pay bills, budgeting and managing money)	36	Free electric car charges	1	Reincorporate the library its critical part of the school and gives people a space to read	2
Free after school activities	18	Taught about money / managing money in school	7	Cheaper trains	1	Ask for opinions from school pupils on new developments before implementing things that don't get used	2
Free school uniforms	22	How to budget and handle money as part of the WPS course	2	Face problems in front of us and reduce stress, such as school buses arriving on time	1	Clubs for families to get food and heat	1

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

The cost of a school	Number of comments	Financial education	Number of comments	Transport, fuel and food	Number of comments	Other comments	Number of comments
Free clubs	9	Make everyone feel equal and understand more about poverty and money	2	Help kids with cooking so we can make meals on basic food as opposed to buying pre-made expensive	1	Give people money	1
Free school meals for everyone	67			More foodbanks / food donations	10	Lower prices	25
Free/lower price of school trips	32			Clubs for families to get food and heat	1	Advertise more help	3
Borrow laptops from school to use at home	6			More food donations	8	More homeless places	3
Free after school clubs to allow people to work longer	13			Lower prices of electricity / gas	3	Pay less rent More fundraising	6
Free breakfast clubs	18			Have emergency money to give people for heating	1	Ensure that poverty proofing is in place in all schools	2
Make after school clubs more affordable	7			Cheaper gas prices	2	Lower costs for basic needs	
All equipment/stationary needed for school should be free	4					Give additional money to those struggling	2
						Wages are enough to afford things	4
Give money for school lunches to let us choose what we want	12					More money from government	1
Make a uniform bank	4					More grants to assist with costs	1
Reduced days in the school week so people can afford to come to school	1					Stop school uniform as it costs a lot	1
Lower locker charges	3					Lower the price of football parks	1
Change the requirements for free school meals as salaries are not changing but food is	1					Free Glasses	2
Lower price of clubs outside school	2					Allow people longer to pay back loans and their rent	1
Increase our EMA	4					Increase wages and lower taxes	3

Appendix Two

Local Child Poverty Action Plan 2023 - 2026

INCREASE INCOME VIA EMPLOYMENT									
Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
North Lanarkshire to increase the number of people employed and receiving the real living wage	Payment of the living wage by employers is amongst those interventions that can support people out of poverty and is part of wider Fair Work commitments	There is an increase in the number of NL employers in public, business and community and voluntary sectors with real living wage accreditation	Workforce for the Future Economic Regeneration Plan	Brighter Futures	123 employers have achieved accreditation, with 7053 employees benefiting from the living wage	Ongoing	Ongoing	NLC Employability VANL for CVS	Number of employers paying the living wage Number of employees receiving the living wage
Social Values	North Lanarkshire will look to integrated social values and the objectives into the tendering process that will allow the weighting for fair work to be flexible to ensure that social values and community benefits are embedded in the contract .	An increase in NL residents receiving the "real living wage".	Workforce for the Future	Transforming Places	5% current weighting applied	Ongoing	Ongoing	Procurement	Number of tenders where higher weighting was applied to living wage providers
Parental Employment Support Fund	Support families who are in or at risk of poverty to support/ access into work. Refreshed publicity to partners and public required	An increase in parents entering and progressing in employment	Workforce for the Future Economic Regeneration Plan Local Child Poverty Action Plan	Brighter Futures	22/23 40 parents have secured employment. Further 18 employed parents have progressed within employment. 104 parents have registered and are engaging with the Project.	Subject to annual funding from the SG - further activity planned for 2023/24	2023 / 24, however, subject to funding may continue beyond this	Employability Routes to Work	Number of parents entering and within target groups progressing in employment
Identify pathways within labour market growth sectors or areas of high replacement demand which will provide progression routes out of low pay in North Lanarkshire.	As part of the Council's Workforce for the Future Strategy and associated plan, work progression pathways will be identified for key labour market growth sectors or those with high replacement demand. These will focus on progression routes out of low pay and strategies for engaging young people (in schools) and those economically active in the labour market (through Routes to Work) to consider increasing their qualification levels and job prospects to improve average weekly wage levels and alleviate "in work" poverty.	Progression pathways identified for key growth sectors with qualifications and progression routes agreed, published and funded.	Workforce for the Future Economic Regeneration Plan Developing the Young Workforce	Brighter Futures	Average weekly wage in North Lanarkshire £548.90	Ongoing	The gross weekly pay for local residents is now higher than the national average for the first time ever - an increase of 10% (£63.90 per week) for North Lanarkshire residents from the previous years results	Enterprise Team	Number of people progressing to higher paid jobs within North Lanarkshire Noomis statistics for levels of qualifications within working age population and average weekly wage
Supported Enterprise	Targeted employability support on people with disabilities or other significant barriers to help them secure fair and sustained work. Also support for disabled parents to enter employment.	Reduction in the disability employment gap in NL	Workforce for the Future Economic Regeneration Plan Developing the Young Workforce	Brighter Futures	22/23 Supported Employment currently supporting 210 people on the different stages of the 5 stage employment model 129 people currently receiving various levels of work support 41 people currently job finding	Ongoing	Continued support planned for the next 3 years	Employability	Number of people progressing to higher paid jobs within North Lanarkshire Noomis statistics for levels of qualifications within working age population and average weekly wage
No one Left Behind	Targeted employability support for vulnerable young people who have mental health problems, the BAME community and over 50s, with delivery through CVS organisations. In addition funding identified to support 200 young people.	Rise in employment figures in targeted groups. Targets met to support young people in gaining qualifications	Workforce for the Future Economic Regeneration Plan	Brighter Futures	22/23 Engaged with 101 people and supported 49 into employment. The focus is on 2 groups, the over 50s and those of any age who are long term unemployed.	Ongoing	Continued support planned for the next 3 years	Employability	Number of people in target groups employed. Number of young people supported to gain qualifications

INCREASE INCOME VIA EMPLOYMENT

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
No One Left Behind Phase 2	Implement grant programme in 2022/23 to distribute £1.6 million to employment projects across North Lanarkshire which target support on groups who may be in poverty due to unemployment	Rise in employment figures in targeted groups	Workforce for the future Economic Regeneration	Brighter Futures	N/A	Ongoing	Continued support planned for the next 3 years	Employability	Number of people in target groups employed
Living Hours	Adequate income is reliant on both living wage rate and also sufficient working hours to provide a liveable income. Living hours are part of wider Fair Work commitments	There is an increase in the number of NL employers in public, business and community and voluntary sectors with real living wage accreditation.	Workforce for the future Economic Regeneration	Brighter Futures	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	NLC Employability VANL for CVS	number of employers providing living hours employment. Number of employees working living hours

REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
Increase uptake of School Clothing Grants	"Introduce online application fo+8:16rm for FSM & CG Continue to automatically award where we have customer consent Use automation to process our auto award caseload"	The number of School Clothing Awards are increased from	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Brighter Futures	12,784 Clothing Grants awarded from June 2022 - May 2023 For School Pupils. An additional 937 Grants for made for nursery pupils	Ongoing	Ongoing	Revenues and Benefits	The number of clothing grants claimed and distributed
Increase uptake of Free School Meal Awards	"Introduce online application form for FSM & CG Continue to automatically award where we have customer consent Use automation to process our auto award caseload"	The number of Children entitled to Free School Meals increases	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Brighter Futures	12,151 FSM awards in 2020, 11,176 awards in 2021, 10,683 awards in 2022	Ongoing	Ongoing	Revenues & Benefits	The number of Children in receipt of Free School Meals
Club 365	Promote Activities and meal provision through Club 365 Initiative	Numbers of Children attending and meals provided. £2.50 per day paid during school holidays to those in receipt of FSM	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Brighter Futures	Club 365 has provided over 88, 000 meals and activity sessions since inception	Ongoing	Ongoing	Revenues & Benefits	Number of meals and activity sessions delivered
Increase uptake of education maintenance allowance (EMA)	Ensure full take of Education Maintenance Allowance. Promotion of EMA through Education Newsletter to schools and locally within schools to raise pupil awareness. Review publicity - posters leaflets etc not distributed recently Discussion within EMA and SMT meetings on improving up-take.	Young People can access EMA	Financial Strategy	Brighter Futures	in 22/23 1327 applications. 876 awards. 66% award rate (down from 73% award rate in 21/22)	Ongoing	ongoing	Revenues & Benefits	The number of EMA grants claimed

REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
Increase take up of Free School Meals In situ	<p>Trial new methods of engagement with parents and carers, e.g attend parent council meetings and inviting parents for a school meal and information session</p> <p>New management information system to give insights into trends, most popular choices, which ages take up free meals</p> <p>Work with other local authorities developing menus, to improve sustainability and better safety and choice for those with special diets (>>ASIST and APSI)</p> <p>Work with schools around different "sittings", and overflow areas. Capital investment to return more schools to Production kitchens</p> <p>Continued roll out of electronic menu notifications to parents and carers</p> <p>Consultation with secondary school pupils via a QR code (promoted via a 'Tell us what you think' poster displayed around schools allowing pupils to scan / access via mobiles)</p> <p>Primary school parents online survey (targeted via menu email / school newsletter email and also placed on NLC website on menu page)</p> <p>Primary pupil surveys (via either focus groups / school meals mystery shopping / pupil surveys designed specific to age groups (P1-3 / P4-7))</p>	Percentage of Children taking up free school meals when they have entitlement is increased	Poverty Profing in our Schools	Brighter Futures	As at May 2023 at 65-70%	Ongoing	launched and ongoing	Facilities Support Services	Take up rates of free school meals
Fuel Poverty	Provision of a short term funded Energy Advice Service to comprehensively alleviate the levels of fuel poverty experienced by vulnerable households	Number of households assisted	Local Housing Strategy	Sustainable Futures	Unknown as SHCS data unavailable for Local Authorities however, zero has been used as the starting point for the introduction of this service	2 years	launched and ongoing	Housing Solutions	will be monitored via NLAN and Wise Group reporting
Affordable Credit	To promote credit unions across North Lanarkshire employers and communities to encourage more people to join to increase access to affordable credit. To widen access to payroll deduction for credit unions and access to affordable credit	to increase credit union membership and reduce payday lending in North Lanarkshire Establish credit union forum in North Lanarkshire	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	5 credit unions affiliated to the Scottish League of Credit Unions have 9,642 adult members and 1,462 junior members. Unable to get contacts for ABCUL credit unions at present.	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	The number of employers promoting payslip deductions The number of people joining the credit union
Debt Advice	Advice and support in relation to debt and budgeting advice provided by Council and Externally commissioned advice services	assist people out of debt and provide them with the tools to budget accordingly	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	1744 referrals received in 2022/23	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of referrals to the Debt Advice Team Level of debt assisted
New Affordable Homes	Deliver 5000 new affordable homes by 2035	reduce the cost of living by increasing the supply of energy efficient, affordable homes	Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026.	Transforming Places	At 1 December 2022, 1,566 homes delivered (970 new build + 596 OMPS)	2035	Ongoing	Housing New Supply	Number of new homes built
New Affordable Homes	Support housing association and co-operative partners to deliver new homes	reduce the cost of living by increasing the supply of energy efficient, affordable homes	Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026.	Transforming Places	2126 homes have been delivered	Ongoing	Ongoing	Housing New Supply	Number of new homes built
Improved Energy Efficiency	Ensure all housing stock is EPC D or above by 2025 by improving energy efficiency	all housing stock is EPC D or above by 2025	Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026.	Sustainable Futures	At 2021/22, 99.2% of the homes are at D or above	Ongoing	Ongoing	Housing Investment	all housing stock is EPC D or above by 2025
Improve Energy Efficiency to owner occupied properties	Utilise ECO4 funding to improve energy efficiency of owned stock	Reduce the cost of living by increasing the energy efficiency of homeowners housing stock	Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026.	Sustainable Futures	At 2021/22, £0.1 m spent	Ongoing	Ongoing	Housing Solutions	number of homes approved

REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
Support homeowners to adapt, repair and maintain their homes	reduce the cost of living by preventing and addressing disrepair and improving health and wellbeing by supporting owners to adapt their homes	reduce the cost of living by preventing and addressing disrepair and improving health and wellbeing by supporting owners to adapt their homes	Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026.	Transforming Places	187 disabled adaptations grant provided in 2022 - the scheme has been revised with no funding available for owner grants	Ongoing	Ongoing	Private Sector Housing	reduce the cost of living by preventing and addressing disrepair and improving health and wellbeing by supporting owners to adapt their homes. *Revision of scheme of assistance completed. Other than mandatory (Disabled Adaptation Grants) no funding available for owner grants for disrepair. Current grant funding for NLC capital programmes is scheduled to end this year and no new financial assistance has been identified. Owners will continue to be provided with advice/ assistance when possible but no financial assistance
Free Transport for Under 22's	Promote and Maximise uptake of Free Bus Travel for 5-21 year olds	Number of travel cards issued and in use	Active Travel Strategy	Resilient People	42,160 total number issued, 61.75% overall uptake	Ongoing	Ongoing	CLD	Number of travel cards provided
Improved and accessible walking, wheeling and cycling network.	Creating or enhancing active travel routes will improve the ability of all people to walk, wheel or cycle for any journey purpose within North Lanarkshire	Equity of access for all our communities with mid term target of 50km to be created by 2026/27	Active Travel Strategy	Resilient People	7.8 kms of active travel routes created in 2021/22	125kms to be created by 2032	Ongoing	Transportation Planning	Number of travel routes
Address Period Poverty	Provide women with access to sanitary products within education and other public buildings Develop Peer Support Programme Expand number of council building access points-expand community group partnerships from 8- 10 areas-develop recording to better understand demand and distribution-consider period card scheme.	Distribution across all of North LanarkshireNo of products distributed	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	311, 767 products to NLC establishments (excluding education and culture venues >> AC to Clarify and get timescale) 87396 to education	Ongoing	Ongoing	Enterprise and Communities	Number of products delivered and taken up
Support people to stop smoking to reduce outgoings	Stopping smoking can have a positive impact of finances as well as health. Brief intervention and referral to the Quit Your Way service in Lanarkshire can support people to successfully quit smoking. Pregnant women are a particularly key target group.	Yearly target 23/24 for 52 pregnant women who live in 40% most deprived areas to successfully stop smoking at 12 weeks (to be reviewed in 2024 after national tobacco control action plan is published). Awareness raising training sessions to be completed with Tackling Poverty staff.	NHS Cost of Living Strategy	Resilient People	"24 pregnant women living in the 40% most deprived areas successfully quit smoking at 12 weeks (April 2022-Dec 2022 data). Published and confirmed data for April 2022 – March 2023 will be available in January 2024. NL % of pregnant women smoking at booking in appt 12.6% year ending Dec 2022 (scotland rate 11.9%)"	Ongoing	Ongoing	NHS Lanarkshire Quit Your Way Service	Number of Tackling Poverty staff members trained. Number of pregnant women supported to stop smoking.
Recycled Bicycle Initiatives	Individuals subject to unpaid work work within the bicycle recycling project	Bicycles provided to low income families and donated to the Christmas Toy Appeals	Justice Partnership	Resilient People	320 bicycles reconstructed	Ongoing	Ongoing	Restorative Justice	Number of bikes restored

INCREASE INCOME VIA SOCIAL SECURITY

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
The Tackling Poverty Team and other council services to continue to maximise the income of the residents of North Lanarkshire	All residents are offered income maximisation and we continue to promote the "no wrong door" approach	Residents will be directed to the tackling poverty team to ensure income is fully maximised	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	18,521 benefit checks carried out in 2022/23 - £35,480,020 generated in additional income	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Work with all social work services to ensure income maximisation is carried out for all vulnerable client groups	Social Work staff refer people to the Tackling Poverty Team who will carry out all income maximisation work	Referrals to the tackling poverty team from all social work staff	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	4888 benefit checks carried out in 2022/23	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
MacMillan Advice Service	Maximise the income of cancer patients, their families and carers	Provide an income maximisation and debt advice service	The Cancer Strategy	Resilient People	700 referrals in 2022/23	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Food Poverty Referral Gateway	Mitigate the need for foodbank use by ensuring access to advice services and claims to crisis grants	A decrease in the use of foodbanks	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	not available	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of referrals to foodbanks Number of Crisis Grant applications
Food Poverty Action Group	Group to consider uniform recording across all emergency food providers	Uniform recording adopted by all emergency food providers	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	2023	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of foodbanks recording
Welfare Reform Group	The welfare reform group to ensure serviced, elevated members etc are kept fully abreast of welfare reform changes and their impact on our communities	updates are provided and action taken when necessary	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People		Ongoing	Ongoing	North Lanarkshire Advice Network	Issues raised / campaigns
Health Staff including those from Integrated Community Nursing services - refer to income maximisation and debt advice services	Health Staff will ensure money issues are addressed and referrals are made to the tackling poverty team	patients will be directed to the tackling poverty team to ensure income is fully maximised	NHS Cost of Living	Resilient People	394 referrals 22/23	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Improvement Service Project - GP Practices	GP Practices identified by the Improvement Service have a welfare rights officer in situ, with access to GP records	The welfare rights service is integrated into the GP Practice	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	357 referrals 22/23	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Relaunch Health Visitor & District Nurse Referral Pathway	Poverty Awareness Training and pathway training to take place	health visitor and district nurses make referrals to the tackling poverty team	NHS Cost of Living	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of referrals to the tackling poverty team

INCREASE INCOME VIA SOCIAL SECURITY

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
GP Community Link Worker Programme	community link worker embedded within GP practices across North Lanarkshire making referrals to information and advice services	embed link workers and increase support to patients	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	482 welfare rights referrals (22/23) 146 debt advice referrals (22/23)	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Commissioned Services - Income Maximisation via Benefit Uptake	All residents are offered income maximisation and we continue to promote the "no wrong door" approach	the successful commissioned service offer income maximisation to the residents of North Lanarkshire	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	£5,267,650 income generated for north lanarkshrie residents 2022/23	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Rent Assistance Fund	Rent Assistance Fund – to assist people who have experienced/are experiencing financial difficulty due to the increase in the cost of living. If tenant has received a previous award of funding from SG – TGF or SC Lacer Fund – they will not be eligible. Tenants can receive a maximum award of £2250 and this funding is not re-payable (fund allocation £1,000,000)	Fund directed to people in need	Local Housing Strategy	Resilient People	522 tenants awarded in 22/23	Ongoing	Ongoing	Housing	Number of people Assisted
Universal Credit Assistance Fund	UCAF award is to assist tenants who have fallen behind with their rent due to the 5 week waiting period, and tenants who are in receipt of Universal credit are eligible to apply	People can access the fund, it requires to be paid back, however, this is at an affordable level - the fund ensures that people can remain in their own home with their arrears being managed.	Local Housing Strategy	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	Housing Services	number of loans provided / loan repayments
Uptake of Scottish Child Payment	Work with the Registrar Offices throughout North Lanarkshire to promote the Scottish Child Payment when registering the birth	Uptake of Scottish Child Payment increases	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	77% national uptake	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Uptake of Bereavement Benefits	Work with the Registrar Offices throughout North Lanarkshire to promote Bereavement Benefits when registering a persons' death	Accessing all bereavement benefits to help alleviate funeral poverty	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People		Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Community Solutions Community Connectors	10 Community Connectors working across North Lanarkshire to refer residents to sources of income support as part of a wider support package	Number of referrals	Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan 2022-25 and HSCNL Commissioning Strategy 2023-26	Resilient People	n/a	Autumn 2023 for two year pilot	Ongoing	VANL	Number of people referred
Universal Credit Campaign	Awareness raising campaign re changes to Universal Credit widening entitlement to benefit	Increase in universal credit claimants	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	7420 people claiming in work benefits (Dec 2022)	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of people claiming in work Universal Credit

HOLISTIC SUPPORTS

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
Sustain Tenancies	Deliver increased financial advice and assistance via 8 income maximisers	increase incomes from social security, reducing rent arrears and sustaining tenancies in social rented homes	Local Housing Strategy	Resilient People	£15,041,070 income generated - 4007 benefit checks completed	Ongoing	Ongoing	Housing Solutions	Number of Benefit Checks / Benefit Claims / Resolutions Income Generated
Whole Family Support	To create a flexible, reliable and integrated support for families to ensure that every family who needs support gets the right support at the right time.	People have access to income maximisation, employability and money advice services at the right time.	Childrens Services Plan	Resilient People	n/a	2023 - 26	Ongoing	Education, Children and Families	inter service referrals
Arrest / Referral Service	The North Lanarkshire Arrest Referral Service is focussed on early intervention by providing support to people whilst held in police custody and connecting them to services within the community to address individual needs.	Number of referrals to the tackling poverty team	Community Justice Improvement Plan	Resilient People	n/a	2025	Ongoing	The service is delivered by Scottish Drugs Forum and Phoenix Futures and funded by North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership for a period of 18 months as a Test of Change.	number of referrals / income generated / debt advice provided / financial education
Poverty Awareness Sessions	Bespoke poverty awareness sessions for council, nhs and third sector partners	Number of people attending the sessions and ultimately the number of referrals this leads to	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of sessions delivered / number of people attending / referrals following the training
Community Solutions Programme	Wide ranging community supports provided by Community and Voluntary Sector organisations to support residents wellbeing including those in poverty or at risk of poverty including; food, mental health and wellbeing	improved wellbeing	Community Solutions Strategy and Investment Plan 2023 and HSCNL Commissioning Plan 2023 -26	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	VANL	Learning and impact reports
Financial Education	Following the "three questions" delivery of financial education to our young people	Young people asked for financial education - the programme will ensure that we meet the needs and requests of our young people	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	in development	in development	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of sessions completed in schools Number of young people who attend the sessions
Revamp of MACA for younger children	Following the "three questions" delivery of a revamped MACA session for the primary children	the younger children asked for financial education - the programme will ensure that we meet the needs and requests of our children		Resilient People	n/a	in development	in development	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of sessions completed in schools Number of young people who attend the sessions

SUPPORTING THE PLAN

Action	Brief Description	How We Measure Success	Links to Other Strategies	Link to Programme Of Work	Baseline	Timescales	Status	Lead Team	Monitoring Information
Tackling Poverty Awareness Sessions	Bespoke awareness sessions delivered to internal and external services - relevant to care group and locality	People aware of the drivers to tackle poverty and how to access appropriate services	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	Number of staff in attendance Staff using the referral gateway
The Tackling Poverty Officers Action Group (TPOAG) to deliver the Action Plan	The TPOAG will support cross sector deliver the action plan/report on the strategy and will review the action plan every quarter	Meet the requirements of internal audit	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	TPOAG	internal audit recommendations implemented
"The Three Questions"	Communities and children are asked "the three questions" which will help shape our services	services act upon the requests of our residents	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Tackling Poverty Team	number of sessions completed in schools Number of sessions completed in the community
Community Boards to support the tackling poverty agenda	Through tackling poverty awareness sessions and delivery of the councils tackling poverty agenda the community boards will support the Strategy	Those representing communities understand their roles and responsibilities in raising awareness of key poverty messages, challenging stigma	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	Local Planning Partnership Teams	Community Board Sub Groups Reports
Heat Map identifying services within the locality	services and information we hold on our communities to be layered to identify areas to direct resources accordingly	Direct resources and become more proactive	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	The Data Group	Heat map established and number of hits
A Local Information System for Scotland (ALISS)	VANL is promoting use of ALISS across NL CVS to share online information on sources of local support for people in poverty /at risk of poverty	System is adopted and implemented	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Spring 2023 - onwards	Ongoing	VANL	Number of NL groups listed Number of people accessing information
Childrens Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA)	CRWIAs aim to ensure reasoned and evidence based policy and decision making into account the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.	Policies and strategies being impact assessed	The Plan for North Lanarkshire	Resilient People	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	Education, Children and Families	Number of CRWIA completed

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