

Community Planning Partnership

Date of Meeting: 2 December

Title of Report: Argyll & Bute Child Poverty Action Plan Review 2019-20

Presented by: Joanna Macdonald

The committee is asked to:

- Note the report detailing the forthcoming review of the Child Poverty Action plan for 2019-20

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Child Poverty Action Plan is a multi-agency plan endorsed and supported by both health board, council and other partner agencies and supporting the delivery of the Local Outcome Agreement. It will seek to deliver the targets set by the Scottish Government in Argyll & Bute reducing the number of children living in poverty and subsequently reducing health and other inequalities.
- 1.2 This approach is focussed on tackling the causes of poverty as reported as well as the impacts of poverty.
- 1.3 The review notes the work being undertaken across agencies and also the implementation of Children's Rights and a commitment to undertaking Children's Rights and Wellbeing Assessments to assist and inform EQSEIA's and to ensure that children rights are taken into consideration.
- 1.4 The review features both planned work and the partner response to Covid-19. Due to Covid-19 some service delivery will require to be redesigned or rescheduled.
- 1.5 The report will be presented through the appropriate partnership governance for approval prior to publication and this paper provides an initial update to the Community Planning Partnership. Publication is anticipated to be by February 2021.

2. INTRODUCTION

In 2017 the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act came into force as an attempt to put in place measures that would reduce the concerning increase in child poverty, both on a national and local level. To evidence the need for such action the Scottish Government commissioned research which found that by 2030/31, if no action was taken, it was estimated that 38% of children would be in relative poverty, 32% of children would be in absolute poverty, 17% of children would be

in combined low income and material deprivation and 16% of children would be in persistent poverty. The key reason for these projected rises was seen as the announced UK Government cuts, primarily the benefit freeze and the two child limit on tax credits.

The 2017 Act set into in law four targets relating to ending child poverty, which the Scottish Government committed to trying to achieve by 2030. The targets for children living in households in Scotland are that:

- less than 10% of children live in relative poverty (relative poverty is less than 60% of average household income for the year taking account of the size and composition of the household);
- less than 5% of children live in absolute poverty (absolute poverty is less than 60% of average household income for the financial year beginning 1 April 2010);
- less than 5% of children live in combined low income and material deprivation (low income is defined as less than 70% of average household income for the year, material deprivation is when families are unable to afford three or more items out of a list of basic necessities);
- less than 5% of children live in persistent poverty (persistent poverty is where a child has lived in relative poverty for three out of the last four years).

These are all measured after housing costs are deducted. The Act also sets out interim targets which are to be met in the financial year beginning 1 April 2023.

The Scottish Government produced its national Child Poverty Action Plan and, in June 2019, all 32 Scottish Council areas produced their own local Child Poverty Action Plans and are required to review on an annual basis.

The Argyll & Bute Child Poverty Action plan can be found here:

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/child_poverty_action_plan_0.pdf

3. DETAIL OF REPORT

3.1 In addressing child poverty the report outlines the causes of poverty and linkages with domestic abuse and lack of access to opportunity.

It notes the adoption of Children's Rights assessment and how this will be used to inform decision making going forward.

The action plan seeks to tackle poverty at the root cause and reviews activity undertaken to increase income through employment and earning, through welfare benefit support and reviewing the cost of living and housing issues.

It further goes on to explore support in maintaining access to digital, particularly pertinent during the Lockdown period. The Connecting Scotland project supported the provision of devices under strict criteria to reduce digital exclusion.

Partnership working remains the key to delivering the activity with a wide range of partners involved throughout the life stages of children and supporting

families to maximise their opportunities and income. This has been supported by the Council Advice web page allowing people to access a range of services.

Future work will continue to engage with harder to reach groups and the agencies supporting them. The action group will continue to develop material supporting poverty awareness and the communication of the skills and experience available to children and families to support them.

The group will aim to ensure they reach as diverse a group as possible targeting the travelling community to ensure children can attain their aspirations.

The impact of Covid-19 has stimulated a national response around issues like free school meals outwith term time and this will be subject to ongoing review of need.

Trauma Informed Practice has been adopted in Argyll & Bute with training undertaken and future training identified to be rolled out to wider groups.

It also notes the progression in informing policy through listening to children.

4. RELEVANT DATA AND INDICATORS

The report notes performance data and qualitative response from partners.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This review notes contribution to the Scottish Governments national priorities, Single Outcome Agreement and delivery of the HSCP strategic plan.

6. GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Impact

None for this report

6.2 Staff Governance

None for this report

6.3 Clinical Governance

None for this report

7. PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY

None for this report

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Please ensure that you have considered the requirement for EQIA and notify completion if required.

9. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES COMPLIANCE

Complaint with data protection principles.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

Ongoing risk assessment on the short and long term impact of Covid-19 and the impacts on poverty in Argyll & Bute and subsequent inequalities.

11. PUBLIC & USER INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

No user involvement in the writing of this report but communities are consulted through the delivery of actions.

12. CONCLUSIONS

The report contains a link to the plan. The review will note a breadth of work undertaken in a multi-agency approach. The plan remains ambitious seeks to build on the work delivered annually. Covid-19 has impacted on the mode of some of the work planned but has also provided opportunities to achieve other areas of work in the shorter term.

13. DIRECTIONS

Directions required to Council, NHS Board or both.	Directions to:	tick
	No Directions required	x
	Argyll & Bute Council	
	NHS Highland Health Board	
	Argyll & Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board	

REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTACT

Author Name Charlotte Craig
Email charlotte.craig@argyll-bute.gov.uk