



***Argyll & Bute Local Child Poverty Action
Report*** For Children & Young
People

Did you know that almost 1 in 5 children in Argyll & Bute live in poverty?



That means their family don't have enough money to pay for things that most of us don't have to worry about. This could be things like food, a home, fuel and transport, clothes and new shoes, school supplies and holidays.



The Scottish Government wants there to be less children living in poverty so they asked all local councils and health boards to report on what they are doing to help. This presentation will help you to know some of the things Argyll & Bute have been doing to make things better for children living in poverty in Argyll & Bute.



Talking to you



Some of you may remember that with our first report we gave you the opportunity to have your say. You may have talked about the Child Poverty Action Plan with your teacher or with the Pupil Council. We included what you said in the report we wrote. This time, because of Covid-19 and the changes that has brought, we were not able to do that ahead of publishing the review report. To make up for that, we are telling you about it here and will give you the chance to tell us what you think. We will make sure that your views and ideas are discussed by the group that works on the Child Poverty Plans; the Argyll and Bute Child Poverty Action Group. We will also put your views and ideas into another review that will come out later in 2021.



In Argyll and Bute we understand it is very important to tackle child poverty and our vision is:

We want an Argyll and Bute where no-one lives in poverty. Everyone should be able to achieve their potential and feel healthy, happy and valued. We want to be a place where everyone understands that tackling poverty is a shared responsibility. We believe that if we act locally, and in partnership, we can make a difference.



We found that Child Poverty in Argyll and Bute, as well as the rest of Scotland, was not getting better. We think this might have been made worse by Covid-19 and some parents not being able to work.



The cost of housing and heating/electricity is making it hard for families in Argyll and Bute to have enough money left after paying those bills to have a good standard of living. Allenergy works with people that are living with fuel poverty in Argyll and Bute. They have people that work with them called Affordable Warmth Advisors that help people to improve things.



It's important that you know that poverty isn't the fault of the families living in poverty. It is the responsibility of people, community, Councils and Governments to help make it better for everybody. Everyone has an equal right to be helped.

There are some things that make it more difficult to overcome poverty and when we are working to make things better we have to think about those people that are:

- lone parents
- families where someone has a disability
- families that have more than 3 children
- families where the youngest child is under one
- mums that are under 25.

You may already know about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC says that every child has basic fundamental rights. These include the right to:

- **Life, survival and development**
- **Protection from violence, abuse or neglect**
- An **education** that enables children to **fulfil their potential**
- Be **raised by**, or have a **relationship with**, their parents
- **Express their opinions** and be **listened to**.

The Scottish Government think that this convention is so important that they are making it law .



Help during lockdown



Some of the things that happened in Argyll & Bute to help children and families were:

- Food deliveries for people that were shielding and children that had free school meals
- Telephone advice to help people with questions about benefits
- Trials of using drones to fly Covid tests and other medicines to Mull Hospital
- Hub schools for the children of keyworkers were set up
- The Digital Inclusion Project worked to repair and get digital devices to people who needed them
- Teams worked together to make sure the right information got to the people that needed it

Important work that has been happening since our first Child Poverty Action Plan...



- The Employability Team have worked with lots of parents to help them with advice, training and new skills to help them get jobs.
- The Employability Team used funds from the Kick Start Scheme to help employers create jobs for 16-24 year olds.
- The Community Learning Service and Employability Service work with school leavers to help them get the right support, training and learning to help them get into work.
- Allenergy worked with children and young people to develop STEM skills to help them in the future
- The Council offered apprenticeships to help people into work.
- Students living on Colonsay and Coll got free flights from Oban so they could easily travel home at weekends.

- Skills Development Scotland helped young people 16-18 who were unemployed develop the skills to get into work.
- The Scottish Welfare Fund (2019-20) spent £447,287 to help families on benefits who needed extra help for things like furniture and fuel.
- The Council spent £662,151 to help people that were struggling to pay their rent.
- Teams across Argyll and Bute worked to secure £6,614,745 of benefits for people that were entitled to them.
- School Clothing Grants and Free School Meal payments were made automatically for those people that should get them.
- Head Teachers had information on how to reduce the cost of the school day for families.
- Young people were able to order free period products online.
- The Argyll and Bute Community Food Forum was launched and helps groups develop food banks and community food initiatives.
- A Parent Support and Advice web page was set up to help parents find information, advice and help.

What's Next?



- We are going to look at developing school clothing banks in local communities.
- We are going to talk to people who have experienced poverty who can tell us about their experiences so we can try to make things better.
- We are looking to develop training for staff to better understand poverty.
- We are developing ways to get information to the people that need it most.

- We will continue to provide free school meals (or equivalent) and look to extend this during holiday time
- We will work to better understand the needs and wishes of children within the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- We will collect information so we can see if child poverty levels are reducing in Argyll and Bute.