

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL11 SEPTEMBER 2024Joint Report by Director of Business Operations and Partnerships and Chief Officer HSCPLOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT: YEAR 6**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the annual East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Report as required by the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that Council:
 - (a) Notes the Local Child Poverty Action Report as required under the Child Poverty Act 2017; and
 - (b) Approves the report for publication, subject to IJB and NHSGGC Population Health and Wellbeing Committee approval.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3. Tackling child poverty is a key priority for Scottish Government and East Renfrewshire Council. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out ambitious targets for the Scottish Government to significantly reduce child poverty by 2030 and the new First Minister has pledged to go beyond this and eradicate child poverty completely. Addressing child poverty requires efforts from both national and local government.
4. Scottish Government published a three-year Child Poverty Action Plan “Best Start, Bright Futures” which sets out the approaches being taken at a national level.
5. Each local authority, along with their health board, is required to publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) which describes the approaches being taken at a local level. This is the sixth annual report for East Renfrewshire and it is produced in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.
6. The LCPAR guidance has been adapted recently to allow for multi-year action planning, with annual progress updates. This is a welcome change which helps reduce some of the administrative pressures of reporting and acknowledges that action taken may not demonstrate impact within a 12-month timescale.
7. This report highlights the areas of progress between April 2023 and March 2024, and provides details of the intended action planned over the next three years, and the relevant indicators which will be used to measure progress. This is summarised below.

REPORT

8. East Renfrewshire is the local authority with both the highest proportion of children and the lowest rates of child poverty in Scotland. The most recent data shows 3,247 (14%) children living in low-income households, which is very slight decrease on the previous data (3,288 / 14.4%). However, there is still work to do to reach the national target of 10% by 2030.

9. Scottish Government sets out the three 'drivers of poverty': income from employment, income from social security and costs of living. These all impact the financial circumstances of the household, and therefore the actions to address these should tackle and prevent poverty. The LCPAR is required to report on local action taken under each of these drivers. In addition, we recognise the importance of taking action to mitigate the impacts experienced by those children and young people living in poverty, therefore the East Renfrewshire LCPAR reports on progress in this area also.

Income from employment

10. There has been positive progress to increase parental income from employment. We have worked to create better local employment opportunities for parents and carers, including promoting Fair Work First, Employer Recruitment Incentives and Real Living Wage Accreditation. We also promote Family Friendly working initiatives in ERC and NHSGGC and provide financial wellbeing support to our employees. Work East Ren has delivered a Parental Employment Support (PES) programme which has supported over 100 parents with a range of successful outcomes. The Local Employability Partnership has established two subgroups: the Parental Employability Group and the Lived Experience Panel. These groups will influence how we provide employability support for parents and carers going forward.
11. Future short-term actions to increase income from employment will include further support to in-work parents, the provision of funded work placements within ERC, and ongoing work with local businesses to help them become employers of choice for local parents and carers. In the medium term, we will aim to create community hub spaces to offer holistic support services, as well as address disability (for parents and their children) as a barrier to employment. It should be noted that many of these planned activities are dependent on grant funding from the Scottish Government, which is single-year allocation and often not confirmed until some months into the financial year. We remain committed to supporting families but must acknowledge the challenges this creates in delivering quality employability supports in a sustained manner.

Income from social security

12. There have been many successes in achieving increased income from social security. All parents and carers receiving employability services have been offered financial inclusion support to manage any potential adverse impacts of them changing employment status. The Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) have supported families to manage over £2 million worth of debt and also secured over £2 million worth of benefits including Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and Child Benefit. MART provides a dedicated in-school officer in 4 primary schools, attended P1 induction days in another 6 schools and delivered money awareness sessions in 4 secondary schools. Staff in health settings are increasingly referring families to money advice services; this includes health visitors, specialist maternity services and the children's hospital.
13. Future short-term actions to increase income from income maximisation and social security will include working with frontline staff to ensure they are aware of supports available to families and are able to refer to them. This will ensure we maintain the existing referral sources as well as identify potential new sources. In addition, we will deliver a communications campaign to make families across East Renfrewshire aware of any potential entitlements. In the medium term, we will use new and emerging data sources (see para 19) to identify and predict the profile of need and target resources to meet these needs. There is an increasing demand for both MART and CAB support, and by raising awareness we predict this will continue to grow. However, there is no

additional budgetary resource available to respond to this therefore we will need to consider how to redistribute and prioritise existing resource.

Cost of living

14. There have been some key areas of progress in relation to reducing costs of living. Many families have faced increased fuel costs over recent years and we have responded by offering the support of a temporary Energy Advisor, applying for fuel grants to pay off direct debit debt, and providing fuel vouchers to household on pre-payment meters. This support reached more than 200 families. We have addressed increased housing costs by increasing the supply of affordable homes, providing short-term rent relief and funding emergency homeless accommodation. There have been positive initiatives to reduce the cost of the school day including breakfast carts, uniform recycling schemes and subsidised extra-curricular activities. We have also developed an Emergency Formula Pathway to ensure access to infant formula for parents and carers facing food insecurity.
15. It should be noted that many of these initiatives were funded through Covid Reserves, which are no longer available. Whilst we have looked to strengthen pathways and sustainable approaches, some of these supports have and will come to an end. We remain committed to providing all possible support to families, but we must acknowledge the reality of budget constraints across the public sector.
16. Looking ahead, short-term actions to reduce the costs of living for families will include delivering the Thrive Under 5 programme to tackle food insecurity for households with 0-5 year old children, and working with head teachers to ensure a rigorous approach to reducing the cost of the school day. We will also speak to social housing tenants to better understand their needs and any financial barriers they experience around housing. In the medium term, we will develop and deliver poverty training to increase awareness of 'hidden poverty' and empower staff to signpost and refer families to support services. We will also take a multi-service approach to reduce the number of children who have significantly low attendance or reduced timetables, with the understanding of the impact non-school-attendance can have on household financial circumstances.

Mitigating the impact of poverty

17. In addition to tackling the drivers of poverty, we have made progress in supporting the children and young people in, or at risk of, poverty. We increased our fostering, adoption and kinship fees and allowances by 5%; and supported young people in care to increase their savings and improve their financial literacy through the Share Foundation's Stepladder of Achievement programme. We provided activities such as laser tag, water sports and graffiti art, and daytrips to Heads of Ayr Farm, Blackpool and Edinburgh Fringe. We also provided bags of food and selection boxes and organised a Christmas party for eligible children and young people.

Improved understanding

18. It is crucial that we are able to delve deeper and really understand the needs of the children and families living in poverty in East Renfrewshire. We also need to be aware of households who are financially vulnerable and at risk of poverty, at the earliest opportunity in order to provide preventative and early intervention support, with a 'no wrong door' approach. With this in mind, we have committed to an additional area of

future action to improve understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty.

19. We have recently worked with the Digital Office to explore ways to bring together internal ERC datasets to identify potentially vulnerable households. We have developed a prototype which allows us to gather geographical and profile information about households, which could then be used to target appropriate supports to families. In May, Cabinet committed some of the Council's Investment in the Future budget to continue work in this area and develop a working data matching tool.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

20. There is no specific budget associated with this report. Some of the planned activities referenced in the report will require budget, which comes from a mix of Scottish Government funding and existing budgets within ERC and NHSGGC.
21. As highlighted, there are a number of activities which were delivered through temporary Covid reserve funding which is no longer available, therefore these supports will not be available in future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22. It is recommended that CMT:
 - (a) Notes the Local Child Poverty Action Report as required under the Child Poverty Act 2017; and
 - (b) Approves the report for publication, subject to IJB and NHSGGC Population Health and Wellbeing Committee approval.

REPORT AUTHORS

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Best Start, Bright Futures: Scottish Government tackling child poverty plan 2022-2026](#)

[East Renfrewshire LCPAR: Year 5](#)



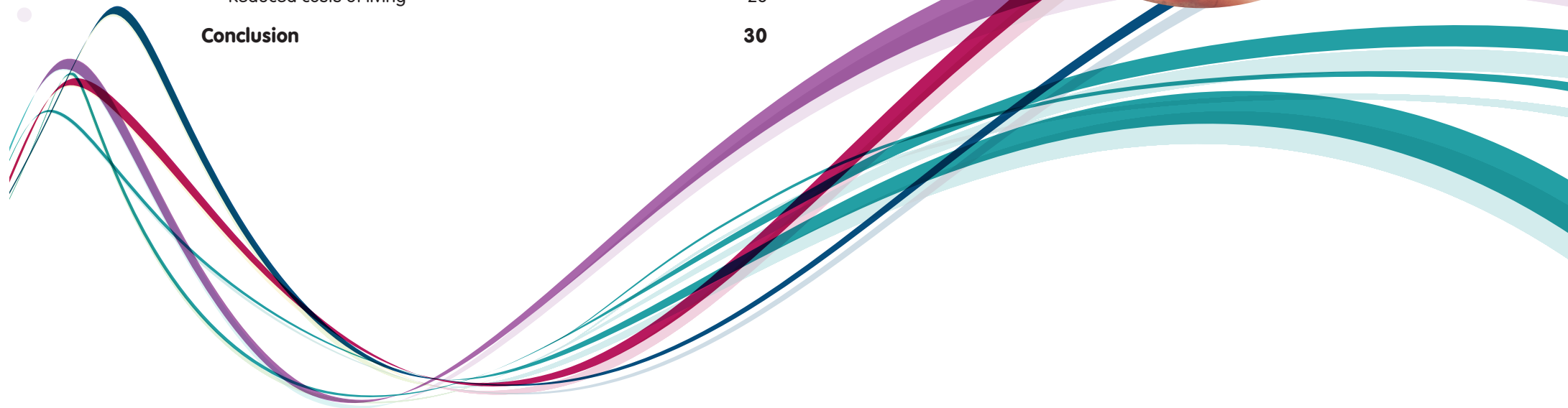
East Renfrewshire Local Child Poverty Action Report (Year 6)

Progress updates 2023 – 2024

Approach to tackling child poverty 2024 – 2027

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Introduction from our Community Planning Partnership Chair

I am pleased to share with you the sixth Local Child Poverty Action Report for East Renfrewshire. This report highlights our achievements over the past year and outlines our plans for tackling child poverty in the coming years.

East Renfrewshire is a unique and special place to grow up, and has the highest proportion of children and young people in Scotland. Children, young people, and their families, have always been at the heart of everything we do.

Protecting children and young people from poverty is crucial in allowing them to flourish. Poverty affects every aspect of a child's life, including their education, health, nutrition, social and emotional well-being, living conditions and aspirations. However, it is essential to recognise that poverty impacts the entire family. To effectively address poverty, we must work with the whole family, supporting parents and caregivers to improve their financial circumstances and helping children and young people cope with the challenges of poverty.

This report showcases several key successes from the past year, a year where we have seen an increased demand for financial support, including from working families and those in traditionally more affluent areas. To address this, we are enhancing our data analysis and ensuring we listen to and respond to the needs of local families. This approach will guide our actions to tackle the root causes of poverty and ensure our efforts are effective.

This plan outlines our commitments to addressing child and family poverty over the next three years and aligns with our long-term vision for East Renfrewshire. To make this vision a reality, we will build on our current strengths working with our partners and become even stronger and more collaborative to deliver a better and brighter future for all children and young people.

Councillor Owen O'Donnell
Chair of Community Planning Partnership



Background

Child poverty in East Renfrewshire, while generally lower compared to many other areas in Scotland, still exists and is a significant concern. Despite our area's relative affluence, there are pockets of deprivation and families facing financial hardship. In some parts of the authority, including Barrhead and Neilston, more than 1 in 3 children are in low-income families. This is higher than the Scottish average.

However, it's essential to recognise that even in affluent areas, there are families and children living in poverty. Some families struggle to make ends meet due to low wages, underemployment or high essential costs of living. In particular, the costs of housing in East Renfrewshire is comparably high.

In areas like East Renfrewshire, child poverty may not always be visible. Families experiencing financial difficulties may be less visible due to the stigma associated with poverty or a desire to maintain appearances. This "hidden poverty" can make it challenging to identify and address the needs of vulnerable children and families.

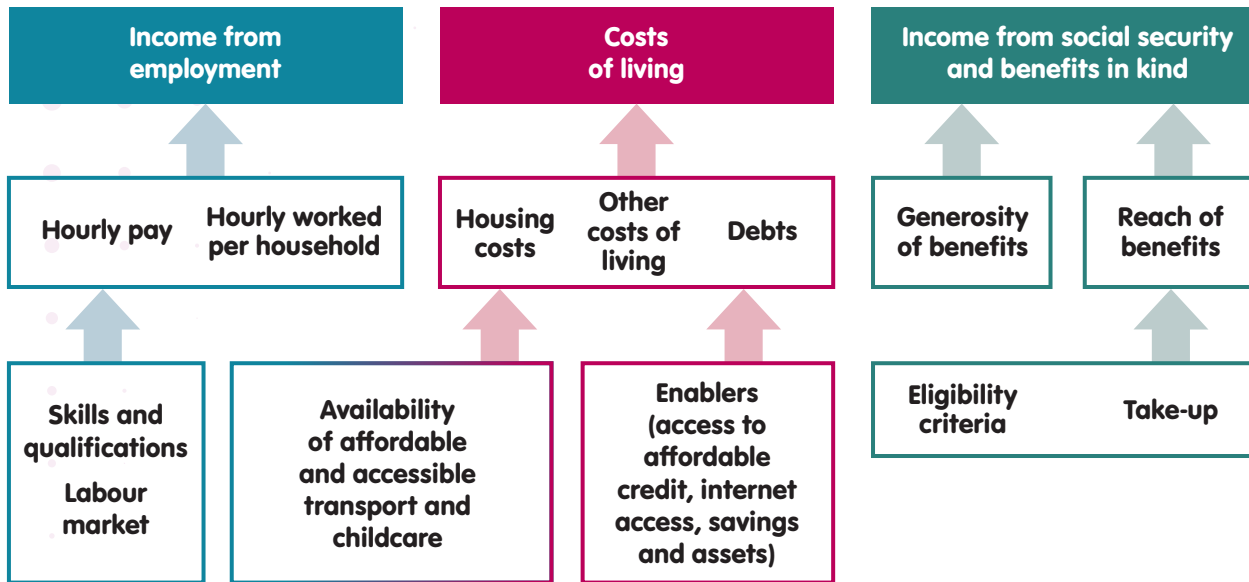
The Scottish Government has taken steps to address child poverty through its Child Poverty Act, which sets ambitious targets for reducing child poverty by 2030. Strategies include increasing income support for low-income families, improving access to affordable housing, enhancing childcare provision, and promoting inclusive economic growth.



It is essential to recognise that even in affluent areas, there are families and children living in poverty



East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partners work together to focus on local action to tackle the three drivers of poverty; increased income from employment, increased income from social security and reduced cost of living.



We also work to mitigate the impact of poverty on those families who experience it. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is a key partner in this work and had three key priorities; their role as a provider, role as an employer and role as an Anchor organisation. These efforts aim to reduce the prevalence of child poverty and improve the well-being of vulnerable children and families in the area. Child poverty is also one of the priorities within our new [Children’s Services Plan “At Our Heart – The Next Steps”](#).

Child poverty remains a significant issue that requires attention and concerted efforts at both a national and local level to address effectively. In East Renfrewshire we want all our children and young people to flourish and this can only be achieved by lifting families out of poverty.

This report provides an overview of progress over the past year (April 2023 – March 2024). It also sets out our short and medium term plans to tackle child and family poverty in East Renfrewshire.



“At Our Heart – The Next Steps”
The East Renfrewshire Approach to Children’s Services Planning

East Renfrewshire’s Children and Young People’s Services Plan 2023-2026

East Renfrewshire logo

Being safe Being equal Being healthy Having someone to trust Friendship Having hope

Profile of poverty

East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland and this is increasing

- One in five (19.701) are aged up to 16 years
- There were 745 babies born in 2022
- 514 young people moved into the area in 2022

Child poverty in East Renfrewshire is the lowest in Scotland

- 3,247 children (14%) are estimated to live in low-income households (after housing costs)
- 2,591 children (11%) live in low-income households (before housing costs)

Child poverty estimates vary across the authority

- At least 1 in 3 children are in low-income families in some parts of Barrhead and Neilston
- At least 1 in 4 children are in low-income families in some parts of Mearns and Thornliebank

Children living in a lone parent household are more likely to experience poverty

- Of the 2,591 children living in relative low-income households (before housing costs), 1,361 (53%) are in a lone parent household

Employment does not prevent child poverty


- Of the 2,591 children living in relative low-income households (before housing costs), 71% live in a household where at least one adult is working.



East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in Scotland

2023-24 Progress Summary



EMPLOYMENT

-  Increase in Living Wage Employers
-  Unemployment levels remain low
-  Number of 16-19-year-olds in work, training or employment remains high

Key successes in 2023/24

- Promoted Employment Recruitment incentives and encouraged Real Living Wage accreditation with local employers
- Established a Parental Employability Working Group and a Lived Experience Panel
- Provided direct employability support to parents including job searching, application forms, interview skills, confidence building, training and upskilling


SOCIAL SECURITY

-  The number of primary pupils receiving Free School Meals due to low-income remains low
-  Increase in number of families accessing financial advice

Key successes in 2023/24

- Offered financial inclusion support to all parents receiving employability services
- Supported families to manage over £2 million worth of debt
- Secured over £2 million of social security awards for families
- Developed new approaches to data insights to monitor and predict areas of need

COST OF LIVING

-  Uptake of funded Early Learning and Childcare remains high

Key successes in 2023/24

- Supported over 200 families with their fuel costs
- Increased the supply of affordable homes, provided short-term rent relief and funded emergency homeless accommodation
- Provided further initiatives to reduce the cost of the school day including breakfast carts, uniform recycling schemes and subsidised extra-curricular activities
- Developed an Emergency Formula Pathway

Progress Updates 2023-2024

Critical indicators

Indicator	Measure and source	Previous data	Current data	
Children living in poverty	Percentage of children living in poverty (after housing costs) in East Renfrewshire: End Child Poverty	12.8% 3,064 children (20/21)	14.4% 3,288 children (21/22)	14.0% 3,247 children (22/23)
Real Living Wage employers in East Renfrewshire	Number of real Living Wage accredited employers: Living Wage Scotland	23 (2021)	34 (2022)	39 (2023)
Working age unemployment level	Percentage of economically inactive residents who want a job: NOMIS	27.6% (2021)	20.5% (2022)	20.4% (2023)
Children and young people participation level	Percentage of 16-19 year olds participating in learning, training or employment: SDS Annual Participation Measure Report	97.2% (2021)	97% (2022)	97.7% (2023)
Free School Meal uptake at primary level for by low-income purposes	Number of children who access FSM payment during holiday period (Christmas) as proportion of school roll: Local data	9.3% 874 pupils (Dec 2021)	8.4% 792 pupils (Dec 2022)	8.1% 761 pupils (Dec 2023)
Access to financial wellbeing advice	Number of families accessing MART financial wellbeing advice: Local data	1,232 (21/22)	1,521 (22/23)	1,728 (23/24)
Uptake of funded early learning and childcare entitlement	Percentage of 3 & 4 year olds registered for funded early learning and childcare: Scottish Government Schools Statistics	100% (2021)	100% (2022)	101% (2023)

Income from employment

We said	We did
<p>Encouraging more businesses to become Real Living Wage accredited</p>	<p>Through our Local Employability Partnership and other networks, we continued to raise awareness of the Fair Work First agenda. When promoting Employment Recruitment Incentives, all employers were encouraged to pay the Real Living Wage and supported to become accredited if required. In East Renfrewshire there are currently 39 RLW registered employers.</p>
<p>Increasing support for in-work parents to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression</p>	<p>This year Work East Ren has supported 34 in-work parents. This included continued employability support via our Core Parental Employment Support Programme, key worker support and access to a Money Advice and Rights adviser.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 parents moved into a role that increased their earnings or saved them travel costs • 3 parents achieved a recognised qualification to help improve their labour market position • 5 parents sustained a volunteer programme to gain further experience to allow them to reach job opportunities • 8 in-work parents are still engaging with Work East Ren • the remaining parents are no longer receiving support <p>We have recruited a Parental Employability Child Poverty Officer and established a Parental Employability Working Group made up of 15 key local stakeholders, including a mix of public and third sector partners within employability, who are working towards supporting the Child Poverty Action Plan. The working group will deliver on the key actions over the next three years including work with local employers and with local parents and carers.</p> <p>Both East Renfrewshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde continue to support their own employees to remain active in the workplace, train and gain progression. NHSGGC has continued to offer Apprenticeships and Academy Programmes; deliver careers programmes and align career pathways to workforce planning. Both employers offer and promote family friendly working practices and offer financial wellbeing support to staff, including a 'Staff Money Worries' campaign and poverty awareness sessions for managers delivered.</p>



All employers were encouraged to pay the Real Living Wage

We said

We did

CASE STUDY: Impactful Parents

Impactful Parents was a creative employability programme aimed at unemployed parents from Barrhead and surrounding areas. It was designed as a fun, non-traditional employability programme, with an emphasis on using visual arts to improve health and wellbeing and performance/ drama skills to build confidence and develop communication skills. Ultimately, the aim was for participants to progress to positive destinations by the time the project ended, and to provide a range of interventions to equip them with the skills to do so.

Running in two blocks, from Sep-Dec 2023 and Jan-Mar 2024, the programme supported 15 parents. Of these parents:

- 2 moved into employment
- 1 moved onto volunteering
- 1 re-engaged with education
- 10 gained a qualification

Many of the participants were at the very early stages of their journey on the employability pipeline and a great deal of foundation work had to be done to prepare them for having the confidence and self-belief to research and apply for job opportunities. Parents reported lots of positive 'soft outcomes' including:

- Increased confidence
- Increased employability skills
- More socially connected
- Improved mental health

"Initially I just hoped this project would help me with my employability and give me some structure. Now, after working with the tutors, it's given me a different hope for the future for what my employment can look like." (Danielle)



"Having something to look forward to and being part of a routine has improved my mental health." (Shadia)

We said	We did
Design and inputs to employability programmes via Participatory Budgeting	We have established an Employability Lived Experience Panel to shape and inform the services we deliver. This panel includes a number of parents and carers who share their experiences of managing employment as a parent. This Panel met for the first time in January 2024 and they will support action planning for 2024 -2027 and beyond.
Delivery of new Parental Transition Fund and Best Start, Bright Futures programme	<p>We have continued to provide employability support via our Core Parental Employment Support (PES) Programme. During 23/24, we provided support to 127 parents. Support included help with job searching, application forms, interview skills, confidence building, assistance with funding for training and upskilling.</p> <p>By engaging with the PES Programme, 48 parents increased their household income and 8 parents entered education or training. The programme is continuing to support 32 parents and the remaining 39 are no longer receiving regular support however can return to the service at any time should they choose to re-engage.</p> <p>The PES Programme also worked closely with a range of third sector partners to provide targeted provision for parents with health issues, young parents, disabled parents, parents in recovery and our economically inactive parents. SAMH worked with 17 parents in recovery and with mental health issues and 7 of the groups took part in organised volunteering opportunities. Through the Impact Arts programme we reached a number of economically inactive parents due to their connections with local tenants and their reach within the community. Our partnership with Enable Works meant that we supported 8 parents with a disability or have a child with a disability and this work is ongoing. The partnership also supported parents with soft skills by building confidence through a number of wellbeing workshops including arts and crafts, sport and volunteering projects such as community gardens & planters for local play parks were crucial in building soft skills, in order to progress their employability skills. The programmes included wider support from partner agencies including Flexibility Works, who helped improve the parents understanding of local fairer working practices and their rights.</p>



The PES programme provided support to 127 parents



48 parents increased their household income



8 parents entered education or training

Income from social security

We said	We did
<p>All parents involved with employability programmes are offered financial inclusion support</p>	<p>The Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) have a Financial Inclusion Officer to assist Work EastRen clients with their financial position and options. MART have supported 45 clients within the employability pipeline, providing advice to ensure that employment is sustainable and generating £51,000 in social security income.</p>
<p>Improved knowledge of financial wellbeing among school aged residents, parents, carers and staff</p>	<p>East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (ERCAB) continue to hold outreaches across the authority to maximise the clients helped. Though the 'Money Talks' project, CAB completed Financial Statement with clients to help save on outgoings and check they getting all the benefits they are entitled to. ERCAB dealt with £1,710,079.24 in debt in the 2023/24 period. MART assisted 83 families with debts solutions creating savings of £225,000.</p> <p>MART offer a dedicated in-school support in four of our primary schools. This support has provided advice and assistance to 275 families and generated over £215,000 in financial gain. It has also supported 229 children to access National Entitlement Cards, 4 families to access a Blue Badge and 1 pupil to access discretionary free school meals. By offering this support in-school, the service removes any stigma around engaging with advice services and allows strong relationships and trust to be built over time.</p> <p>In addition, MART have attended P1 induction days in a further 6 primary schools, delivered Money Awareness sessions in 4 high schools, and attended a number of parents evenings across the authority.</p> <p>MART now have an officer working alongside Adult Learning to deliver the UK Government's Multiply Programme. Classes are being delivered to parents that focus on the cost of living, budgeting, benefits, and debt issues. 48 parents are now attending.</p> <p>Amongst health visitors, there is an improved understanding of circumstances of families in or at risk of poverty. At team and supervision meetings, health visitors have reflected on the impact of hidden poverty and their own development of skill in approaching this.</p> <div data-bbox="577 1027 2085 1433" style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 15px;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">CASE STUDY</h3> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">During an antenatal home visit, the Health Visitor identified that Suzie* might be vulnerable. Suzie was care experienced and also having a high risk pregnancy. The Health Visitor sensitively discussed the financial impact of welcoming a baby and the benefits of a referral to Money Advice and Rights Service (MART) for income maximisation. This referral resulted in Suzie receiving the Best Start grant and a review of her financial circumstances. This early intervention work had a positive impact upon Suzie by allowing her to practically prepare for motherhood and alleviate some of the financial burden.</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">*not real name</p> </div>

We said	We did																										
<p>Improved parental access to benefits and income maximisation information and advice, including new referral pathways</p>	<p>Within a year, ERCAB has helped clients receive a total of £1,125,111.25 in social security awards for children. MART secured social security awards for children of £908,269. This includes securing numerous child related benefits:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="618 276 1601 679"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="618 276 1088 363" rowspan="2">Summary Benefit</th> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="1088 276 1601 320">Financial Gains</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="1088 320 1346 363">MART</th> <th data-bbox="1346 320 1601 363">CAB</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 363 1088 408">Tax Credits</td> <td data-bbox="1088 363 1346 408">£21,860.00</td> <td data-bbox="1346 363 1601 408">£16,440.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 408 1088 453">Best Start Grant</td> <td data-bbox="1088 408 1346 453">£7,419.50</td> <td data-bbox="1346 408 1601 453">£707.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 453 1088 497">Child Benefit</td> <td data-bbox="1088 453 1346 497">£19,801.60</td> <td data-bbox="1346 453 1601 497">£28,148.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 497 1088 542">Child Disability Payment</td> <td data-bbox="1088 497 1346 542">£727,326.00</td> <td data-bbox="1346 497 1601 542">£1,026,964.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 542 1088 587">Education Maintenance Allowance</td> <td data-bbox="1088 542 1346 587">£8,400.00</td> <td data-bbox="1346 542 1601 587">N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 587 1088 632">Free School Meals/Clothing Grant</td> <td data-bbox="1088 587 1346 632">£34,361.90</td> <td data-bbox="1346 587 1601 632">£2,401.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 632 1088 679">Scottish Child Payment</td> <td data-bbox="1088 632 1346 679">£89,100.90</td> <td data-bbox="1346 632 1601 679">£50,450.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>During the Food Insecurity Pilot that ERCAB were involved in, 864 children were provided with a £25 cash voucher for food purposes. CAB received a large amount of referrals from partners for the Food Insecurity Pilot. This has opened up referral pathways for other services offered including Fuel help, money advice and benefit services.</p> <p>All families who access HSCP Children and Families Services, including Request For Assistance, are signposted to MART to ensure their income is maximised especially for families where ill health, addiction, and disability is a feature.</p> <p>We improved access to Clothing Grants and Free School Meals by running drop-ins during summer 2023, supporting those who needed face to face support to complete applications and receive support. We also established links between local charity 'Back to School Bank' and schools' sustainable uniform schemes to support families to access.</p> <p>Following a Short Life working group to improve Health Visiting referrals to money advice last year, it has now easier for HVs to make direct referrals to MART. During 2023-24, 71 referrals made were from the 'priority groups' (lone parent, household with a disability, child under 1, minority ethnic household, parent/guardian under 25, and large families), providing a financial gain of £10,582.</p> <p>Since April 2023 there has been a reduction in available HV resource which means there could be an adverse impact on the opportunity to signpost and support families accessing MART financial wellbeing advice.</p> <p>The Blossom Maternity Service in Glasgow supports pregnant women who have multiple vulnerabilities including single parents, those with a disability and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Many who attend this service have low level literacy skills and/or English is not their first language, which makes managing their money and financial literacy an additional challenge. Often IT skills are also low making claiming universal credit more difficult. All pregnant women who attend Blossom are offered the Money & Debt Advocacy Service, Money Matters. During 2023-24, 7 clients from East Renfrewshire were supported through this service, with an average financial gain of £7,059.</p>	Summary Benefit	Financial Gains		MART	CAB	Tax Credits	£21,860.00	£16,440.00	Best Start Grant	£7,419.50	£707.25	Child Benefit	£19,801.60	£28,148.40	Child Disability Payment	£727,326.00	£1,026,964.60	Education Maintenance Allowance	£8,400.00	N/A	Free School Meals/Clothing Grant	£34,361.90	£2,401.00	Scottish Child Payment	£89,100.90	£50,450.00
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Best Start Grant	£7,419.50	£707.25																									
Child Benefit	£19,801.60	£28,148.40																									
Child Disability Payment	£727,326.00	£1,026,964.60																									
Education Maintenance Allowance	£8,400.00	N/A																									
Free School Meals/Clothing Grant	£34,361.90	£2,401.00																									
Scottish Child Payment	£89,100.90	£50,450.00																									

We said	We did
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHSGGC Money Matters service supports any families who have a child as an inpatient or who attend the hospital as an outpatient. The service works closely with families who often experience major life changing circumstances due to their child's lifelong or life limiting medical condition. These parents often become carers and they are faced with increasing and additional costs of caring for a child with additional needs. In 2023/24, there were 2 clients from East Renfrewshire with an average client gain of £10,531. These high gains were mainly due to child disability payments and levels of debt managed.
Enhanced use of data to provide insights and interactivity	<p>We continue to work in partnership with Smart Data Foundry to develop the Cost of Living Dashboard. This project uses banking data to identify 'financial wellbeing indicators' such as overdraft use, income from benefits and living beyond means. The tool then cross-matches this with 'contextual data' including receipt of free school meals, family size and disability in the household. Using this tool, we are able to monitor changes in financial wellbeing in 'real time' and pinpoint areas where household finances aren't stretching far enough.</p> <p>We have been developing a data matching tool, using a service design approach. This tool aims to match East Renfrewshire Council internal datasets to allow us to identify households who may be financially vulnerable, and may benefit from MART services. This project is part of the national Data and Digital Office Service Design Challenge in partnership with Snook. East Renfrewshire was only one of 2 councils to be successful in obtaining this support and training. The Council has committed further temporary funding to develop this work further and implement new approaches in 2024/25.</p>



**Help to pinpoint areas
where household finances
aren't stretching far enough**

Costs of living

We said	We did
<p>Reducing energy costs for vulnerable families</p>	<p>MART had a temporary Energy Advisor for the 23-24 financial year which focused on utility arrears and maintaining energy supplies to homes. The project assisted 212 residents and created £52,000 in revenue via energy grants. MART have a partnership with the fuel bank foundation and are able to secure fuel vouchers for residents with immediate need.</p> <p>Barrhead Housing Association (BHA) made £37,500 of payments to support 95 tenants with fuel debt. These payments were made to either the tenant (if they had a pre-payment meter) or direct to the energy provider. In additions, BHA made 52 applications to the Energy Hardship Fund and distributed £15,092 of fuel vouchers to tenants. The also worked in partnership with Citizen’s Advice Bureau to provide an energy advisor one day a week. This resulted in 78 referrals being made.</p> <p>East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau have supported a client financial gain of £119,591.45 for energy. £73,747.70 of this was debt which was written off by obtaining grants. The remaining £45,843.75 has been issued to clients on direct debit meters and fuel vouchers for clients who are on pre-payment meters.</p>
<p>Increasing provision of affordable housing options to vulnerable groups</p>	<p>There has been an increased supply of affordable homes during 2023-24 with support of the Scottish Government and housing developers such as Taylor Wimpey. This includes 55 new build social rented homes (10 Council homes at Malletsheugh Newton Mearns; 20 by Link Housing Association at Cherrybank, Newton Mearns; and 25 by Barrhead Housing Association at Springfield Road, Barrhead). A further 7 new homes discounted for sale by Taylor Wimpey were delivered at Maidenhill, and 7 second hand homes acquired by the Council and Barrhead Housing Association. This is above the target of 45 average per year set for 2023-24.</p> <p>East Renfrewshire Council’s Housing Service used £50,000 of temporary funding to provide rent relief on a short-term basis to 36 vulnerable tenants. These tenants included lone parents, domestic abuse victims, care experienced young people and families just over the income threshold for benefits but experiencing real poverty due to the cost-of-living crisis. This supported them to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness, whilst providing time for them to work with advice services.</p> <p>A further £100,000 of temporary funding was used to support the provision of emergency homeless accommodation. We have this year seen an unprecedented increase in demand for emergency temporary accommodation with 396 households placed (130% increase on previous year), 52 of which were households with dependent children who spent an average of 10.5 days in emergency accommodation before being moved to alternative accommodation.</p> <p>We are working in partnership with Aberlour to improve the housing and accommodation support needs of care experienced young people. Following lived experience feedback, we have been working to examine support for independent living, redesign supported accommodation and aftercare/outreach offers with an overall aim to improve young people’s transition experiences and minimise the risk of homelessness which is higher among care experienced and vulnerable young people. The process is now near completion and a series of improvement recommendations have been made. These will inform future action planning.</p>

We said	We did
	<p>ER Housing Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership have worked jointly to identify a number of properties dedicated to the prevention of homelessness for Care Experienced Young People through effective transitional housing. The purpose of this accommodation is to reduce the number of Care Experienced Young People becoming homeless. 14 properties have been established, the majority of which have been used to accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children to date. These properties were developed in response to the recommendations from care experienced young people as part of the 'A Good Childhood - Collaborative Approach to Service Design' report from June 2023.</p> <p>In December 2023, we updated and improved our Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy to ensure all those entitled to DHPs can access them.</p> <p>Citizens Advice Bureau has focussed on using preventative measures to avoid homelessness, and have dealt with a combined total of £303,171.78 for arrears in both mortgaged and rented properties. This has allowed clients to continue living in their homes, therefore preventing homelessness for families. CAB has worked with families to address the root causes of their arrears, and provided financial education and budgeting advice.</p>
<p>Reducing costs to families of school attendance and participation</p>	<p>East Renfrewshire Council Education Department launched its Social Justice Framework and Strategy in March 2023. This includes specific anti-poverty guidance for schools and centres including guidance on reducing the cost of the school day. Baseline data on Cost of the School Day audits and poverty-aware training was gathered. Overall 56% of schools and centres have now undertaken Cost of the School Day (CoSD) audits with stakeholders. 38% of schools and centres report that more than half of practitioners have undertaken professional learning on poverty-aware practice. This data is being used to support and challenge schools and centres to continue to improve poverty awareness amongst practitioners and further reduce the cost of participation in education.</p> <p>Following a thematic review of the use of Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) in April 2023, a number of next steps were identified to improve the targeted use of PEF to support learners in poverty. Establishments have been supported and challenged throughout the session to take these forward through high quality, finely targeted PEF plans. Alongside a wide range of learning interventions, PEF is being used to support cost-reducing initiatives such as breakfast carts, uniform recycling schemes and subsidised extra-curricular activities. These interventions reduce the cost to families of school attendance while also promoting wellbeing, dignity and equity for children and young people affected by poverty.</p> <p>Where families have no recourse to public funds, school staff and health visitors have supported them to access free school uniforms from local charity the Back to School Bank.</p>

We said

We did

CASE STUDY: Reducing costs at St Ninian's and St Luke's High Schools



Through their CoSD consultation, **St Ninian's High School identified the cost of school blazers as a financial burden for families**, however parents also felt strongly that the blazer is an important part of the school's identity. In response, the school established a 'Laudato Si' blazer recycling scheme to support families with the cost of school uniform. Donations of good condition, unwanted blazers are invited from the school community and are listed in order of size in an online inventory. Parents can complete an online order form and the blazer will be available to collect the following week. The blazer stock from donations has also been supplemented by the school using a small amount of PEF funding.

Parents have the option of making a voluntary £15 donation for the blazer, which the majority take up, but which is not obligatory. Following S6 graduation in June, S6 pupils are also invited to leave their braided S6 blazer behind for the next S6 year group. The new S6 then have the opportunity to swap their existing blazer for a braided one, replenishing the school's stock. To date, **the scheme has recycled around 200 blazers which would have a retail cost of around £20,000.**



At **St Luke's High School, a partnership with Fareshare is supporting families through the delivery of unused, good quality food** that parents can collect weekly from the school. The partnership with Fareshare is also supporting 'Help Out Trolleys' where pupils can collect breakfast items and provides extra fresh produce for health and food technology lessons.

One innovative aspect supported by the Fareshare partnership is the family Cook School. This family learning activity brings **pupils and parents together to cook a meal**. As well as the benefits of learning new culinary skills and spending recreational time together with their young people, families also take home a free healthy meal for the evening.

We said	We did
<p>Continuing to reduce costs to families of Early Learning and Childcare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1140 hours of funded Early Learning & Childcare continues to be provided to all eligible children who apply for it from the term after their 3rd birthday until they commence school, including eligible two-year-olds. East Renfrewshire Council continues to collaborate with a range of partners including; Health Visitors, Family First, Money Advice and Rights Team and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to ensure that families are aware of their entitlement. Systems are now in place which enable the Education Department to proactively contact families who have recently become eligible through related DWP criteria and encourage them to apply for a nursery place. In addition to providing Early Learning and Childcare for eligible and vulnerable two-year-olds, where there is capacity to do so we continue to support other working families who are not eligible, with the offer to purchase nursery places at a reasonable hourly rate. <p>Over 1,500 3 and 4 year olds attend Early Learning and Childcare in East Renfrewshire and are offered a healthy snack, drinks and a meal provided during their funded sessions. Almost all children access this free food entitlement, although there are some families who prefer to send in a packed lunch. All parents who access this free provision will benefit from a reduction in food bill costs for a free meal and snack up to 5 days a week.</p>
<p>Reducing costs to families of the pregnancy pathway</p>	<p>East Renfrewshire has developed an Emergency Formula Pathway in place to support families in emergency financial crisis. This pathway is part of the wider agenda to support food insecurity and builds on cash first principles with the Health Visiting service referring to MART for Asda supermarket vouchers to support families.</p> <p>Budget pressures have resulted in some adaptation to antenatal visits this year. However, midwifery services now run from the two local health centres and will have opportunity to support families to maximise income and access benefits.</p> <p>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have taken action to address structural barriers in the maternity pathway including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - issuing and marketing a patient interpreting code to ensure access to the telephone triage system - developing of a simple step by step guide to NHSGGC maternity services - reviewing patient facing materials (including the Badgernet app) in community languages <p>In addition, a number of improvement plans have been developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - areas of care not currently meeting the needs of ethnic minority families (e.g. Birthplans); - patient engagement - staff training plan

Mitigating the impact of poverty

In addition to tackling the three drivers of poverty, across the partnership we have taken action to support those families who are living in poverty and mitigate the impact. These activities are underpinned by GIRFEC, The Promise and our local Children's Plan "[At Our Heart – The Next Steps.](#)"

In 2023/24, we **increased our fostering, adoption and kinship fees and allowances by 5%** to reflect increases in the cost of living for our carers. This allows us to provide foster carers, kinship carers, and adoptive parents with financial security, and stability for the children and young people in their care.

During Spring and Summer 2023, we delivered a range of **Participation Programmes** which were designed based on feedback from low-income families. The programme targeted:

- Care experienced children and young people
- Children on the child protection register
- Children allocated within children and families social work service with complex additional support needs on the edges of the care system

We engaged with **194 children and young people, with on average 40 attending each week**. Activities included day trips to Heads of Ayr Farm Park, Edinburgh Zoo, Cinema, M&D theme park, plus further trips to local parks and nature walks. Through the Youth Intensive Support Service, **30 young people were engaged in a number of activities** including laser tag, water-sports, and hill climbing. Within our Aftercare group, we **supported a group of 10 young people on a trip to Blackpool**. This group also enjoyed a day out to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. We also provided activities for a group of **young people who are not engaging in school** due to emotional wellbeing issues. These included graffiti art and hip hop. All of the participants come from **vulnerable low-income families who would not have been able to afford to pay** for the activities offered.



Children and young people from low income families participated in trips and activities

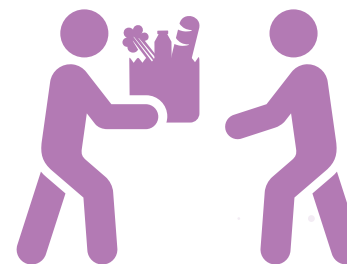
We continue to provide the **For Your Entertainment Programme (FYE)** which offers care experienced children and young people with free leisure access in partnership with East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust. The FYE scheme gives access to leisure facilities, arts classes, theatre, and swimming. In 2023/24 **a total of 218 children, young people, and parents** used the scheme and feedback indicates that their participation in the activities has improved physical and emotional wellbeing and brought families together to have fun.

We participated in the **Share Foundation's Stepladder of Achievement programme** to increase the savings of young people living in care and to improve their financial literacy. This was a one-off UK government initiative linked to Junior ISAs for care leavers. **75% of our eligible young people were registered and £14,200 was generated** for the ten young people who completed the online modules. This scheme was aimed at a small population of care leavers and although logistically highly complex for staff, we drew all of our workforce resource together from social workers, youth workers, and the Family Firm employability officer.

Each looked after and care experienced child under 5 years of age (to their 5th birthday) receives an age-appropriate classic book each month from the Dollywood Imagination Library Foundation. Most of the small children will, by the time they graduate from the scheme, have their own library of over 60 classic books. In 2023 a total of **257 free books were received by 24 young children**.

The Brighter Future Barrhead Programme has been delivered to tackle poverty and inequality in our most deprived communities through a coordinated partner and community-led approach. Barrhead Housing Association (BHA) has been the lead delivery and managing partner and 11 community partners have been involved including Dunterlie Food Share; Dunterlie Parent Support; Back to School Bank East Renfrewshire; and East Renfrewshire ASN Parent Action Group. The programme has included:

- 428 individual participants/ beneficiaries, 325 of whom are already evidencing improved life changes / quality of life because of the projects
- 43 Volunteers contributing 3,555 Volunteer hours
- 81 exercise classes
- 48 Arts & Crafts sessions
- 46 Food Waste Cooking workshops
- 45 digital engagement sessions
- 112 personal development sessions for children and young people
- 50 children with brand new school uniforms
- 43 Food Share sessions issuing 30 bags of food each week



During Winter 2023, BHA distributed **600 bags of food**, donated **£1,000 to Nelly Boxes Christmas Gift Appeal**, distributed **800 selection boxes** and organised a **Christmas party for 80 young people**.

Approach to tackling family poverty: 2024 - 2027

In order to address family poverty in East Renfrewshire over the next three years, we have 4 key areas of focus:

1. Improved understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty

East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of children in any local authority in Scotland and this is increasing. We are fortunate to have the lowest rate of child poverty in Scotland, with an estimated 3,247 children (after housing costs), or 2,591 (before housing costs).

Our commitment to children and young people is fundamental to everything we do in East Renfrewshire. With such a small number of children living in poverty, it is crucial that we are able to delve deeper and really understand the needs of these children and their families. We also need to be aware of households who are financially vulnerable and at risk of poverty, at the earliest opportunity in order to provide preventative and early intervention support, with a 'no wrong door' approach. The Council has committed additional funds in 2024/25 for development and implementation.

We aim to achieve this improved understanding by:

- Enhancing use of data to better understand more the profile of families in poverty, and those at risk of poverty
- Listening to the voices of families experiencing poverty and using these to shape services delivered
- Creating a more 'joined up approach' to ensure families receive coordinated support from all relevant services, with 'no wrong door'

2. Enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security

Households in East Renfrewshire are less likely to receive income through social security than other parts of Scotland. Only around two thirds are in receipt of child benefit and the percentage of children receiving Free School Meals and Education Maintenance Allowance is lower than other parts of Scotland. For some, this may be because household income makes them ineligible for support. However for others, this could be a lack of awareness and/or a need for support to apply. Estimates suggest that around one in four East Renfrewshire households eligible for Scottish Child Payment are not taking it up. We need to work to ensure all households are supported in a dignified way to receive their full entitlements and have their household income maximised, where they wish to do so.

We aim to achieve these enhanced gains by:

- Increasing poverty awareness of frontline staff working with families
- Increasing accessibility of money advice and rights support



**Child poverty in
East Renfrewshire
is the lowest in
Scotland**

3. Improved income from employment for parents

Employment alone does not prevent poverty. Almost three quarters of the children living in poverty in East Renfrewshire are in a household with at least one adult in employment. We need to focus not only on getting parents and carers into employment, but also supporting them to progress whilst in work. The Parental Employability Support programme will support both unemployed and in-work parents.

Median earnings for those living in our area are higher than average, however median earnings for those working here are lower than average. Therefore we need to consider the local availability of well-paid, family-friendly employment opportunities.

We also recognise the importance of transport and childcare as levers to employment. Whilst these are not specific to the area of child poverty, we will work to ensure these are influenced through a child poverty lens.

We aim to achieve this improved income by:

- Increasing into work support for unemployed parents and support to in-work parents to progress in the workplace

4. Reduced costs of living

The essential costs of living, including food and fuel, are increasing throughout the country. In East Renfrewshire, we recognise that our housing costs are particularly high. The average property price in East Renfrewshire is around £100,000 higher than the Scottish average; and the private rental price for a 4 bed property is around £500 higher per month. Our Council Tax levels are in line with the Scottish average, however around three out of four properties in East Renfrewshire are in bands D-H which is almost double the Scottish average.

While recognising that many of the costs of living for families are outwith our influence, we acknowledge areas for influence across the Community Planning Partnership including the cost of the school day, social housing and community food supports.

We aim to achieve this reduced cost of living by:

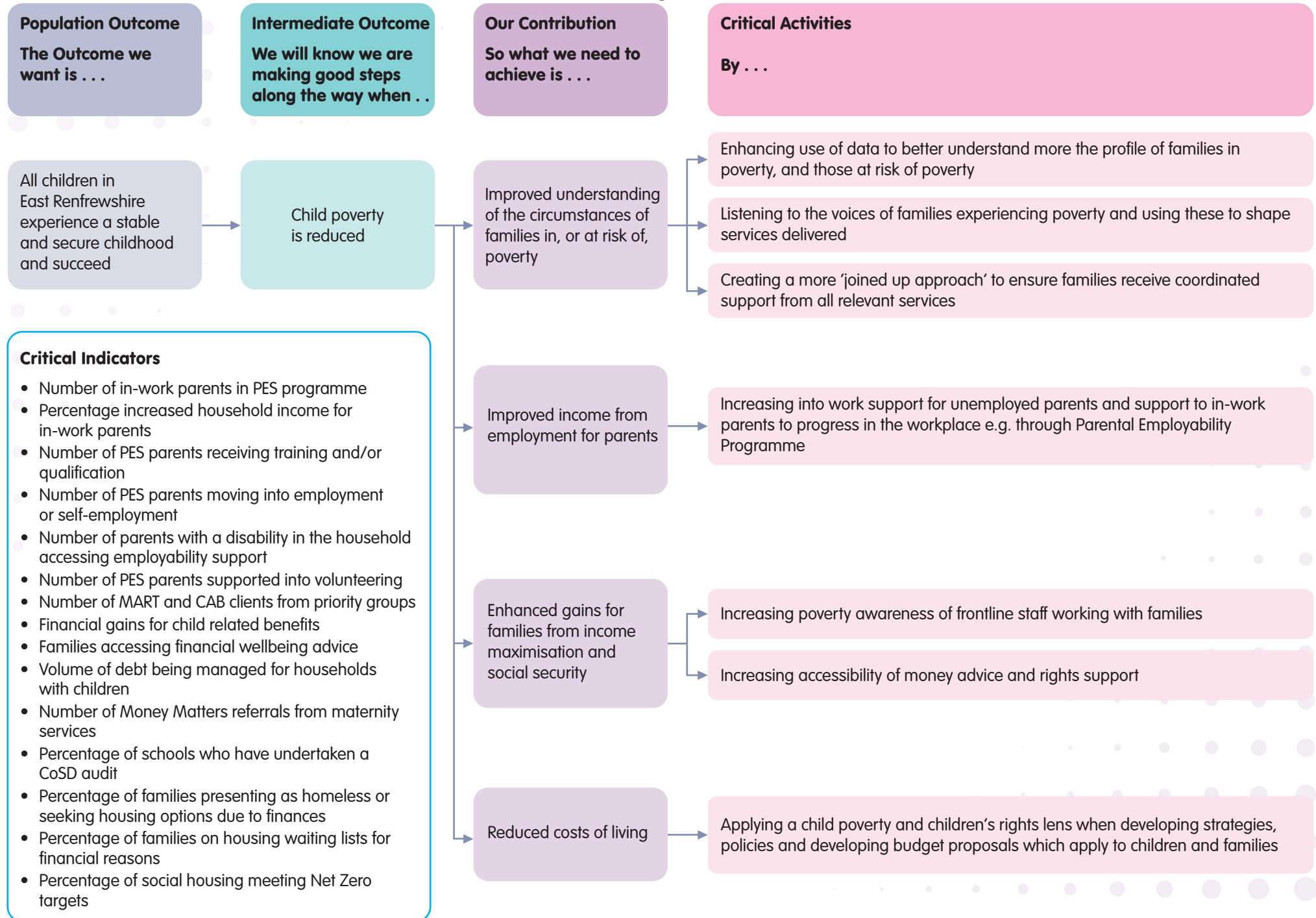
- Applying a child poverty and children's rights lens when developing strategies, policies and developing budget proposals which apply to children and families

The driver diagram on the following page provides an overview of this approach. Detailed action plans for each of these four areas, including how we will measure progress, can be found in Appendix 1. These have been informed by the profile of the area, details of which can be found in Appendix 2.



**A need to consider
the availability of
well-paid family
friendly employment
in the area**

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Action Plans and Progress Measures: 2024 - 2027

Improved understanding of the circumstances of families in, or at risk of, poverty

	Action	Details	Partners
Short term 2024-25	Piloting the new data matching tool	Test with live data and iteration as required to ensure it is fit for purpose. Begin using the tool to inform MART service delivery (subject to funding)	ERC Money Advice and Rights Team, ERC Scottish Welfare Fund, ERC Data Team, ERC Strategic Services
	Enriching and utilising the Cost of Living Dashboard	Enhance the number of banking records and local data within the dashboard to create richer data set. Use the dashboard to inform ongoing interventions to reach new households	ERC Strategic Services Team; ERC Project Management Team; Smart Data Foundry
Medium term	Expanding the data matching tool	Build on the pilot, consider what additional service data should be included to provide an enhanced profile of customers. Work with the Improvement Service to explore options around sharing personal data as part of the SAVI project (subject to funding)	ERC Money Advice and Rights Team; ERC service managers; ERC Data Team; ERC Strategic Services; Improvement Service
	Listening to the voices of families in poverty	Gather lived experience feedback from parents and carers, and use this to inform how services are delivered	Local Employability Partnership Lived Experience Group; NHSGGC; Family First

How we will measure progress:

- Qualitative feedback on development of data matching tool
- Qualitative feedback on use of data to inform interventions and/or service delivery
- Qualitative feedback on how lived experience shapes interventions and/or service delivery

Improved income from employment for parents

	Action	Details	Partners
Short term 2024-25	Focus on in-work parents on low income and maximising income	Increase outreach & support to in-work parents to extend the reach of employability services Continuation of workforce employability activity to ensure both NHS GGC and ERC offer well-paid, family-friendly employment opportunities	Work EastRen PES Team; MART; Child Poverty Oversight; Local Employability Partnership (LEP); Lived Experience Panel (Employability); Local Employers; Business Gateway (BG); Economic Development (ED); Third Sector Partners; NHS GGC; ERC HR
	Funded work placements in Early Years and Education	Provide funded placements within ERC for parents to allow the opportunity to earn and learn in a secure environment, and with a view to longer-term sustained employment	Work EastRen PES Team; MART; Education & Early Learning Centres & Partnership (Operational & Strategic) (LEP)
	Employment Recruitment Incentives aimed at low income parents	Reduce any potential barriers faced by local businesses to recruit more parents	Work EastRen PES Team; MART; Third Sector; Economic Development, Business Gateway, Partnership (Operational & Strategic) (LEP East Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce & 3 Business Improvement Districts
	Advocating Real Living Wage to local employers through Fair Work First Framework	Through grant funding including Employment Recruitment Incentives	Work EastRen PES Team; MART; Third Sector; Economic Development Partnership (Operational & Strategic) (LEP, Business Gateway
Medium term	Establishing community hub pilots for parents offering holistic support which meets local needs and is accessible	Working in partnership with agencies to provide regular drop in sessions aimed at parents through schools, nurseries or other key agencies across East Renfrewshire (subject to funding)	Work EastRen PES Team; Money Advice & Rights; Child Poverty Partnership; Partnership (Operational & Strategic) (LEP; Third Sector Partners; Education & Early Learning Centres

	Action	Details	Partners
Medium term	Addressing health / disability as a barrier to employment	<p>Deliver specialised employability provision to parents with disabilities and/or health conditions with a focus on supported employment</p> <p>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will develop a plan focussed on children with a disability</p>	Work EastRen PES Team; Money Advice & Rights; Child Poverty Partnership; Partnership (Operational & Strategic) (LEP; Third Sector Partners; NHS GGC

How we will measure progress:

Indicator	Data source	Baseline 2023/24	Target
Number of in-work parents engaging with PES programme	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	38	50
Percentage increased household income for in-work parents	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	20% increased household income	35% increased household income
Number of PES parents receiving training and/or qualification	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	18	25
Number of PES parents moving into employment or self-employment	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	41	41
Number of parents with a disability in the household accessing employability support	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	8	20
Number of PES parents supported into volunteering	Advice Pro – Work East Ren MIS	24	30

Enhanced gains for families from income maximisation and social security **141**

	Action	Details	Partners
Short term 2024-25	Maintaining existing referral sources	Continued outreach work, MART workers embedded in schools and ongoing links with services including HSCP, Carers Centre, Work EastRen, health visitors and maternity services (including specialised services such as Blossom)	Money Advice and Rights Team (MART), ER Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), NHSGGC
	Establishing awareness of services and poverty among new groups of potential referral sources	Deliver combined poverty awareness / 'know our service' training across ERC services and partner organisations	Money Advice and Rights Team (MART), ER Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Work East Ren
	Making the public aware of potential entitlement	Develop a communications plan aimed at both partners and public to raise awareness of entitlement. This will include a schedule of video and social media promotions.	Money Advice and Rights Team (MART), ER Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Communications Team
Medium term	Using data matching tool to identify and anticipate areas of need	Targeting resources, including outreach and marketing, based on data findings	Money Advice and Rights Team (MART), ER Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Communications Team

How we will measure progress:

Indicator	Data source	Baseline 2023/24	Target
Number of MART and CAB clients from priority groups	MART and CAB databases	MART: 2,599 CAB: 2,863	Aim to increase
Total financial gains for child related benefits	MART and CAB databases	MART: £908,269 CAB: £1,117,286	Aim to increase
Number of families accessing financial wellbeing advice	MART database	MART: 1,728	Aim to increase
Total volume of debt being managed for households with children	MART and CAB databases	MART: £908,269 CAB: £1,710,079	Aim to increase
Number of referrals to Money Matters from maternity services	Number of pregnant women referred to Money Matters; NHSGGC database	5	Aim to increase

Reduced costs of living

	Action	Details	Partners
Short term 2024-25	Delivering Thrive Under 5 programme	Tackle food insecurity amongst 0 – 5-year-olds by helping families maximise their income and provide practical approaches to support healthy weight in the early years	HSCP, Voluntary Action East Ren, ER Culture and Leisure Trust, NHSGGC
	Enhancing approach to Cost of the School Day	Work with Head Teachers to ensure a rigorous approach to Cost of the School Day	ERC Education Department
	Improving understanding of needs of families in social housing	Speaking to tenants to better understand any financial barriers they face around housing	ERC Housing Team, Barrhead Housing Association
Medium term	Increasing poverty awareness training to school staff	Deliver anti-poverty training to staff from early years, primary and secondary school with a focus on increasing awareness of 'hidden poverty' and empower education staff to signpost and refer families to support services	ERC Education Department, MART, CAB, ERC Strategic Services
	Reducing the number of children who have significantly low attendance or reduced timetables	Adopt a multi-agency approach to supporting children and young people not attending school through working with schools and partners to support inclusive environments and practice in all settings and schools	ERC Education Department, HSCP, Children1st and CLD
	Addressing the housing and accommodation needs based on lived experience feedback	Build upon understanding of financial barriers faced by tenants, consider systematic change to address these and ensure social housing provision across the authority is fit for purpose in terms of affordability and the reduction of fuel poverty	ERC Housing Team, Barrhead Housing Association

How we will measure progress:

Indicator	Data source	Baseline 2023/24	Target
Percentage of schools who have undertaken a CoSD audit	ERC Education records	56%	Aim to increase
Percentage of families presenting as homeless or seeking housing options due to financial reasons	ERC Housing homelessness and housing options data – ERC	Not yet available – establish 2024/25	Aim to decrease
Percentage of families on housing waiting lists citing financial reasons	Housing waiting lists – ERC and BHA	Not yet available – establish 2024/25	Aim to decrease
Percentage of social housing properties meeting the Social Housing Net Zero target	Implementation date yet to be set, following consultation process	Not yet available -	Aim to increase

Conclusion

We recognise the need to look to the long term for reductions in rates of child poverty. The actions described in this report all culminate in long-term, sector-wide shifts to join up services, think carefully about the drivers of poverty and aim to ensure everything we deliver is underpinned by poverty considerations.

The efforts made in addressing child poverty over the past year are positive and reflect East Renfrewshire's collective commitment to creating a better future for all children. However, it's evident that to truly make a lasting impact, we must refine our approach to be more targeted and responsive to the diverse needs of families.

Moving forward, it's imperative that we prioritise our interventions, ensuring that resources reach the families who need them most, at the right time. We need to base our efforts around evidence of what works, taking into account the lived experience of families affected.

This demands a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted factors contributing to child and family poverty and a tailored response that addresses these factors comprehensively. By adopting a more targeted approach, we can better allocate resources, strengthen support systems, and empower families to break the cycle of poverty.

We have committed one-off funding to support us to both tackle poverty and to mitigate the impacts of it. To tackle poverty, we will invest in our approach to data; to identify families in need and provide coordinated support. To mitigate the impacts, we will invest in early years interventions to support readiness to learn.

Ultimately, our goal is not just to alleviate child poverty, but to eradicate it entirely. By staying focused, adaptive, and responsive to the evolving needs of families, we can work towards a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their circumstances.



**East Renfrewshire has a collective
commitment to creating a better
future for all children**

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