

Scottish Borders
Local Child Poverty Action Report
Annual Progress Report 2019/20

SCOTTISH BORDERS CHILD POVERTY ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2019/20

Background

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out the Scottish Government's statement of intent to eradicate child poverty in Scotland by 2030.

Although the greatest impact on child poverty will occur through nationally set policies and strategies, it is recognised that local agencies and communities have much to contribute to achieving the outcomes desired. As a result, the Act requires Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report and an Annual Progress Report. The annual progress report should describe activities undertaken and planned locally to contribute towards the child poverty targets set out in the Act.

The first Annual Reports were due by 30 June 2019. Following consultation with key members of the Community Planning Partnership Reducing Inequalities Delivery Group, the Scottish Borders Report for 2018/19 was endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership on 13 June 2019 and submitted to Scottish Government thereafter.

This report for 2019/20 is the second Annual Report for the Scottish Borders and provides Scottish Government with an update on progress against activities within the Action Plan. The Child Poverty Planning Group and the Community Planning Partnership thank all partners for their input to the report.

The Poverty and Inequality Commission's Review of the Local Child Poverty Action Reports 2018/19 was published on 12th December 2019.

<https://povertyinequality.scot/publication/review-of-the-local-child-poverty-action-reports/>

A number of recommendations were highlighted for national and local partners to consider. The Scottish Borders response is set out under local context.

Accountability and Governance

The Child Poverty Planning Group (CPPG) manages the implementation of the Plan and is accountable to the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The CPPG is a strategic group with senior multi-agency membership.

The CPPG reports to the CPP through the Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group (CYPSLG) on the following:

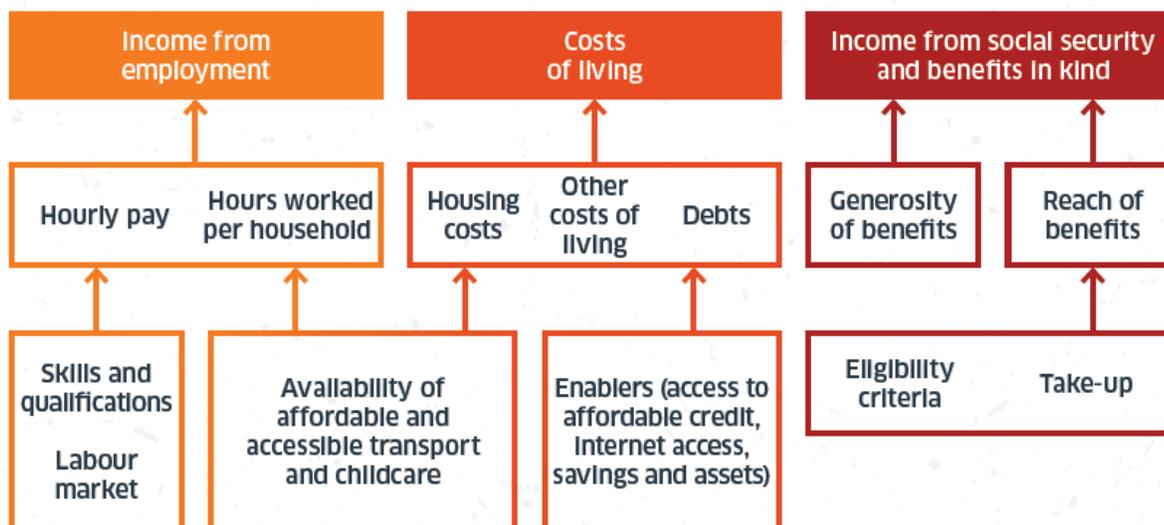
- Key strategic priorities in relation to statutory requirements and local needs
- Progress reports and updates against the high level priorities contained within the Child Poverty Plan, including annual reports for submission to Scottish Government
- The group also reports at least annually to the governance bodies of the key partners e.g. Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders Board etc.

Participation and engagement

During 2019/20 relationships have developed with stakeholders who have an interest in Child Poverty. A multi-agency Child Poverty Planning Group was formed in September 2019 and is made up of representatives from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders as well as the Third Sector and RSLs. This group meets regularly on the Child Poverty Agenda.

Drivers of Child Poverty

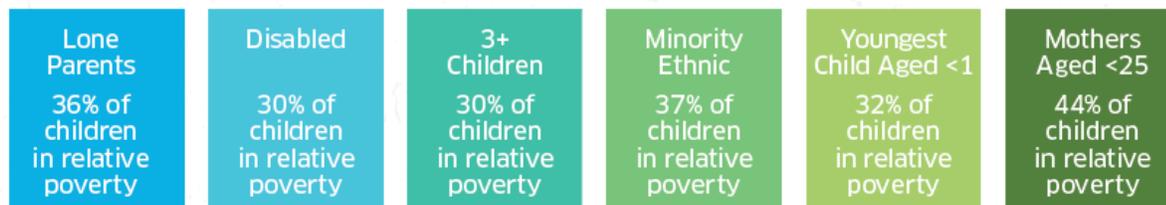
The direct drivers of poverty fall in to three main categories – income from employment, costs of living and income from social security. The relationship of these drivers to wider thematic areas is summarised below.



Key risk groups and targeted interventions

Child poverty action reports are expected to describe measures taken in relation to children living in households where income and/or expenditure are adversely affected as a consequence of a member or members in a household having one or more protected characteristics. The national Child Poverty Delivery Plan also identifies certain priority groups to be targeted as beneficiaries (see Figure 1 below), and notes the need to take account of local geography and demographic profile. For the Scottish Borders, rurality is a key factor. There is also a requirement to report on income maximisation measures taken in the area to provide pregnant women and families with children with information, advice and assistance about eligibility for financial support; and assistance to apply for financial support. This includes work by the NHS Borders and partners to embed financial inclusion referral pathways in health care settings, as well as other settings.

Figure 1 - Nationally identified priority groups at high risk of poverty



National context and targets

According to the Scottish Household Survey, **17.3%** of Scottish children live in families that had low income in 2017 and could not afford at least 3 out of a prescribed list of “basic necessities”, such as a new refrigerator or a new coat for school. This is before housing costs (BHC), such as rent or mortgage payments, are taken out. After housing costs (AHC), the figure is understandably worse, at **20.7%** of Scottish children, or **one in five**.

According to the Scottish Government publication “Persistent poverty in Scotland 2010-2018”, **17%** of children in Scotland were in persistent poverty after housing costs between 2014 and 2018. This compares to **15%** in 2013-2017.

The Scottish Government has set itself ambitious targets to reduce child poverty by 2030. The four key measurements, after housing costs (AHC) are as follows:

- less than 10% of children live in relative poverty (relative poverty is less than 60% of average UK 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 UK 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 UK 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).

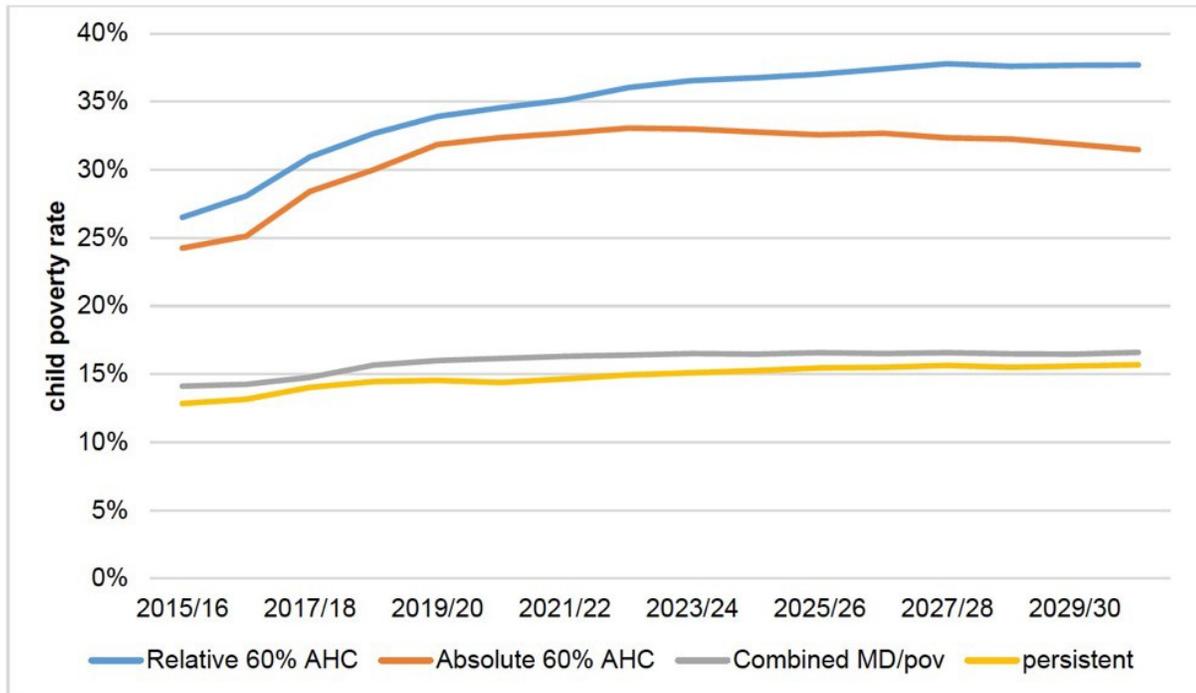
The most up to date national figures¹ for these 4 targets are:

- In 2016/17 an estimated 23% of children were in relative poverty
- In 2016/17 an estimated 20% of children were in absolute poverty
- In 2016/17 an estimated 11% of children were in combined low income and material deprivation
- In (2012 to) 2016 an estimated 10% of children were in persistent poverty

Without intervention and mitigation at both a national and local level, Figure 2² forecasts that child poverty will increase across all 4 measures to 2030.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00533142.pdf>

Figure 2 - Headline child poverty rate forecasts



Recognising external factors which are likely to impact on child poverty and the significant gap between existing poverty levels and the 2030 targets, the Scottish Government has set the following interim targets to be achieved by April 2023:

- Less than 18% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 14% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 8% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- Less than 8% of children are in persistent poverty

Public Health Scotland was formed in April 2020 and promotes the six national Public Health Priorities agreed by Scottish Government and COSLA in June 2018. These priorities are intended to support national and local partners across Scotland to work together to improve healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities in our communities.

- Priority 1 - A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
- Priority 2 - A Scotland where we flourish in our early years
- Priority 3 - A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing
- Priority 4 - A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Priority 5 - A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all
- Priority 6 - A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

Local context

1. The Poverty and Inequality Commission's Review

The review of the Local Child Poverty Action Reports 2018/19 set out 22 recommendations, of which 18 were for local action. An analysis was undertaken against these recommendations and 3 were identified as having the biggest impact on enhancing the Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Action Plan and these have become key priorities for the 2020/21 Plan. These are -

- **Involvement of people with direct lived experience**
Consideration should be given as to how to involve people with direct lived experience. People's voices should be heard and should be used to help shape agendas.
- **Consider how to strengthen and evidence partnership working**
There is scope to improve how partnership working is reflected in future reports.
- **Review how data and evidence is used to measure progress and ensure effective evaluation and monitoring methods are in place**
There is scope for the approach to evaluation and monitoring progress to be improved.

Other recommendations will also be addressed where appropriate but have less impact on our plan. Finally, some of the recommendations are already met in our plan.

2. The 2019/20 Annual Progress Report

Good progress has been made against the actions set out in the 2019/20 Action Plan. This is shown in detail in Appendix 1(a). Highlights include –

- Creating apprenticeships and training opportunities for young people through commissioning of new and existing home investment. Eildon Housing Association and Harts Builders working in partnership to create apprenticeships and training opportunities through the delivery of affordable housing projects. Eildon and Harts Builders have jointly funded a Community Benefits Officer. A review will be carried out by Eildon Housing.
- Inspire Learning is a £16million 1:1 education transformation programme which Scottish Borders Council has centrally funded prior to COVID19. By March 2020 every secondary pupil had their own managed iPad to take home, and by July 2020 iPads were provided to primary pupils in classes P6-P7 for the academic year 2020/21. This initiative has assisted greatly with the avoidance of digital exclusion and the widening of access via the provision of technology and equipment has been very well received by schools, students and their families.
- Early Years Pathway Pilot Project – improving access to benefits information, advice & support for early years families. The advice facility at Health Centres was arranged as part of the NHS "Pathway initiative" where Midwives are encouraged to refer expectant mothers for benefit advice. Uptake of the service was slow at the outset however as communication of the service improved so did the take up. The advisor now has regular referrals from Health Visitors, Nurses and new and expectant mothers as well as telephone and email messages requesting advice. The number of enquires during the first 6 month period totaled 39, resulting in an increase in benefits of £76,000. The majority of enquiries concerned pre-birth issues but many of the mothers involved said that they would be contacting the advisor again when the baby was born to ascertain their revised entitlement at that time. A few weeks into the project, the

Scottish Social Security Area manager attended a Centre to discuss the new Scottish Best Start and Best Food grants and during that meeting they had the opportunity to help three expectant mothers to claim their grants. We had not anticipated their visits and they were very pleased to have been given the opportunity to have face to face meetings with the target audience for the first time.

3. Current position of the Poverty Drivers in the Scottish Borders

Appendix 1(b) shows evidence in relation to the Scottish Borders position on the three drivers of child poverty, high priority risk groups and protected characteristics. Key messages are set out below:

1) Income from employment

- The Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal will lead to increased employment opportunities for young people and children and potentially disadvantaged groups. The Borderlands Inclusive Deal approval is planned which will support the economic development of the Scottish Borders as a whole with higher quality, better paid and more diverse employment opportunities for young people and adults.
- Scottish Borders average earnings are still lower than the Scottish average which presents a challenge.

2) Costs of living

- All Head Teachers in Scottish Borders Schools have participated in an in-house programme called 1 in 5 which was designed to increase the level of awareness of the importance of the Council's Inclusion Strategy. As a result, each school has undertaken an in-depth review of the costs of the school day. Many activities and opportunities were reviewed, making them more accessible to families where finance is an issue. School trips, support for sporting equipment, free school meal awareness and non-uniform days were amongst those activities reviewed.
- **47.6%** of children in Scottish Borders live in areas classified as "Rural" (Accessible-rural or Remote-rural) which presents a difficulty in terms of access to employment and services due to the cost of transport.
- The use of food banks has increased possibly due to the cost of food combined with lower earnings

3) Income from social security and benefits in kind

- Young Carers in the Scottish Borders have taken advantage of the new Carers Allowance

4. The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index

Poverty and low income remain an issue in an area with one of the lowest wages in Scotland, with many families "just getting by". This has led to "poverty proofing" in all schools, supported by the development of the Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index (CPI), which provides schools and other partners with a more detailed understanding of child poverty as it affects communities locally.

These are experimental statistics using HMRC Children in low income families, free school meals, clothing grants and educational maintenance allowance. The index shows that there are unexpected areas of child poverty. The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index has 3 years

of data and over time, the areas of high or higher levels of child poverty has reduced, however there are areas that consistently have high levels of child poverty. The SB CPI 2019 Report is shown at Appendix 1(c).

5. Scottish Borders Council Children and Families Social Work Service

Poverty is only one factor in abuse and neglect, but perhaps the most pervasive. Evidence suggests that direct and indirect impacts of poverty can both operate separately and also interact with other factors to increase or reduce the chances of abuse and neglect. It is within this sphere that children and families social work focus their day to day interactions and interventions.

Children and Families social work (C&FSW) fulfils specific statutory duties to children and young people in the Scottish Borders, primarily contained in the following pieces of legislation:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

C&FSW provides a range of functions and interventions linked to the impact of poverty including:

- an initial response to referrals, investigating concerns that children may be at significant risk of abuse and neglect;
- a comprehensive service for all looked after children, children on the child protection register and those who are at high risk of becoming so;
- work with children affected by disabilities and their families;
- recruitment of and support to foster carers and prospective adopters and assessment of kinship carers;
- residential provision for young people and a satellite unit for young people in transition to independent living;
- support to young people who were previously looked after and;
- specialist assessment and support to young people who have offended and their families.

The statutory role of Children and Families social work necessitates focussing on those children, young people and families assessed as most in need, supporting them to navigate complex systems which frequently place them in positions of disadvantage, and supporting children and their families who experience poverty to access services or resources that they may not have been able to. Examples include charity applications; sourcing essentials items such as food, household goods, and clothing; the provision of practical support; the provision of funding for utilities such as gas and electricity.

Advice is provided by staff within the service to support budgeting on a long term basis, and support is provided to ensure income maximisation and access to correct benefit payments. Where a child is placed with kinship carers, the set up costs to purchase bed, bedding, clothes and other equipment is offered to assist the successful commencement of the placement. C&FSW also fund childminding where it is assessed to be in the child/families best interest.

Self-directed support, where families have increased choice about the support they receive, is

currently primarily focused on children with disabilities, however this is a developing area of practice and Scottish Borders C&FSW will continue to engage with Scottish Government to explore options to extend self-directed support to other families.

Scottish Borders C&FSW also commission or purchase a number of services including:

- Aberlour Child Care Trust are commissioned to provide the Options service (residential respite and day respite play scheme during school holiday periods) for children affected by disabilities, and the Sustain Service for children and young people at risk of becoming looked after.
- Who Cares? Scotland are commissioned to provide an independent advocacy services for children and young people who are within external placements.
- Children 1st are jointly commissioned by C&FSW and the Children & Young People’s Leadership Group to provide an Abuse and Trauma Recovery Service for children and young people who have been the victims of abuse.
- C&FSW also make a contribution to Children Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) for hospice care services.
- Purchased services include a number of foster placements from independent providers and placements for children and young people who require intensive support in a residential setting.

6. Holiday Programmes for early years families

Successful holiday programmes for early years families were run by multi-agency partnerships in Burnfoot, Eyemouth, Langlee and Selkirk in 2019. Key partner organisations involved were: Healthy Living Network (HLN), Community Learning and Development service (CLDS), Early Years Centres, Primary Schools, Live Borders and a range of local partners.

The models varied according to need, resource and capacity but all delivered clear impacts for families. Programme uptake was high across localities with a combined total of 523 participants. This included 356 children and 167 adults. Some children and families were invited to attend by headteachers and agencies who thought summer programmes may provide additional support during the school holiday period.

An evaluation of the Summer 2019 programme was carried out by NHS Borders Public Health Registrar and is shown at Appendix 1(d). Families described the programme as positive and parents/carers progressed into other learning and community opportunities as a result of taking part.

7. Contributions from Strategies, Plans, Budgets and Funding

Several Strategies, Plans and Budgets have contributed to the Local Child Poverty Action Plan for the Scottish Borders. Significant contributions include:

7.1 Budgets

- I. Funding was allocated by Scottish Borders Council in February 2019 to specific budget headings intended to help address the impact of child poverty.

Budget	2019/20
Crisis Grants	£89,965
School clothing grants	£240,800

Free sanitary products in schools and workplaces	£42,000
Educational Maintenance Allowance	£232,632

- II. Budgets for various key services were also used in 2019/20 – Holiday programmes c£15.5k for staff time and resources

7.2 Integrated Children and Young People’s Plan for the Scottish Borders 2018-2021

The Scottish Borders Integrated Children and Young People’s Plan 2018-2021 sets out the strategic direction for the planning and delivery of services for Children & Young People in the Scottish Borders from 2018–2021. The Plan expresses the commitment of the Children and Young People’s Leadership Group to use its combined resources and to work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for all our children and families.

The priorities in the integrated Children and Young People’s Plan 2018–21 are:

1. Keeping children and young people safe - More children and young people will be protected from abuse, harm or neglect and will be living in a supportive environment, feeling secure and cared for.
2. Improving health and well-being and reducing inequalities - Inequalities in the health and wellbeing of young people are reduced
3. Targeting support to maximise life experiences and opportunities and ensuring inclusion - Life experiences and opportunities are improved for children and young people who require our targeted support
4. Increasing participation and engagement - All our children and young people will be encouraged to be involved in the planning, provision and delivery of services and their rights respected

Priority 2 of the plan reflects the actions required to support the Local Child Poverty Action Plan and comply with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. An extract is shown below.

Improving health and well-being and reducing inequalities

What we will do

1. **Play a key part in the development of the Scottish Borders Child Poverty action plan - leading to changes in practice across all partners that impact on the drivers of child poverty**

How will we know

A range of measures will be developed by the Leadership Group eg.

- **Progress in implementing the Child Poverty Action Plan**

7.3 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

In the Scottish Borders £1.79 million was allocated to schools in 2019-20. Allocations were based on the number of pupils claiming Free School Meals. For each eligible pupil the school received £1,200. Two schools in the Scottish Borders did not receive any funding. Two schools received over £90,000. Headteachers must use the fund to provide additional and targeted

support for all pupils affected by poverty regardless of their attainment status. Their choice of intervention should be based on evidence of what works in raising attainment.

Two Attainment Officers (AO) continued their roles in supporting schools with their plans for the use of PEF. This has included supporting an analysis of needs, identification of appropriate interventions and designing plans to measure the impact of each intervention. The AO's meet regularly with Headteachers, clusters and school teams to provide support and plan next steps. This has been supported by an Improvement Advisor from Scottish Government.

In the Scottish Borders schools have focused on providing additional support to pupils who are in receipt of free school meals and clothing grant, are care experienced or previously care experienced and those who are disadvantaged by poverty.

What are SBC schools using PEF for?

Almost all schools have identified the key areas of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing as the focus of their interventions. Depending on the needs and resources available, schools are delivering one or more of these areas.

In Literacy there are interventions at all stages of school. These include support in developing speech and language, early reading and writing skills, reading strategies and reading comprehension. There are a significant number of literacy interventions which support pupils who are currently attaining well below expected levels.

In Numeracy interventions are targeted at those pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, who are not attaining at expected levels and who are not on track to achieve. There is a focus on basic numeracy skills and skills for life.

In Health and Wellbeing schools are addressing the social and emotional wellbeing of pupils by providing nurture groups, 1-1 mentoring, wider experiences and therapeutic groups. These are often provided alongside support in literacy and numeracy.

The Jedburgh Schools Cluster secured one of three places in the finals of the Community Learning and Development Category of the 2020 Scottish Education Awards. The PEF fund supported the work carried out which has focused on initiatives to improve health and wellbeing. (See Appendix 1(e))

The poverty related attainment gap in Scottish Borders Council has been narrowed in the last year in the following areas:

- P4 Listening and Talking, by 6% points
- P4 Reading, by 3% points
- P4 Writing, by 4% points
- P7 Listening and Talking, by 15% points
- P7 Reading, by 8% points
- P7 Reading, by 15% points
- P7 Numeracy, by 10% points

7.4 Housing Needs and Aspirations of Young People

The Housing Needs and Aspirations of Young People in the Scottish Borders Study was developed throughout 2018 and the findings and report were finalised in April 2019.

The focus of this work has been on the housing needs and aspirations of young people aged

between 16 and 34 years. The study has been undertaken to support the vision of the Local Housing Strategy 2017-22 in that “every person in the Borders lives in a home which meets their needs”. It also supports the priorities in the Integrated Children and Young People’s Plan 2018-21, particularly priorities 2 and 3.

A progress report on the first year has been produced including key highlights and significant achievements in 2019/20, as well as key developments for the year ahead. Some of these actions are:

- Engage with transport initiatives and seek to link with housing to maximise impact e.g. Explore opportunities to subsidise first months travel for new Modern Apprentices at Scottish Borders Council
- Develop and implement the private rented sector strategy to improve access to and quality in the private rented sector.
- Work with community councils and other community representatives to consider whether there is interest and capacity within communities to enable new community led housing development
- Review model of access to social housing in Scottish Borders across all providers to minimise time in temporary accommodation and achieve Rapid Rehousing

7.5 Best Start Grants

The Scottish Borders has one of the highest application success rates in the country for Best Start Grants. This has recently been praised by the Local Area Partnership Manager who believes that the excellent network we have in the Borders, facilitated by the advice/information given to all of the midwives, early years centres and other groups has contributed to this success. This has resulted in **£429,889 extra money for Borders parents**.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-grant-and-best-start-foods-high-level-statistics-to-31-march-2020/>

7.6 Employability and Skills

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) invested around £3.2M in the Scottish Borders in 2018/19. This contributed to the area’s inclusive growth and productivity through investment in skills.

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/46316/sdsspend-scottish-borders-1819.pdf>

8. Food Support for children and young people

To complement our universal services and provide additional support, a range of targeted services for children and young people are commissioned and delivered through statutory and third sector services.

Generic Youth Work (7 providers across the Borders) is a sustainable model which offers consistency of access to quality Youth Work services in addition to and supporting positive life choices, equality & inclusion with a focus on targeted work to support the most vulnerable young people. Part of their work includes food related activities which contribute to the Child Poverty Agenda and are offered to children and young people attending the youth group settings, mainly for free. Examples include:

- Teas for primary school children
- Dinner for high school pupils

- Cooking Courses e.g. One pot cooking, soup making
- Free breakfast and lunch attached to holiday programmes in half term, Easter and Summer.
- Christmas opening for distribution of food bags and Christmas gifts (23.12.19 to 25.12.19)
- Lunch time Community Café
- Free monthly Community Curry Nights
- Supply high school breakfast club with cereals
- Cook and offer food on drop-in nights
- Distribute left over food from local shops
- Cook a communal meal for all young people to sit down to together on an evening session.

9. Scottish Borders Challenge Poverty Event – October 2019

A Challenge Poverty Event was held in October 2019 as part of the annual Challenge Poverty Week. The event was well attended with 36 participants including young people. A range of topics were discussed and speakers from The Poverty Alliance and Home Energy Scotland, as well as Local Authority and NHS Staff gave insightful presentations. The programme for the event is at Appendix 1(f).

2020-2021 Action Plan

The Local Authority and Health Board response to COVID-19 is already underway and a top priority for both organisations. Future planning of and the delivery of child poverty actions are being considered as part of this response and the Community Planning Partnership's Recovery & Renewal Plan 2020/21 recognises the importance of child poverty and the deepening issues arising as a result of COVID-19. The Child Poverty Planning Group recently met to discuss high level actions for the 2020/21 Action Plan and the group is in the process of developing the plan. The Group provides regular update reports to the Community Planning Strategic Board and will seek approval for the finalised 2020/21 Action Plan in November 2020.

The Improvement Service recently published a paper entitled '**Coronavirus: Considering the Implications for Child Poverty: Supporting local authorities and health boards to consider what steps they can take to respond effectively**' and seeks to support local authorities and health boards to draw out the impact of COVID 19 in relation to child poverty specifically. The paper sets out key messages which will be considered in the development of the Action Plan:

- Children already living in poverty are likely to experience a greater impact of COVID 19, with potential for child poverty to become more ingrained. For already vulnerable families, the situation is likely to further compound family stress and trauma.
- The number of children now likely to experience poverty will increase as a result of either temporary or longer term loss of family income. This in turn will create additional demand on a range of public services including housing, childcare, rights and advice services.
- Without concerted effort, the inequality between children with and without digital resources and other supports is likely to deepen.
- Local bodies should prepare for more children becoming eligible for priority 2 places in nurseries and higher numbers eligible for clothing grants, free school meals and other supports targeted at children. There will also be increased demand from families for support from the Scottish Welfare Fund. It is important for local authorities to consider what more they can do to ensure families in need access the support available and make the best use of increased funding available to them to support families e.g. embedding advice services within childcare and school settings, developing financial inclusion pathways etc.
- Local authorities should consider how the value of existing supports might be increased to help meet the additional pressures low income families are facing – e.g. school clothing grant, free school meals
- Local authorities and others should work to prioritise key activity which will enable and support economic recovery and ensure that the decisions they take are informed by the impact on children in or at risk of poverty.
- Focusing on the key drivers of poverty and building on the work done to prepare the Local Child Poverty Action Report should support plans for preventing and mitigating the impact of higher levels of child poverty.

The Child Poverty Planning Group have identified the following headings for consideration in the 2020/21 Action Plan with further themes still to be added following feedback from a recent workshop:

- Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic including local issues
- Food insecurity, food funds, funding support
- Costs of the school day
- Money worries app
- Connectivity – inspire programme
- Borderlands/city deal/SOSE
- Scottish Borders Strategic assessment – local information

- Scottish Borders ScotPHO Vulnerability index 2020
- Community Assistance Hubs – locality model

Finally, as set out in Local Context above, key priorities which will feature in the Action Plan are:

- Involvement of people with direct lived experience
- Consider how to strengthen and evidence partnership working
- Review how data and evidence is used to measure progress and ensure effective evaluation and monitoring methods are in place.

Conclusion

In accordance with The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, the Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Annual Report for 2019/20 describes the activities undertaken and planned locally to contribute towards Child Poverty targets set out in the Act. These are very important and ambitious targets which are designed to reduce child poverty by 2030. Without intervention and mitigation at both a national and local level, these will be difficult to achieve. Current levels suggest that 1 in 5 Scottish children are affected by child poverty and Local Child Poverty Action Plans must address this.

The Child Poverty Planning Group welcomes the Poverty and Inequality Commission's Review and will act accordingly to reflect their recommendations going forward. Also the key messages from the Improvement Service paper 'Coronavirus: Considering the Implications for Child Poverty: Supporting local authorities and health boards to consider what steps they can take to respond effectively' are invaluable to the Group. The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index, the Integrated Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2021 and the continuation of Scottish Government PEF Funding will all assist the Local Authority, Health Board and partners to continue to develop plans to address child poverty in the Scottish Borders.

Good progress has been made as set out in this Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Annual Report for 2019/20 and we will continue to raise the profile of child poverty as we develop the Action Plan for 2020/21, particularly recognising the impact of COVID-19 through the Community Planning Partnership's Recovery and Renewal Plan.