

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

Local Child Poverty Action Plan 2024 - 2026

Annual Report for 2024-25

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1. Executive Summary

This annual report presents Dumfries and Galloway's progress in delivering the Local Child Poverty Action Plan 2024 – 2026, highlighting the collective efforts made over the past year (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025) to reduce child poverty across the region.

Despite the persistent challenge that more than one in four children in Dumfries and Galloway continue to grow up in poverty, this year's report demonstrates that progress is being made.

Of note:

- The **rate of child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway in 2023-24 is now 22.7%¹**. This equates to 5,672 children and young people living in poverty in Dumfries and Galloway.
- This is a **reduction of 4.2%** on the previous year (2022-23 was 26.9%). In the previous year 6,841 children and young people were living in poverty in Dumfries and Galloway, so this is a reduction of 1,169 on the previous year.
- Dumfries and Galloway now has the 15th highest rate; it was previously 8th highest.
- Dumfries and Galloway is one of 10 local authority areas to see a reduction in child poverty in 2023-24.
- The Dumfries and Galloway rate is now lower than when records began in 2015 when the rate was 23.3%.
- Enhanced cross-sector collaboration to address the root causes of poverty.
- Delivery of targeted interventions that support families facing multiple disadvantages.

This report also features case studies that illustrate the real-world impact of our approach from early parental engagement to employability support and the difference it makes when services work together to support families holistically.

Poverty in Dumfries and Galloway may look different in each community but its effects are universally damaging. However, poverty is not inevitable. With the right decisions, partnerships, and continued commitment, we can work to ensure that every child in Dumfries and Galloway has the fair start in life they deserve.

“We must be bold in our ambition and relentless in our delivery.”

Convener, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, Scottish Parliament

¹ [Child Poverty Statistics 2025 - End Child Poverty](#)

2. Legislative Context

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out statutory targets for the Scottish Government to significantly reduce child poverty by 2030. Under the Act, local authorities and NHS boards are required to work collaboratively to produce and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR).

3. Strategic Commitment

Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership is committed to working together to eliminate child poverty, as stated in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (2023–2033). Our vision of a confident, ambitious, healthier and fairer Dumfries and Galloway for everyone who lives and works here supports this commitment.

This includes collaborative effort and targeted interventions via the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership with key contributions to address root causes from our Community Learning and Development Plan and the Local Employability and Skills Partnership Delivery Plan.

4. Alignment with National Strategy: Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026

The Dumfries and Galloway Child Poverty Action Plan aligns closely with the Scottish Government's national strategy, *Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022–2026*.

Our local action plan shares its strategic framework with Best Start, Bright Futures with the plan explicitly adopting these three nationally recognised drivers of child poverty as its core structure:

1. Increasing income from employment
2. Reducing the cost of living
3. Increasing income from social security benefits and benefits in kind

The national strategy emphasises whole system approaches, community empowerment and inclusive policy making which are reflected in the four enabling actions within the Plan. National data is used to identify and tailor local interventions which support the six priority family groups and the Scottish Government call for local leadership and accountability in tackling child poverty is reflected by the embedding of the plan within our Community Planning Framework.

5. Child Poverty in Dumfries and Galloway

Overview – Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2023/4

Annual data from the *End Child Poverty Coalition*² and the *Centre for Research in Social Policy* (University of Loughborough) provides insight into child poverty across the UK. This data is based on family income after housing costs and focuses on children aged 0 –16 years. It should be noted that the data is to be treated with some caution due to small sample sizes.



Key Findings

- The current rate of 22.7% is lower than the 2015 baseline of 23.3%
- Dumfries and Galloway is one of 10 local authority areas to see a reduction in child poverty in 2023-24
- There is an overall lower rate of child poverty in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK, in part due to devolved policies
- The report finds that there is a strong correlation between child poverty and the number of children affected by the two-child limit. The two-child limit restricts support in universal credit to two children in a family. According to CPAG³ this leaves families without means-tested support for their third and subsequent children worth £3514 a year.
- The data emphasises how difficult it is to shift long standing geographical patterns

² [Local-indicators-of-child-poverty-after-housing-costs_2025_final-1.pdf](#)

³ [The two-child limit: our position | CPAG](#)

Trend over time

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022-23	2023/24
23.3%	25.3%	24.8%	26.4%	25.0%	26.7%	22.9%	26.0%	26.9%	22.7%

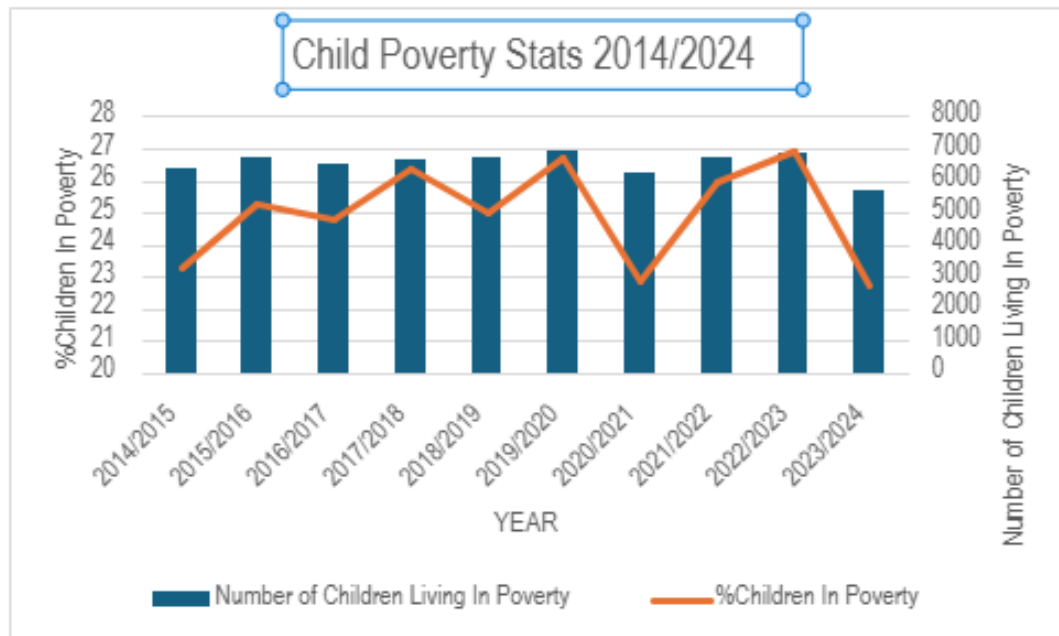


Table and Chart 1: Child Poverty Statistics for Dumfries and Galloway (published June 2024) – End Child Poverty Coalition/University of Loughborough.

Geographical Patterns

Department of Work and Pensions provides data on the number and percentage of children living in relative and absolute low-income families. Chart 2 shows the geographical variation across Dumfries and Galloway ward areas in 2023-24:

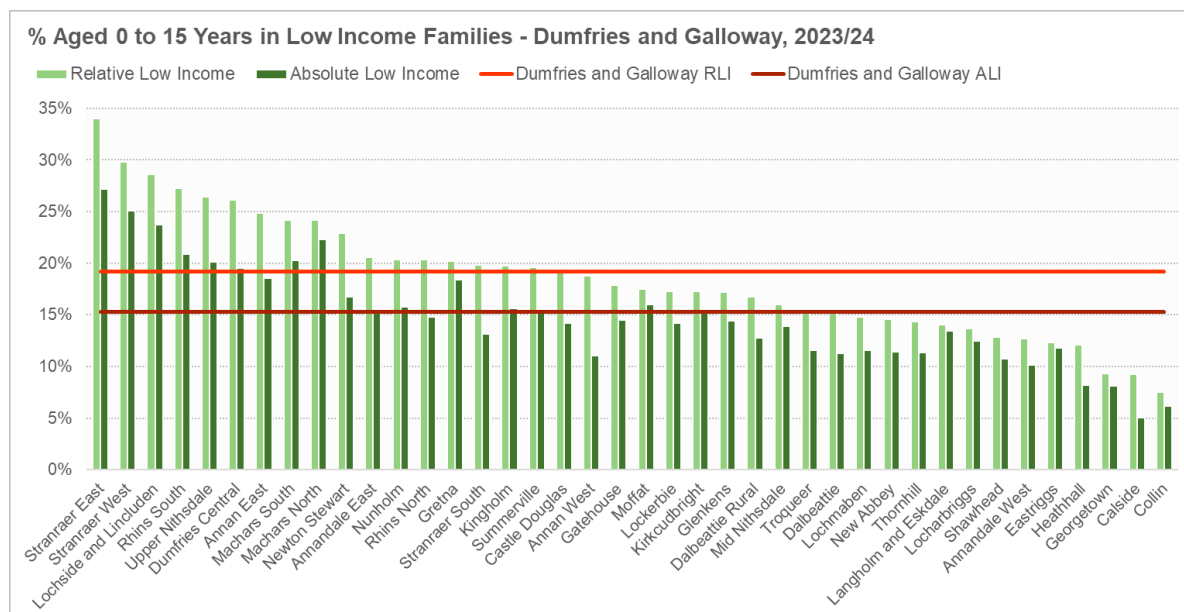


Chart 2 Percentage of children aged 0-15 years in absolute and relative low-income families in Dumfries and Galloway⁴

⁴ Source: Department for Work and Pensions. Children in Low Income Families.

6. Annual Report 2024-25

This annual report provides an update on progress within the year 2024 - 2025 to the Local Child Poverty Action Plan 2024 - 2026 (hereafter referred to as the Action Plan).

Objectives of the Action Plan

- To develop, deliver, and manage, in partnership, strategic and operational activities that focus on reducing child poverty in Dumfries and Galloway.
- To reduce the number of children living in poverty and mitigate the impact of poverty for low-income families.

2024 – 2025 delivery

During 2024-2025 the previous 57 actions were evaluated and the Local Child Poverty Action Report published in October 2024 summarised the status of those actions:

Complete	51
In progress, on schedule	2
In progress, not on schedule	1
Not started	0
Superseded	3

Following this review, a refocused Action Plan was developed through a partnership approach involving the Child Poverty Sub-Group, Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service, while taking account of the views of children and young people shared as part of the ‘Big Question’, ‘Through Young Eyes’ and other local and national engagement activity.

The Action Plan for 2024-2026 contains 12 actions structured around the three recognised key drivers of Child Poverty: with five enabling and supporting actions. The Plan outlines key actions to be delivered across services and partner organisations. It recognises the significant work already underway across the region that contributes, directly or indirectly, to tackling child poverty. The plan does not seek to duplicate existing efforts but rather to build upon them, identifying areas for further development and collaboration.

At the end of 2024 - 2025 the status of the new action plan was:

Action	Status
Increasing income from employment	3/4 on track
Reducing the cost of living	5/6 on track
Increasing income from Social Security benefits/benefits in kind	2/2 on track
Enablers and supporting action	5/5 on track

7. Progress and Future Direction

Appendix one details progress and updates across the 17 actions with three case studies which give a snapshot of work being delivered across the region.

Key successes

- Annual increases in the number of parents registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline **from 193 parents in 23-24 to 421 parents in 24-25 (an increase of 118%)**
- Annual increases in parents from the priority families registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline:

Priority Group	23-24	24-25	Increase
Lone Parents	77	164	113%
Child with disability	21	43	105%
Ethnic minority	21	49	133%
Child younger than 1	13	23	77%
Parent with a disability	17	43	153%
Young parent	13	34	162%
3+ children	38	83	118%

- Annual increases in parents registered and receiving support as part of DG Works progressing into employment, work experience, volunteering, education and self-employment. – from 38 in 23/24 to 90 in 24/25 an increase of 137%
- Opening of Stranraer and Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Employability HUBs
- 31 families and 81 young people supported by whole family support (case study 2)
- Delivery of 166 affordable homes through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan
- Community Midwives are using the Financial and Welfare advice pathway by referring to Citizen's Advice. There have been 23 women referred to CAB.

Next steps

In 2024-25 positive progress has been made across most actions and in terms of refining and streamlining the local child poverty action plan and reviewing the direction of the Child Poverty subgroup through Service Design. Further partnership improvement work is planned to consolidate that progress and further develop the enabling and supporting actions with a focus on realistic measures and a responsive but not reactive partnership approach all building on the voice of lived experience

For 2025-26 work will also be undertaken to refresh and renew the Child Poverty subgroup enabling a focus on impact and building on the themes identified by the group during a service design workshop: Direction, Partnership, Resources, Roles, Rurality and Humanity. This work will be supported by and aligned with a Dumfries and Galloway Fairer Futures Partnership. This programme will support locally led, place based and targeted tests of change to tackle child poverty with a view to scaling and spreading successful approaches across Dumfries and Galloway.

APPENDIX ONE: CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN FOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY 2024 – 2026: Annual Report 2024-25

Area of Work	Action		Measure of Success	Timescale	Update 31/03/25			
Increasing income from employment - Making employment work for families								
1. Increasing income from employment	Utilising the funding available to DG Local Employability and Skills Partnership to develop and commission services via DG Works to support parents to gain and progress in employment.	1.1	Annual increases in the number of parents registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline.	Mar-25 Mar-26		23-24	24-25	Increase
					1.1 Parents registered	193	421	118%
		1.2	Annual increases in parents from the priority families registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline.		1.2 Priority Group	23-24	24-25	Increase
					Lone Parents	77	164	113%
					Child with disability	21	43	105%
					Ethnic minority	21	49	133%
					Child younger than 1	13	23	77%
					Parent with a disability	17	43	153%
					Young parent	13	34	162%
					3+ children	38	83	118%
1.3	Annual increases in parents registered and receiving support as part of DG Works progressing into employment, work experience, volunteering, education and self-employment.		1.3 Parents outcomes	38	90	137%		

2. Place-based employability programmes	Develop learning from the place-based employability pathfinders to identify improved employment related child poverty reductions in targeted communities. Deliver the action from the service design work in Stranraer and Upper Nithsdale including:	2.1	Deliver two events in each community per year to raise awareness of employability support to communities, particularly parents.	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26
		2.2	Open an Employability Hub in Stranraer town centre and Hillview Leisure Centre	Mar-25	- Stranraer Employability HUB opened in November 24 working with Stranraer Development Trust to support - Kelloholm HUB opened in February 25 working with Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Development Trust
		2.3	Monitor community engagement with the Employability Hubs	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26
		2.4	Annual increases in the number of parents from the target communities registered on and receiving support as part of the DG Works pipeline	Mar-25 Mar-26	- Stranraer 18% - Nithsdale 12% Growth aligns with targeted outreach efforts
		2.5	Direct delivery of employability programmes in the community	Mar-25 Mar-26	- Both hubs are offering ongoing skills training provided by external partnerships. - Volunteering opportunities are in place through a community café model
		2.6	Deliver service design led, community engagement in Annan and Lochside and Lincluden in 2025/26	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26

3. NHS Employability (NHS as an Anchor Organisation)	Scope opportunity to develop an NHS D&G Employability programme focused on placements leading to positive job outcomes within the NHS for identified child poverty priority groups (or embed employability support for child poverty priority groups within wider employability programmes)	3.1	Employability programme in place and number of ring-fenced placements offered	Mar-25 Mar-26	Funding has been secured for an NHS anchor role from the Local Employability and Skills Partnership. The priority ask from the LEP was to support Project Search and placements for lone parents as one of the main groups affected by child poverty. This project has been delayed due to recruitment timelines, and the role is due to commence in 2025/26.
4. Deliver targeted support to households with a disabled family member	To align work to reduce the regions Disability Employment Gap and Child Poverty by delivering dedicated support to households with a disabled family member. Including: Disabled Young People – Whole Family Support	4.1	60 young people per year supported to enter into positive destination	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26. NB to date: <u>Support for Disabled Children and Families:</u> 118 referrals 96 families engaging with support 22 young people have been involved in volunteering or work experience 7 young people have started training/education lasting less than 6 months (PACE/STAR/ life skills) 33 young people have been supported into a positive destination
	Disabled Family Support Project (pilot) - Wigtownshire	4.2	20 families engaged in early intervention work		This programme has ceased due to the provider being unable to deliver

	Engagement and Support for individuals with disabilities Supported Employment	4.3	Annual increase in the number of people with disabilities registered and receiving support as part of DG Works progressing into employment, work experience, volunteering, education and self-employment		– to be reported for 2025/26
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Reducing the cost of living					
5. Housing	Deliver 166 new affordable homes in 2024- 2025 as part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022-2027	5.1	Number of new homes delivered in 2024-2025	Mar-25	166 new homes delivered
	Deliver additional affordable homes through the ongoing delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022-2027	5.2	Number of new homes delivered	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26
6. Free School Meal Expansion	Deliver expansion of Free School Meals to P6 and P7 children whose parents receive Scottish Child Payment benefits	6.1	Number of P6 and P7 children in receipt of Free School Meals	Aug-25	- As a result of data share from Social Security Scotland, an additional 516 children were successfully awarded free school meals, demonstrating the value of data sharing in improving uptake and targeting support effectively. - The largest impact seen of additional pupils in one school was 56, with 86 separate schools seeing at least 1 additional recipient. - Pilot authorities are currently working with to expand this further, with Scottish Government aiming to expand this provision to include S1-S3 pupils.
		6.2	Capital funding from Scottish Government spent		
7. Reducing home energy and fuel costs	Develop and implement new and specific actions with all Energy Advice Services	7.1	Increase in number of families accessing energy advice and receiving support to reduce fuel costs	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26. NB: 3,568 individuals were given advice and support 595 individuals were reconnected after Self Disconnection - Over 2,000 Emergency Energy Vouchers were issued £157,898 of Fuel Debt reduction 513 referrals between agencies 40 Homes supported via Winter Warmth Project and provided with £150 of Solid Fuel supplies.

8. Access to Transport	Develop and implement new and specific actions with Transport providers which reflect the needs of families living in poverty	8.1	TBC	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26
9. Study Space	Map and thereafter promote availability of study spaces for children and young people across Council and partner facilities, including schools and Customer Services facilities	9.1	Number of children accessing study spaces	Mar-25	– to be reported for 2025/26. NB: - A variety of arrangements exist across secondary school clusters including both supervised and un-supervised study opportunities on the lead up to exam time. - Customer Service Centres have dedicated study spaces which are accessible during opening times. Larger branches offer additional study space in their activity rooms in the lead up to exam time. All Customer Service Centres have free Wifi to accommodate bring your own device, young people do not need to be Library members to access this. There is also access to free public access PCs for online study. - These opportunities will be promoted as part of the upcoming Challenge Poverty Week and again in the lead up to exam time
10. School Age Childcare	Scope school-age childcare landscape locally in advance detailed delivery plan to be published by Scottish Government in 2025-26	10.1	Understanding of potential demand and potential models of additional delivery which could be tested locally	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26 NB: - Scottish Government plan to develop a more detailed delivery plan in 2025-26 setting out what a targeted school age childcare offer will look like for families within communities and providing a clear timescale for delivery. No further information has been received from SG at this time. - Initial scoping was undertaken as part of the Council's asymmetric week consultation.

Increasing income from Social Security Benefits and Benefits in-kind					
11. Partnership working to increase uptake of benefits	Develop and undertake bespoke benefit awareness campaigns based on low benefit uptake data	11.1	Increase in number of people accessing benefits	Ongoing	- The D & G Poverty and Inequalities Partnership Sub-Group 2 is continuing to deliver and develop a joint Project which directly increases the Benefit Uptake of both Free School Meals and the linked School Uniform Grant Benefits. - Results for 2024/2025 are due to be received shortly.
	Explore the potential to develop a supports and services leaflet which could be included in 'Birth Registration Packs' issued to parents following the registration of a birth	11.2	Increase in number of new parents being signposted to benefits advice and support	Mar-25	This project has not yet been progressed due to potential duplication and will be reviewed in 25/26
	Explore current provision and the opportunity to present business case to possibly procure an online Benefit Checker for front-line staff who work with families and with accessibility to the public, if deemed necessary	11.3.1	Number of staff trained to use the Benefit Checker	Mar-25	The online benefit check has not yet been procured due to technical issues/concerns. Work is continuing in 25/26 in relation to this.
		11.3.2	Number of Benefit Checks completed		

12. Financial Wellbeing and Advice in Health and Social Care Settings	Review and ensure financial advice referral pathways within Maternity Services is meeting service and family needs	12.1	Financial and welfare advice referral pathway being routinely used and monitored	Mar-25	• 23 women were referred from Maternity Services to D&G Citizen’s Advice Bureau.																								
		12.2	Number of referrals from Maternity Services to advice providers and amount of additional monies reaching families																										
Deliver Financial Wellbeing Project utilising funding from the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund awarded by Scottish Government.		12.3	H&SCP/D&G Citizens Advice Service Families Financial Wellbeing Project is delivered, and outcomes are routinely reported	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26. NB: <table><tr><td></td><td>Target</td><td>Oct - Dec 2024</td><td>Jan - Mar 2025</td></tr><tr><td>No of individual Advice Sessions</td><td>350</td><td>65</td><td>150</td></tr><tr><td>Priority Group Clients</td><td></td><td>21</td><td>51</td></tr><tr><td>Client Financial Gains</td><td>£150,000</td><td>£62,027</td><td>£38,173</td></tr><tr><td>Awareness Raising Sessions</td><td>40</td><td>1</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>Priority Referrals Addressed</td><td>40</td><td>15</td><td>22</td></tr></table>		Target	Oct - Dec 2024	Jan - Mar 2025	No of individual Advice Sessions	350	65	150	Priority Group Clients		21	51	Client Financial Gains	£150,000	£62,027	£38,173	Awareness Raising Sessions	40	1	14	Priority Referrals Addressed	40	15	22
			Target			Oct - Dec 2024	Jan - Mar 2025																						
		No of individual Advice Sessions	350			65	150																						
		Priority Group Clients				21	51																						
Client Financial Gains	£150,000	£62,027	£38,173																										
Awareness Raising Sessions	40	1	14																										
Priority Referrals Addressed	40	15	22																										
12.4	Satisfaction feedback from clients																												
12.5	Number of referrals and amount of additional monies reaching families																												
Promote the NHS D&G/H&SCP Staff Financial Wellbeing Project and ensure its outcomes are reported		12.6	NHS D&G/H&SCP Staff Financial Wellbeing Project is delivered, and outcomes are routinely reported	Ongoing	Data is provided for the duration of the project from March 2023 – March 2025 is as below Over the 2-year period this project: - Engaged 153 staff members and supported 152 individuals directly - Delivered £250,691.14 in financial gains for 92 staff																								
		12.7	Number of referrals and amount of additional monies reaching staff and their families																										

Enablers and supporting action					
13. Lived experience	Develop and implement new ways to engage and involve young people and priority groups with the lived experience of poverty, building upon approaches used in Youth Work Services, Employability, Skills and Partnerships Service and other areas.	13.1	Participation programmes in place Increase in the number of people (especially young people) engaged with decision-making	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26. NB: Through Young Eyes is a powerful, youth-led film project that highlights the impact of poverty on children and young people across Dumfries and Galloway. Supported by the Youth Work Service, the film was developed and directed by young people with lived experience and gives a voice to their stories and sheds light on the real challenges faced by families in our region. - The film has already made a significant impact. It has been screened at two dedicated events for professionals, each followed by an expert panel discussion, giving audiences the opportunity to reflect on the realities of poverty and to identify gaps in current services. It has also been shared more widely, including with the Scottish Minister for Public Health during a ministerial visit to the region.
	Support the DG Works Lived Experience Panel to invest 2-5% of No One Left Behind Child Poverty annual funding using a Participatory budgeting model.	13.2	Monitoring the impact of the investment on target programmes/projects.	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26. NB: In pilot year 2024/25 total funding distributed was £16,816 across eight successful applicant focused on those priority areas identified within the Local Employability and Skills Partnership investment plan.
14. Data-driven	Develop and agree a local data set for Child Poverty to ensure consistency of data reporting across partnerships and inform future delivery	14.1	Data reported is consistent and is routinely being used to inform delivery of actions	Mar-26	This project will be progressed as part of the Fairer Futures Partnership programme where a child poverty dashboard will be commissioned which will be published and available for all organisations to use to support delivery and inform funding bids

15. Partnership Working	Link with the 4 Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Groups to map and ensure alignment of actions and ensure maximum use of resources with no duplication of action	15.1	Evidence of aligned actions across the 4 Poverty and Inequalities Sub	Mar-26	Linking with the four Poverty and Inequalities Sub-Group Leads will be completed during 2025 / 2026 to ensure that each of the Sub-Groups continues to deliver their agreed actions plans without duplication
	Work with local Anchor Organisations to ensure child poverty action is included and embedded within Anchor Action Plans	15.2	Evidence of references and connections to child poverty in Anchor Plans	Jun-25	The NHS Anchor organisation plan for 25/26 aligns with and does not duplicate work of the Child Poverty Action plan. It contains actions to look at how the NHS uses employment, procurement and land and assets to support the local economy
	Work with Locality Hubs to explore how child poverty action can be included within local Place Plans (broadly this could include actions in relation to places and space, housing, food, mental health and wellbeing)	15.3	Evidence of references and connections to child poverty in Local Place Plans	Jun-25	– to be reported for 2025/26.
16. Communication and Awareness	Deliver a new communication campaign aimed at managers, front-line staff and service providers to promote understanding of what child poverty means and looks like in Dumfries & Galloway	16.1	Communication Plan in place and being delivered	Jun-25	– to be reported for 2025/26.

	Social media campaign of supports available to families to help with the cost of living as part of Challenge Poverty Week	16.2	Number of communications raising awareness of supports available	Oct-25	– to be reported for 2025/26. In 2024-25 full details are available from Challenge Poverty Week 2024 Dumfries and Galloway Council
	Ensure child poverty is a key feature within Challenge Poverty Week campaigns	16.3	Number of references to child poverty within Challenge Poverty Week campaigns		– to be reported for 2025/26.
17. Building capacity	Deliver a programme of bespoke poverty/child poverty awareness sessions for Public and Third Sector Organisations	17.1	Number of awareness sessions delivered and number of individuals attending	Mar-26	– to be reported for 2025/26.

CASE STUDIES

LIFT D&G Brings Hope and Healing to Vulnerable Families Across Dumfries and Galloway

A local initiative is making a powerful difference in the lives of vulnerable families across Dumfries and Galloway. Thanks to dedicated funding, the **LIFT D&G project** has been able to offer short breaks, emotional support, and community engagement opportunities to children, young people, and their families—many of whom are facing significant challenges.

At the heart of this success is a **community caravan**, located on a local site, which has become a sanctuary for over **450 individuals** this season alone. Families referred to LIFT often face complex issues such as poverty, neglect, domestic abuse, poor mental health, and isolation. Through the caravan, LIFT provides a safe and nurturing environment where families can reconnect, relax, and begin to heal.

The project's impact is far-reaching:

- **Short breaks** are offered free of charge, with transport, food, clothing, and activity packs all provided—removing barriers that often prevent families from accessing respite.
- **Mental health and wellbeing support** is embedded in the community, with LIFT staff engaging through local shops and creative outreach at the community cabin.
- **Early intervention** is key, with LIFT working closely with schools and early years settings to identify children on the edge of care and provide timely support.

Groups supported this year include:

- Residents from **Voyage Care Home**, all with additional needs.
- A **Kinship Care Group** supporting 15 families.
- Families from **local primary schools** in NW Dumfries.
- **Local families** identified through LIFT's community engagement.

The outcomes speak volumes. Families report improved mental health, stronger relationships, and a renewed sense of hope. Children benefit from outdoor play, creative expression, and the calming effects of being near the sea—what researchers call “**blue health**”, the therapeutic power of water.

“Watching the waves, breathing in the sea air, and simply being together has helped us more than we ever imagined,” said one parent. “We feel seen, supported, and safe.”

As LIFT continues to grow, its mission remains clear: to **tackle poverty, reduce the number of children in care, and build resilient families** through compassion, creativity, and community.

Direct Payments Project Empowers Young Person to Overcome Barriers and Build Confidence

A young person from Dumfries and Galloway has experienced a transformative boost in confidence and wellbeing thanks to support from the **Direct Payments to Vulnerable Young People** project.

Living with mum and two younger siblings, the young person faced financial hardship that impacted their school attendance, mental health, and social inclusion. As a single parent working a minimum wage job, the family struggled to afford essentials like winter clothing and school supplies.

Through engagement with the **Youth Work service** and the **low-level mental health in schools project**, the young person was supported to access direct funding discreetly ensuring dignity and privacy throughout the process.

Impact at a Glance:

- **Warm winter clothing** provided for the young person and siblings
- **Updated school uniform** after outgrowing previous set
- **Toiletry and stationery kits** to support hygiene and school readiness
- **Confidence boost** through access to basic essentials and youth worker support
- **Secured part-time employment** while continuing education

“I was really embarrassed to tell anyone about my situation... but through talking to my youth worker, I realised they could help. I was able to stay warm during the cold nights and help keep my little brother and sister warm too. I can’t thank you enough for what you’ve done for me.”

These small but meaningful interventions have had a **lasting impact**. The young person now feels more confident amongst their peers, is better equipped for school, and has taken a proactive step by securing a part-time job—helping maintain access to toiletries and other essentials independently.

The project demonstrates how **targeted, compassionate support** can empower young people to overcome stigma, build resilience, and take control of their future.

“This is a great example of how direct payments, combined with trusted relationships through youth work, can make a real difference in a young person’s life,” said a youth worker involved in the project.

The young person continues to receive support through youth work services but currently requires no additional assistance—highlighting the success of early, person-centred intervention.

Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Community Consultation

Following the success of a community consultation approach in Stranraer, the focus shifted to Kirkconnel and Kelloholm as part of ongoing efforts to tackle child poverty.

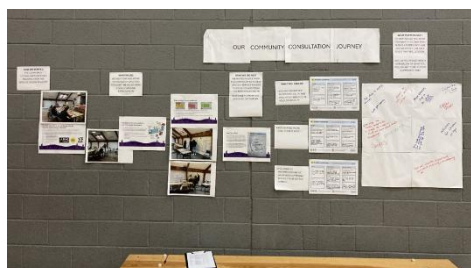
Community Context

- In 2022, there were **228 households with dependent children** and **823 individuals** living in such households in Kirkconnel and Kelloholm.
- The area was home to **387 children aged 0–15** (Source: Scotland’s Census 2022).
- As of February 2024, **132 households** with dependent children were receiving Universal Credit, encompassing **213 children**.

Approach and Methodology

Building on lessons from Stranraer, it was evident that community insights were more authentic and impactful when gathered by trusted, local individuals. Dumfries and Galloway Council, as a DGLEP partner, supported the Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Development Trust (KKDT) in recruiting local consultants to lead the consultation.

Although recruitment posed challenges, a committed team of local volunteers stepped forward and received a full day of training from the **Service Design Academy**. This equipped them with the skills and confidence to conduct a five-week consultation using a variety of methods:



- Face-to-face interviews
- Pop-up events
- Naturally occurring conversations
- QR code surveys
- Questions distributed via school

Key Insights and Themes

The consultation yielded **46 unique insights**, which were analysed with further support from the Service Design Academy. Three core themes emerged:

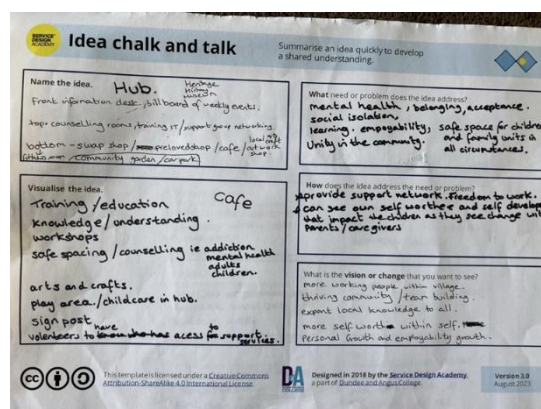
1. **How might we improve access to health and wellbeing services within the community?**
2. **How might we increase childcare places locally?**
3. **How might we ensure equal awareness of services and opportunities across the community?**

Co-Design and Community-Led Solutions

A final co-design day invited the public to explore these themes and co-create solutions. Despite working on separate problem statements, all groups independently proposed a similar solution: a **community hub**.

This hub was envisioned as:

- A welcoming space for social connection, learning, and access to services
- A venue for training and volunteering opportunities, potentially through a community café
- A centralised location for childcare and support services



The community identified **Hillview Leisure Centre** as the preferred site for the hub, expressing a desire for it to be open more frequently and host services that support local needs.

Family Fun and Information Day

To build momentum, the consultants organised a **Family Fun and Information Day** on **17th October** at Hillview Leisure Centre. The event aimed to connect families with relevant organisations and provide free, fun activities during the school holidays, including lunch for all children.

Event Highlights:

- 42 families attended
- 17 organisations participated
- 12 additional contributors
- **Total attendance: 183 people**

Feedback from attendees and organisations was overwhelmingly positive. A visual display titled **“Community Consultation Journey”** showcased the process—from initial questions to community responses and resulting actions. This reinforced the message that the event was shaped by community input and encouraged ongoing involvement in the service design process.

Next Steps

The community consultants remain actively engaged in driving forward the community’s vision for a hub. Work is underway with Hillview staff to explore opening the building during currently unused times and co-locating services to create a **one-stop shop** for Information and support, group activities, Wi-Fi and digital access, opportunities for training and volunteering through a café model. Whatever form the hub takes, the community will remain at its heart.