

*Welcome to Glasgow's Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) 2022/23.*

*Child Poverty is a fundamental driver of inequalities in Glasgow, with the daily distress that not having enough money for your child's welfare brings to every affected family. Whilst the statutory duty to provide this annual report lies with the Health Board and the Local Authority, we continue to be very thankful of the commitment and involvement of many partners (locally and nationally), including the work of communities themselves, to mitigate, prevent and challenge child poverty with us. The third sector are crucial and valued partners in the city's anti-poverty work.*

*Glasgow's third sector is diverse, ranging from very small organisations deeply embedded in a particular community to services provided by large national organisations. What unites the sector is the extent to which it works with people in poverty on a daily basis, via clubs and organised activities, community meals, pantries and other food offerings and provision of advice, advocacy and support services. GCVS's Everyone's Children<sup>1</sup> project, and the Child Poverty Network they run, has been a pivotal point of contact for bringing together the voices of the sector in all its diversity.*

*Our existing partnerships are central to the work we have undertaken over the last year. Building on these we have done more and worked smarter to make real inroads to the significant challenges we face as a city.*

*This year, our LCPAR provides a snapshot of activity undertaken to contribute towards tackling child poverty in Glasgow and the impact these have made. The report's main focus is to describe work underway to better align our strategic approach to child poverty within the city. This will ensure that we maximise our resources to deliver a preventative and early intervention approach to reduce the scale, and extent to which, children, young people and families experience poverty.*

*The ongoing impact of the pandemic, alongside the current cost-of-living crisis, demands and dictates new and radical approaches that make a real and lasting difference for families across our city. It is not good enough to simply react to failure demand and the resultant humanitarian crisis. Although ongoing action to address immediate needs will continue to be required, there has never been a more critical time to rethink our approach. Alongside addressing the continued fragmentation of services across this city, this renewed and committed focus to prevention and early intervention is essential to delivering the ambitious child poverty targets for the city.*

**Jane Grant**

**Chief Executive, NHS GG&C**

**Annemarie O'Donnell**

**Chief Executive, GCC**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gcv.org.uk/policy-networks-overview/everyones-children/>

Tackling child poverty is embedded within the Council's renewed Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup> as one of their key missions, is part of the Health Board's Annual Delivery Plan<sup>3</sup>, and it is core to the new HSCP Strategic Plan<sup>4</sup>. However, it is in our refreshed Integrated Children's Services Plan, the city's joint plan for improving children and young people's wellbeing, that our *shared approach* will be best articulated.

The Integrated Children's Services Plan will be published in September 2023, with much of the preparatory work undertaken in 2022/23. It embeds work to address child poverty as a key focus, articulating a specific priority that '*Children, young people and their families receive flexible support to address the impact of poverty and the Cost of Living crisis*'.

This focus provides an opportunity to ensure strategic oversight of the city's child poverty agenda, to co-ordinate efforts and to maximise all our resources to the best effect. Getting this right will take time but we are making good progress. The new Integrated Children's Services Plan will be overseen by the Children's Service Executive Group on behalf of our Community Planning Partnership and will guide our future actions in relation to tackling child poverty.

During 2022/23, two of our key areas of work have been the development of our Child Poverty Pathfinder and work to grow our Family Support offer.

### **Glasgow's Child Poverty Pathfinder**

Across the public and third sectors in the city, there is a shared recognition of the need for a fundamental shift in our approach to tackling child poverty, resulting in the creation of an innovative Child Poverty Pathfinder. This Pathfinder brings together the local public and third sector, along with the Scottish Government to contribute to the delivery of the national '*Best Start, Bright Futures – Child Poverty Action Plan*'. The Pathfinder, established in early 2022, has agreed a dual focus; reducing child poverty levels, whilst also identifying and addressing systemic barriers to enable prioritisation of prevention and earlier intervention.

Glasgow's Child Poverty Pathfinder will redesign how services are accessed by and delivered to families, address fragmentation of service delivery, and break down siloed working. It will work to reframe how the city uses its funding allocations to deliver better outcomes. This includes how we identify need, how we move people to the services they require, and through systems; as well as how we share information to ensure that our children, young people and families have the best support possible. The Pathfinder will increasingly shift our focus to preventative and early intervention measures to ensure families are supported through early and initial crisis

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/strategicplan>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nhsggc.scot/downloads/nhsggc-board-paper-22-71-annual-delivery-plan-25-october-2022/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/strategic-plan-2023>

or need and onto building resilience and self-management. Moreover, it will redesign our services to prevent the need for crisis intervention at all.

The Pathfinder is piloting a practical '**No Wrong Door test of change**' model in the city, aligned to the relaunch of Getting it Right for Every Child. This will create joins across a currently complicated array of services that operate with limited partnerships to connect families into additional support. Using a No Wrong Door approach will provide improved access to person centred, holistic support, underpinned by a strong network of services that operate collaboratively to ensure that, no matter where somebody first interacts with 'the system' in the city, they receive 'the right support, in the right place, at the right time'. More simply 'when you engage with one of us, you get the best of all of us'.

It is through radical rethinking and radical redesign of services that we have the best opportunities to tackle child poverty. The co-production of this approach, across the third and public sectors, and with families themselves, will ensure that the appropriate joins are made across services and that a shared strengths-based approach is adopted for all our interactions with children, young people and families. This Pathfinder will seek to coordinate tackling childhood poverty and inequality by not only aligning the strategic policy intent, but by ensuring every asset and opportunity in the city is maximised to the advantage of every child, young person, and citizen.

## **Family Support**

Glasgow has a dedicated Family Support strategy<sup>5</sup> and funds access to additional assistance for families in need. The impact of the availability of this support has been independently evaluated demonstrating the enormous value for families. The announcement of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund<sup>6</sup> by the Scottish Government highlights the strategic importance of developing more and more varied supports for families in the city. Detailed work to understand the complexity and scale of change required has been undertaken in partnership with GCVS. As well as mapping<sup>7</sup> the current provision, GCVS also facilitated detailed service design work<sup>8</sup> with families to ensure that our next steps are jointly owned by families themselves.

The Glasgow Promise Partnership (GPP) is an innovative collaboration of third sector organisations, supported by GCVS, along with the Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership. This coordinated approach to service design is focused on the needs and views of families, involving those who use services and a range of partners from Glasgow's third and statutory sectors.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/Family%20Support%20Strategy.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/whole-family-wellbeing-funding/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gcv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FS-Report-2.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gcv.org.uk/blog/glasgow-promise-project-2/>

The project carried out consultation, including detailed interviews with 387 children, young people and families to understand the issues they faced, and their views of services. Families are looking for earlier and more consistent support with fewer barriers to access, better communication between services and professionals, and more information on services that are available. Particular issues raised included;

- Mental health (for parents, young people and children);
- Complex needs, ASN, ASD, disability, respite, transitions;
- Poverty, cost of living, food and fuel poverty, money advice;
- Early intervention, preventative work, local services;
- Support for BME communities, asylum seekers and refugees;
- Employability and skills development; and
- Dads only provisions.

It was clear these issues are inter-connected and poverty weakens family resilience.

*“I have received crisis support and household energy support, I am really struggling to cope financially, and this has been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. My housing and financial situation has taken its toll on my mental health”*

*– Single Parent*

As part of the consultation, 26 parents and young people were involved in work to co-design family support services for the future. Work will continue over the next year, to determine how co-production can help services become more holistic and joined up.

As the Family Support work moves forward, the joins across the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, the Child Poverty Pathfinder and engagement with employability services to deliver on its No-One Left Behind policy<sup>9</sup> will be maximised. This will inform the development of a shared holistic support framework for families that will underpin our city offer.

### **Activity during 2022/23**

As well as a focus on strategic developments, an extensive range of activity was undertaken by our third and public sector partners. The breadth of activity is significant and encompasses both services that tackle the *impact* of poverty as well as those that seek to *prevent* children, young people and families from experiencing this in the first place. Details on this activity is available [here](#). Below are just three insights, one for each of the key drivers for tackling child poverty. These demonstrate not only the diversity of support and the impact directly on children and families, but also the collaboration across the public and third sector to manage and deliver these;

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.employabilityinscotland.com/policy/no-one-left-behind/>

## 1. Income from Employment

Employability support for parents has grown over the last 12 months with full rollout of projects delivered using the Parental Employment Support Fund. This has offered targeted support to parents as well as access to generic and specific employability services. Across Glasgow, we continue to invest in funded initiatives to support families to increase their income from employment.

Initiatives such as the Family Finance Key Workers, who provide individual mentoring to support parents into work, alongside access to training support have played a significant role in improving income from employment. This project alone has supported 60 parents into long term sustainable employment with combined financial gains in earned income of around £1.22m. Over and above this, 90 parents received assistance into education or training of some form.

*Ms A grew up in foster care until she moved in with her grandparents aged eight. She remained in kinship care until she was 18 and now has a two year old son. Ms A reached out to One Parent Family Scotland for support as she wanted to work but was unsure where to start. As well as in need of practical assistance with childcare and access to training and qualifications, Ms A was struggling with her confidence and a lack of support. Working directly with OPFS, Ms A has received regular one to one advice and guidance, as well as group work sessions, to build her self-esteem and confidence as part of the OPFS Preparing For Your Future course. Alongside this, she has participated in Skills Boost sessions to explore apprenticeship options and identify the next steps to securing work within her chosen field of construction. Ms A worked with OPFS to develop the skills to articulate her needs and negotiate appropriate housing support as well as nursery provision to facilitate her return to learning and ultimately into work. She has received practical support to facilitate a move to housing in a better area with a family support network alongside access to food, fuel and clothing assistance. She was also assisted to create a plan to better manage her family budget and avoid future crisis. Ms A has secured a place on a Painting and Decorating course at her local college and is excited about what the future holds.*

*'I wouldn't have thought about going to college, it just didn't feel like an option. But more importantly for me just now, with all of this trying to work stuff out with my house and the nursery, I would have just given up....It is really helping me to know that I have help and that it will all work out for us soon'.*

## 2. Support with the Cost of Living

The challenges faced by low-income families to meet the rising cost of living become even more difficult during the school holidays. Many children rely on their daily school meal and school holidays present an added source of stress. The Glasgow Children's Holiday Food and Activity Programme funds third sector organisations working in their communities to support families to meet these needs. As well as investing in a variety of engaging activities, the programme also ensures that participating children and young people between 0-18 years are provided with nutritious food. In 2022/23 a total

of £2.33m was invested in the programme, providing vital support to 13,150 children and young people during the Easter holidays, 25,837 in the Summer and 8,714 during the October break. For those that took part, often over more than one holiday period, the opportunity to enjoy the ‘normality’ of being young, spending time with their friends in a safe environment and being able to take part in activities they would not otherwise have been able to, was significant, with many reporting increased levels of confidence and skills.

Organisations delivering the Holiday Food and Activity Programme built incredible relationships with families that participated and often became a trusted point of contact. In Summer 2022, the Programme piloted a partnership with Glasgow Helps. Staff were available by telephone and also attended a variety of holiday activity events. Families were signposted directly to Glasgow Helps and information was provided to 686 families during the Summer and 333 families in October. This provided access to support ranging from financial inclusion advice, housing support, and employability assistance, to ongoing cost of living support as well as bespoke matters. The partnership with Glasgow Helps continues outwith the holiday periods and this work will contribute to the development of a ‘No Wrong Door’ approach in the city, ensuring that wherever citizens present, they are able to access the right support at the right time.

*“Knowing my child gets a free full meal and extra snacks is a great form of support as the cost of living becomes tighter and everything is costing more. Learning about healthy food options, as well as building self confidence and being around children her own age builds her self development. The activities that are on offer along with the outings have made a huge impact on my daughter’s confidence and independence. The variety allows my daughter to experience new things that I may not necessarily be able to provide with money being tight in my budget’.*

*“My son really enjoys the activities you provided for the children, it upsets me that I can’t take my son out to do fun things during the summer holidays. I am grateful that he can come along to the club that is free and he is having lots of fun. I don’t need to worry now he is being supplied with his lunch on this day”.*

### **3. Income from Benefits**

Supporting families to access the right benefits for them is one of the ways we are tackling poverty across the city. The introduction of the Scottish Child Payment and the significant uptake of this demonstrates the ongoing level of need in the city. A total of 25,945 applications have been made by families in Glasgow since its introduction with payments valued at £9.6m made so far. We continue to work with colleagues at Social Security Scotland to support citizens to access this and associated benefits as quickly, effectively and efficiently as possible. Over the course of 2022/23, work has progressed to facilitate the sharing and matching of data across key organisations.

We have made significant legal steps towards using this data to maximise benefit take up based on known eligibility.

One of the many ways the city is supporting families to access benefits is by embedding a Welfare Rights service across 84 General Practices in the most deprived communities within the city. This service, funded by the Scottish Government, was established in February 2022 and provides a dedicated advisor one day a week to each practice offering support in relation to money, housing insecurity and ultimately mental health. Not only does this have a positive effect on patient health, it reduces health inequalities and poverty, reduces pressure on practice staff and enhances time for clinical care, enabling advice agencies to work with client groups who would otherwise not engage. In the first year of the service 5,472 people were referred and supported through this service with over £5m in financial gains.

*Ms C is a lone parent with two young children, an EEA National and suffers from depression. At that time she was struggling financially and was only receiving Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit. Her previous entitlement to Maternity Allowance and Housing Benefit had ended. Ms C was supported by an Advisor to request reviews of her Housing Benefit as well as with a mandatory reconsideration when she failed the Habitual Residence Test for benefit purposes. Ms C was supported to access appropriate medical evidence to prove she was temporarily unable to work to submit for her review. At the same time she received immediate assistance with foodbank vouchers, and a crisis grant from the Scottish Welfare Fund to support her and her children.*

*Following a successful review of her situation, Ms C has been supported to access Employment Support Allowance at a rate of £73 per week as well as her Housing Benefit being reinstated. Both of these benefits have also been backdated. Following a work capability assessment, Ms C has been advised that she will continue to receive these benefits in the future. The support that this service provided for Ms C has had a significant impact for the family's mental health and also the family's financial situation. The total financial gain secured for Ms C is £10,953.*

### **What difference have we made?**

In August 2022, our partners at the Centre for Civic Innovation published the third statistical report on the extent of child poverty in Glasgow; '*Child Poverty: Recovering from the Covid-19 Pandemic*<sup>10</sup>'. This report details the level of child poverty in mid 2022 and also, for the first time, its persistence within the city.

Work is underway to complete the fourth report, detailing progress made over the course of the last year. This report will be published in early Autumn. Early analysis shows that whilst there has been some improvements, there is much still to be done, even to return to pre-Covid levels.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=55359&p=0>



# Understanding Child Poverty in Glasgow

The rate of child poverty in Glasgow increased by 2% during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has now fallen to 2020 levels again. The total number of children living in Glasgow has also reduced in this time. **This means fewer children in the city are living in poverty than in 2020 but the rate of poverty remains the same at 24%.**

2020

24%

of children in  
Glasgow in  
poverty

25,485  
children in  
poverty

On average these families were...

£107

per week below  
the Poverty line

2021

On average these families were...  
£115 per week below  
the Poverty line

27,995  
children in  
poverty

26%  
of children in  
Glasgow in  
poverty

2022

26,166  
children in  
poverty

1 ♥  
GLASGOW

On average these families were...  
£117  
Per week below  
the Poverty line

25%

of children in  
Glasgow in  
poverty

2023

24,252  
children in poverty

24%

of children in  
Glasgow in  
poverty

14,387  
children in  
Persistent poverty

On average these families were...

£115

per week below  
the Poverty line



# Understanding Child Poverty in Glasgow priority groups

Priority groups are identified by the Scottish Government as families that are most vulnerable to child poverty. Income from employment is one of the main drivers of poverty. To reduce child poverty in the city, we have to understand the specific challenges that these families face. This data is an important step in understanding how to break down the barriers for families most at risk of experiencing child poverty.

In 2023...

Families with  
one parent

15,526  
children in  
poverty

On average  
these families  
were...  
£113  
per week  
below  
the  
poverty line

9,764  
children in persistent  
poverty

16,142  
Children in  
poverty

In 2020...

On average  
these families  
were...  
£107  
per week  
below the  
poverty line

In 2020...

5,113  
children in  
poverty

On average  
these families  
were...  
£70  
per week  
below the  
poverty line

In 2023...

Families with a  
disability

On average  
these families  
were...  
£85  
per week  
below  
the poverty line

3,334  
children in  
persistent  
poverty

4,403  
children in poverty

Families with  
in work poverty

In 2020...

5,750  
children in  
poverty

£57  
per week  
below the  
poverty line

In 2023...

On average  
these families  
were...  
£62  
per week  
below the  
poverty line

3,820  
children in  
persistent  
poverty

7,436  
children in  
poverty

In 2020...

On average  
these families  
were...  
£112  
per week  
below the  
poverty line

19,736  
children in  
poverty

In 2023...

16,816  
children in poverty

Families with  
no-one in employment

£126  
per week  
below the  
poverty line

Children in  
persistent  
poverty

Significant progress has been made to secure access to the data sets required to interrogate our city's child poverty statistics. This will enable more regular and detailed analysis of the progress being made on tackling child poverty in Glasgow. It will also better inform how we target our focus and shape our services to best effect – both in terms of immediate and preventative investments.

Data also demonstrates that the risk of growing up in poverty is disproportionately higher for families with particular protected characteristics, and escalates with intersectionality.

Disabled people face a higher risk of poverty. Last year in Glasgow we had nearly 5,000 children known to be in poverty in a family with a disability, with three quarters of those children living in persistent poverty. This is driven partly by the often recurring additional costs associated with disability and ill-health, and partly by many disabled parents being less able to access work. Poverty also varies by who is disabled within the family and is especially high where there are both disabled parents and children. During 2022/23 Glasgow Disability Alliance were able to continue the additional work, funded by the council, to offer financial and welfare support to families with a disability. The health board also has a money and debt advice service for families using the Children's Hospital (RHC). As anticipated 46% (110) of the individuals referred to RHC in 2022/23 presented with a disability, particularly in relation to a learning disability, mobility or physical impairment and/or long-term illness.

Poverty rates for ethnic minority groups have also been higher than the white ethnic group for a long time, and poverty rates between ethnic groups vary significantly. Last year 30% of all births in Glasgow were to Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) parents. During 2022/23 the financial advocacy service for vulnerable women during pregnancy received 190 referrals, just under half (45%) were Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) women and 1 in every 5 required an interpreter.

Single parenthood has numerous challenges which compound the disadvantage that those parents and their children live with. The Glasgow Indicators Project reported that nine out of ten single parents are female, that one third have a disability or longstanding illness and that a similar proportion have a child with a disability. One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) completed an evaluation<sup>11</sup> of the impact of their work with families, clearly demonstrating the significant impact and reach of their gender sensitive services.

Scotland's LGBT+ health needs assessment published in 2022 involved a survey with over 2,300 LGBT+ people, with over a quarter of respondents being local to Glasgow. The survey found that most (88%) had financial worries at least some of the time. One in six (18%) had experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months and one in eight (13%) had ever been homeless. 10% of all respondents indicated that they were

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<sup>11</sup> <https://opfs.org.uk/who-we-are/evaluation/evaluation-of-opfs-glasgow-service/>

parents/parenting children under 16 years of age. There is a lot more to be done to understand and address poverty for LGBT+ families and their access to local services. Asking, exposing, understanding and acting to mitigate these differences is essential to reducing child poverty in Glasgow, challenging discrimination and achieving equality. Locally we are not yet able to routinely report poverty or use of anti-poverty services by all protected characteristic groups but are progressively challenging this.

But our data only tells part of the picture. We cannot properly support families out of poverty if we do not understand the reality of living in poverty. During the course of 2022/23, we have continued to **work with families affected by poverty** to inform and shape both our responses and how we work differently to prevent poverty to begin with.

Glasgow refreshed its 'Cost of the School Day' (COSD) programme through the city's New Learning Community networks of nurseries, primary and secondary schools. Four learning communities are trialing the approach first. Each establishment has a designated COSD champion and a programme of training has taken place to inform the action plans.

*"I'm thinking I could identify a wee sub-group of staff, one practitioner from each play room, to evaluate our poverty sensitive practice & consider this training to move forward" (training attendee).*

*"It (child poverty) is present in every setting across the city - positive to see so many establishments working towards change and support"*

As part of Child Poverty Week 2022, Cost of the School Day champions worked with young people in South Glasgow to design and undertake a peer survey. The young people asked about the impact of money on their education, clubs, socialising and home, and what more could be done to address child poverty. A total of 184 young people returned the survey and described a range of general and personal issues for them.

*"I can't do activities that cost money. We are on benefits".*

The survey identified that one in four were worried about the current cost of living crisis, and less than a third knew where to go for help with financial worries. Their experiences and suggestions are informing the refreshed COSD action plans.

Across a range of interactions, families have told us;

- The cost of living keeps rising and benefits are not enough;
- Working does not provide enough to lift them out of poverty;
- Childcare is not accessible or affordable;

- It is difficult to understand what is available and entitlement. This has been made more complicated by the introduction of the new Social Security benefits;
- Proving eligibility for some supports is difficult, especially where photographic identification is required;
- Supports available should be more flexible – e.g. provide cash rather than access or have fewer conditions attached;
- Families do not see themselves represented in the decision makers; and
- There are still gaps in services (addictions, childcare, youth work, housing support, mental health, employment, financial inclusion, disability and complex needs, peer support and loneliness and domestic abuse).

## **Looking Forward**

Our priorities for 2023/24 will be;

- ensuring integration and strategic oversight of our city approach to child poverty, connecting more strongly to the Children's Services Executive Group and therefore the Community Planning structures;
- making sure child poverty is led by our Children's Services Plan and embedded in all our service planning;
- utilising our resources across the CSEG to deliver our shared objectives in relation to child poverty;
- developing our shared data insights to inform how we monitor and measure levels of child poverty in the city;
- building on our engagement with people affected by poverty, to best understand lived experience and use co-production to reshape, join up and improve service development and delivery;
- shifting our focus from crisis response to prevention and early intervention activities including how we utilise our assets (staff, services, funding, buildings);
- building on the pathfinder and the public sector reform agenda to make the necessary system change to support our endeavours to address the levels of child poverty; and
- determining the opportunities that the Verity House Agreement brings to consider funding and sustainability challenges.