

# Public Document Pack



To: Councillor Allard, Convener; Councillor Bouse, Vice Convener; and Councillors Bonsell, Brooks, Clark, Davidson, Graham, Greig, Houghton, Hutchison, McLeod, Mennie and Watson.

Town House,  
ABERDEEN 4 January 2023

## **ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE**

The Members of the **ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Council Chamber - Town House** on **WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2023 at 10.00 am**. This is a hybrid meeting and Members may also attend remotely.

The meeting will be webcast and a live stream can be viewed on the Council's website. <https://aberdeen.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

JENNI LAWSON  
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

## **BUSINESS**

### **DETERMINATION OF URGENT BUSINESS**

1.1 There are no items of urgent business at this time

### **DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS**

2.1 Members are requested to determine that any exempt business be considered with the Press and Public excluded

### **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS OR TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS**

3.1 Members are requested to intimate any declarations of interest or transparency statements

## **DEPUTATIONS**

4.1 There are no requests at this time

## **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

5.1 Minute of previous meeting of 23 November 2022 (Pages 5 - 8)

## **COMMITTEE PLANNER**

6.1 Committee Business Planner (Pages 9 - 12)

## **NOTICES OF MOTION**

7.1 There are none at this time

## **REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

8.1 There are none at this time

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

9.1 Child Poverty Action Plan Annual Statutory Report - CUS/23/011 (Pages 13 - 38)

9.2 Six monthly update on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Work and Pensions - CUS/23/017 (Pages 39 - 56)

9.3 Citizens' Assemblies - CUS/23/012 (Pages 57 - 66)

9.4 Update report on current initiatives including Women's Experience of the Cost of Living Crisis - CUS/23/015 (Pages 67 - 76)

9.5 Clawback of Benefits Payments - CUS/23/016 (Pages 77 - 88)

## **EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

10.1 None at the time of issuing the agenda

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Emma Robertson, [emmrobertson@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:emmrobertson@aberdeencity.gov.uk) or 01224 522499

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## Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

ABERDEEN, 23 November 2022. Minute of Meeting of the ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allard, Convener; Councillor Bouse, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Bonsell, Brooks, Clark, Davidson, Graham, Greig, Hutchison, Kuszniir (as substitute for Councillor McLeod), Mennie, Stewart (as substitute for Councillor Houghton) and Watson.

External Advisers:- Evan Adamson (Instant Neighbour); Dr John Bone (University of Aberdeen); and Maggie Hepburn (Chief Executive of Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. Members were requested to intimate any Declarations of Interest or Transparency Statements in respect of the items on the agenda.

#### The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Convener advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda items 8.1 (Anti-Poverty and Inequality Update) and 8.2 (Report from External Advisers) as he was an appointed representative to Aberdeen Heat and Power, Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) Board and Grampian Regional Equality Council, however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the items;
- (ii) to note that Councillor Brooks advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda items 8.1 and 8.2 as he was founder and Chairman of the TLC Charity which was part of the Trussell Trust family of food banks however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the items;
- (iii) to note that Evan Adamson advised that he had a connection in relation to agenda items 8.1 and 8.2 as he was an employee of Instant Neighbour however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the items; and
- (iv) to note that Dr John Bone advised that had a connection in relation to agenda items 8.1 and 8.2 as he was on the Board of CFINE (the North East Food Bank Consortium) however, having applied the objective test he did not consider that his connection amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the discussion on the items.

## **ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE**

23 November 2022

### **INTRODUCTION FROM CONVENER**

2. The Convener welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Anti Poverty and Inequality Committee. He spoke about the recent Challenge Poverty week and introduced a video presentation that had been made by 12 young people involved at SHMU.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note the Convener's remarks;
- (ii) to note the video presentation; and
- (iii) to note that the video presentation would be circulated to Members.

### **INTRODUCTION TO MEMBERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE LEADS**

3. The Committee received presentations from the Director of Customer Services and Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Empowerment, who provided information on their roles within the Council as well as information relating to the remit of the Committee.

The Convener welcomed the External Advisers to the meeting, who introduced themselves and the organisations they represented.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

to note the information provided.

### **COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER**

4. The Committee had before it the planner of committee business, as prepared by the Chief Officer - Governance.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to instruct the Director of Customer Services, to add the agenda item: Women's Experience of the Cost of Living Crisis to the Planner and bring a report to committee on 11 January 2023 in this regard; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the Planner.

### **ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY UPDATE - CUS/22/250**

5. The Committee had before it a report from Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment that provided an overview of current activity in respect of tackling and alleviating poverty and inequality across Aberdeen, with regard to child poverty, fuel poverty, food, in-work poverty and income and the current cost of living pressures.

## **ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE**

23 November 2022

The Locality Inclusion Manager – Central, responded to questions from members regarding the number of employees covered by the 74 employers headquartered in the city that were Real Living Wage accredited (section 3.19 of the report), a request for a breakdown of the £9.6m budget on various energy efficiency measures including insulation and heating system replacement (section 3.26 of the report) and the scale of funding for the school day, (sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the report), and undertook to circulate further information in this regard.

The Director of Customer Services undertook to circulate a summary update regarding zero hours contracts for Aberdeen City Council, ALEOs and partners; and information on the city gift card.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee note the activities and progress described in the report.

### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to issue a Service Update in respect of library opening hours with regard to warm spaces;
- (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to issue a Service Update in respect of the information being made available to Community Centres with regard to additional sources of funding; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

## **REPORT FROM EXTERNAL ADVISERS - CUS/22/266**

6. The Committee had before it a report from the External Advisers. The report explained that on 13 October 2022, Council had agreed the appointment of five external advisers to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee, with a sixth position being left vacant for now. A request had been made to the external advisers to provide a report on the issues they felt were important for the Committee to address. That report was attached at Appendix 1.

Maggie Hepburn – Chief Executive, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) introduced the report and the External Advisers spoke in furtherance of the report, responding to questions from Members. In respect of a question regarding the Approved Mileage Allowance Payment for volunteer drivers, Ms Hepburn undertook to circulate the information to Members.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee note the report.

### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to welcome the external advisers' report, with recognition and thanks for the ongoing contribution by our external advisers in shaping our work;

**ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE**

23 November 2022

- (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, to produce a report for the next meeting of the committee, providing further information on the clawback of benefits payments by the Council and Department for Work and Pensions;
  - (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to consult with partners and produce a report for the meeting on 8 March 2023 of the committee with demographic information on child poverty, in-work poverty and other forms of poverty in the city; and
  - (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendation.
- **COUNCILLOR CHRISTIAN ALLARD, Convener**



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	<b>ANTI-POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER</b> The Business Planner details the reports which have been instructed as well as reports which the Functions expect to be submitting for the calendar year.								
2	<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Chief Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<b>Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T</b>	<b>Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred</b>
3	<b>11th January 2023</b>								
4	Child Poverty Action Plan Annual statutory report - CUS/23/011	At the meeting of Operational Delivery Committee on 31 August 2022, it was agreed to instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to review the Council's approach to tackling Child Poverty, in conjunction with Community Planning Partners through the Community Planning Aberdeen Anti - Poverty group, and bring a report back to the relevant Committee detailing a refreshed action plan for 2022-2026.		Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	2.1		Transferred from Operational Delivery Committee.
5	Six monthly update on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Work and Pensions - CUS/23/017	At the Council meeting on 13 July 2022 Council resolved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding; to agree that the Co-Leaders of the Council countersign the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Council; and to agree that update reports for the Memorandum of Understanding be submitted on a six-monthly basis to the relevant committee.		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	2.3		
6	Citizen Assemblies- CUS/23/012	The Committee Terms of Reference include Citizens' Assemblies on Poverty and Inequality. This report outlines plans to facilitate Citizen Assemblies on Poverty and Inequality.		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.2		
7	Update report on current initiatives including Women's Experience of the Cost of Living Crisis - CUS/23/015	To provide an update to committee on ongoing initiatives in relation to stigma and discrimination for those experiencing poverty; health and wellbeing of those experiencing poverty, and credit unions and fair and affordable banking and advice services. Committee agreed on 23 November 2022 to instruct the Director – Customer Services, to add the report on Women's Experience of the Cost of Living Crisis to the Planner and bring a report to Committee on 11 January 2023 in this regard.		Derek McGowan/ Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1, 1.9, 1.10, 1.12		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Director	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2									
8	Clawback of benefits payments by the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions - CUS/23/016	Committee agreed on 23 November 2022 to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, to produce a report for the next meeting of the committee, providing further information on the clawback of benefits payments by the Council and Department for Work and Pensions		Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1, 1.6		
9	<b>8th March 2023</b>								
10	Child Poverty Action Plan update	At the Operational Delivery Committee on 13 January 2021, it was agreed that committee receives a half yearly report on the actions being taken by Community Planning Aberdeen to reduce and eradicate child poverty. Last reported to ODC on 31 August 2022.		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1		Transferred from Operational Delivery Committee.
11	Development of an Anti-Poverty strategy	This report will outline an approach to the development of an anti-poverty strategy.		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1		
12	Citizens' Assemblies	This report updates Committee on the plans to facilitate Citizens' Assemblies on Poverty and Inequality.		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.2, 1.3		
13	Demographic information on child poverty, in-work poverty and other forms of poverty in the city	Committee agreed on 23 November 2022 to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to consult with partners and produce a report for the committee meeting on 8 March 2023 to provide demographic information on child poverty, in-work poverty and other forms of poverty in the city.		Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1		
14	Report from External Advisers	To provide an update to committee on ongoing initiatives in relation to research into poverty and inequality.		Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Director	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2									
15	Equality Outcomes Progress Report 2021-2023	To provide an update on the progress achieved at the end of Year 2 of Aberdeen City Council's Equality Outcomes for 2021-25.		Baldeep McGarry	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	2.2		
16	<b>10th May 2023</b>								
17	Supporting People Through the Cost of Living Crisis	At the meeting of Operational Delivery Committee on 31 August 2022, it was agreed to instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to report to a future Committee on the outcomes achieved by the allocation of funds; to instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to report to the relevant committee on the provision of warm spaces within Aberdeen and explore any support that can be provided to communities visiting them; and should additional resources be made available by either the UK or Scottish Government for fuel and the cost of living crisis, to instruct the relevant Chief Officer to report to the relevant committee with options for the best allocation of these funds.		Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1		Transferred from Operational Delivery Committee.
18	Update report on current initiatives	The report will provide an update to committee on ongoing initiatives in relation to food insecurity and fuel poverty, and on funded programmes.		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.8, 1.4		
19	Citizens' Assemblies	To note detailed plans and costs for a Citizens' Assembly (while noting that budget approval would require to be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee).		Derek McGowan/ Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.2, 1.3		
20	<b>21st June 2023</b>								
21	Child Poverty Action Report 2022/23	Agree the submission of Child Poverty Action Plans and Reports to the Scottish Government		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	2.1		
22	<b>30th August 2023</b>								
23	Annual Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual committee effectiveness report		Andy MacDonald		Customer	GD 8.5		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Director	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2									
24	Memorandum of Understanding between Aberdeen City Council and the Department of Work and Pensions on preventing homelessness and improving outcomes	At the Council meeting on 13 July 2022 the Council resolved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); to agree that the Co-Leaders of the Council countersign the MoU on behalf of the Council; and to agree that update reports for the MoU be submitted on a six-monthly basis to the relevant committee.		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	2.3		
25	Child Poverty Action Plan update	At the Operational Delivery Committee on 13 January 2021, it was agreed that committee receives a half yearly report on the actions being taken by Community Planning Aberdeen to reduce and eradicate child poverty. Last reported to ODC on 31 August 2022; on Planner for March 2023.		Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1		Transferred from Operational Delivery Committee.
26	<b>1st November 2023</b>								
27									
28	<b>Beyond 2023 or date not confirmed.</b>								
29	Child Poverty Action Plan Annual statutory report.	At the meeting of Operational Delivery Committee on 31 August 2022, it was agreed to instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to review the Council's approach to tackling Child Poverty, in conjunction with Community Planning Partners through the Community Planning Aberdeen Anti - Poverty group, and bring a report back to the relevant Committee detailing a refreshed action plan for 2022-2026.		Derek McGowan	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer			Transferred from Operational Delivery Committee.

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
<b>DATE</b>	11 January 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/23/011
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Paul Tytler, Tracy Davis
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.1

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to submit the refreshed Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026 for approval.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note progress in developing the Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026 and further work to finalise and ensure alignment with the Children's Services Plan by March 2023.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (the Act) fully entered into force on 1 July 2019. The Act sets out steps required to be taken by the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and Health Boards to tackle child poverty. The Act identifies four definitions for poverty, identifies targets to be achieved by 2030, and creates a requirement for Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to annually agree a Child Poverty Action Report. This Report is then published and submitted to Scottish Ministers.

- 3.2 Poverty is defined in the Act under four different headings:

- Relative poverty
- Absolute poverty
- Combined low income and material deprivation
- Persistent poverty

- 3.3 At Operational Delivery Committee on 17 September 2019, the Committee agreed to adopt the Local Outcome Improvement Plan as the Council's Child Poverty Action Plan for the years 2019-22.

- 3.4 The Scottish Government published their updated National plan, 'Best Start, Bright Futures' in March 2022, and with our local Child Poverty Action Plan now requiring renewal, the Child Poverty Action Plan for 2022-26 is attached at Appendix 1 for approval. The Act requires that this Plan is developed by the Council and Health Board for the area, and this is reflected in the plan presented. The Child Poverty Action Plan will also be considered by the Community Planning Aberdeen Board on 15 February 2023.
- 3.5 The Child Poverty Action Plan sets out action areas across services and partners which will impact on tackling child poverty. Following guidance being developed by Scottish Government on developing the plans and progress reports, development areas include developing clear strategic aims, short, medium and long term actions. Throughout the report, focus on use of intelligence to determine actions taken and proposed actions, good practice, developments and improvements, future work and priorities and highlight partnership working and awareness. Specific areas are:
- actions taken
  - Protected characteristics
  - Specific actions on any of the 6 priority groups:
    - lone parent families
    - minority ethnic families
    - families with a disabled adult or child
    - families with a younger mother (under 25)
    - families with a child under 1
    - larger families (3+ children)
  - Proposed actions in light of the above
  - Data, charts where available
  - Case studies from services, partners to illustrate lived experience and outcomes delivered
- 3.6 The implementation of these development areas will be taken forward through a Child Poverty sub group of the Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group.
- 3.7 While this plan identifies core actions deemed necessary, it is worth noting that these are areas of focus in addition to the core services offered by the Council, NHS Grampian and partners in mitigating Child Poverty.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Section 13 of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on local authorities and regional health boards in Scotland to jointly produce annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPARs) describing ongoing and planned action to tackle child poverty at local level.

5.2 This Child Poverty Action Plan provides the basis for producing those annual reports.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk of not fully supporting those children in most need	Child poverty working group under the Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group, that includes a wide range of partners across: communities, H&SCP, Education	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Requirement to produce a local child poverty action plan progress report	Agreement of the action plan will ensure that the progress report can be submitted as required	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	Staff and partner capacity	Monitor progress and activity to determine any remedial action required.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	No financial risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of not supporting work to tackle child poverty	The Child Poverty Action Report and six-monthly progress report will demonstrate progress in tackling child poverty	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No environmental risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u></p>	<p>The activities in support of tackling child poverty within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to make Aberdeen a UNICEF Child Friendly City.</li> <li>• Review the cost of the school day, to make sure no child is missing out on opportunities because of their financial situation.</li> </ul>
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The activities described within this report impact on the Prosperous Economy section of the LOIP, stretch outcome no 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No one in Aberdeen will go without food due to poverty by 2026</li> </ul>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The activities within this report support the delivery of Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 and 5 in the LOIP:</p> <p>4. 95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026.</p> <p>5. 90% of Children and young people will report that their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	N/A
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p>	<p>The actions within this report support action under Inclusive Economic Growth</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Full impact assessment required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	not required



<b>Other</b>	None
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**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

**11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix 1 Child Poverty Action Plan

**12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

<b>Name</b>	Paul Tytler
<b>Title</b>	Locality Inclusion Manager
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**Aberdeen City  
Local Child Poverty Action Plan  
2022 - 2026**

**The three main drivers of Child Poverty:**

Work and earnings:

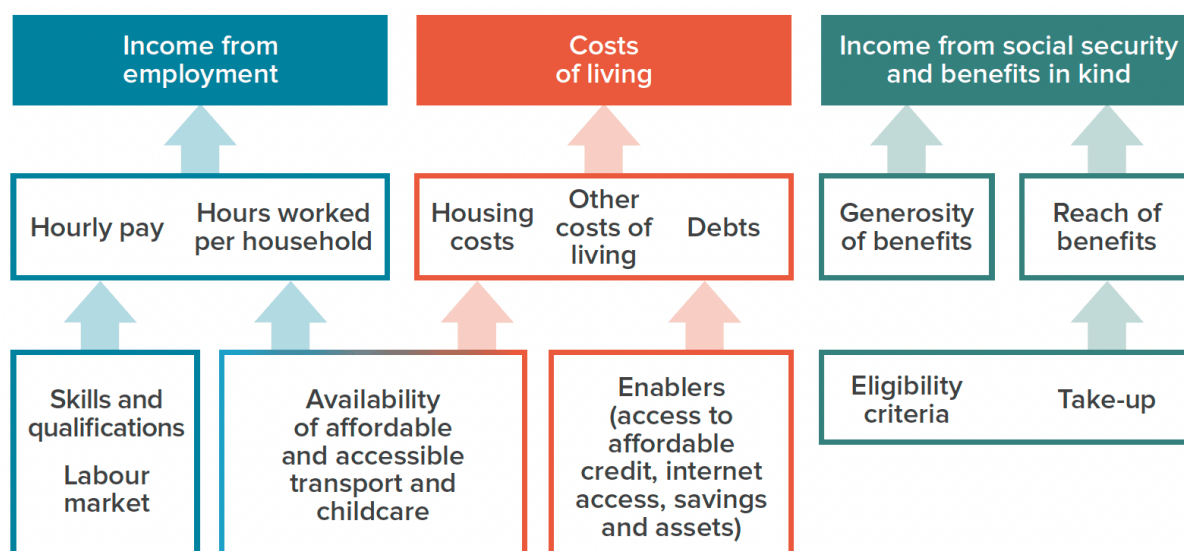
- Income from parent's work and earnings is not sufficient to lift them from poverty

Household costs:

- The costs of living that households have to cover are too high

Social Security:

- Income from social security, particularly for families with children, and is now inadequate to lift families from poverty



The six priority groups identified as being most at risk of children living in poverty are:

- lone parent families
- minority ethnic families
- families with a disabled adult or child
- families with a younger mother (under 25)
- families with a child under 1
- larger families (3+ children)

The actions focus these six priority groups and are in addition to core services available delivered universally. The long term aim is to address the three drivers described above for the priority groups identified and the plan identifies short and

medium term actions, which will be updated when the annual progress report is developed.

### Lone Parent Families

Why lone parents are more likely to be in poverty -

Lone-parent families are predominately single female adults with dependent children, which means:

- there is just one potential earner in the family
- their hourly earnings are likely to be lower because of the gender pay gap
- the earner is limited in the hours they can work by caring responsibilities.

In 2019, Labour Force Survey (LFS) data showed there were an estimated 144,000 lone-parent families in Scotland, which is 25% of all families with dependent children.

Nine out of 10 lone parent families were headed by a lone mother.

In 2016, there were estimated to be 5,200 lone parent families in Aberdeen, 24% of all families with dependent children, broadly in line with the level for Scotland as a whole.

### Key areas for action

- Increase Uptake of benefits
- Improve financial inclusion
- Child support
- Childcare
- Education and employment

Short term 2023/24	Medium Term 2024/25
Further promote the Scottish Welfare Fund and financial wellbeing support through social media to increase awareness	<p>Via Healthier, Wealthier Children: (Developing financial inclusion referral pathways in Scotland’s funding plan) develop and implement a Midwifery and Early Years Practitioners pathway, policy and procedure to financial support services across Grampian.</p> <p>1. Our workforce will be well equipped to offer support and/or referral to families</p>

	<p>1.1. Staff will receive an ongoing programme of training and support</p> <p>1.2. Run a pilot training programme of poverty awareness/poverty sensitive practice for staff to test its usefulness and impact on confidence and practice</p> <p>1.3. The appropriate strategic group will be identified to ensure this work is delivered to a high standard and supported by the organisation</p> <p>1.4. The network between healthcare professionals, relevant third sector stakeholders and welfare rights workers will be enabled and encouraged in order to enhance local knowledge and understanding about income maximisation and services and supports</p> <p>1.5. The language and definitions used to describe financial services and supports will be harmonised in order to facilitate appropriate referral</p> <p>1.6. A centralised digital resource will be developed and maintained, that is accessible for all staff and personalised to the three local authorities</p>
<p>Clothing grants support families with the cost of school clothing and shoes, providing £120 for primary and £150 for secondary pupils.</p>	
<p>Employability transition grant of £1000 for lone parents, payable over three months to support the costs of moving from benefits and into work, covering transport costs, clothing, food etc.</p>	
<p>Reinforce and promote the importance of attending for antenatal care, with the aim to increase the number of vulnerable mothers eligible and in receipt of the Best Start Grant</p>	<p>1. We will promote opportunities for financial support across all health settings</p> <p>1.1. Identify a mechanism to provide staff with up-to-date information and regular training updates on benefit entitlement changes</p>

<p>Income maximisation teams to continue supporting people to claim for their eligible benefits.</p>	<p>1.2. Ensure that all professionals have easy access to a benefits calculator</p> <p>1.3. Facilitate at least one whole system learning event per year with a focus on poverty/financial inclusion</p> <p>2. Every opportunity is being taken to ensure that families are in receipt of their full social assistance entitlements</p> <p>2.1. Understand the extent and investigate what can be done to assist health professionals and parents who are receiving their full social assistance entitlements, but still do not have sufficient income to meet their needs</p> <p>2.2. Identify how best to reach mothers and carers not claiming benefits who may be entitled but are reluctant or unaware of their right to claim</p>
<p>Family Wellbeing Fund provides support to families through the provision of advice and to develop a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. As these households are identifiable, this provides an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income. This will help support those that need further support but are just above the thresholds for mainstream help available.</p>	
<p>Provide more support to children and families in the earliest years through delivery of the Universal Health Visiting Pathway (UHVP) and Family Nurse Partnership Programme.</p>	
<p>Minimise the costs of the school day and maximise the uptake of free school</p>	

meals and school clothing grants by eligible families.  All schools to consider poverty proofing within their own unique context.	
Continue to expand the provision of free sanitary products	

## Minority Ethnic Families

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report that while 4% of Scotland’s population identified as being from a minority ethnic population in 2011, in 2017-2020 1 in 10 (11%) people living in poverty were from a minority ethnic background.

There is no up-to-date evidence on the ethnicity of Scotland’s population and its distribution across regions, therefore much work is based on the findings of the last census undertaken in 2011. The results of the 2021 census will be published during 2023 and where required this plan will be updated to reflect these results..

Joseph Rowntree Foundation further report that one of the clearest indicators of inequality is pay. In 2019, minority ethnic workers in Scotland were, on average, paid £10.99 per hour compared to white workers who were paid £12.25 per hour (£1.26 more per hour) (ONS 2020). For a full-time worker, working 35 hours a week, this would total a difference of £2,300 a year between the ‘average’ workers from a minority ethnic and white background.

Workers from minority ethnic backgrounds are around twice as likely as white workers to be on insecure contracts resulting in 1 in 10 minority ethnic workers being in insecure work which increases the likelihood of minority ethnic workers being in poverty.

Minority ethnic households are over-represented within the private rented sector in Scotland, with 30% of minority ethnic households having this tenure, compared to just 13% of white households. Minority ethnic households make up 8% of the private rented sector in Scotland, double the 4% representation in the population

Short term 2023/24	Medium term 2024/25
More effective engagement with families and groups to ensure supports are targeted and delivered effectively.	
Family Wellbeing Fund provides support to families through the provision of advice and to develop a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. As these households are identifiable, this provides an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income. This will help support those that need further support	Via Healthier, Wealthier Children: (Developing financial inclusion referral pathways in Scotland’s funding plan) develop and implement a Midwifery and Early Years Practitioners pathway, policy and procedure to financial support services across Grampian.

but are just above the thresholds for mainstream help available.	
Clothing grants support families with the cost of school clothing and shoes, providing £120 for primary and £150 for secondary pupils.	
Reinforce and promote the importance of attending for antenatal care, with the aim to increase the number of vulnerable mothers eligible and in receipt of the Best Start Grant  Income maximisation teams to continue supporting people to claim for their eligible benefits	
Minimise the costs of the school day and maximise the uptake of free school meals and school clothing grants by eligible families.  All schools to consider poverty proofing within their own unique context	
Continue to expand the provision of free sanitary products	



## **Families with a disabled adult or child**

Around a third of all families in Scotland include at least one disabled member. Most likely the disabled person will be an adult (27% of families), but 11% of families include a disabled child, and in one in twenty families (6%) both an adult and a child are disabled.

Just under a fifth (18%) of parents in Scotland are disabled.

There is an overlap between families with a disabled adult or child and the other child poverty priority groups. For example, 30% of children in households with a disabled adult or child were also in a lone parent household, and 30% were in a household with 3 or more children. Over 40% of children in poverty live in a household with at least one disabled person and three-quarters of these are also in at least one other priority group.

In Aberdeen City, in May 2022, there were 29,450 adults and children in Aberdeen in receipt of various disabilities benefits. This is based on Department for Work and Pensions data and there are likely to be further people in receipt of benefits through Social Security Scotland.

Many studies have referenced the additional financial cost for families with a disabled child. Joseph Rowntree Foundation concluded that the minimum cost of raising a severely disabled child is, on average, three times more than for a child without disability.

In 2018, research undertaken by 'Parenting across Scotland' showed that 33% of families with a disabled child have extra disability and care related costs of at least £300 per month. 23% are going without essential therapies and 36% have taken out a loan to pay for food. It is more difficult for parents with caring responsibilities for a disabled child to enter and sustain work due to the complexity, and cost, of appropriate childcare.

Children who are dependent on electricity supplied technology (ventilation, feeding pumps, suction machines, infusions pumps) need to be given particular consideration within the context of rising costs of living and threatened national power outages.

Families are advised to register with their power suppliers 'vulnerable customer database' but further awareness and support is needed to ensure that they all do. It is also important to understand what this offers in terms of timing for help. For children reliant on ventilation support, the need is immediate.

NHS Grampian have purchased a generator for one very dependent child. Specific information has been communicated to all our families to ensure:

- core and back up equipment is kept charged
- they are registered as a priority user with their electricity supplier
- they claim back reimbursement for additional electricity used
- they are aware they can access Royal Aberdeen Children’s Hospital if there is a prolonged power outage.

**Key areas for action**

- Income maximisation
- Employment
- Economically inactive parents want to work and take on more paid work
- Accessibility of adverts and application process are barriers
- Attitudes of others a barrier
- Flexible working a requirement
- Childcare and transport – access, flexibility and cost
- Cost of living – food, fuel, costs of ‘having a disability’

Short term 2023/24	Medium term 2024/25
<p>Family Wellbeing Fund provides support to families through the provision of advice and to develop a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. As these households are identifiable, this provides an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income. This will help support those that need further support but are just above the thresholds for mainstream help available.</p>	<p>Via Healthier, Wealthier Children: (Developing financial inclusion referral pathways in Scotland’s funding plan) develop and implement a Midwifery and Early Years Practitioners pathway, policy and procedure to financial support services across Grampian.</p>
<p>Clothing grants support families with the cost of school clothing and shoes, providing £120 for primary and £150 for secondary pupils.</p>	
<p>Reinforce and promote the importance of attending for antenatal care, with the aim to increase the number of</p>	

<p>vulnerable mothers eligible and in receipt of the Best Start Grant</p> <p>Income maximisation teams to continue supporting people to claim for their eligible benefits</p>	
<p>Continue to expand the provision of free sanitary products</p>	
<p>Families will not feel stigmatised when raising financial concerns or seeking support</p> <p>Motivational interviewing and 'Having Effective Conversations' training will be offered to staff as part of a rolling programme of training</p> <p>Review the type of training that may be included in such a programme to determine its suitability to deal with the complex issues and barriers that inhibit routine enquiry about financial challenges, e.g. perceived and actual risks of exacerbating partner violence, financial control and coercion, and parental concerns about triggering Child Protection concerns</p> <p>Establish appropriate messaging to help de-stigmatise the notion of claiming benefits, or of seeking financial help, amongst young parents</p>	
<p>Appropriate contact time with families will create a positive environment for routine financial enquiry</p> <p>Health Visitors, Family Nurses and Midwives (HV, FN &amp; M) will be provided more time to initiate and engage in sensitive conversations about financial and related challenges</p> <p>Explore the relationship and links between HV, FN &amp; M and Financial Inclusion/Welfare Rights workers as an alternative model of enabling professionals to provide parents with access to up-to-date information and practical support to help with income maximisation</p>	

A communication strategy will be developed to ensure that information for health professionals achieves the relevant spread, is up-to-date and easily accessible	
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## **Families with a younger mother (under 25)**

The earliest years of life, including during pregnancy, provide the greatest opportunity to influence a child's development but can also be the most vulnerable for babies and children. It is widely accepted that the social determinants of health (housing, education, financial security, physical environment and health and social care systems) are contributors to significant levels of health inequalities while protective factors; the strengths that buffer and support families, are vitally important.

The Family Nurse Partnership in Grampian provides an intensive, clinical intervention to young Mums up to the age of 20, with the purpose of achieving three core outcomes:

- to improve pregnancy and birth outcomes, through improved health behaviours
- to improve child health and development, through positive, responsive caregiving, and
- to improve the economic stability of the family

In 2018, 88% of clients were recorded as having at least one socio-economic disadvantage upon entering the FNP programme. 60% were living on a low income and one in ten were considered to have low job stability (zero hours or temporary contracts). 57% were not in work, education or training at the time of entering the programme. Over a quarter had experienced homelessness and the majority were parenting on their own.

Over half (55%) of children in households with a mother aged under 25 were in relative poverty in 2015-18, compared to 24% of children overall. In 2021, there were 276 births to mothers aged under 25, 13.5% of births. This was consistent with the rates in 2019 and 2020, but a drop from c16% in 2017 and 2018.

The ability to raise income from employment is limited for many mothers under 25. They have had less time to build experience and progress in their career before becoming a parent, but importantly, the National Living Wage is not enforced until the employee is at least 23 years old (National Minimum Wage applies from school leaving age) and rates below age 23 are lower.

There are some general characteristics that households with mothers under 25 are more likely to share than those where the mother is older. They are more likely to:

- be in poverty
- when employed, be in in-work poverty
- live in the same household as a grandparent of the child

- be in other priority family groups. For example, over half (54%) are in a lone parent household, 40% have a baby under 1 in the household, and 35% have someone disabled in the household.

The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan Fourth Year Progress Report (2021-22) identifies stigma as an issue affecting young mothers, with young mothers reporting feeling judged by other people and that they lack the ability and/or motivation to gain qualifications and employment.

### Key areas for action

- Income maximisation
- Supporting young mothers to begin, or continue, in further education can improve future prospects for young mothers
- Flexible and affordable childcare can help young mothers pursue work or educational opportunities.
- Tackling stigma

Short term 2023/24	Medium Term 2024/25
Family Wellbeing Fund provides support to families through the provision of advice and to develop a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. As these households are identifiable, this provides an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income. This will help support those that need further support but are just above the thresholds for mainstream help available.	Via Healthier, Wealthier Children: (Developing financial inclusion referral pathways in Scotland's funding plan) develop and implement a Midwifery and Early Years Practitioners pathway, policy and procedure to financial support services across Grampian.
Reinforce and promote the importance of attending for antenatal care, with the aim to increase the number of vulnerable mothers eligible and in receipt of the Best Start Grant  Income maximisation teams to continue supporting people to claim for their eligible benefits	1. Families will not feel stigmatised when raising financial concerns or seeking support:  1.1. Motivational interviewing and 'Having Effective Conversations' training will be offered to staff as part of a rolling programme of training

	<p>1.2. Review the type of training that may be included in such a programme to determine its suitability to deal with the complex issues and barriers that inhibit routine enquiry about financial challenges, e.g. perceived and actual risks of exacerbating partner violence, financial control and coercion, and parental concerns about triggering Child Protection concerns</p> <p>1.3. Establish appropriate messaging to help de-stigmatise the notion of claiming benefits, or of seeking financial help, amongst young parents</p>
<p>Continue to expand the provision of free sanitary products</p>	
<p>Minimise the costs of the school day and maximise the uptake of free school meals and school clothing grants by eligible families.</p> <p>All schools to consider poverty proofing within their own unique context.</p>	

## Families with a child under 1

40% have a baby under 1 in the household.

In 2021, there were 2041 births in Aberdeen (although these children will now be older than 1), with the average over the past 5 years being 2209. There is no locally available data to indicate how many of these children and families are living in poverty.

Around a third (34%) of families with a child under the age of 1 experience relative poverty compared to just less than a quarter (24%) of children overall. A holistic approach beginning in pregnancy (or even pre-pregnancy) is important to reduce the risk of having a baby becoming a trigger point for falling into poverty.

Health Visitors, Family Nurses and Midwives are well placed to make enquiry as to the social-economic factors impacting on families. Local research was undertaken last year; Midwives, health visitors', family nurse practitioners' and women's experiences of the NHS Grampian's Financial Inclusion Pathway in practice: A qualitative investigation of early implementation and impact.

This research found that the nature and scope of practice undertaken by the three different professional groups played a key role when and how often financial challenges were discussed during routine healthcare conversations. Professional's expectations and practices, parent's willingness or openness to discuss money worries, and outwardly visible financial insecurity were all factors influencing how, when and if financial enquiry was made.

Related to this, some Health Visitors described the challenges of having conversations with families who were living in more affluent areas compared to those living in more deprived areas, and about relying on their professional judgement to determine how and whether to broach the subject.

Where someone lived in the city for example, seems to play a role in determining the likelihood that this issue is raised and how often it is, illustrated in this excerpt: *'A lot of it comes down to professional judgement as well, and I think, on reflecting, I probably have to adapt more, like adopt more of a, you know, asking, asking everyone approach. Erm, right now, my caseload is spread across various parts of, erm, Aberdeen. I have a pocket in the central city and then I have, erm, a larger area in the sort of x and y, area ... So, I have a mixed caseload. so probably, you know, this is probably wrong, but I think I'm less likely to ask financial questions depending on where my families are. (HV)*

Most parent participants in the study described food insecurity experiences. Half of the participants were either current users of food banks or food pantries (either often



or periodically) or had used those in the past. In cases where participants said they didn't use food banks some reported relying on family members for help with food bills. Care and concern to feed nutritious food to their children were also commonplace but admission that that it was difficult to buy what they wished because healthy food cost too much to buy.

*I like to eat healthy...so, it's quite expensive to eat healthy...Like, chocolate's cheaper, and it shouldn't be. (Full-time carer of her 10 month old daughter)*  
[\(see full report and recommendations here\)](#)

### Key areas for action

- Income maximisation
- Flexible and affordable childcare can help families pursue work or educational opportunities.

Short term 2023/24	Medium term 2024/25
Family Wellbeing Fund provides support to families through the provision of advice and to develop a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. As these households are identifiable, this provides an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income. This will help support those that need further support but are just above the thresholds for mainstream help available.	Via Healthier, Wealthier Children: (Developing financial inclusion referral pathways in Scotland's funding plan) develop and implement a Midwifery and Early Years Practitioners pathway, policy and procedure to financial support services across Grampian.
Reinforce and promote the importance of attending for antenatal care, with the aim to increase the number of vulnerable mothers eligible and in receipt of the Best Start Grant  Income maximisation teams to continue supporting people to claim for their eligible benefits	1. Appropriate contact time with families will create a positive environment for routine financial enquiry  1.1. Health Visitors, Family Nurses and Midwives (HV, FN & M) will be provided more time to initiate and engage in sensitive conversations about financial and related challenges  1.2. Explore the relationship and links between HV, FN & M and Financial Inclusion/Welfare Rights workers as an alternative model of enabling

	<p>professionals to provide parents with access to up-to-date information and practical support to help with income maximisation</p> <p>1.3. A communication strategy will be developed to ensure that information for health professionals achieves the relevant spread, is up-to-date and easily accessible</p>
<p>Continue to expand the provision of free sanitary products</p>	
<p>1. Families who need urgent supplies of baby formula can access it quickly and easily</p> <p>1.1. A pan-Grampian pathway for urgent access to baby formula is in place and is easily accessible to health professionals</p> <p>1.2. A pan-Grampian pathway is in place for mothers living with HIV to have access to baby formula, bottles and a steriliser for the first year of their baby's life</p> <p>1.3. All pregnant women and families with children under the age of 5 have access to nutritional support</p>	

## **Larger families (3+ children)**

Why larger families are more likely to be in poverty –

- Larger families face higher costs of living, including childcare, cost of the school day, housing, food and fuel.
- Larger families are disproportionately affected by policies to reduce the value of benefits and tax credits, the cap on the total amount of benefits that can be received by families and the policy that restricts child benefit payments to only the first two children. These policies are likely to continue to drive large families into poverty.
- Families with four or more children are particularly affected by poor health, worse educational and skills outcomes, overcrowding and financial difficulties.

There are nearly 600,000 families with dependent children in Scotland (2018). Of these, over 73,000 (12%) are larger families. Most (10%) of these larger families have three children, 2% of all families have four children and 1% has five or more children.

In Aberdeen, there are approximately 2185 larger families, 10.1% of all families, slightly below the level for Scotland as a whole.

Work is not lifting larger families out of poverty. Most children in poverty in larger families live in working families.

- More than six out of 10 children in poverty from larger households has at least one adult that is in paid work.
- Almost one in three live in households where all the adults are in employment

The benefit cap affects larger families, with 19.7% of families in Aberdeen claiming housing benefits affected by the benefits cap according to the most recent data (February 2019).

1250 Households in Aberdeen are affected by the limit on additional payments to two children, meaning no additional Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit is paid for a third or subsequent children. Of these 1250 households, 760 are in receipt of UC and 490 in receipt of Child Tax credits. The Scottish Child Payment is paid regardless of the number of children in eligible families.

## **Key areas for action**

### **Social security**

- Increase awareness and take-up of Best Start Grants
- Increase awareness and take-up of Scottish Child Payment once this becomes available
- Mitigate against the impact of the benefits cap
- Establish or enhance formal financial inclusion and income maximisation referral pathways in healthcare settings
- Increase awareness and take-up of the Scottish Welfare Fund

### **Food and necessities**

- Increase awareness and take-up of the Best Start Foods Grant
- Move away from emergency food aid towards more sustainable ways of preventing and reducing food insecurity. Emergency food aid should be delivered in a way that promotes dignity
- Access Scottish Government funding and work with education services and FareShare to ensure that free sanitary products are available to students and those on low incomes

### **Clothing**

- Make sure school clothing grants are automatically given to low-income families by linking to payment of their Housing Benefit/Universal Credit

### **Social and leisure activities**

- Provide lunches to children participating in holiday programmes in areas where there is likely to be greater need,
- Increase awareness and take-up of concessionary travel for young people
- Increase awareness and take-up of family and friends rail cards
- Increase awareness and take-up of help to meet health-related costs
- Improve awareness and take-up of disability benefits
- Increase awareness and take-up of Discretionary Housing Payments and the Council Tax Reduction

### **Education**

- Increase awareness and take-up of Educational Maintenance Allowance
- Increase awareness and take-up of help to meet childcare costs

### **Fuel**

- Increase awareness and take-up of the Warm Home Discount Scheme

### **Employment**

- Increase the value of in-work benefits paid to low-income families

### **General**

- Ensure that new and existing policies and practices are poverty proofed to avoid penalising larger families

Short term 2023/24	Medium term 2024/25
<p>Family Wellbeing Fund provides support to families through the provision of advice and to develop a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. As these households are identifiable, this provides an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income. This will help support those that need further support but are just above the thresholds for mainstream help available.</p>	<p>Via Healthier, Wealthier Children: (Developing financial inclusion referral pathways in Scotland’s funding plan) develop and implement a Midwifery and Early Years Practitioners pathway, policy and procedure to financial support services across Grampian.</p>
<p>Provide more support to children and families in the earliest years through delivery of the Universal Health Visiting Pathway (UHVP) and Family Nurse Partnership Programme.</p>	<p>1. We will seek to understand and will continue to learn about the impact of our services on families in regard to their finances</p> <p>1.1. The impact of the Financial Inclusion Pathway (FIP) on uptake of referrals due to health professional referral will be better understood</p> <p>1.2. The impact of the FIP related to extra income secured due to health professional referral will be better understood</p>
<p>Reinforce and promote the importance of attending for antenatal care, with the aim to increase the number of vulnerable mothers eligible and in receipt of the Best Start Grant</p> <p>Income maximisation teams to continue supporting people to claim for their eligible benefits</p>	

<p>Clothing grants support families with the cost of school clothing and shoes, providing £120 for primary and £150 for secondary pupils.</p>	
<p>Continue to expand the provision of free sanitary products</p>	
<p>Minimise the costs of the school day and maximise the uptake of free school meals and school clothing grants by eligible families.</p> <p>All schools to consider poverty proofing within their own unique context.</p>	

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
<b>DATE</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Six monthly update on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Work and Pensions
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/23/017
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.3

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on work agreed through the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Department of Work and Pensions.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On the 13th July 2022 Council agreed to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Work and Pensions, and that it be signed by the co-leaders Cllrs Nicoll and Yuill.
- 3.2 On the same date Council agreed that update reports for the Memorandum of Understanding be submitted on a six-monthly basis to the relevant committee.
- 3.3 At the adjourned Council meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022, the Terms of reference were approved for the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee. These Terms of Reference establish this Committee as the appropriate

Committee for the submission of the six monthly updates on the Memorandum of Understanding. This report is the first such update.

3.4 The table at Appendix 1 sets out progress against each aspect of the Memorandum of Understanding.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>		No significant risk identified		Yes
<b>Compliance</b>		No significant risk identified		Yes
<b>Operational</b>		No significant risk identified		Yes
<b>Financial</b>		No significant risk identified		Yes
<b>Reputational</b>		No significant risk identified		Yes



<b>Environment / Climate</b>		No significant risk identified		Yes
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## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</a></u>	
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p>HOMES FOR THE FUTURE</p> <p>Work with partners to produce a ten-year plan to increase the stock and variety of Council and social housing to meet the needs of Aberdeen’s citizens and continue to deliver Council and social housing projects, including at Greenferns and Granitehill, to tackle the Council house waiting lists and do everything in our power to end homelessness.</p> <p>A PROSPEROUS CITY</p> <p>Develop our economy in a genuine partnership with the private sector, third sector and residents.</p> <p>A CARING CITY</p>	<p>The Memorandum of Understanding will help ensure the Council delivers on its stated vision.</p>

<p>Work with partners to identify and agree specific integrated solutions for tackling the health and social problems caused by misuse of alcohol and drugs.</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></a></p>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposal to provide additional monies to help with energy costs supports the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes:</p> <p>1 - No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026</p> <p>2 - 400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026</p> <p>3 - 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026</p> <p>10 - 25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction and 2% fewer people reconvicted within one year by 2026</p> <p>11 - Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026</p>

	12 - Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026
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## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Stage 1 IIA not required as there is no proposal for Committee to consider.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Progress report on the Memorandum of Understanding.

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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**MoU action tracker**

	Action	Update 1/12/22
1	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department of Work and Pensions will work together to support homeless citizens by:</p> <p>a - Working towards a data sharing agreement to allow the sharing and analysis of customer data so changes in benefit status for homeless households can be identified</p> <p>b - Share information within data protocols on new tenancies created through the homeless process to ensure support is provided when starting a new home</p>	<p>Work has been ongoing to ensure financial assessments are available for all housing presentations. Project charters demonstrate excellent progress in achieving increased income, with average monthly totals of around £50,000 since the summer.</p>

<p>c - Co-locate where appropriate to enhance the support available to those experiencing homelessness</p>	<p>Discussions have been held on Department Of Work And Pensions, along with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership, having a presence at our West North Street facility.</p>
<p>d - Replicate the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 “Duty to Refer” arrangement, ensuring that where work coaches are aware of a homeless person, they refer to ACC</p>	<p>This will be replicated by the Housing bill currently being considered in the Scottish Parliament which will introduce the ‘Prevention duty’. Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions, along with other partners, are already meeting most of the requirements that this legislation will introduce.</p>
<p>e - Create a Single Point of Contact Model (SPOC) for homelessness and work together to support homeless applicants with no income, reducing the timescale for support where possible</p>	<p>These have been identified.</p>
<p>f - Collaborate where possible to determine status of No Recourse to Public</p>	

	Funds groups as quickly as possible.	This is in place.
2	Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will continue to work collaboratively, sharing intelligence as per current protocols and seek to further develop these, including supporting Universal Credit 'mass migration' when this is planned.	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions and Aberdeen City Council currently work closely in a number of service areas, including revenues and Benefits, Housing and Support, and Homelessness.</p> <p>A date has not yet been confirmed for mass migration.</p>
3	Department Of Work And Pensions will continue to be an active partner in Community Planning Aberdeen, continuing our work through the Aberdeen Prospers Group, and actively participating in the Anti-Poverty Group and Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. This will include:	

	<p>a) Department Of Work And Pensions advisors co-locating with Alcohol and Drugs Partnership services to support stabilisation and recovery</p> <p>b) Alcohol and Drugs Partnership support to Department Of Work And Pensions to identify alcohol/drug risks and pathways</p>	<p>There is an agreement to work together at the Timmermarket and West North Street to support those most vulnerable.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions will continue be an active partner in the Criminal Justice system, building on work already being provided at HMP Grampian through:</p> <p>a. Collaborating with ACC's Prison Liaison Officer to ensure planned support is in place prior to liberation</p>	<p>A number of national organisations are interviewing in HMP Grampian and are keen to take ex-offenders, with some requiring CSCS cards for employment hence the push to find an acceptable avenue for this to happen. We are working with the Construction Industry Training Board to arrange for Construction Skills Certification Scheme testing to be available.</p> <p>The plan is to produce a coherent strategy between the five principal employability services to ensure efficient and effective partnering.</p>



	<p>b. Department Of Work And Pensions joining the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Strategic Oversight Group as required.</p>	<p>A large national brewery chain are moving towards having the training kitchen up and running and we are looking into the local processing employers to firm up a suitable training programme.</p> <p>There has not yet been a requirement for this.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will continue work together to support families in the current Home Office Afghan Resettlement Scheme, with Department Of Work And Pensions</p> <p>a. Actively engaging in Afghan Resettlement Scheme Tactical meetings</p>	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions continue to provide active support to refugee work across the city.</p>

	<p>b - Assigning a work coach to all families or individuals where eligible</p> <p>c - Participating in quarterly reviews of the resettlement scheme, identifying lessons learned and ensuring these are translated into practice</p> <p>d - Participating in any future resettlement schemes.</p>	
6	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work together and in collaboration with other National and Local partners to support employability across Aberdeen. This will include –</p> <p>a. supporting young people to overcome multiple barriers to employment, including:</p> <p>i. The establishment of a Youth Hub, as well as introducing Youth Employability Coaches,</p>	Local Employability Partnership is in place.

	<p>specifically to work with 18 to 24-year-old unemployed people, in order to increase both skills attainment and employment outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ii. Continuing to develop the established Local Employability Partnership</li><li>iii. Sharing relevant and appropriate information, to enhance young people's employability and ensure a positive destination is reached.</li></ul> <p>b - Supporting adults to overcome barriers to employment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>iv. Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will collaborate to link local employment opportunities with Community Benefit</li></ul>	
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	<p>clauses included in procurement contracts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>v. Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work with key stakeholders to co-ordinate an effective offer for individuals and employers at risk of redundancy</li> <li>vi. Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will collaborate to maximise the employability of people with long term health conditions</li> <li>vii. Reviewing these arrangements on an ongoing basis.</li> </ul>	
7	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work together to strengthen the support available to lone parent families. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. An agreed contact point for escalation between</li> </ul>	

	<p>both organisations where a lone parent family requires additional support</p> <p>b. Joint access to relevant systems and common data platforms allowing quantitative analysis and prediction. This will include Aberdeen City Council Housing and Council systems, and Stat Xplore.</p> <p>c. Agreement of referral pathways where there are mental health issues being experienced by the lone parent</p> <p>d. Exploring the creation of a Parent Hub to provide wraparound support</p> <p>e. Department Of Work And Pensions as a stakeholder in the development of the Family Support Model in Aberdeen.</p>	<p>This is in place.</p> <p>These are in place.</p> <p>This is in place.</p>
8	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will collaborate to ensure the new Housing and</p>	

	<p>Support delivery model provides support to tenants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. At risk of becoming homeless to resolve any housing element issues timeously</li> <li>b. An agreed contact for escalation between both organisations</li> <li>c. Commitment to sharing feedback on the development of the landlord portal, influencing where possible.</li> </ul>	<p>This is in place.</p> <p>This is in place.</p>
9	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work together to tackle safeguarding, suicide and drugs deaths. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a - Enhancing and define existing escalation and referral routes where safeguarding concerns are identified, including through the Risk and Concern Hub</li> <li>b - Department Of Work And Pensions becoming an active</li> </ul>	<p>This is in place.</p> <p>This is in place.</p>

	<p>partner in the City's Alcohol and Drugs Partnership in its attempts to reduce drugs deaths in the City task force</p> <p>c - Sharing of information regarding financial harm</p>	
10	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions will support Aberdeen City Council wherever possible in its vision to eradicate poverty in all its forms. This will be based on whole and targeted population data, including at locality level, and include the sharing of data through a data sharing agreement on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Child poverty</li> <li>b. Fuel poverty</li> <li>c. Food poverty</li> <li>d. In work poverty</li> <li>e. Poverty and employment issues affecting minority ethnic communities</li> <li>f. Care experienced young people</li> </ul>	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions are an active partner in this work, with a key role in the development of responses to poverty, high profile work recently includes benefit checkers and income maximisation outreach work.</p>

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
<b>DATE</b>	11 January 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Citizens' Assembly
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/23/012
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Paul Tytler, Deirdre Nicolson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.2

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present an approach to developing a Citizens' Assembly in Aberdeen with a particular focus on gender inequality and other inequalities all arising from poverty.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Agree the principles for a Citizens' Assembly described in this report;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to further develop plans for a Citizens' Assembly including potential topics for the Assembly to consider which may include looking at gender inequality, and report back to the Committee on 10th May 2023, noting that any budget requirements will need to be considered by Finance and Resources Committee;
- 2.3 Approve the draft Terms of Reference for a Citizens' Assembly in Appendix 1.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Citizens' Assemblies are a type of democratic method that has been used around the world to empower citizens and solve intractable problems. A Citizens' Assembly brings together a diverse group of the public - selected at random but chosen to broadly reflect the demographics of the local community - to deliberate on an issue and recommend what should be done.
- 3.2 The Working in Partnership for Aberdeen policy statement includes, under 'A Transparent, Accessible and Accountable Council' the following –

- Explore options to establish local Citizens' Assemblies – with the first remit of a Citizens' Assembly being to advise the council on what's needed to tackle gender inequality in Aberdeen.

The work on developing the model for Citizens' Assemblies will explore the delivery of this policy statement.

3.3 The principles underpinning a Citizens' Assembly are:

3.3.1 **Diverse:** They resemble the wider population in all its diversity, having been selected at random from that community to match the demographic characteristics of the population. The process of random selection would reflect the demography of the area, to ensure a representative participants identified. For example, the Citizens' Assembly for Scotland identified the following socio-demographic variables:

- Geography
- Age
- Gender
- Ethnic group
- Educational qualifications
- Limiting long term conditions/disability
- Attitudes towards Scottish independence and the UK's membership of the EU
- Scottish Parliament voting preferences

The proposed socio-economic demographics will be developed in the detailed planning for the assembly and will inform the Terms of Reference.

3.3.2 **Deliberative:** Citizens' Assemblies don't aggregate top-of-the-head opinions, but harvest deeper, more considered judgements.

3.3.3 **Lengthy:** Lasting at least four days, they give participants the chance to get under the skin of a problem, developing their understanding and challenging their assumptions as they go, before arriving at a series of recommendations.

3.3.4 **Informed:** Participants leave as experts in their own right, having heard from 'witnesses' with professional, lived and academic experience of the topic at hand.

3.3.5 **'By the people, for the people':** Recommendations are made by assembly members, not by politicians or officers. They are published without revision, caveat or manipulation and responded to by decision makers.

3.3.6 **Professionally facilitated:** They are painstakingly designed and impartially facilitated to enable rich and meaningful participation by all assembly members, ensuring that everyone is given the space to express themselves freely.

3.4 The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) published a briefing [Citizens' Assemblies – An international comparison](#) which referenced earlier

work by the Electoral Reform Society in describing three typical phases of an assembly as:

- **Learning phase:** participants get to know each other, how the assembly works and what its aims are. Relevant facts about the issue at hand are presented to the participants, who get to ask questions of experts and access background and contextual information.
- **Consultation phase:** campaigners from each side get to present their arguments and be questioned on them. Sometimes, the assembly might run a public consultation during this phase to understand what the broader public thinks about an issue.
- **Deliberation and discussion phase:** the participants deliberate amongst themselves. Generally, assembly members will make recommendations to government or parliament at the end of this phase. In some cases, if these recommendations are taken up, they will be put to the people in a referendum (as in the case of Ireland), noting it is usually up to elected politicians whether or not to follow the assembly's recommendations.

3.5 In order to develop the approach for an assembly, the SPICe briefing makes the following recommendations:

**1. Assembly Remit** - decisions on remit must recognise the impact on design, delivery and governance. The broader the remit, the more time required.

**2. Governance Framework** - roles and responsibilities must be collectively agreed and clearly defined with responsibilities for oversight, advice, design and delivery distinguished.

**3. Assembly Phases** - sufficient time must be given to each stage of assemblies:

- inception;
- delivery; and
- impact.

**4. Assembly Impact** - a clear mandate must be set out, including clear parameters for how the assembly will interact with the decision-making of other democratic institutions.

**5. Public Engagement** - consideration must be given to how the assembly will interact with the wider public to build understanding, foster public deliberation and enhance legitimacy.

**6. Capacity Building** - future action must include building capacity in skills, resources and infrastructure for delivering deliberative and participatory processes.

**7. Research** - concurrent research should be embedded and used to inform the Assembly's design and governance. The research should be fully funded and have a duration that enables an assessment of impact.

- 3.6 In respect of the governance arrangements for the Citizens' Assembly, draft terms of reference have been developed at Appendix 1 for consideration by the Committee.
- 3.7 Officers will require to identify the financial costs to run a Citizens' Assembly, seek committee approval for that spend and undertake a commissioning process to secure the services of independent facilitators to develop and deliver the assembly.
- 3.8 The delivery of a Citizen Assembly sits alongside a range of community engagement activities currently delivered by the Council, including participation in Community Councils, Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships, Locality Empowerment Groups and the Citizens Voice Panel. In addition, specific engagement activities take place as part of projects and developments, including, for example, the recent work on the Beachfront Masterplan.
- 3.9 The Community Planning Aberdeen (CPA) Community Empowerment Group has developed a Community [Empowerment Strategy](#) which sets out the approach to community engagement and empowerment. The Strategy was approved by the CPA Board on 30 November 2022.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are financial implications arising from this report, with detailed costings yet to be determined and budget requirements will need to be considered by Finance and Resources Committee.
- 4.2 The costs identified include:
- Independent facilitators to develop the learning for the assembly, to run the assembly and prepare the report
  - Costs of identifying and recruiting the representative participants
  - Event costs, to include location, catering, child care, interpreters, travel costs
  - Staff costs

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 In order for a Citizens' Assembly to be fully effective a governance framework, including terms of reference are required.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 No environmental implications have been identified in this report.

#### **7. RISK**

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Not fulfilling the commitment to undertake Citizens' assemblies	Approval of the paper and agreement to progress with the Assembly	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	No risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Operational</b>	Resources to undertake the assembly	Staffing and other resources to undertake a Citizens' Assembly will be identified during detailed planning	M	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	Funding to cover the cost of the Assembly process	Subject to approval	M	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	Not responding to or implementing the outcomes from the assembly	Effective planning will ensure that there is a clear timescale for the Citizens' Assembly report. Participants will be advised that the Assembly is advisory	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No environmental risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>  <u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-</p> <p>A Transparent, Accessible and Accountable Council</p> <p>Recognise that citizens and communities – rather than the City Council - are best placed to say what services they require and how these are provided</p>

	<p>and seek to give greater control over appropriate services and facilities to local communities</p> <p>Explore options to establish local Citizens' Assemblies – with the first remit of a Citizens' Assembly being to advise the council on what's needed to tackle gender inequality in Aberdeen</p>
<p><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</a></p>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	There are no direct impacts on LOIP outcomes arising from this report, although this will be reviewed in light of the question to be addressed by the Citizens' Assembly.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	There are no direct impacts on LOIP outcomes arising from this report, although this will be reviewed in light of the question to be addressed by the Citizens' Assembly.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	There are no direct impacts on LOIP outcomes arising from this report, although this will be reviewed in light of the question to be addressed by the Citizens' Assembly.
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p> <p><u>Regional Strategies</u></p> <p><u>Council Strategies</u></p>	<p>There are no direct impacts on Regional Strategies arising from this report, although this will be reviewed in light of the question to be addressed by the Citizens' Assembly.</p> <p>The report will deliver against the CPA Community Empowerment Strategy.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	An Integrated Impact Assessment will be required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	A DPIA will be required to assess how the personal data relating to the selection and participation of the assembly participants will be gathered and stored
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

## 11. APPENDICES

## **.12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Draft Terms of Reference:**

#### **Introduction**

Aberdeen City Council's Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee has committed to establishing a Citizens' Assembly to assist in developing a series of recommendations that will inform the Committee in its remit to alleviate and mitigate gender inequality and other inequalities all arising from poverty in the city.

In establishing a Citizens' Assembly, the Committee wishes to:

- learn about the shared and contrasting values, concerns and needs of Aberdeen City citizens
- better understand the citizens' vision for the future of the city
- provide citizens with an unprecedented opportunity to shape proposals to alleviate and mitigate poverty and inequality

#### **Guiding Principles for the Citizens' Assembly**

##### **Openness and Transparency**

The Citizens' Assembly will regularly share its learning and deliberations with the public through the Council's website.

##### **Accountability and Legitimacy**

The Citizens' Assembly will work within a defined mandate. The Assembly will deliver recommendations to be considered at the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee and referred to other committees as appropriate.

##### **Membership**

The members of the Citizens' Assembly will represent the needs and interests of all Aberdeen City citizens. While it is anticipated that Assembly members should broadly represent the demographics Aberdeen City citizens, assembly members will be randomly selected.

##### **Accessibility**

The Council will provide reasonable support to address barriers that may prevent an Assembly member from participating successfully.

##### **Independence**

The Citizens' Assembly will have full independence to determine how to best fulfil its mandate.

##### **Well-informed**

The Citizens' Assembly will deliver sound recommendations. The Assembly's recommendations will be informed by a range of perspectives and sources of expertise.

#### **Balance**

The Citizens' Assembly will consider a diversity of voices and perspectives in its deliberations.

#### **Collaborative decision-making**

Citizens' Assembly members will work towards consensus when drafting their recommendations, while also respecting and documenting differing perspectives among its members.

#### **Respect**

Citizens' Assembly members will strive to be conscientious and fair-minded in their deliberations.

### **3.0 Mandate of the Citizens' Assembly**

The Citizens' Assembly will be asked to consider a number of topics and develop a series of recommendations that will inform the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in alleviating and mitigating all forms of poverty and inequality in the city.

To assist the members of the Citizens' Assembly with their task, the Council will provide a learning programme including information on existing policies; relevant data and existing budget.

### **4.0 Constraints on the Citizens' Assembly**

The Assembly will enjoy wide latitude in its ability to make recommendations.

The Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee will accept, modify or reject specific recommendations from the Assembly or remit them to an appropriate Council Committee.

### **5.0 Schedule of the Citizens' Assembly**

The schedule of meetings for each Citizens' Assembly will be decided by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee.

### **6.0 Reporting of the Citizens' Assembly**

The Citizens' Assembly's recommendations will be collated into a report and considered by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee.

### **7.0 Composition of the Citizens' Assembly**

Members of the Citizens' Assembly will be randomly selected.

#### **7.1 Number of Members**

The Citizens' Assembly will consist of 40 members.

### **8.0 Roles and Responsibilities**



## **8.1 Citizens' Assembly Members**

Members of the Assembly are expected to:

- Attend each Citizens' Assembly
- Work to understand and represent the varied perspectives of all citizens
- Treat each other with dignity and respect
- Take an active role in the work of the Assembly.
- Work collaboratively to achieve a strong consensus concerning the Assembly's recommendations.

If a member of the Assembly must withdraw owing to illness or unexpected events, his or her position may be filled from the pool of applicants at the discretion of the Chair.

## **8.2 Chair of the Citizens' Assembly**

The members of the Citizens' Assembly will appoint a Chair.

The Chair will ensure

- the smooth running of the Assembly
- that all members are given the opportunity to fully participate and
- that the recommendations of the Assembly are appropriately documented and submitted to the Anti-poverty and Inequality Committee for consideration

## **8.3 The Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment**

The Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment will ensure appropriate staff from across the Council are available to sufficiently support the Citizens' Assembly.

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
<b>DATE</b>	11 January 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Update on Current Initiatives including Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/23/015
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Paul Tytler
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1, 1.9, 1.10, 1.12

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on ongoing initiatives in relation to stigma and discrimination for those experiencing poverty; health and wellbeing of those experiencing poverty, and credit unions and fair and affordable banking and advice services.
- 1.2 To advise the Committee of a report issued by the Poverty Alliance and Scottish Women's Budget Group on Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the ongoing initiatives in relation to stigma and discrimination for those experiencing poverty; health and wellbeing of those experiencing poverty, and credit unions and fair and affordable banking and advice services;
- 2.2. Notes the content of the Poverty Alliance and Scottish Women's Budget Group on Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis report issued in November 2022; and
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to further promote the Scottish Welfare Fund and financial wellbeing support through social media to increase awareness.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### **Stigma and discrimination**

- 3.1 The [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021- 2025](#) describes the Council's overall approach to delivering equality outcomes and mainstreaming equalities across the Council and through its work.

- 3.2 Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) produced a report in December 2021 entitled How Fair is North East Scotland. The full report is available [here](#), but the report highlighted the following in respect of discrimination:

‘It is difficult to find existing data to build a clear picture of the social bridges, bonds and links that support integration across diverse communities. More research is required in this area, especially in light of Brexit and Covid-19. What is available shows a consistently high proportion of ethnic minorities who feel that North East Scotland is a welcoming place, and who feel they are part of their local communities. A decrease in this sentiment has taken place over the last few years, which is likely to be associated with the implementation of Brexit.’

- 3.3 The report further highlighted concerns about community safety as follows:

‘Evidence in this area reflects the ongoing pervasiveness of racism and xenophobia. In 2020, the number of reported prejudice and hate crime incidents in Grampian reached its highest level in the last six years, with the majority of these incidents related to race/ethnicity. The figures are likely to be much higher due to under-reporting. Covid-19 led to a rise in prejudice against Chinese and East Asian communities, along with an increase in gender-based abuse.’

- 3.4 Although these issues of stigma and discrimination will not solely affect people in Aberdeen (given the area of operation of GREC) nor those experiencing poverty, the report further highlights:

‘Problems in this area are most prevalent in deprived areas, but overall, ethnic minorities in Grampian live with less secure tenure than the Scottish/British population, and levels of over-crowding are noteworthy. There are consistent gaps in data on homelessness and ethnicity at a local level, and more research is required to get a clearer picture.’

Since the research was conducted in 2021, many families of refugees and asylum seekers have moved to Aberdeen and will be part of further research to update the position.

- 3.5 The Population Needs Assessment 2021 showed Aberdeen City has a diverse population. Recent figures (year ending June 2020) from National Records of Scotland estimate that 24.7% of the City’s population was born outside the UK (compared to 9.8% for Scotland). Of those, it is estimated that 41.1% are from EU countries and 58.9% from non-EU countries (compared to 50% for both groups in the year to end December 2019). The estimated proportion of those born outside the UK has fluctuated in the last few years, from 24% in the year ending June 2017, down to 19% in year ending June in both 2018 and 2019, before rising again to 24.7% in the year to end June 2020. At the time of the 2011 Census, Aberdeen City had the third highest proportion of non-white ethnic minority people in Scotland at 15.6%. This was more than double the Scotland rate at 7.6%. The results of Scotland’s Census 2021 will begin to be reported during 2023.

- 3.6 The University of Aberdeen are researching the impacts of stigma on health and wellbeing. Dr John Bone, Coordinator, Just Transitions Lab at the University has highlighted the latest thinking on epigenetics, which is the study of how behaviours and environment can cause changes that affect the way genes work:

‘One issue that’s not understood by policymakers is that stigma, and the chronic anxiety and insecurity associated with this, may well have effects that go beyond the widely acknowledged impacts on mental health - while they’re severe enough.

Chronic stress, including that imposed by low socio-economic status, may impact on physical health through epigenetic effects. This an emerging area that’s shedding further light on health disparities associated with poverty and inequality. While most policymakers tend to think that poor health amongst the economically marginalised is a consequence of poor diet and lifestyle factors, this seems to be only one part of the story. Emotional stress, as well as environmental factors, is now thought to impact on the expression of genes, without altering DNA, increasing vulnerability to ill health and lowering life expectancy. In addition, health effects experienced by one generation, while potentially reversible if conditions change, can be passed onto succeeding generations, including vulnerability to stress, illness and psychopathologies. This means that some of the negative health effects of poverty and inequality are not just transmitted intergenerationally through sharing the same socio-economic environment but may also be heritable. Stress can also affect people’s capacity to think clearly, leading to a tendency towards more impulsive, emotion driven thinking and behaviours with a range of social consequences.’

### **Health and Wellbeing**

- 3.7 Research into the health and wellbeing impacts of those experiencing poverty is described below.
- 3.8 [Fuel poverty: review of evidence on existing interventions in Scotland](#) by Neza Javornik and Phil Mackie is an update in 2022 on a fuel poverty literature review carried out in 2016. The report identifies the health impacts of fuel poverty:

‘Living in a cold, damp home is associated with physical and mental health problems. Heating our homes adequately, or worry that we can afford to do so, affects health and wellbeing. Sometimes, like with respiratory problems, these can be directly related to the cold and damp environment. In some cases, the effects are more indirect, as with a loss of mental wellbeing.

Fuel poverty is one of the mechanisms by which social, economic or environmental determinants of health creates and sustains inequalities that can lead to poor health.'

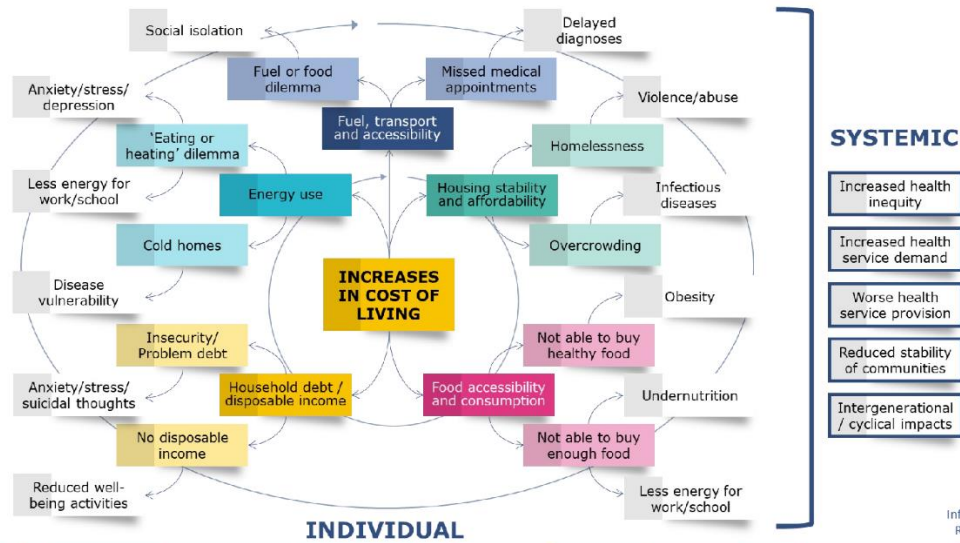
3.9 The report reviews recommendations originally made in 2016 and concludes that the main change in respect of the following recommendations is the urgency with which they need to be addressed. Although the recommendations below are made from a public health perspective, they have relevance across Council front line services:

- Advise/remind the NHS and wider partners on the links between fuel poverty, cold homes and ill-health.
- Explore how approaches to the delivery of the local NHS as an anchor institution could be a vehicle for addressing fuel poverty.
- Explore how best to align efforts within the national and local systems to tackle fuel poverty with investment in climate change and green jobs.
- Work with local community planning/resilience partnerships and wider partners to identify who and where those most vulnerable to fuel poverty reside within NHS Board areas, exploring the use of data and intelligence systems to support this.
- Work with partners to explore the barriers to participation in current measures and scope to extend the reach to those most in need by encouraging increased partnership with trusted sources of information and support based on lived experience input.
- Work to realise the potential for fuel poverty and cold home-related activities to be delivered as part of other health improvement/health promotion activities.
- Explore how best to minimise potential barriers to health service professional engagement with issues related to fuel poverty.
- Explore the feasibility and potential benefits of developing training for frontline staff to support their understanding of fuel poverty and the prevention of its health consequences.
- Provide specialist public health advice and guidance on monitoring and evaluating interventions and measures and to be an advocate for the inclusion of evaluation in fuel poverty interventions to better determine what works.
- Link with fuel poverty leads across local and national whole-system public health organisations to share experiences and knowledge of local measures and activities to address fuel poverty.

3.10 Aberdeen City Council, working with partners and third sector organisation has focussed on tackling fuel poverty through a range of funding and support submitted in The Anti-Poverty and Inequality Update paper presented to the Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 (CUS/22/250). These supports will impact on the actions above and will be reviewed when progress on that paper is updated,

3.11 Research in 2022 by Public Health Wales identified the public health impacts of the increases in the cost of living and these are seen to be wide ranging.

# How does cost of living link to health?



Cost of living: A public health issue



- 3.12 The information illustrated above shows how different aspects of poverty affect health and increase demand on health services. The Anti-Poverty and Inequality Update paper presented to the Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 (CUS/22/250) illustrated where the Council is supporting poverty in areas identified above including energy use, food accessibility, earnings and income.
- 3.13 In October 2022, Aberdeen City Council was awarded funding of £5million over 5 years to establish a Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDCR) in partnership with NHS Grampian, The University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University (RGU), funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).
- 3.14 National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Determinants Research Collaborations enable local authorities to become more research-active, embedding a culture of evidence-based decision making. Research within the collaboration will focus on determining what can be done to address the wider drivers of population health and health inequalities of groups and areas within the city. The outcomes of the HDCR which will be reported to Council and Community Planning Aberdeen, will support future decision making and identify improvements in driving factors affecting the health and wellbeing for the residents of Aberdeen.

## Credit Unions, affordable banking and advice services

- 3.15 There are now two credit unions in Aberdeen: St Machar Credit Union and Grampian Credit Union. Credit Unions operate through a 'common bond' which identifies the scope of their operations which can be eg geographic, people working for the same employer etc.

- 3.16 Financial Inclusion for Scotland was launched in September 2022 with the aim of enabling better financial inclusion in Scotland by supporting those who find it difficult to access fair or affordable financial services, such as free banking, affordable credit and money management services. It is managed by Social Investment Scotland.
- 3.17 The Council previously explored the potential for a Community Development Finance Initiative (CDFI) to support accessible finance in the City at a time when payday lenders were particularly prevalent. Early development work was undertaken but no initiative established, due to the complexities of the Council promoting and potentially acting as a financial services provider. At the time there was a third Credit Union based in Torry which supported communities across the City (and the North east). North East Scotland Credit Union (NESCU) went into administration on the 27 February 2018 and ceased trading. Administrators confirmed that all NESCU's investments were covered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) and all cash was protected. This had no impact on the other credit unions, which all operate as separate entities.
- 3.18 The Committee will be familiar with the work of the Council's Financial Inclusion Team and in particular recent improvement work undertaken by the team in supporting benefits uptake. The team works closely with other money and debt advice providers across the City, including Citizen's Advice, Cfine's Safe team and other community and third sector groups who may be able to provide first level advice and support. The FIT team can support clients at all levels of need.

### **Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis in Scotland**

- 3.19 The Poverty Alliance and Scottish Women's Budget Group published a report in November 2022 [Women's Experiences of the Cost-of-Living Crisis in Scotland](#). Key findings include:

*"Women are more likely to be poor, have lower levels of savings and wealth, and are less able to find suitable work or increase their hours if they're in work often due to caring responsibilities that fall disproportionately on women."*

*Sarah*

*Sarah is a parent and works full-time in a role providing advice and support to people in the community. In October, she was concerned about managing her existing debts and rising energy costs, particularly as she lives in an old house with poor insulation. She is no longer able to afford to go out places and see family or friends. Her interview highlighted the challenges for people in low-paid work during the crisis. She is not entitled to benefits or support with the cost of living.*

*Sarah said: "And I was thinking, 'How can I... how can I keep my daughter, how can I keep warm? What if I have to go to work and then come home and freeze my ass off every night. And I was, I honestly got to the point where I was thinking, 'What's the point of living?' You were going into shops, the prices were*



*going up so much, and it was like, 'Well I work so God damn hard, I get no help. I'm helping people get help, do you know what I mean? But yet I can't access any help myself?'*.”

- 3.20 The report makes two recommendations relevant to local authorities. The first one is Recommendation 14 which is to

“Provide longer-term funding for third sector, community organisations who provide critical financial wellbeing advice and support to women in local areas.”

- 3.21 In terms of recommendation 14, the Council's Financial Inclusion team has been successful in securing additional funding to increase the size of the team and the services that can be provided. The issue of longer term funding has been recognised and work has been undertaken through the Fairer Aberdeen Fund to try and provide stability for successful organisations over a three year funding cycle. Other funding arrangements do however, depend on an annual budget cycle.

- 3.22 The second recommendation the report makes, that is relevant to local authorities, is Recommendation 15 which is to

“Increase awareness of support available at a local level for people struggling during the crisis including the Scottish Welfare Fund and local authority financial wellbeing services”

- 3.22 As for recommendation 15, effective communication of information to reach all groups remains a challenge and work continues in trying to distribute relevant information widely, to ensure it reaches vulnerable people. In addition, work continues to ensure automatic enrolment for eg free school meals where entitlement is established, thereby improving access and simplifying processes. It is recommended that the Chief Officer Early Intervention and Community Empowerment undertakes further work to promote awareness of Scottish Welfare Fund and financial advice services through social media.

- 3.23 The Working in Partnership policy statement from the Council administration includes ‘...with the first remit of a Citizens’ Assembly being to advise the Council on what’s needed to tackle gender inequality in Aberdeen’. This work will be further developed in light of the Citizen Assemblies paper at this Committee.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Operational</b>	No significant risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Reputational</b>	No significant risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified	n/a	n/a	n/a

**\*Note – if there are inconsistencies between the target risk level and the risk appetite level set, please provide rationale for your proposals.**

## 8. OUTCOMES

<a href="#"><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u></a>	
	Impact of Report
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	There are no proposals in this report

<a href="#"><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></a>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	There are no proposals in this report
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	There are no proposals in this report
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	There are no proposals in this report
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	There are no proposals in this report

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Full impact assessment not required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 CUS/22/250 Anti-Poverty and Inequality Update
- 10.2 Cunliffe, V. T. (2016). The epigenetic impacts of social stress: how does social adversity become biologically embedded?. *Epigenomics*, 8(12), 1653-1669.
- 10.3 Zannas A. S. (2019). Epigenetics as a key link between psychosocial stress and aging: concepts, evidence, mechanisms. *Dialogues in clinical neuroscience*, 21(4), 389–396.
- 10.4 Lacal, I., & Ventura, R. (2018). Epigenetic inheritance: concepts, mechanisms and perspectives. *Frontiers in molecular neuroscience*, 292.
- 10.5 Bone, J. (2021). Neoliberal precarity and primalization: A biosocial perspective on the age of insecurity, injustice, and unreason. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 72(4), 1030-1045.

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 None

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
<b>DATE</b>	11 January 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Clawback of benefits payments by the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/23/016
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Steve MacRae / Angela Kazmierczak
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1, 1.6

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report giving further information on the clawback of benefit payments by the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions, as instructed at the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the information provided in the report regarding the clawback of benefit payments by the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### Background

- 3.1 Local Authorities and the Department for Work and Pensions have an obligation to protect public funds and to ensure that, wherever possible, overpayments are recovered. In certain circumstances, when a claimant is struggling to pay certain household bills, the Department for Works & Pensions can deduct money from their benefits and should only be used when other avenues have been exhausted to protect the welfare of the customer.
- 3.2 A wide variety of deductions may be made from Universal Credit/Legacy Benefits. The most commonly encountered are deductions to the Department for Work and Pensions to repay advance payments and overpayments, and 'third-party' deductions to cover eligible housing costs (i.e., service charges), rent arrears, fuel, and water.
- 3.3 Since 2019, the Department for Work and Pensions has been using a deduction policy which provides a limit on deductions overall, so that total

deductions should not exceed a limit. The limit is set at the amount of the applicable amount of the Universal Credit Standard Amount/Legacy Benefits Personal Allowance. The limit may be exceeded to ensure payment of a “last resort” deduction, is one which helps to prevent a claimant from being evicted or having their utilities cut off.

- 3.4 The current rate as amended in April 2021, provides that the total deductions do not usually exceed 25 per cent of the claimant’s personal allowance, instead of the previous 30 per cent.

#### Clawback of benefits payments by the Council

- 3.5 Local Authorities administer Housing Benefit on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. Customers apply to Local Authorities via an application process. The Local Authority makes a decision based on Housing Benefit legislation and makes payment to the customer or direct to the landlord.

- 3.6 The Local Authority will then make a claim to the Department for Work and Pensions to recover the amount of Housing Benefit awarded. This is through a Subsidy Claim process. Local Authorities recover most but not all their Housing Benefit Expenditure in this way. There are some areas where the Local Authority does not get “full” subsidy. One of these areas is where a Housing Benefit overpayment has been made.

- 3.7 An overpayment of Housing Benefit occurs when a claimant receives more Housing Benefit than they are entitled to, e.g., a delay in reporting a change of circumstances, which means the claimant:

- is no longer entitled to Housing Benefit, or
- is entitled to less Housing Benefit than originally awarded

This is the case whether the Housing Benefit is:

- paid to the claimant or someone acting on their behalf; or
- paid to a landlord or their agent; or
- credited to their Aberdeen City Council rent account (if they are a council tenant).

- 3.8 Section 75 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 allows for overpayments of housing benefit to be recovered either by the Secretary of State or by the authority which paid the benefit.

- 3.9 Local Authorities must:

- establish that there has been an overpayment
- establish the cause of the overpayment
- identify the period and calculate the amount of the overpayment
- classify and record overpayments so the correct rate of recovery can be made
- decide whether or not the overpayment is recoverable

- decide from whom the recovery should be sought
  - consider whether or not recovery should be sought
  - notify any 'person affected'.
- 3.10 Each decision to recover an overpayment is made on its own merit. Most overpayments are recoverable, but in certain circumstances, overpayments caused by official error are not recoverable. Claimants who have received an overpayment decision have a right of appeal against some relevant decisions that the Local Authority makes on a claim, or on an award of Housing Benefit.
- 3.11 Overpayments do not receive full subsidy and are therefore at a cost to the Local Authority.
- 3.12 In terms of recovery of overpayments there are several methods available (This is not an exhaustive list):
- from arrears of Housing Benefit that become payable while there is an outstanding overpayment
  - by deduction from ongoing Housing Benefit, which could be paid to the claimant, landlord, appointee, or agent (sometimes known as 'claw-back')
  - by deduction from the partner's ongoing Housing Benefit, as long as the claimant and partner were a couple at both the time of the overpayment and when deductions are being made.
  - by transferring a Rent Rebate overpayment to the tenant's Aberdeen City Council Rent account, but you must keep the Housing Benefit overpayment separate from any rent arrears (the overpayment is not recovered just because it has been transferred to the Aberdeen City Council Rent account)
  - by deduction from certain Department for Work and Pensions benefits paid to the claimant
  - by deduction from certain Department for Work and Pensions benefits payable to the partner, as long as the claimant and partner were a couple at both the time of the overpayment and when deductions are being made
  - by applying to another Local Authority to ask them to deduct the overpayment from the claimant's ongoing Housing Benefit entitlement in their area
  - by recovery from Housing Benefit paid to a landlord/agent for another tenant, i.e. when the landlord has been classed as responsible for repayment of a debt (sometimes known as 'Blameless Tenant' recovery)
  - by 'invoicing' the affected person for the amount outstanding
  - by civil proceedings
  - from the estate of a deceased person who had an overpayment prior to death
  - by Direct Earnings Attachment.
- 3.13 In terms of Housing Benefit recovery by the means of deductions from ongoing Housing Benefit (claw-back) the Department for Work and Pensions set maximum weekly deductions on an annual basis. In 2022/23 these are:
- £19.25 per week if found guilty of fraud, or admitted fraud after caution, or agreed to pay an administrative penalty
  - £11.55 per week in all other cases.

- 3.14 Aberdeen City Council Housing Benefits Section decided to have 3 rates of Housing Benefit deductions from ongoing Housing Benefit (clawback):
- £19.25 per week if found guilty of fraud, or admitted fraud after caution, or agreed to pay an administrative penalty
  - £3.85 per week will be taken if the claimant is in receipt of a passported benefit i.e. Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related), Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)
  - £9.00 per week for all other cases. This amount can be reduced if a claimant is experiencing financial hardship.
- 3.15 In determining the maximum amount to be deducted, the award of Housing Benefit must not be reduced below £0.50 per week.
- 3.16 As at October 2022 Aberdeen City Council has 8,379 claimants receiving Housing Benefit. Of these claims there are 376 where there are deductions from ongoing Housing Benefit (clawback). This equates to 4% of claimants who are currently having deductions taken from their ongoing benefit entitlement. 64% of the deductions are being taken at rate of £3.85 per week or less.

#### Clawback of benefits payments by Department for Work and Pensions

#### Legacy Benefit Deductions

- 3.17 The Department for Work and Pensions customers in receipt of certain benefits may have deductions taken from their benefit and paid direct to a creditor/supplier under the Third-Party Deduction Scheme. Third party deductions will only be made when it is considered to be in the interest of the customer or the customer's family.
- 3.18 The Third-Party Deductions Scheme is operated in accordance with Regulation 35(1) and Schedule 9 of the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1987 and Regulation 60 and Schedule 6 of the Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Claims and Payments) Regulations 2013.
- 3.19 The Third-Party Deduction Scheme should only be used when all other avenues of recovery have been exhausted.

Deductible benefits are:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance



### 3.20 Types of arrears recovered from benefit

Arrears that can be recovered under the scheme include:

- Rent Arrears (for customer's current address)
- Fuel costs (for customer's current provider) arrears
- Council Tax Arrears
- Unpaid fines or compensation orders
- Child Maintenance

3.21 A maximum of 3 third party deductions are taken from each payment of benefit.

#### Rent Arrears

3.22 If a landlord informs the Department for Work and Pensions that a claimant has rent/service charges arrears, then 5% of their personal allowance can be deducted from their ongoing legacy benefits until the balance is cleared. This is to prevent eviction.

	Amount per week
Single, under 25	£3.05
Single, 25 and over	£3.85
Couple, both under 18	£4.61
Couple, one or both 18 or over	£6.05

#### Council Tax Arrears

3.23 If the Local Authority informs the Department for Work and Pensions that a claimant has defaulted on their Council Tax bill and has arrears, the Department for Work and Pensions can recover 5% of their personal allowance for this debt.

	Amount per week
Single, under 25	£3.05
Single, 25 and over	£3.85
Couple, both under 18	£4.61
Couple, one or both 18 or over	£6.05

#### Gas, electric and water arrears

3.24 If a claimant owes money to their current utility supplier, they can request that an amount is deducted off their ongoing legacy benefit payments for normal usage amount and arrears. This is to prevent disconnection of service.

The amount allocated for normal usage is set by their supplier and cannot be more than 25% of their personal allowance. A payment for arrears is set at 5% of a claimant's Personal Allowance.

	Amount per week
Single, under 25	£3.05
Single, 25 and over	£3.85
Couple, both under 18	£4.61
Couple, one or both 18 or over	£6.05

3.25 The Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Modification) Regulations 2022 temporarily modifies the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1987 and the Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Claims and Payments) Regulations 2013 so that a new deduction for ongoing consumption of fuel, or an application for an increase to a deduction for ongoing deductions, may only be made further to an application by the claimant. The Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Modification) Regulations 2022 came into force on 26 April 2022. The changes made by the Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Modification) Regulations 2022 are temporary and cease to have effect on 6 April 2023.

#### Court fines

3.26 The court can order that money is deducted off a claimant's legacy benefit payment if they have non-payment of a fine. A payment for fines is set at 5% of a claimants Personal Allowance.

	Amount per week
Single, under 25	£3.05
Single, 25 and over	£3.85
Couple, both under 18	£4.61
Couple, one or both 18 or over	£6.05

#### Benefit Overpayments

3.27 The standard and higher rates of deduction from income related benefit for overpayment recovery are prescribed in legislation. There is an administrative lower rate that has been introduced for use where directed. e.g. claimants in residential care homes.

From	Standard Rate 15% (Non-fraud)	Maximum Rate 25% (Fraud Debt)	Lower Rate 5% (Nursing Home)
April 2022	£11.55 per week	£30.80 per week	£3.85 per week

#### Child maintenance

3.28 Child maintenance can be deducted off a claimant's legacy benefit, if they are the non-resident parent and they have no earned income. It can only be taken if Child Maintenance Service request the payment direct from their benefit.

Child maintenance can only be collected at a set rate of £8.40 per week.

## Universal Credit Deductions

### Deductions for advances

3.29 The maximum that can be collected each month for advances is 25% of a standard allowance. If they are already paying back 25% of standard allowance for advances, then no other debts can be collected - unless for rent arrears or utilities.

	Maximum amount per month
Single, under 25	£66.33
Single, 25 and over	£83.73
Couple, both under 25	£104.11
Couple, one or both 25 or over	£131.43

3.30 An advance can be deferred for either 3 or 6 months due to financial hardship and a claimant should contact Universal Credit to agree this.

3.31 If a claimant has other debts at the Department for Work and Pensions Debt Management, such as a tax credit recovery, they should call Debt Management to ensure they do not increase the amount they recover and may even be able to agree a fixed lower amount.

### Deductions for 'ordinary debt'

3.32 If a claimant owes money to the Department for Work and Pensions for an overpayment of Universal Credit, legacy benefit, housing benefit or tax credits then this will be treated as an 'ordinary debt'. An amount can be recovered from their ongoing Universal Credit payment until the balance is cleared.

3.33 If a claimant is paying back any advances on their current claim for Universal Credit, then the advance repayment will take priority, then an amount will be collected for 'ordinary debts' within the allowed limits. Any advances from a previous claim will be treated as an 'ordinary debt'.

3.34 If a claimant has no earnings or earnings below their work allowance, no more than 15% of their standard allowance can be taken for one ordinary debt, but no more than 25% of their standard allowance can be taken for all ordinary debts and advance repayments combined.

3.35 If a claimant has earnings above their work allowance, no more than 25% of their standard allowance can be taken for all ordinary debts and advance repayments combined.

	15% amount per month	25% amount per month
Single, under 25	£39.80	£66.33
Single, 25 and over	£50.24	£83.73
Couple, both under 25	£62.47	£104.11
Couple, one or both 25 or over	£78.86	£131.43

3.36 The Department for Work and Pensions Debt Management are responsible for collecting the money for 'ordinary debts'. They may even be able to agree a fixed lower amount if the amount being deducted is causing a claimant financial hardship.

#### Third party deductions

3.37 Third party deductions are when money is taken off their Universal Credit for another service and is not money owed to the Department for Work and Pensions. The Department for Work and Pensions have been given responsibly for collecting the money and passing it over. The Third-Party Deductions Scheme is operated in Aberdeen City Council in accordance with Regulation 60 and Schedule 6 of the Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Claims and Payments) Regulations 2013.

3.38 The Third-Party Deduction Scheme should only be used when all other avenues of recovery have been exhausted.

#### Rent/service charges arrears

3.39 If a landlord informs Universal Credit that a claimant has rent/service charges arrears, then an amount can be deducted per month from their ongoing Universal Credit payment until the balance is cleared. This is to prevent eviction.

3.40 Universal Credit will always deduct 20% of their standard allowance unless they are already paying back 25% of their standard allowance to advances and 'ordinary debts' or if they inform Universal Credit of financial hardship. The lower amount is 10% of their standard allowance. They will never take lower than this amount.

	Lower amount per month	Higher amount per month
Single, under 25	£26.53	£53.06
Single, 25 and over	£33.49	£66.98
Couple, both under 25	£41.65	£83.29
Couple, one or both 25 or over	£52.57	£105.14

#### Council tax arrears

3.41 If the Local Authority informs Universal Credit that a claimant has defaulted their Aberdeen City Council account and has arrears, Universal Credit can recover 5% of their standard allowance for this debt.

	Amount per month
Single, under 25	£13.27
Single, 25 and over	£16.75
Couple, both under 25	£20.82
Couple, one or both 25 or over	£26.29

- 3.42 Council tax arrears cannot be deducted if they are already having 25% of their standard allowance deducted for advances and 'ordinary debts' as these have a higher priority.

#### Court fines

- 3.43 A Fines Enforcement Officer at the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service can apply for a Deduction from Benefit Order. The court can order that money is deducted off a claimant's Universal Credit payment if they have non-payment of a fine.

	Amount per month
Single, under 25	£13.27
Single, 25 and over	£16.75
Couple, both under 25	£20.82
Couple, one or both 25 or over	£26.29

- 3.44 Court fines cannot be deducted if a claimant already has 25% of their standard allowance deducted for advances and 'ordinary debts' as these have a higher priority.

#### Gas, electric and water arrears

- 3.45 If a claimant owes money to their current utility supplier, they can request that an amount is deducted off their ongoing Universal Credit payments for normal usage amount and arrears. This is to prevent disconnection of service.
- 3.46 The amount allocated for normal usage is set by their supplier and cannot be more than 25% of their standard allowance and child element unless they agree in advance. A payment for arrears is set at 5% of a claimant's Standard Allowance.

	Amount per month
Single, under 25	£13.27
Single, 25 and over	£16.75
Couple, both under 25	£20.82
Couple, one or both 25 or over	£26.29

- 3.47 The Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Modification) Regulations 2022 temporarily modifies the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1987 and the Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Claims and Payments) Regulations 2013 so that a new deduction for ongoing consumption of fuel, or an application for an increase to a deduction for ongoing deductions, may only be made further to an application by the claimant. The Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Modification) Regulations 2022 came into force on 26 April 2022. The changes made by the Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Modification) Regulations 2022 are temporary and cease to have effect on 6 April 2023.

## Child maintenance

- 3.48 Child maintenance can be deducted off a claimant's Universal Credit payment if they are the non-resident parent and they have no earned income. It can only be taken if the Child Maintenance Service request the payment direct from their benefit.
- 3.49 Child maintenance cannot be deducted if they are already having 25% of their standard allowance deducted for advances and 'ordinary debts' as these have a higher priority
- 3.50 Child maintenance can only be collected at a set rate of £36.40 per month.
- 3.51 The Department for Work and Pensions have an information on where they have discretion, the deduction can be reduced if a claimant is struggling to repay her/his debt. Below is taken at [gov.uk](http://gov.uk)

*'If you're struggling, you can ask for a financial hardship decision to reduce the amount of benefit debt you pay. You may be considered for this if you have money taken from your universal credit for:*

- *benefit debt;*
- *budgeting loan and crisis loan repayment;*
- *advances;*
- *rent arrears (if they're taken at a rate greater than 10% of the standard allowance)*

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Local Authorities have an obligation to protect public funds and to ensure that, wherever possible, overpayments of housing benefits are recovered. Local Authorities have powers under legislation to recover overpayments of housing benefits in certain circumstances.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Operational</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Reputational</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

8.1 The proposals in this report have no impact on the Council Delivery Plan.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Full impact assessment not required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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