

Aberdeen City Council Response to the

Scottish Women's Budget Group Report and Recommendations on Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty

November 2025



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Foreword by Councillor Allard and Councillor Buchanan

Aberdeen City Council extends its sincere thanks to the Scottish Women's Budget Group for their important and timely report on gender inequality and poverty in Aberdeen. There are 116,000 women in Aberdeen, making up 51% of the city's population, so addressing the needs of the majority of the people of Aberdeen is critical. The Scottish Women's Budget Group study presents a clear and compelling account of the structural barriers that contribute to poverty and shape women's experiences in our city. The report is rooted in the lived experience of women in Aberdeen. Their perspectives have shown that people do not experience poverty uniformly. Factors like gender, race, disability and caring responsibilities influence and deepen disadvantage. The report also challenges us to reflect on how we design and deliver services for our citizens with these complexities in mind.

We take poverty and inequality seriously. Tackling these problems effectively demands a clear focus on the differing needs of women and men. We are committed to responding to the distinct challenges that women face by enhancing support around care and caring, safety, the welfare system, and health and wellbeing. Our response to the Scottish Women's Budget Group report sets out what we are doing currently to make services accessible, inclusive, and responsive to women's needs. We are working to improve access to childcare, supporting unpaid carers, making public spaces safer, and simplifying access to financial support. We are taking steps to strengthen how we use data to understand the needs of different groups of people, build people's perspectives into the decision we take and improve how we communicate what we are doing.

The Scottish Women's Budget Group report shows that far more work is required to root out inequality in Aberdeen, and that considering women's experiences will help us achieve this goal. This response set out the steps that Aberdeen City Council will take to address the Scottish Women's Budget Group's recommendations. By taking measures to implement these recommendations, we will help women living on low incomes. The proposed actions contained in this response demonstrate the Council's commitment to designing and delivering services that reflect the lived experiences of women in Aberdeen. Many of the suggested actions cut across different parts of Aberdeen City Council and will help to make our services more inclusive, responsive, and accessible.

This response is the start of a process, not the end. We will continue to engage the Scottish Women’s Budget Group as we implement our proposed actions and work with partner organisations to fight poverty and improve women’s lives in Aberdeen.



Councillor Allard, Co-Leader of Aberdeen City Council and Convener of the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee



Councillor Desmond Buchanan, Vice Convener of the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

Summary of Scottish Women’s Budget Group Recommendations and Aberdeen City Council’s Response

Aberdeen City Council acknowledges the valuable insights and recommendations presented by the Scottish Women’s Budget Group regarding the experiences of women and disadvantaged groups within our city. Drawing on their expertise, we are committed to addressing systemic barriers, promoting gender equality, and ensuring that all citizens have equitable access to services, opportunities, and support.

Scottish Women’s Budget Group Recommendation Themes	Aberdeen City Council Response
Care and Caring	
<p>Childcare - Ensure equitable, accessible, and well-communicated childcare and family support for all children and families, with targeted help for vulnerable and low-income households. Expand flexible childcare models, improve support for kinship carers and unpaid carers, and address gaps in provision for disabled children and school age care.</p>	<p>We want every child and family in Aberdeen to have fair and easy access to childcare and family support, especially those facing financial hardship or difficult circumstances. Our Council offers flexible and affordable childcare options, and we regularly listen to feedback from families to make sure we’re meeting local needs. We’re working to make information about childcare support clearer and easier to find, including help for disabled children and kinship carers. By using data, we can spot where support is missing and take action.</p>
<p>Unpaid Care - Provide adequately funded, equitable social care and carer support by accounting for disability-related costs and assessing the impact of charges on child poverty. Strengthen social care by using data to identify unmet needs, improve support for carers, and embed community-based, trauma-informed approaches to service delivery.</p>	<p>We want everyone in Aberdeen who needs social care or support to get it in a way that’s fair, affordable, and meets their needs. We are working to make sure funding is used well and that services reflect the real costs faced by disabled people and families. We will also look at how charges affect child poverty, so we can make better decisions that support families. Unpaid carers play a vital role, and we want to support them. That includes help with leave from work, financial advice, and more improvements coming through our updated Carers Strategy.</p>

Safety

Improve women's safety by investing in better street lighting, safer public spaces, and accessible, trauma-informed services for survivors of abuse. Strengthen multi-agency responses to violence against women and girls, and ensure services are culturally competent and inclusive of migrant and minority ethnic women.

Everyone should feel safe in Aberdeen, whether walking or travelling through the city, at work or at school. We are making sure that safety is built into how we design streets, buildings, and services, especially for women, girls, and other vulnerable groups. We regularly check things like street lighting and taxi ranks to make sure they're safe and accessible. Schools are also looking at how toilet facilities can help pupils feel safer during the school day.

Welfare and Benefits

Simplify access to welfare support and ensure services are designed with compassion and dignity. Improve awareness of entitlements, reduce administrative barriers, and ensure support is accessible to those with no recourse to public funds. Tackle low pay and insecure work by promoting fair employment practices and supporting women into sustainable, well-paid jobs.

We want people in Aberdeen to get the financial support they're entitled to quickly and without having to get around complicated barriers. We will improve how we share information about benefits and support to people in the city, making it easier to understand and easier to access. We will work to make support schemes more visible, so people know what help is available and how to get it. We will also be reaching out to groups who might miss out, including migrant women. We are tackling in-work poverty by promoting fair employment within Aberdeen City Council and across employers in the city more widely.

Health and Wellbeing

Ensure health and wellbeing services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to women's needs, particularly for disabled women, migrant women, women living on low incomes and women experiencing other forms of vulnerability. Improve access to mental health support, reduce digital exclusion, and address the cost barriers to essentials like food and heating. Embed gender-sensitive approaches in service design and delivery.

We are working to make health and wellbeing services easier to access and more inclusive, especially for women who are experiencing poverty. This includes improving access to digital services, supporting mental health, and helping with the rising cost of living. We are also looking at how housing, financial support, and transport services can better meet the needs of women, including those who have experienced domestic abuse. Our future plans include offering more translated information, strengthening support for migrant and Gypsy/Traveller communities, and making public transport safer and more affordable.

Introduction

In June 2024, Aberdeen City Council's Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee commissioned the Scottish Women's Budget Group to deliver a citizen's assembly approach study on poverty and gender inequality in Aberdeen. The final report on the study was presented to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 11 June 2025. The Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Report sets out how women's everyday experiences in Aberdeen are affected by gender inequality and what can be done to tackle the systemic barriers which are built into systems to make life fairer for women in Aberdeen. The study presents 116 recommendations across four themes: care and caring; safety; welfare/benefits; and health and wellbeing. 96 of the recommendations are for Aberdeen City Council and the other 19 are made to the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership, Scottish and UK Government, Police Scotland and Financial Services Ombudsman.

This document sets out Aberdeen City Council's response to the 96 recommendations for Aberdeen City Council as well as the 4 recommendations made to the Health and Social Care Partnership and 1 recommendation for Police Scotland. In developing this response, we have carefully considered each recommendation, reviewed current activity, and identified relevant improvement actions. In addition, we have established the priority level, timescale for completion and financial implications of these proposed improvements.

Cross-Cutting Areas for Improvement

As well as responding to each individual recommendation, the Council has identified several overarching and cross-cutting areas for improvement to implement a gendered approach to addressing poverty in Aberdeen. These cross-cutting actions will enable Aberdeen City to enhance the design and delivery of services we provide to our Citizens.

Strengthening the use of data to address intersectional needs

Strengthening the use of data is central to understanding how poverty affects different people in Aberdeen, especially women, and ensuring that our decisions are fair and targeted to those most in need. We are improving how we collect, analyse and use information, including breaking down data by sex and other characteristics to get a clearer picture of inequalities. While our systems already hold much of this data, we recognise that numbers alone are not enough, so we use structured evaluations to assess the real impact of our policies and services. This is particularly important when addressing intersectional needs, as some women face additional challenges linked to

disability, race, migration status or belonging to the Gypsy/Traveller community. These overlapping issues can make poverty harder to escape and support more difficult to access. To respond better, we will use the data we hold alongside structured evaluations and, crucially, the insights of women with lived experience, especially those facing multiple barriers. By combining evidence with lived experience, we can shape services that are fairer, more inclusive, and easier to access for everyone.

Embedding participation lived experience in decision-making

Aberdeen City Council recognises that the communities most affected by our decisions must be at the heart of shaping them. We will continue to engage directly with people who rely on our services to better understand lived experiences and identify opportunities for improvement. Through Community Planning Aberdeen and our locality planning structures, we will ensure that engagement is rooted in local priorities and reflects the voices of those who know their communities best. We are committed to ensuring that the perspectives of marginalised and disadvantaged groups, including women, are heard and meaningfully shape how council services change and improve. We will work closely with the Scottish Women's Budget Group to ensure women's voices are heard as we implement the proposed improvement actions.

Improving communication and accessibility

The Council will launch a coordinated communications campaign to make it easier for everyone in Aberdeen to access clear and inclusive information about the services and support available. As part of the campaign, we will provide easy-read materials, translated resources, and digital tools to improve access to information and ensure our new website is mobile-friendly, accessible, and inclusive. However, we know that not everyone can or wants to access information online, so we will share information about the services we provide and entitlements people can receive in community spaces and through partner organisations to reach people where they are.

Collaboration between Council Services and with partner organisations

Tackling poverty is complex and no single Council service can achieve this goal on its own. It is crucial that Aberdeen City Council staff work together to identify poverty-related problems and implement strategies to address them. Through Community Planning Aberdeen, the Council is working with many public, private and third sector organisations to help people living on low incomes. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans are currently being revised for 2026-36. These plans are central to how the Council works in partnership to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities. The LOIP sets out shared priorities for the city, ensuring that organisations and communities are aligned around common goals. Locality plans focus more closely on the neighbourhoods experiencing the greatest levels of disadvantage, with actions developed and delivered in collaboration with residents. Together, these plans help partners pool resources, design services around lived experience, and monitor collective progress, ensuring that efforts to tackle poverty are coordinated, targeted, and responsive to community needs.



Care and Caring

The Scottish Women's Budget Group's study in Aberdeen highlights the urgent need for equitable and accessible support for both childcare and unpaid care. It calls for childcare and family services to be well-communicated and available to all children and families, with targeted support for vulnerable and low-income households.

Recommendations include expanding flexible childcare models, improving support for kinship and unpaid carers, and addressing gaps in provision for disabled children and school age care. In parallel, the study emphasises the importance of adequately funded and equitable social care, accounting for disability-related costs and assessing how charges affect child poverty. Strengthening social care through better use of data, improving support for carers, and embedding community-based, trauma-informed approaches are key to meeting unmet needs and ensuring all families can access the care they require.

Affordability and availability of childcare in Aberdeen

Aberdeen City Council understands that caring responsibilities often fall to women, which can affect their job choices, work hours and income. To help, the Council aims to make childcare more flexible and inclusive, so it fits the needs of different families throughout the city. This helps women take part in work and supports the wellbeing of families. The Council also works to make childcare more affordable and easier to access, including during school holidays and throughout the school year. These steps reflect our dedication to supporting young people and those who look after them.

What we are doing now:

Our vision is to provide early learning and childcare which is accessible, affordable, is of high quality and is available up to 50 weeks of the year. Provision will be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of individual children, parents/carers and the wider community and will support parents to work, train or study, especially those who need routes into sustainable employment and out of poverty.

The Council provides direct and practical support to make childcare more affordable and accessible for families. Subsidised lets are offered to childcare providers operating in Council buildings, reducing their operating costs by including janitorial and cleaning support within the subsidised fee. This helps to keep fees for parents lower and ensures provision can remain sustainable.

The Aberdeen City Council Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2024-26 recognises how the expansion of early learning and childcare can help reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve long term outcomes for children and families. As a result of the ELC Expansion Programme Aberdeen City Council has implemented the delivery of the increased entitlement of 1140 hours from August 2021 and offers a mixed delivery model of ELC provision in the city. Flexible childcare services are offered in Tillydrone and Cummings Park as a result of Scottish Government ELC Expansion funding and are run as concessions on behalf of the Council. The Council gathers the views of parents and carers every two years to ensure the local childcare offer reflects demand.

Early Learning and Childcare

In June 2023 we consulted with parents and carers to seek their views to inform the Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 24-26

79.4% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the range of providers and models within their local area, an increase of 7.4% from 2021

80.6% secured their first choice of ELC provision.

87.1% were satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date.

Information about childcare support is promoted widely to ensure families know what is available. A Guide to Early Learning and Childcare is updated and published annually, detailing the funded offer and all available options. The Aberdeen City Council website advertises childcare services, while schools share information locally with parents at enrolment. The Council offers holiday activity sessions, including Easter, Autumn, and Summer of Play. These activities mainly target children aged 5–14 and are focused on families most at risk of poverty. These activities are publicised online and through local promotional materials. Partnership working through Community Planning Aberdeen's Children's Services Board further supports this, with Health Visitors fully aware of eligible two-year-old provision and referring families directly. In line with national guidance, funded places are actively promoted to all eligible families, including those with twins or triplets, through direct mailings and advertisements.

Specialist childcare is also provided for children with additional support needs. [School age childcare](#) is offered at Mile End School and Orchard Brae School, both after school and during holidays, ensuring that families have reliable provision tailored to their children's needs. To expand provision more broadly, Aberdeen City Council is supporting the Scottish Government's National Childminding Recruitment Programme. This includes hosting events such as the Childminding Discovery Session held in September 2025, which introduced prospective childminders to training and support available for entering the profession.

Support also extends beyond childcare into wider education and wellbeing. Educational Psychologists provide training and coaching to school staff, alongside Early Intervention Consultations, to help children who struggle with attendance for emotional reasons. In 2024, 82 consultations were held, and some schools are now working together to develop consistent approaches to supporting pupils with emotional needs. In addition, smooth transitions from primary to secondary school are a priority. Schools follow the Aberdeen City Transition Standard, which sets expectations for planning, working closely with families, and ensuring children feel prepared. This includes extra support for pupils at risk of struggling with attendance, such as early introductions to staff and personalised visits.

Finally, Aberdeen City Council's commitment to flexibility also extends to its workforce. The Flexible Working Policy was updated in January 2025 to introduce hybrid and fixed-location workstyles, going beyond statutory requirements. Flexibility is promoted actively in recruitment and day-to-day policy, with staff feedback showing strong results:

85% report that hybrid working improves their work–life balance

72% feel it supports Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion



What we will do next:

1. Continue to build on the success of the flexible childcare models being implemented at Cummings Park Nursery and Tillydrone Nursery if funding to further extend the provision of Early Learning and Childcare becomes available. Furthermore, offer the option to purchase additional Early Learning and Childcare hours in settings with available capacity. (Recommendations 1, 2 and 15)
2. Continue to publicise and promote Early Learning and Childcare to eligible two-year-olds to increase uptake. We will ensure that literature is clear about eligibility, including for twins and triplets. (Recommendation 20)
3. Strengthen awareness of the Job Start Payment among parents by highlighting its coverage of childcare and other essential costs. Provide simple, easy-to-understand materials and share them with partner organisations for wider distribution. (Recommendation 4)
4. Continue to monitor the number of childminders recruited as part of the National Childminding Recruitment programme, including those providing childcare for children with additional support needs. A Family and Friends Referral Scheme is being established to encourage existing childminders to promote childminding as a career and encourage their family and friends to consider it. (Recommendation 6)

5. Continue to support children who struggle to attend school for emotional reasons as part of the Stronger Families Series. A new Digital Resource Hub has launched to improve access for parents and carers, supported by promotional materials in schools and community spaces. Training will also be extended to partners like the Family Learning Service to strengthen targeted support for families. (Recommendation 19)
6. Participate in Business in the Community's (BITC) In-Work Poverty Lab, which will help the Council develop an action plan to tackle in-work poverty among council employees, including employees with caring responsibilities. This will involve continuing to promote flexible working and we will also work with BITC and ABZ Works to encourage other employers in Aberdeen City to do the same to embed flexible working practices and Fair Work principles. (Recommendation 14)

Kinship Care and Parents of Looked After Children

We recognise the vital role that kinship carers play in young people's lives and the pressures they face, often stepping in at short notice to provide stability and care during a time of crisis. Kinship care is rarely planned and can place sudden financial, practical, and emotional demands on families who may not have anticipated becoming primary carers. The Council is committed to improving support for these carers and the parents of looked after children by ensuring their needs are fully recognised and that services are straightforward to access.

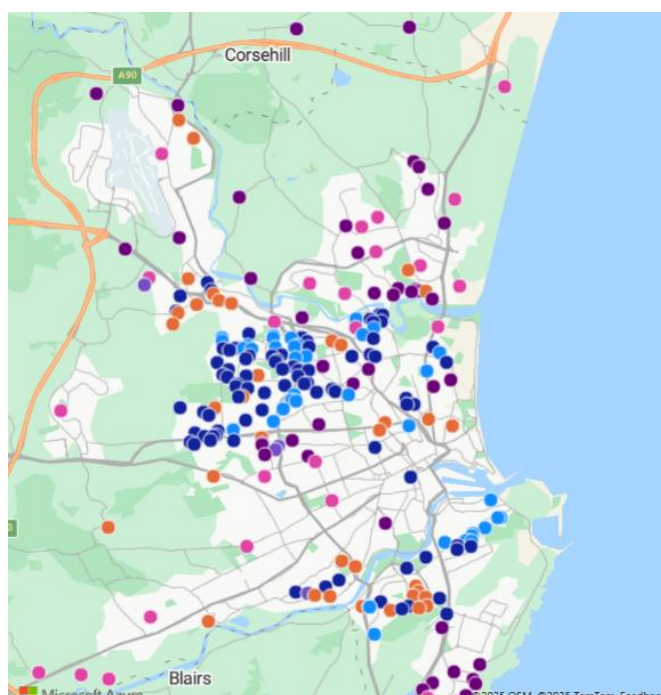


What we are doing now:

Our data analysis shows that most kinship carers are grandparents, many of whom live in areas of high deprivation as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 1 & 2).

Kinship Carer Locations (Sep 2025)

- SIMD1 - 16%
- SIMD2 - 36%
- SIMD3 - 12%
- SIMD4 - 21%
- SIMD5 - 10%
- Unknown - 6%



To support kinship carers, a financial assessment is carried out to ensure that carers receive the Scottish Recommended Allowance, which is a standard weekly payment set by the Scottish Government for foster and kinship carers, and are assisted in accessing their full benefit entitlements, often with help from the Citizens Advice Bureau or Aberdeen City Council's money advice service. In addition, Aberdeen City Council has used Scottish Government funding to increase the Scottish Recommended Allowance payment to kinship carers. This increase accounts for inflation and has been backdated to 1 April 2025.

Children's Social Work staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the ways poverty impacts families, recognising it as an adverse childhood experience. Most children supported by the service live in the most deprived areas of the city and are directly affected by poverty. Staff are well-placed to direct families to immediate help and can also provide direct financial or practical support. The Fit Like Service includes a dedicated welfare worker who helps families access the full range of benefits they are entitled to, thereby increasing household income. Health Visitors are also able to make referrals to the Financial Inclusion Team for additional support. Furthermore, Children's Social Work provides financial assistance to parents and families to help them maintain and enjoy contact with children who are in Aberdeen City Council's care.

In addition, kinship carers who are Council employees benefit from access to special leave provisions, including unpaid parental leave and carers leave. Flexible working options are available, allowing staff to request adjustments to their working patterns to balance their employment with caregiving responsibilities. While formal tracking of flexible working requests is not yet in place, Council employees caring for a dependent with a long-term care need are entitled to one week of unpaid leave per year. Flexible working is also actively promoted in job adverts on My Job Scotland and within Council guidance, further encouraging a supportive culture for employees with caring responsibilities.

What we will do next:

7. The Financial Inclusion Team will use the Low Income Family Tracker to identify households with a child under three who are affected by under-occupancy or the benefit cap. These families will be targeted for Discretionary Housing Payments and other financial support, reducing the risk of financial crisis. By providing this support early, the Council can help families stay together and prevent children from needing to enter care. (Recommendation 24)
8. Children's Social Work leaders will work with colleagues to strengthen staff knowledge on how to help families involved in the care system maximise income, manage debt, and access support. This includes training from Fife Gingerbread on how to support parents with the Child Maintenance Service, including how to make a claim, challenge decisions, and find further help. The service will also explore whether

there is a gap in local advice and advocacy. A new Learning and Development lead will work with colleagues to deliver briefings that improve staff understanding of the benefits system and income maximisation routes. (Recommendation 47)

9. Continue to promote school age childcare provision and explore ways to capture data on children in kinship care who access this support. This will help us better understand how we are meeting the needs of kinship families and identify opportunities to strengthen and improve the support available. Additionally, we will update our training provision to staff delivering school age childcare to include a closer focus on supporting kinship carers and parents with disabilities. (Recommendations 21, 83 and 87)

10. Review the offer to kinship carers as part of our new Family Friendly Project, ensuring that Council staff who step into this role receive the right balance of leave, flexibility, and practical support. The project brings together policies on carers leave, parental leave, and flexible working into a clear framework, making it easier for kinship carers to understand and access the support available to them. (Recommendation 7)

Cost of the School Day and School Holidays

Rising costs of children’s education, from transport to uniforms and school trips, place additional strain on families. School holidays bring additional costs to households. We want to support parents and carers with the cost of the school day, helping to ensure that children can access education and reach their full potential.



What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City council is committed to reducing the cost of the school day for families, particularly those experiencing financial hardship. We have taken steps to remove all costs relating to participation in core curriculum subjects for all learners in our schools. Schools monitor other costs to ensure that any parental contributions are manageable and that parents are given prior notice of any costs. Schools provide support for items such as school trips, uniforms, and learning materials for use at home. Families are regularly informed about Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants, with information sent out through the [Support for Families booklet](#) three times per year to ensure no eligible family misses out.

The image shows three pages from the 'Support for Families' booklet. The first page is the cover, featuring the Aberdeen City Council logo and the title 'SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES' with a red banner stating 'If you are on a low income and have children at school, you may be entitled to financial support.' The second page is titled 'FREE SCHOOL MEALS' and details eligibility criteria, including income thresholds and the current grant amount of £2.30 per child per school day. The third page is titled 'SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANT' and explains that the grant covers the cost of essential school clothing, with a current grant of £20 towards the cost of essential school clothing. It also lists eligibility criteria and application information.

Financial Inclusion advisors work with schools to help families claim all relevant entitlements, and schools operate preloved clothing schemes, often managed by parent councils, giving families access to affordable uniforms. These schemes mean that children can start the school year fully equipped without parents having to buy everything new.

Strategic Equity Funding, allocated as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, helps schools support pupils and their families. Financial Inclusion workers funded through Strategic Equity Funding now operate through a central contact point, making it easier for parents and carers to access advice and support. Pupil Equity Funding is allocated directly to schools to help them provide the best possible opportunities for children's learning and the planned use of this is carefully targeted to help close the poverty related attainment gap. Pupil Equity Funding is used to help schools support children who experience barriers to learning and who might be falling behind or not having the same chances in their education because their family is experiencing poverty or other financial difficulties. Schools report on the use and impact of Pupil Equity Funding in their annual Standards and Quality Reports, and the Council provides guidance and shares best practice to help schools ensure these resources are used effectively.

The Council also administers benefits such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, and the Education Maintenance Allowance, alongside free school meals and school clothing grants, in line with UK and Scottish Government income thresholds. Additional eligibility for the school clothing grant has been extended to families receiving Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction. The Council uses benefits system data to identify families who have not yet claimed their entitlements and proactively invites them to apply. The Free School Meal and School Clothing Grant application process includes a mobile number, allowing staff to contact families to resolve any issues quickly and ensure support reaches those who need it.

To make school holidays more affordable, Aberdeen City Council runs a holiday activity programme for children aged 5–14. While the programme focuses on families most at risk of poverty, it also includes opportunities for all children to participate. Activities are community-based and free, and where possible include meals to remove barriers to participation. Families can take part in a variety of activities—from sports and arts to learning workshops—ensuring children have safe, engaging, and nourishing experiences during school breaks. The programme is continually improved using participation data and feedback from children and families, and support is provided for those who cannot book activities online, helping people who face barriers to using digital services.

What we will do next:

11. The Education Service will continue to monitor the cost of the school day and share best practice through the Equity Network. Targeted information will continue to be provided to parents and carers to help them access their full entitlements, including support from Money Advisors in schools. (Recommendation 3)
12. The Financial Inclusion Team will distribute the Support for Families booklet three times a year, detailing advice agencies, available support, and clear centralised access routes to ensure families know how to claim what they are entitled to. (Recommendation 29)
13. Household data will be analysed to understand how current benefit thresholds affect families working 16 hours a week at the National Minimum Wage or Real Living Wage. This will help explore options to support those who earn just above the cut-off for financial assistance such as the housing element of Universal Credit, Council Tax Reduction, or Free School Meals, and cost estimates will be prepared for any potential changes. (Recommendation 88)
14. In collaboration with Education, the Financial Inclusion Team will use the Low Income Family Tracker Dashboard to identify families entitled to Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants, or the Education Maintenance Allowance who are not currently claiming. Where possible, eligible households will be auto-awarded, and families will be proactively contacted to provide any required information, such as bank details, to ensure they receive their full entitlement. (Recommendations 27, 28 and 31)
15. Remove the requirement to provide a mobile phone number on all educational benefits application forms, making it optional while maintaining alternative contact methods. This change will remove a potential barrier to applying and ensure that families can access support in a way that suits them. (Recommendation 30)
16. Explore the data we hold on school age children and their families to determine whether we can identify pupils who may require additional support with bus travel to school, focusing on children in low-income households who are not entitled to school transport. (Recommendation 8)

Unpaid Care and Social Care



We recognise the significant impact unpaid care responsibilities have on women's ability to take up paid work or increase their hours. The Council is committed to supporting to providing straightforward access to support for unpaid carers.

What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership recognises the significant impact unpaid care responsibilities have on women's ability to take up work, increase their hours, or pursue education and training. The Aberdeen City Carers Strategy 2023–2026, ensures practical, targeted support to both adult and young carers and sets out commitments to ensure carers have access to information, guidance, respite, and other services that reduce the burden of unpaid care.

An annual performance report is produced on the delivery of the Carers Strategy and 'unmet need' is monitored, which refers to situations where individuals have been assessed as requiring funded social care or support but either cannot receive the service or have refused the offer available. These cases are tracked and action is taken to address them. The Scottish Women's Budget Group study highlights a broader category of unmet need: individuals whose needs do not meet our eligibility criteria for funded care. While the Health and Social Care Partnership does not hold formal data on this type of need, it will actively signpost people to alternative support options, helping carers access resources that may enable them to balance caring responsibilities with work or study.

Carers funding provided by the Scottish Government is currently allocated to delivering the commitments within Aberdeen City's Carers Strategy 2023 -2026. The non-residential social care charging policy is called Contributing to your Care and Support. People are only asked to pay towards the cost of their care if they can afford it. To decide this, a financial assessment is carried out that looks at a person's income and subtracts essential expenses like rent and Council Tax. Disability-related costs are also considered. If someone has money left over after these expenses, we use a formula to work out whether they should contribute to the cost of their care.

What we will do next:

17. Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership will examine how they better understand and record situations where people need support but do not qualify for funded social care. They will work with communities and third sector organisations to explore how these needs could be met and to develop a Single Point of Access, making it easier for people to find out what support is available in their area. (Recommendation 97)

18. Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership will ensure the annual report on the Carers Strategy is shared more widely and promoted more effectively. The strategy is currently being refreshed for April 2026 and input from the Scottish Women's Budget Group will be welcome. (Recommendation 98)

19. Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership are reviewing their non-residential social care charging policy to make sure it properly considers disability-related costs. They will check this against national guidance and compare it with what other health and social care partnerships across Scotland are doing. (Recommendation 33)

20. Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership will work with the Council's Data and Insights Team to test assumptions that non-residential care charges do not affect child poverty and consider whether the policy needs to change. (Recommendation 34)



Safety

The Scottish Women's Budget Group's study on gender poverty in Aberdeen highlights violence against women and girls as a key issue affecting women's safety and well-being. The study emphasises strengthening multi-agency responses to support survivors and ensure services are culturally competent and inclusive of migrant and minority ethnic women, recognising that experiences of violence and risk are shaped by both gender and social context. It also calls for investment in better street lighting, safer public spaces, and accessible, trauma-informed services to improve safety in both public and private spaces, helping women feel secure and supported in all areas of daily life.



Violence Against Women

Violence against women is unacceptable. Women and girls face heightened risks of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and violence in both private and public spaces. These experiences can limit their freedom, impact mental and physical health, and create financial hardship. Aberdeen City Council is determined to play its part, alongside partner organisations, in ending violence against women and girls.

What we are doing now:

Addressing violence against women and girls is a key priority for Aberdeen, delivered through a strong multi-agency approach. Aberdeen City Council is a partner in the Aberdeen Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership, which aligns with Scotland's national *Equally Safe* strategy. This partnership brings together the Council, the Health and Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland, NHS Grampian, and third-sector organisations to ensure responses are joined-up and focused on prevention, protection, and reducing the financial harm that often follows abuse.

Support services are in place to help survivors remain safe while minimising disruption to their lives. The Council's Domestic Abuse Team offers safety planning, advocacy, and advice on housing and benefits, while the Health and Social Care Partnership provides wider safeguarding for adults and children. Access to safe accommodation is a critical part of this response, with emergency and temporary housing available through the Council and refuge provision supported by Grampian Women's Aid. These measures are complemented by financial support, including access to the Scottish Welfare Fund, which provides crisis grants to help families meet essential needs at times of emergency.

Preventing abuse and creating safer public spaces is also a shared priority across Community Planning Aberdeen. Campaigns such as *16 Days of Action* highlight gender-based violence as a human rights issue, while initiatives like “Ask for Angela” and the designation of public safe spaces such as Aberdeen Art Gallery give women practical routes to seek help. These initiatives complement the city’s wider public protection work, which brings together child protection, adult protection, and violence against women to ensure risks are identified early and support is coordinated.

To strengthen professional responses, the Council and its partners have developed Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Guidance, ensuring consistent and trauma-informed practice. The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse (Clare’s Law) also helps individuals make informed decisions about relationships, preventing both harm and the financial hardship of becoming trapped in abusive situations.

Aberdeen City Council leads by example as an employer through the Equally Safe at Work programme, achieving Bronze accreditation – most recently retained in 2025 – for promoting gender equality and supporting staff affected by abuse. By embedding equality and safety across its services and working closely with Community Planning Aberdeen and the Health and Social Care Partnership, the city recognises that tackling domestic abuse is not only about protection, it is about enabling women to secure safe housing, financial stability, and independence.

Finally, Aberdeen City Council supports teachers and youth workers to address issues that can contribute to violence against women, including harmful online influences, the manosphere, and pornography. Schools use the Relationships, Sexual Health, and Parenthood Collaborative Resource to explore topics such as consent, healthy relationships, and respect, with many National Progression Awards in Health and Wellbeing supporting this work. Annual mental health and wellbeing surveys help schools identify needs and tailor programmes. Staff are supported through professional learning, including events on online influences and violence against women, and can access guidance from the Educational Psychology Service on harmful sexual behaviours, pornography, self-confidence, and consent, ensuring young people develop the understanding and skills needed to prevent future violence.

What we will do next:

21. Explore options to prevent the need for temporary accommodation, working in partnership with Homewards Aberdeen, a five-year homelessness initiative launched by The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales, to reduce the risk of homelessness resulting from domestic abuse. (Recommendation 91)

22. Continue to support teachers and youth workers to address and prevent issues contributing to future violence against women, including harmful online influences and pornography. As part of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group will work with schools on the Personal and Social Education curriculum review, incorporating updates to Relationships, Sexual Health, and Parenthood. Health and Wellbeing Groups will meet monthly, with separate activity for primary staff, to ensure staff are equipped to deliver consistent, effective programmes that build understanding of consent, healthy relationships, and respect. (Recommendation 39)

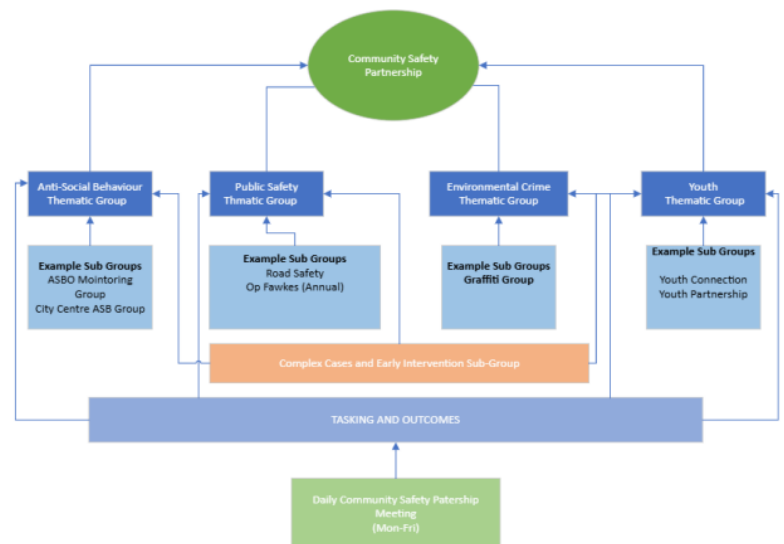
Feelings of Safety and Street Lighting



It is essential that everyone, including women and girls, feel safe. Street lighting plays a vital role in shaping how safe people feel in public spaces, particularly at night. Well-lit streets, paths, and transport hubs can reduce fear of crime and improve confidence, especially for women, girls, and other groups who may feel vulnerable. Aberdeen City Council recognises that poor lighting can limit where people feel comfortable going and at what time of the day they go there. Feeling unsafe can limit people’s ability to access work, education and social opportunities.

What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City Council is taking a multi-faceted approach to improving street safety and enhancing residents’ confidence in public spaces, particularly for women and other vulnerable groups. The Council participates in Community Safety Partnership Aberdeen, which is a multi-agency collaboration focused on improving safety in the city. The Partnership operates through sub-groups on particular topics, including anti-social behaviour and public safety, and uses data to target interventions designed to meet the needs of specific communities.



The Lighting Up Aberdeen project has upgraded over 37,000 streetlights to energy-efficient LED units with smart technology, improving visibility and creating a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists. In June 2025, the Council approved the release of £200,000 for further city centre lighting improvements as part of the Aberdeen in Colour strategy. This funding supports innovative lighting solutions to enhance inclusion,

legibility, identity, movement, and night-time safety, addressing areas of the city centre where poor lighting affects women and girls' sense of safety. Community surveys inform these projects, ensuring that local needs are prioritised.

The Council works closely with the Disability Equity Partnership and third-sector organisations to carry out safety audits in areas being redeveloped or identified as high risk, improving access, accessibility, and overall safety. These audits help ensure that both physical infrastructure and public spaces are designed with the needs of all users in mind.

To enhance safety for those using taxis at night, the Council carefully manages taxi ranks. Daytime ranks on side roads operate from 5am to midnight, while nighttime ranks on Union Street operate from midnight to 5am. This arrangement provides additional space for queuing, higher levels of surveillance during peak periods, and all ranks are monitored by CCTV, helping to reassure women and other vulnerable users traveling at night. Through these initiatives — from upgraded lighting and community-informed safety audits to strategically managed taxi ranks — Aberdeen City Council is creating safer, more accessible, and more welcoming streets for everyone, with particular attention to the concerns of women and vulnerable groups.

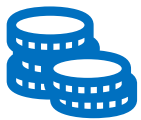
What we will do next:

23. The Council's Strategic Place Planning team will continue to monitor work being undertaken elsewhere in Scotland around designing public spaces with women's safety, comfort, and inclusion in mind. Where appropriate, we will explore opportunities to take this approach in Aberdeen, for example through the revised Local Development Plan, ensuring new developments and redevelopments reflect best practice in safe and inclusive urban design. (Recommendation 36)
24. Use the conclusions of the Path Network Audit and Open Space Audit to help identify areas flagged as needing improvement. The Path Network Audit provides detailed assessments of walking and cycling routes, highlighting safety, accessibility, and condition issues, while the Open Space Audit evaluates public spaces for quality, accessibility, usability, and community value. These audits will inform targeted improvements to create safer, more accessible streets, paths, and public spaces for all users. (Recommendation 37)
25. Engage with Police Scotland as it develops its new Operating Model. This model emphasises a stronger community policing presence, increased visibility in neighbourhoods, and improved problem-solving approaches at the local level. Close collaboration will ensure that public spaces are supported by responsive policing and that safety improvements align with community needs. (Recommendation 115)



Welfare/ Benefits

The Scottish Women's Budget Group's study on gender poverty in Aberdeen highlights the importance of ensuring that welfare and benefits systems are accessible, compassionate, and designed to uphold dignity. The study calls for simplifying access to support, improving awareness of entitlements, and reducing administrative barriers, particularly for women with no recourse to public funds. It also emphasises the need to tackle low pay and insecure work by promoting fair employment practices and supporting women into sustainable, well-paid jobs, recognising that financial security is a key factor in reducing poverty and inequality.



Low Pay and In-Work Poverty

Getting a paid job can help people improve their income and move out of poverty. However, in-work poverty remains a challenge in Aberdeen. Aberdeen City Council recognises that women are more likely to be employed in part-time and low-paid sectors, which increases their vulnerability to financial hardship. The link between work and the benefits system can be complex, and small increases in income may result in the loss of support such as the School Clothing Grant, leaving some families worse off overall. In-work poverty has a significant impact on women and their children.

What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City Council recognises that in-work poverty is a significant issue and has a role to play in promoting fair pay and reducing inequalities within its workforce. One of the key tools the Council uses is its Job Evaluation Scheme, which measures the size and responsibilities of job roles. This system ensures that pay is fair, transparent, and free from bias, supporting compliance with equal pay obligations and contributing to a consistent approach to remuneration across all roles.

The Council also monitors and reports on pay equity through the publication of gender pay gap data for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Workforce data is analysed by protected characteristics where employees have shared this information, and the results are made available through the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report. This transparency allows the Council to track progress, identify disparities, and take action to address systemic inequalities that may contribute to low pay or limited career progression.

In addition, Aberdeen City Council is aware of the challenges faced by migrant workers and other residents in the current political and economic climate. The Council considers the barriers these groups may experience in accessing fair employment and ensures that

its workforce practices and policies are inclusive, equitable, and supportive of all employees, helping to mitigate the risk of low pay and job insecurity.

Beyond its own workforce, the Council works across Aberdeen to promote fair work practices city-wide. Through partnerships with local employers, trade unions, and business networks, the Council encourages adherence to fair pay standards, living wages, and secure employment contracts. Initiatives include supporting employers to adopt equality-focused HR practices, promoting workforce development opportunities, and highlighting the benefits of sustainable, well-paid employment. These measures aim to ensure that tackling low pay is not only an internal commitment but also a broader economic objective, helping to improve financial security and reduce poverty in the city.

Through these combined actions—robust job evaluation, transparent pay reporting, inclusive workforce policies, and city-wide fair work initiatives—Aberdeen City Council is actively working to address low pay, promote equality, and support sustainable, well-paid employment for both its staff and the wider community.

What we will do next:

26. Participate in Business in the Community's In-Work Poverty Lab, which provides an opportunity to collaborate with other organisations to better understand the drivers of in-work poverty and identify practical solutions. Through this Lab, the Council will gather insights on the specific challenges faced by employees, including those with caring responsibilities, and use this evidence to develop a comprehensive action plan. The plan will outline targeted measures to reduce in-work poverty within the Council workforce, ensuring pay, benefits, and workplace support are fair, transparent, and inclusive. (Recommendation 14)
27. Review the information contained on the Council Jobs website and My Job Scotland. Build a social media campaign to promote the Council as an 'Employer of Choice' sharing the range of job roles, pay grades and working patterns along with the benefits of working for the Council. Additionally, we will review other opportunities to promote the Council as an 'Employer of Choice'. (Recommendation 42)
28. Analyse household income data to understand how current benefit rules affect families working 16 hours per week at the National Minimum Wage or the Real Living Wage. This includes examining the Department for Work and Pensions' income threshold of £952 per month, which influences eligibility for financial support. By understanding these impacts, the Council can explore potential measures to support families who earn just above these thresholds. Any proposals to adjust support in response to these findings would require funding approval from Aberdeen City Council and formal endorsement by the relevant Council committees. (Recommendations 43 and 95)

Benefits and Income Maximisation



The Council recognises that many women face challenges related to Universal Credit, including the level of financial support available, unpredictable payments for those in flexible or part-time work, and complex eligibility rules. It is also understood that paying Universal Credit to a household rather than an individual can create difficulties, particularly for women experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, having to pay childcare costs upfront and then claim reimbursement can cause financial strain. Although Aberdeen City Council has no direct control over Universal Credit, we remain committed to supporting residents who are eligible for this payment.

What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City Council is committed to supporting women to overcome the financial challenges they may face, particularly those associated with part-time or flexible work, childcare responsibilities, and navigating the benefits system. One key area of support is helping parents and carers manage upfront childcare costs, which can be a barrier to returning to work or taking up training. In 2024, the Council's Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee allocated £60,000 to address this issue. The funding was managed through ABZ Works, a service that helps people find employment and improve their skills, making it easier for women to progress in work and training opportunities.

To ensure women are aware of the financial support available to them, the Council has collated current information about entitlement to benefits and other forms of support in easy-read formats. This helps make complex information more accessible and ensures that women can understand what support they may be eligible for. As part of this work, the Financial Inclusion Team engages directly with women during conversations about benefits and money, explaining how the Department for Work and Pensions calculates Universal Credit, and offering guidance to help them navigate the system.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BanGDuA50Zs>

Recognising the importance of other income sources, the Financial Inclusion Team also provides information on child maintenance as part of wider discussions about money and benefits. The Council's online benefit calculator has been updated to clarify that child maintenance payments are not considered when assessing eligibility for benefits. This ensures women can claim all the support they are entitled to without losing out due to household arrangements.

The Council also provides clear guidance on additional sources of support. The website offers detailed information about grants available through the Scottish Welfare Fund, including who can apply, how to make an application, and how to request a review of a decision. There is also a dedicated page signposting people in crisis to essential services such as food banks, money advice, and housing and homelessness support. To improve accessibility, this information can be translated into several community languages, and communities are encouraged to seek support from local support workers or third-sector organisations when needed.

In addition, the Council uses proactive approaches to ensure women and their families access all eligible financial support. For example, the Financial Inclusion Team uses data from the Low Income Family Tracker to identify households entitled to Pension Credit but not claiming it and engages directly with these households to support successful applications. In recognition of the ongoing cost-of-living pressures, the Council's Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee approved £217,197 in June 2025 to Food Poverty Action Aberdeen, providing targeted support to families most in need across the city.

What we will do next:

29. Improve the accessibility and promotion of support available for women with children, bringing together information in an easy-to-understand format, making it available online, and sharing it with partner organisations to support wider use. (Recommendation 45)
30. Review and update easy-read materials on benefits and financial support, identify gaps, and engage women with lived experience to understand their preferred formats. Feedback will inform a communications plan, including translations into priority languages and consideration of visual materials for those with limited literacy. (Recommendations 45 and 72)
31. Develop a clear, user-friendly resource on Universal Credit calculations, including a simple introduction, a worked scenario, bullet points explaining the calculation, and links to official GOV.UK guidance and the online benefit calculator. Use household income data to understand how current benefit rules affect women working 16 hours per week at the National Minimum Wage or Real Living Wage, particularly regarding the £952 monthly income threshold. (Recommendation 46)
32. Provide training for up to 40 Council and third-sector staff through Fife Gingerbread's "Confident Conversations" programme to improve discussions about child maintenance. Embed these principles into all conversations about maximising income, updating Financial Inclusion Team scripts, online benefit calculator prompts, and case-note templates, and ensuring staff sensitively ask about child maintenance, with guidance that maintenance income does not affect benefit eligibility. (Recommendations 47 and 48)

33. Explore how we can analyse Scottish Welfare Fund application outcomes to identify underrepresented groups and potential differences in success rates. Use these insights to inform targeted promotional activity and increase visibility of eligibility criteria and other financial support through multiple channels, including the Council website, community centres, family support booklets, and communications platforms such as Newsbite and the Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations bulletin. (Recommendations 11, 49 and 70)
34. Continue proactive use of the Low Income Family Tracker to identify households eligible for Pension Credit and support women and families to successfully claim through multiple communication channels. (Recommendation 5)

Council Tax, Council Tax Reductions and Council Tax Debt

Council Tax is an important revenue stream that allows local authorities to deliver essential services. However, Aberdeen City Council recognises that some households, particularly those headed by women or with caring responsibilities, face challenges in paying Council Tax. Uptake of Council Tax Reduction could be higher, and some residents experience Council Tax debt and arrears, reflecting the wider financial pressures that contribute to gendered poverty in the city.

What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City Council is committed to ensuring that households, particularly those most at risk of financial pressures, have access to clear and accessible information about Council Tax, available discounts, and exemptions. As part of this, the Council has undertaken two rounds of public consultation on budget decisions over the past year, including in-person and virtual engagement sessions and an online consultation tool. Digital support was provided for those without online access, and a social media campaign and dedicated webpage explained how budget decisions, including Council Tax levels and relief schemes, are made. These efforts help residents, including women with caring responsibilities, understand and engage with decisions that affect household finances.

To support households in managing Council Tax obligations, the Council's website provides detailed information about available discounts and exemptions, including those for disabled households, with direct links to the necessary forms. Council Tax documentation also signposts residents to these resources. Of Aberdeen's 126,846 properties, 51,889 households receive a single-person discount, 10,841 households are exempt, and 6,124 properties are empty. By highlighting these provisions, the Council helps residents, including women heading households, access the relief they are entitled to.

Recognising that scenarios around Council Tax Reduction can be complex, the Council has worked to simplify information on its website to make it easier for residents to understand. In response to recommendations from the Scottish Women's Budget Group, the Council has also updated guidance to clarify how backdated claims for Council Tax Reduction can be made, ensuring that women and other vulnerable residents can access support even if they were unaware of their entitlement at the time.

When households experience Council Tax arrears, the Council considers each case on its individual merits, providing sensitive support to vulnerable residents, including women experiencing domestic abuse. While the Council has limited powers to collect debt directly, Sheriff Officers are used to recover monies owed in a cost-effective manner, ensuring that collection processes are balanced with fairness and consideration for those facing financial or personal hardship.

What we will do next:

35. Plan and deliver the 2026/27 budget consultation, including engagement with the Scottish Women's Budget Group to encourage participation and ensure residents have a voice in decisions affecting Council Tax. (Recommendation 10)
36. Make information on Council Tax exemptions and discounts clearer and more accessible. This includes information available on the Council's website. We will consider whether a flyer could be added to the Council Tax letter to highlight this information and provide details of other support available for households to cope with the cost of living. (Recommendation 50)
37. Create a dedicated, plain-English webpage explaining Council Tax Reduction. This will introduce what it is, how entitlement is calculated, and how individual circumstances and Council Tax banding affect outcomes. The page will include a simple worked example, a real-life case study, and a clear call-to-action directing residents to the online benefits calculator. Messaging will be promoted through local social media influencers and other accessible channels to reach those most in need. Additionally, we will ensure that Council staff have access to relevant online tools that allow them to give information about Council Tax Reduction to disabled households. (Recommendations 51, 52, 53 and 54)
38. Review the household data the Council currently collects to identify gaps beyond those in receipt of Council Tax discounts and exemptions, improving understanding of residents' needs and helping to target support more effectively. (Recommendation 55)
39. Consider proposals to introduce a Council Tax allowance scheme, designed to reduce or remove historic, uncollectable Council Tax arrears for households experiencing financial hardship. (Recommendations 56 and 57)



Health & Wellbeing

The Scottish Women's Budget Group's study on gender poverty in Aberdeen highlights the critical importance of ensuring women can access essential support and services. The study emphasises the need to improve access to support for women experiencing financial hardship, disability, or other vulnerabilities. It also highlights the importance of reducing digital exclusion, so that all women can use online services and access information effectively. In addition, the study stresses the need to tackle barriers to affordable and secure housing, as well as safe and reliable transport, which are vital for women to participate fully in work, education, and community life. By addressing these challenges, services can be more inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of women in Aberdeen.

Accessing Support and Digital Support

The Council wants to ensure that everyone can access the support they need, including through digital channels. Our current website provides information on Council services and tells people about help and support on offer. We are working on a new website, which will improve people's experience of accessing support online. We understand that not everyone can get online easily, so we will work to provide information to people who need to access information in different ways.

What we are doing now:

The Council wants to ensure that everyone can access the support they need, including through digital channels. Our current website provides information on Council services and guidance on available help and support, and we are developing a new website to improve the experience of accessing information online.

Scottish Government Six Priority Families

We want to support the six types of families at the greatest risk of child poverty through our improvement actions, including:

- Improving awareness of educational benefits to help **lone parents**.
- Reviewing Blue Badge assessments to support **families with a disabled adult or child**.
- Deliver more affordable housing for **larger families**.
- Translating documents into priority languages to support **minority ethnic families**.
- Distributing the Support for Families booklet, providing information to **families with a child under one**.
- Improving how we advertise help with childcare costs, **supporting families**

The Council's digital platforms are designed to be accessible and user-friendly. They can be accessed via smartphones, include tools to translate content into different languages, and meet the 2018 accessibility regulations for public sector websites and mobile apps. These features help ensure that residents, including those with disabilities or limited English proficiency, can navigate and use online services effectively.

We recognise that not all residents can access digital services easily. To support these individuals, the Council distributes information through community settings and works with local support organisations, such as Aberdeen Citizens Advice Bureau, housing and welfare services, and community centres. By providing multiple ways to access information, the Council aims to reduce the barriers faced by residents who may find it difficult to navigate complex systems or who are unsure about their eligibility for support.

These approaches are intended to respond to the challenges highlighted in the Scottish Women's Budget Group report, including difficulties in accessing services, long waiting times, and unclear information about eligibility. By improving both digital and non-digital access, the Council seeks to make it easier for women and other vulnerable residents to find and receive the support they need.

What we will do next:

40. Ensure the new website is fully accessible via smartphones and designed to support residents in accessing information easily. The Council will engage different citizen groups, including representatives from the Scottish Women's Budget Group, to gather feedback on ease of navigation and accessibility, and inform the development of content, such as guidance on important life events, to make it as useful and relevant as possible. (Recommendations 62 and 63)

41. Develop a communications campaign to raise awareness of low-cost broadband options ('social tariffs') for households on a low income. This will include producing a flyer with information on social tariffs and distributing it through schools, libraries, community hubs, and local support organisations. The campaign will also promote this information on social media, the Council website, and in the Support for Families booklet to reach as many residents as possible. (Recommendation 64)

Housing

Everyone deserves a safe, secure, and affordable place to live. Women in Aberdeen can face greater barriers to accessing suitable housing due to lower incomes, caring responsibilities, and disrupted employment patterns, which can limit their housing choices. Rising energy costs, poverty, and insecure tenancies place additional pressure on households, with women disproportionately affected. Women experiencing domestic abuse may also need to leave their homes urgently, increasing the risk of homelessness.

Migrant women, particularly those with no recourse to public funds, and Gypsy/Traveller women face further barriers, including discrimination and limited access to services, which can compound housing insecurity and social exclusion. Aberdeen City Council recognises these challenges and is committed to understanding and addressing the housing needs of women across the city.

What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City Council recognises that access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing is essential to reducing inequality and improving wellbeing across the city. Through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, the Council is continuing to increase the supply of affordable homes, with a particular focus on providing larger family properties. This focus reflects the needs of families, including single-parent households often led by women. However, delivering larger homes remains challenging under the current Scottish Government funding model, which does not fully support the higher costs associated with building them. The Council continues to raise these challenges in discussions with partners, developers, and Registered Social Landlords.

A cross-party group of councillors is examining the housing emergency in Aberdeen, highlighting issues such as the number of empty Council homes and the rising demand for homelessness services. To respond, the Council is developing a Housing Emergency Action Plan that will focus on improving internal systems, speeding up access to housing, and ensuring that available homes are used effectively to meet residents' needs.

The Council also maintains a strong focus on housing quality and maintenance. Repairs performance is monitored monthly, with data reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator and the Council's Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee. This ensures that any issues identified through monitoring are acted upon promptly. Work is also underway to improve the energy efficiency of homes, including appointing a new insulation contractor and exploring ways to install loft insulation in mixed-tenure buildings to help reduce fuel costs for residents.

For women and families facing additional barriers, including migrant women with no recourse to public funds, the Council provides practical and informed support. Staff are trained to respond to domestic abuse and are aware of the rights and entitlements of those affected by visa restrictions. They refer women to the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Network for specialist advice and signpost them to the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession, which can help women in crisis access safety and support.

The Council also works to ensure that Gypsy/Traveller communities are supported equitably. At the Clinterty site, residents receive the same repair priorities as tenants in other Council housing, ensuring consistent service standards. Council house contents insurance is available for residents, helping them protect their homes and belongings. While the nearest bus stop to the Clinterty site remains some distance away and surrounding land is privately owned, limiting options for new stops, the Council continues to explore how transport accessibility for residents can be improved.

What we will do next:

42. Continue to work with partners to deliver more affordable housing across the city, with a particular focus on larger family properties. The need for these homes is set out in the Housing Asset Plan that was presented to Council in October 2025 as part of the 30-Year Business Plan. (Recommendations 68 and 69)
43. Develop a new Family Support Model as part of the Homewards project, which will take a closer look at how domestic abuse affects people's housing situations. This will help ensure services are designed to meet the needs of those most at risk of losing their home. (Recommendation 67)
44. Implement a new digital platform to manage housing repairs. This platform will make it easier to manage and complete work efficiently, improving the service tenants receive. (Recommendation 76)
45. A new insulation contractor will focus on loft insulation in shared Council and privately owned buildings, alongside some cavity wall and underfloor insulation to reduce energy costs for residents. (Recommendation 71)
46. Create a "Support for Migrant Families" hub on its website, offering clear, multilingual information and a direct link to the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Network. Staff will have access to dedicated training and resources to help them provide informed assistance. QR codes linking to the hub will be shared through schools, community centres, and partner organisations. (Recommendations 73 and 74)
47. Hold a focused session with the local community to understand the impact of limited public transport options near the Gypsy/Traveller site and explore potential improvements. It will also promote the contents insurance available for residents and ensure all tenants are aware of current repair timescales to support transparency and equality of service. (Recommendation 12)

Transport

Accessible and reliable transport is essential for connecting people to jobs, education, services, and social opportunities. Ensuring that transport options are affordable, inclusive, and sustainable supports economic growth and reduces inequalities. The Council will work with partners to improve transport networks and address barriers faced by different groups in the community, including women.

What we are doing now:

Aberdeen City Council continues to explore how it can strengthen local transport provision within the powers available to it. The Council has examined options such as running its own bus services or introducing a franchising model. However, as most bus services in the city are operated by private companies, and the cost of major changes would be significant, these options are not being pursued at present. Instead, the Council is working with the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance to improve public transport through Bus Service Improvement Partnerships. Supported by funding from Transport Scotland, this partnership focuses on making services more reliable, accessible, and sustainable for everyone across the city.

Understanding how people experience public transport is also central to improving it. The North East of Scotland Bus Alliance regularly surveys passengers about safety and satisfaction. In 2023, 60% of respondents in Aberdeen were women (including trans women) and 40% were men (including trans men). Most passengers reported feeling safe, with 86% satisfied or very satisfied with safety at bus stops and 88% satisfied or very satisfied with safety on buses. This feedback helps the Council and its partners to identify where improvements can be made to ensure that everyone—especially women—feels secure and confident when using public transport.

Aberdeen also benefits from services designed to support people who need additional help with travel. Dial-a-Bus and the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre provide vital connections for those with mobility or health needs, and all local buses must meet accessibility standards for disabled passengers. The Council also administers the national Blue Badge scheme, which provides parking concessions for people with disabilities and supports independent, accessible travel. Although the Council's Taxicard scheme, which helped people with travel costs, ended in 2010 due to financial constraints, reinstating it would require both funding and staff resources. The Council continues to seek opportunities to make transport more inclusive but recognises that funding from the Low Emission Zone is limited and will reduce over time.

The Council is also committed to ensuring that environmental initiatives such as the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) are fair and accessible. Aberdeen's railway station, along with the car parks at Union Square and College Street, are located outside the LEZ. This allows people

to be picked up or dropped off, and for drivers with non-compliant vehicles to park nearby without entering the zone. A review of exemption data confirms that the LEZ has not disproportionately affected any groups with protected characteristics, helping to ensure that environmental progress goes hand in hand with equality and accessibility.

What we will do next:

48. Review the assessment and renewal process for Blue Badges to identify opportunities for improvement. As part of this work, we will consider the needs of people with neurological conditions and engage with Aberdeen Action on Disability to receive their feedback. (Recommendation 89)
49. Continue working with the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance to explore the most effective ways of delivering public transport across the region, ensuring that services remain affordable and offer value for money. (Recommendation 77)
50. Work with the Bus Alliance to include a safety survey in future research to better understand passenger experiences and perceptions of safety when using public transport. (Recommendation 78)
51. Improve awareness of existing community transport schemes by providing clearer information to the public. The Council will also review financial options, including the potential use of Low Emission Zone funding, to support initiatives such as a Taxicard or Dial-a-Bus scheme. (Recommendation 13)
52. Continue to monitor Low Emission Zone exemption data to ensure the scheme remains fair and does not disproportionately impact any group. (Recommendation 80)

Improvement Actions with Significant Cost

The financial implications set out in the table reflect estimated costs of proposed improvement actions which would not be covered by existing service budgets and would therefore be subject to funding being available. Note that no specific costs have been identified for activities that raise awareness of existing support. However, increasing public awareness is likely to result in higher demand for financial support, which could have an impact on service budgets.

SWBG Recommendation	Proposed Improvement Action	Timescale/ Priority Level	Prevention Tier	Indicative Cost Implication
Care and Caring				
4. Continue to provide upfront support with childcare costs to families. Undertake a review of how this grant is advertised to improve uptake and collect disaggregated data on the use of it to monitor impact.	We will improve advertising of support that is available for children, bringing information together in a way that is easy to understand. It will be available for partner organisations to use. We will consider whether this information could sit on ABZ Works website. Staff will apply to Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee next year for Job Start Payment for parents, which cover childcare costs and address other needs.	March 2027 High	Early Intervention and Prevention	£150,000 to support 150 parents during 2024/27.
14. run a campaign highlighting the benefits of flexible working to employers and review its own provision	We will explore the potential for ABZ Works to run a campaign encouraging employers to embed flexible working practices and Fair Work principles.	To be confirmed Medium	Early Intervention and Prevention	A campaign targeting employers in the city would require £20,000. £40,316.22 could be used to create an employer engagement post within ABZ Works.

High – Urgent/ legally mandated/ significant positive impact

Med – Important/ positive impact

Low – Already in place/ nice to have/ minimal impact

SWBG Recommendation	Proposed Improvement Action	Timescale/ Priority Level	Prevention Tier	Indicative Cost Implication
Welfare and Benefits				
5/ 24/ 28. Maximise uptake of pension credit, discretionary housing payment, school clothing grants and free school meals by those who are entitled to receive this support.	Continue to pay for the Low Income Family Tracker which is used to identify households eligible for support and proactively contact them through multiple communication channels to support successful claims. The LIFT is funded externally up until March 2026 from the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund.	Ongoing High	Early Intervention and Prevention	£32,000 per annum to cover the cost of the Low Income Family Tracker from March 2026 onwards.
50/54. Ensure households are aware that they have the option to pay council tax over 12 months instead of 10 and promote the availability of wider supports available to low-income households.	We will make information on exemptions and discounts clearer on our website. A flyer could be added to the Council Tax letter to highlight this information as well as other support available for households to cope with the cost of living.	March 2026 Medium	Early Intervention and Prevention	£5,000-£10,000 for 130,000 leaflets

High – Urgent/ legally mandated/ significant positive impact

Med – Important/ positive impact

Low – Already in place/ nice to have/ minimal impact

Conclusion

The Scottish Women's Budget Group report provides a clear and urgent call to action. The evidence in the report shows that poverty is complex. A range of factors, including caring responsibilities, disability, race and migration status, contribute to how women experience living on low incomes. The steps required to tackle poverty must reflect this range of experiences and cannot be one-size-fits-all. However, the report shows that accessing Council services can be complicated. These barriers undermine the effectiveness of the support we offer to women experiencing poverty.

This response sets out Aberdeen City Council's commitment to tackling poverty. It shows how we will think and respond to poverty differently, with a far stronger focus on how it impacts women. We have identified practical actions that the Council can take across care and caring, safety, welfare and benefits, and health and wellbeing to address poverty in Aberdeen. These actions will be supported by Council-wide improvements in how we use data, strengthen how people shape the decisions we make, and make services more accessible and inclusive.

Aberdeen City Council recognises that high-quality childcare is key to helping parents and carers access employment and reduce poverty. Our goal is to offer flexible, accessible, and affordable early learning and childcare that reflects the priorities of families. Building on recommendations from the Scottish Women's Budget Group, we will promote our childcare services, encourage childminding as a career, and support kinship carers. We will also monitor the cost of the school day and proactively reach out to families who may benefit from financial support such as Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants. In addition, we will share information about available assistance and explore the impact of non-residential care charges on child poverty. These efforts aim to reduce financial barriers to accessing early learning and childcare, improving access to vital support for households across Aberdeen.

Tackling violence against women is a priority for Aberdeen City Council. In partnership with other organisations, our approach focuses on prevention, protection, and reducing financial harm. Through collaboration with Homewards Aberdeen, we support teachers and youth workers to address the root causes of violence and will continue delivering these initiatives. We are also committed to improving public safety by upgrading street lighting and working with partners to identify and address unsafe areas. These actions for improvement will serve to make Aberdeen a safer and more inclusive place.

We understand that low pay and challenges within the welfare system contribute to poverty. Aberdeen City Council promotes fair work practices among employers and is taking steps to prevent in-work poverty within our own workforce. We provide information about financial support for those receiving or eligible for social security payments, and we recognise the need to make this information easier to access and understand. We will also improve how we communicate support available for Council Tax, especially for those struggling to pay. These actions reflect our commitment to reducing poverty and making financial support more accessible.

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our citizens is of central importance to Aberdeen City Council. Our website offers information for those on low incomes, and we are developing a new version to make accessing support easier. Recognising the importance of housing, we will continue working with partners to deliver more affordable homes. Reliable public transport connects people to jobs, education and training, so we will maintain our partnership with the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance to ensure services are safe and affordable. We will also raise awareness of community transport schemes like Dial-a-Bus and review the Blue Badge process to better meet the needs of people with diverse health conditions. Through improved access to housing, transport and support services, we aim to enhance wellbeing and opportunity for all residents.

The changes detailed in this response will take sustained effort. Work is already underway to how the Council communicates the support it provides and simplify access to this help. Moving forward, we will think differently about how we create and implement our services. Dealing with poverty in Aberdeen will also require collaboration with our partners. We are committed to working together to deliver the improvements set out in this response.

This response is not the end of this process. It provides a blueprint for change that will allow us to improve our services and help make Aberdeen a place where women can live with dignity, security and opportunity.

Further Information



For further information about this report or for general enquiries please contact: Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Team faireraberdeen@aberdeencity.gov.uk



Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. Background

- 1.1 In June 2024 Aberdeen City Council commissioned the Scottish Women's Budget Group to deliver a citizen's assembly approach study on poverty and gender inequality in Aberdeen.
- 1.2 The final report on the study was presented to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 11 June 2025. [The Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Report](#) sets out how women's everyday experiences in Aberdeen are affected by gender inequality and what can be done to tackle the systemic barriers which are built into systems to make life fairer for women in Aberdeen.
- 1.2 Page 100 of the report presents 116 recommendations across four themes. See also Appendix 2 of this document.
 - Care and Caring (Childcare and unpaid care)
 - Safety (Violence against women/ community safety)
 - Welfare/ Benefits
 - Health and Wellbeing (Accessing support and health)
- 1.4 96 of the recommendations are for Aberdeen City Council and the other 19 are made to the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership, Scottish and UK Government, Police Scotland and Financial Services Ombudsman.



2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Working Group is to consider the validity, urgency and feasibility of the 116 recommendations made by the Scottish Women's Budget Group as part of their final report.
- 2.2 The working group will prepare a response to the recommendations, including details of completed and proposed actions, and report this to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 26 November 2025.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The working group will consider the 96 recommendations for Aberdeen City Council, as well as the 4 recommendations for Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, and 1 joint recommendation for Aberdeen City Council and Police Scotland.
- 3.2 The other 15 recommendations are for the Scottish and UK Government, and Financial Services Ombudsman. Whilst the working group may wish to comment on these, full consideration of the implications of the recommendations will be for the responsible organisations to determine. A copy of the report will be shared with these organisations for their consideration.

4. Objectives

- Gather relevant data, research and perspectives related to the recommendations.
- Systematically evaluate each recommendation by considering: whether they are supported by evidence of need; potential risks and benefits; and assessing their feasibility in terms of whether they can be implemented with available resources .
- Understand and report on progress which has already been made in support of the recommendations
- Propose any further actions to be taken in response to the recommendations, including details of resources required, timescale and responsibility for implementation.

5. Meeting Frequency

- 5.1 Meetings of the Working Group will take place monthly between August and November 2025.

6. Reporting

- 6.1 The Working Group will provide regular progress reports to ACC Strategy Board, ACC Directors and Extended Corporate Management Team.

7. Key deliverable and timescales

7.1 This review is planned to take place during June to November 2025. The key deliverables are as follows:

Working group terms of reference	9 July
Commence data gathering	11 July
Working group meeting	7 Aug
Design consultation stage	14 Aug
Complete data gathering	21 Aug
Working group meeting	28 Aug
Complete options appraisal	4 Sep
Draft report	18 Sep
Working group meeting	18 Sep
Commence consultation stage	25 Sep
Strategy board	2 Oct
SWBG Steering Group	TBC Oct
Aberdeen Youth Movement	TBC Oct
External Advisers	TBC Oct
Working group meeting	9 Oct
Anti-Poverty Group	21 Oct
Directors deadline	23 Oct
Consultation	27 Oct
Working group meeting	30 Oct
Draft deadline	3 Nov
Pre-agenda	10 Nov
Final report submitted to Committee	14 Nov
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee	26 Nov

See section 9 for full project plan.

8. WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Chair/ Vice Chair	Michelle Crombie, Strategic Lead Prevention and Community Empowerment Susan Thoms, Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager
Core Group	Matthew Lee – Poverty Shona Milne – Childcare Alison MacLeod – Unpaid Care/ HSCP Iain Robertson – Unpaid Care/ HSCP Mark Wilson – Safety Wayne Connell – Welfare/ Benefits Steve MacRae – Welfare/ Benefits Angela Kazmierczak – Welfare/ Benefits Emma Shanks – Health and Wellbeing Claire McArthur – Health and Wellbeing Mel Booth – Health and Wellbeing

	<p>Helen Sherrit – Finance Deirdre Nicolson – Legal Alison Paterson – POD Baldeep McGarry – Equalities Martin Murchie – Data</p>
Other Contributors	<p>Laura Paterson Andrew Jones Graeme Simpson Emma Powell Iain Robertson Claire Wilson Martin Smith Caroline Johnstone Brian Webb Will Hekelaar Mark Shaw Chris Cormack Vycki Ritson</p>
Executive Sponsors	<p>Andy MacDonald Eleanor Shepperd Gale Beattie ACC Strategy Board Extended Senior Corporate Team</p>
Key Stakeholders/ Consultees	<p>Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee External Advisers Scottish Women’s Budget Group Steering Group Grampian Women’s Aid Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project Aberdeen Action on Disability Aberdeen Youth Movement Community Planning Aberdeen Anti-Poverty Group</p>

9. Outline Project Plan

Milestone	Jul				Aug				Sep					Oct				Nov			
	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24
Terms of Reference Agreed and Project Initiation	■																				
Commence Data Gathering	■	■	■	■																	
Working Group Meeting					■																
Design and arrange consultation stage					■	■	■														
Complete data gathering					■	■	■														
Working group meeting								■													
Complete options appraisal								■	■	■											
Listen and Learning Engagement Session										■											
Working group meeting										■											
Commence consultation stage											■	■	■	■	■	■					
Draft report circulated to key stakeholders															■	■	■				
Insights into Action Engagement Session																■					
Report finalised for submission to Committee																		■	■	■	
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee Meeting																		■	■	■	26

Engagement and Consultation Activity

Listening and Learning Session, 17 September 2025

Purpose: To deepen Council staff understanding of the recommendations made by the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group.

Attendees: Representatives of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Youth Movement, Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee External Advisers and Police Scotland.

Meeting between Council officers and Scottish Women's Budget Group, 3 October 2025

Purpose: To gain further understanding of the recommendation to expand free travel to parents of children who need accompanied to school on public transport.

Attendees: Representatives of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group and Aberdeen City Council.

From Insights to Action Session, 30 October 2025

Purpose: To deepen Council staff understanding of the recommendations made by the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group.

Attendees: Representatives of the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Youth Movement, Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee External Advisers and Police Scotland.

Key Stakeholders Consulted on this Report

Aberdeen City Council Extended Corporate Management Team

Aberdeen City Council Strategy Board

Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee External Advisers

Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group

Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership

Aberdeen Youth Movement

Community Planning Aberdeen Anti-Poverty Group

Listening and Learning Session

17 September 2025, 10-12
Seminar Room, Aberdeen Art Gallery, Schoolhill, AB10 1FQ

Purpose of the Session

To deepen Council staff understanding of the recommendations made by the Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group.

Programme

- 9.30 Tea and Coffee on arrival
- 10.00 Welcome and Purpose
- 10.10 Findings and Recommendations Recap
- 10.20 Steering Group Reflections:
Why these recommendation matter and the difference they could make
- 10.45 Follow Up Questions
Opportunity for Council staff and other attendees to ask clarifying questions
- 11.15 Small Group Discussions
- 11.50 Next Steps and Close
- 12.00 Sandwich Lunch and Networking (optional)

Attendees:

Aberdeen City Council Working Group (Area)

Michelle Crombie (Prevention and Community Empowerment)
Susan Thoms (Prevention and Community Empowerment)
Matthew Lee (Prevention and Community Empowerment)
Louise Beaton (Families and Communities)
Wayne Connell (Revenues and Benefits)
Steve MacRae (Revenues and Benefits)
Bruce Reid (Business Services)
Angela Kazmierczak (Benefits and Money Advice)
Claire McArthur (City Regeneration and Environment)
Mel Booth (Housing)
Alison MacLeod (Health and Social Care)
Alana Thomson (Customer Experience)
Alison Paterson (People and Organisational Development)
Deirdre Nicolson (Legal)

Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group

Heather Williams
Natasha Franklin
Jacquie Westland
Arantxa Garcia De Sola

Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee External Advisers

Dr Rachel Shanks (University of Aberdeen)

Aberdeen Youth Movement

Sam Milne
Hannah Forbes
Brian Webb (Aberdeen City Council)

Police Scotland

Superintendent Jason Carrigan



Summary of Key Points Discussed

Aberdeen City Council officers met representatives from the Scottish Women's Budget Group and Aberdeen Youth Movement to discuss the Council's response to the Scottish Women's Budget Group report on gender inequality in Aberdeen.

Scottish Women's Budget Group emphasised that poverty cannot be addressed in isolation. It is tied closely to caring responsibilities, particularly for kinship carers – often women – who face significant barriers to employment. The design of the social security system was also raised as a concern, with women on low incomes experiencing a loss of support when their earnings go above eligibility thresholds.

Safety in public spaces was another key theme. Scottish Women's Budget Group shared concerns that LED street lighting can make women feel less safe, and that ongoing construction work on Union Street and at the beach contributes to a sense of insecurity. Police Scotland noted the changing nature of crime, with an increasing amount of crime happening online. This shift has led to a less visible police presence in some communities but Police Scotland remain committed to community policing. As part of a discussion around urban planning, Council officers noted exploratory work on Aberdeen Rapid Transport and suggested that Scottish Women's Budget Group could have a role in shaping the business case for this project.

Digital exclusion was identified as a major barrier to accessing Council services. Scottish Women's Budget Group and Aberdeen Youth Movement stressed the need for consistent, in-person support and the importance of providing information in languages other than English. Officers confirmed that the Council has a budget for translation services and agreed that it was important to promote this option.

There was a shared recognition that many women are unaware of the support available to them. Scottish Women's Budget Group and Aberdeen Youth Movement suggested distributing printed materials through community centres and other Council facilities. Officers noted that the Council's website is mobile-friendly and invited Scottish Women's Budget Group to trial a pre-launch version of the new site.

The discussion also covered social care. Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership is currently refreshing its Carers Strategy and invited Scottish Women's Budget Group to help shape it. Scottish Women's Budget Group was also asked to engage in upcoming work on digital inclusion. The concept of "unmet need" – referring to individuals who narrowly miss eligibility for social care – was explored, with agreement to continue this conversation in future meetings.

Gender Equality: From Insights to Action

30 October 2025, 10-12
Town House Committee Room 5 (ground floor)
Entrance on Queen Street

Purpose of the Session

Follow up to the listening and learning session held on 17 September to present the improvement actions to be taken as a result of the Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Report 2025.

9.30 Tea and Coffee on arrival

10.00 Welcome and Purpose

10.10 Presentation on Improvement Actions

10.30 Steering Group Reflections and Group Discussion

Which improvement actions feel most important to focus on?
Are there any gaps or additional considerations we should factor in?

11.45 Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee Meeting – What to expect and how we can support you

Attendees:

Aberdeen City Council Working Group (Area)

Michelle Crombie (Prevention and Community Empowerment)

Matthew Lee (Prevention and Community Empowerment)

Mark Duguid (Families and Communities)

Angela Kazmierczak (Benefits and Money Advice)

Wayne Connell (Revenues and Benefits)

Mark Wilson (Community Safety)

Donna Laing (Strategic Place Planning)

Mel Booth (Housing)

Alison MacLeod (Health and Social Care)

David Leslie (Transformation)

Scottish Women's Budget Group Steering Group

Heather Williams

Samara McIntyre

Sahar Abdulla

Arantxa Garcia De Sola

Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee External Advisers

Dr Rachel Shanks (University of Aberdeen)



Summary of Key Points Discussed

Aberdeen City Council officers met representatives from the Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG) to provide an update and participate in further discussions regarding the Council's response to the Scottish Women's Budget Group report on gender inequality in Aberdeen.

Participants discussed the importance of school age childcare to help women secure and sustain employment. Officers gave an overview of the Council's approach to school age childcare, noting the financial challenges associated with providing these services and ensuring they are sustainable in the long term. SWBG representatives highlighted the importance of providing this service for families with disabled or migrant parents. SWBG also noted the importance of mapping where the Council provides school age childcare as a way of thinking about service design and delivery. Officers undertook to include a map of current school age childcare services in the Council's response to SWBG's study.

Moving to support for households during the school holidays, SWBG members noted the difficulty in securing places on Summer in the City and Autumn in the City activities. Officers agreed to engage further with SWBG on this issue.

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership offered to involve SWBG in the refresh of the Carers' Strategy, which is due to begin soon.

Officers outlined the steps that the Community Safety Partnership is undertaking to address anti-social behaviour and public safety concerns. The approach taken is driven by data and there is scope for focusing on areas where residents are particularly concerned about perceptions of safety. Officers acknowledged that the Council must consider how citizens can access this information and understand the ongoing work in this area. SWBG representatives stressed the importance of using a gendered lens when planning new infrastructure in the city centre and at the beach. Officers and SWBG representatives discussed the Council's approach to housing issues in Aberdeen through the Housing Emergency Action Plan. In addition to highlighting the steps the Council has taken to provide more housing, officers accepted that there is more work required in this area.

The session ended with a discussion around how people access support from the Council. Officers shared that the intention is to make it easy for individuals to get the help they need when contacting the Council by phone or in person, with staff signposting them to relevant support and information. In some cases, staff may need to direct people to specific services or external organisations. SWBG attendees and Council officers agreed to hold a virtual demonstration of the new Council website.

Letters to National Organisations



2 September 2025

Shirley Anne Somerville MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
Scottish Government
St Andrews House
2 Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

By Email: CabSecforSJ@gov.scot

Dear Cabinet Secretary

Scottish Women's Budget Group Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Report, June 2025

We are writing to highlight the Scottish Women's Budget Group's recently published Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen.

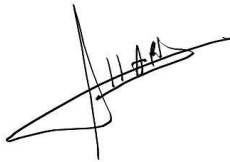
This publication explores the structural factors that shape women's distinct experiences of poverty and inequality. We draw your attention to the study's recommendations for the Scottish Government:

- Increase the Scottish Recommended Allowance for foster and kinship carers which was set in 2023.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of legal aid provision in Aberdeen.
- Review the Framework agreement for goods supplied via the Scottish Welfare Fund to ensure quality of goods provided is considered.
- Review the Scottish Welfare Fund guidance provided to local authorities using a gendered lens.
- Conduct a revaluation of properties across Scotland as a step towards the replacement of council tax and explore alternative local taxation.
- Ensure there is availability of Legal Aid solicitors to support women with No Recourse to Public Funds to deal with immigration and civil law cases.
- Pilot bus fares cap in Aberdeen.

You can view a full copy of the published report here:
committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s170214/CORS-25-133.2 Appendix 2 Full SWBG Report.pdf

We would be grateful to receive your feedback on the report and to engage in further discussion regarding its recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Christian Allard
Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council



Councillor Desmond Buchanan
Vice-Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council



2 September 2025

Chief Superintendent Kate Stephen
Divisional Commander North East of Scotland
Police Scotland

By Email: Kate.Stephen@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Dear Kate

Scottish Women's Budget Group Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Report, June 2025

We are writing to highlight the Scottish Women's Budget Group's recently published Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen.

This publication explores the structural factors that shape women's distinct experiences of poverty and inequality. We draw your attention to the study's recommendation that Police Scotland and Aberdeen City Council should work together to increase the number of community police across the city to build trust within the community and promote safety.

You can view a full copy of the published report here:

committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s170214/CORS-25-133.2 Appendix 2 Full SWBG Report.pdf

We would be grateful to receive your feedback on the report and to engage in further discussion regarding its recommendations.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Christian Allard
Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council

Councillor Desmond Buchanan
Vice-Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council



1 September 2025

Jenny Simmonds
Interim CEO
Financial Services Ombudsman
Exchange Tower
London
E14 9SR

By Email: stakeholder.enquiries@financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Scottish Women's Budget Group Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Report, June 2025

We are writing to highlight the Scottish Women's Budget Group's recently published Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen.

This publication explores the structural factors that shape women's distinct experiences of poverty and inequality. We draw your attention to the study's recommendation that the Financial Services Ombudsman should investigate the practices of insurance companies in relation to the Gypsy/Traveller Community.

You can view a full copy of the published report here:
committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s170214/CORS-25-133.2 Appendix 2 Full SWBG Report.pdf

We would be grateful to receive your feedback on the report and to engage in further discussion regarding its recommendations.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Christian Allard
Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council

Councillor Desmond Buchanan
Vice-Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council



2 September 2025

Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Minister for Women and Equalities
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

By online contact form

Dear Minister

Scottish Women's Budget Group Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty Report, June 2025

I am writing to highlight the Scottish Women's Budget Group's recently published Study on Gender Inequality and Poverty in Aberdeen.

This publication explores the structural factors that shape women's distinct experiences of poverty and inequality. I draw your attention to the study's recommendations for the UK Government:

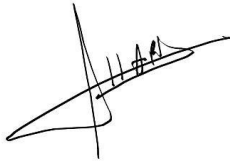
- Bring work capability rules for kinship carers in line with those for foster carers.
- DWP to take into account the requirements for engagement with statutory organisations when children are removed in the conditionality rules placed on parents.
- DWP to ensure they are not calling people who are in work (but who are seen to be underemployed) to meetings during the days/hours they work.
- Ensure Universal Credit provides enough income to cover essential expenditure.
- Unfreeze Local Housing Allowance.
- Ensure social tariffs are available to low-income households.
- Nationalise energy distribution and review how the energy markets work to ensure more equitable charges.

You can view a full copy of the published report here:

committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s170214/CORS-25-133.2 Appendix 2 Full SWBG Report.pdf

I would be pleased to be grateful for your feedback on the report and to engage in further discussion regarding its recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Allard', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Christian Allard
Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'D. Buchanan', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Desmond Buchanan
Vice-Convener
Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Aberdeen City Council