

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
<b>DATE</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Demographic information on child poverty, in-work poverty and other forms of poverty in the city
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/23/067
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Derek McGowan
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with a report on the demographic information on child poverty, in-work poverty and other forms of poverty in the city.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the demographic information contained in the report;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to undertake further work with the External advisers and working group on poverty demographics in Aberdeen and report back to this Committee in September 2023;
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to undertake further research into rates of poverty and ‘in work’ poverty in the rented and social housing sectors in Aberdeen and report back to this Committee at a future date;
- 2.4 Instruct the Chief Officer – Customer Experience following consultation with the Chief Officer – Data and Insights, to review how the Council records demographic information of residents, and report back to a future Committee

with suggestions on how this data can be more effectively used to target key demographics with a higher risk of experiencing poverty;

- 2.5 Instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to report back to this Committee on poverty demographics once the most recent census data is available;
- 2.6 Instruct the Chief Officer – Data and Insights to undertake a further survey through City Voice on poverty rates in Aberdeen and report back to a future Committee, and
- 2.7 Instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to include in the next six monthly Child Poverty Action Plan report analysis of work being done to support specific demographics outwith the six identified child poverty family groups.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Anti-poverty and Inequality Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 the Committee considered a report from the [External Advisers](#) on poverty issues prevalent in the city. Following the discussion of the report, The Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment was instructed to consult with partners and produce a report for the Committee meeting on 8 March 2023 with demographic information on child poverty, in work poverty and other forms of poverty in the city.
- 3.2 The Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee has subsequently agreed the new [Child Poverty Action Plan](#) at the Committee held on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023, which will be incorporated in to the Children’s Services Plan to be presented to Education and Children’s Committee in May 2023.
- 3.3 In developing the Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-26, current child poverty data was accumulated and used as the basis of the actions planned, including:
  - Data from the Scottish Government’s ‘Best Start Bright Futures’ National Child Poverty Strategy
  - Local data from the Population Needs Assessment
- 3.4 It is acknowledged that the research base for the Best Start Bright Futures identifies six key family groups that are at increased risk of experiencing child poverty:
  - In a family with a child under 1
  - In a family with a disabled adult or child
  - In a family with a mother currently under the age of 25
  - In a family with three or more children
  - In a lone parent family
  - In a minority ethnic family
- 3.5 Families with a child under 1:

In 2021, there were 2041 births in Aberdeen (although these children will now be older than 1), with the average over the past 5 years being 2209 per year.

### 3.6 Families with a disabled adult or child:

In Aberdeen City, in May 2022, there were 29,450 adults and children in Aberdeen in receipt of various disabilities benefits, based on Department for Work and Pensions data.

### 3.7 Families with a mother currently under the age of 25:

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

### 3.8 Families with three or more children:

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

### 3.9 Lone parent families:

The most recent data available is from 2016, where there were estimated to be around 5200 lone parent families in the city. This was in line with the national average at that date.

### 3.10 Minority ethnic families:

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report that in 2017-2020 11% of people living in poverty were from a minority ethnic background. More specific data is not available for Aberdeen City.

### 3.11 Apart from the recognised data on child poverty, other notable categories of poverty include fuel poverty, food poverty and in work poverty. It is also clear that some families and households will experience multiple forms of poverty as categorised through child poverty and legislation. For organisations seeking to reduce and eliminate poverty such categorisations are helpful in targeting work, however for those experiencing the realities of poverty such categorisations will be of less importance than the simple fact that they, and their families, are struggling to meet their basic daily needs. In the following sections this report identifies high level themes and areas of relevance.

### 3.12 Fuel poverty in Aberdeen:

Data used to determine a Community Planning Aberdeen project charter through the Anti-Poverty Group to reduce fuel poverty [estimates that](#) extreme fuel poverty rates in Aberdeen are at 13% and fuel poverty rates at 26%, and that these rates are increasing. Household data shows that social housing

tenants were the highest rate of those in fuel poverty, at 36%, against 13% in owner occupied housing and 26% in private rented housing.

### 3.14 Food poverty

It is estimated that 21.5% of children in Aberdeen City are living in poverty. In local surveys, 'making sure no-one goes without food due to poverty' was the second highest ranking issue in the Community Planning Aberdeen' Values Simulator exercise carried out in March 2021, informing the current citywide food poverty features in all 3 Locality Plans. In March 2020, 6.4% of City Voice respondents reported that, because of lack of money or other resources, they were hungry but did not eat.

- 3.15 We know that more recently, through the Fairer Aberdeen Fund in 2021/22, 557 tonnes of free food were distributed to 232 Community Food members, the equivalent of 1.3m meals (Food Standards Authority standard calculation of 420g per meal, used by FareShare). 23,937 emergency food parcels were provided for 15,293 people and to partner organisations and services. 650 food bank users were referred to other services for support. 3 community pantries supported 232 members, as a more dignified and longer-term solution to food poverty. A Community Planning Aberdeen project charter led by Community Food Initiatives North East achieved an increase in community pantry membership of 55%. This progress is supported by Aberdeen City Council through the provision of grant funding to Community Food Initiatives North East to provide additional food through these pantries and other local food charities.

### 3.16 In work poverty

In work poverty rates are difficult to determine at a local level due to both the range of fluctuating data sets, and perceived low rate of households accessing the benefits they are entitled to. The most recent Scottish Government [data](#) available on this, from 2019, states that the majority of the working-age population in relative poverty (59%) now live in working households. It can be assumed that since then, due to various social and economic factors, that this situation has worsened.

- 3.17 Within this data set, household sub categories of 'in work' poverty are identified:

Household type	All families	In poverty	In 'In work' poverty
Single without children	48%	57%	41%
Couple without children	25%	14%	19%
Lone parent	7%	13%	11%
Couple with children	21%	17%	29%

3.18 Within this data, further analysis shows the ages of children within those households that are experiencing in work poverty:

Age of child(ren)	All families	In poverty	In 'In work' poverty
16-19	10%	10%	11%
13-15	13%	12%	13%
11-12	19%	16%	15%
8-10			
5-7	16%	12%	14%
2-4	21%	25%	18%
0-1	21%	25%	27%

3.19 There are however other thematic areas that do not define poverty are but are indicators of it, and two notable examples of this is the rate of homelessness, and ethnicity.

### 3.20 Housing and poverty

Following on from paragraph 3.12 above related to fuel poverty in social housing, the Scottish Government data used in this report identifies that households in social housing make up the largest group of those in both poverty and 'in work' poverty. This is illustrated below:

Household type	All households	In poverty	In 'In work' poverty
Owned with mortgage	29%	11%	21%
Owned outright	32%	17%	12%
Rented privately	16%	27%	31%
Rented from Council or Housing Association	23%	45%	36%

3.21 Aberdeen City Council is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Local Authority landlord in Scotland with almost 22,000 homes available for rent. On average, around half of all of those households will be in rent arrears. This will not always mean that they are in poverty as payments can be missed, technical arrears can arise due to transfer of property, or because the householder is no longer in receipt of benefits such as Universal Credit. As a responsible landlord, our aim is to ensure that tenancies can be sustained wherever possible, and this is reflected in our person centred approach to working with those in arrears to identify appropriate payment plans.

3.22 It is the case however that over the last twelve months our homeless presentations have increased by 25%. Through statutory recording undertaken at point of presentation, we know that almost all of this increase is due to people leaving private sector rented accommodation, and that is due largely to affordability of rent following the relaxation of covid restrictions.

3.23 In July 2022 the Council entered into a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the Department for Work and Pensions, aimed at preventing homelessness and improving outcomes. It is understood that poverty can be a driver of homelessness, as well as the result of homelessness. At the Anti-Poverty Committee in January 2023 the first [six monthly report](#) was considered, outlining the steps being taken to prevent and mitigate against homelessness.

### 3.24 Ethnic minority poverty

Scottish Government statistics show that in 2017-20, non white minority ethnic groups were more likely to be in relative poverty after housing costs compared with those from 'white British' and 'White other' groups. The poverty rate was 41% for the 'Asian or Asian British' ethnic group and 43% for 'Mixed, Black or Black British and other' group. This is against 'White other' group at 24% and 'White British' group at 18%. It is recommended that further work be undertaken, through the newly established Committee working group with the support of the External Advisers, to increase our local understanding of how poverty affects ethnic communities.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report, however as with all Council reporting it is important to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 when considering recommendations and actions that may stem from this report.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?

<b>Strategic Risk</b>	The Council fails to understand the detailed information available on poverty demographics and undermines our developing approach to prevention and early intervention.	This report and the recommendations contained within it, along with the approved child poverty action plan, appointment of external advisers and ongoing appointment process of a working group to support the Committee whelp mitigate this risk.	Low	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Failure to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.	This report and the recommendations contained within it, along with the approved child poverty action plan, appointment of external advisers and ongoing appointment process of a working group to support the Committee whelp mitigate this risk.  Additionally the progress on embedding the key objectives of the Equality Mainstreaming Outcome Report are important.	Low	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	That the Council fails to allocate sufficient resources to tackle poverty	The ongoing work to tackle poverty and inequality, and the prevention and early intervention strategy	Low	yes

	and equity issues and prevent them from escalating.	being embedded help mitigate this risk.		
<b>Financial</b>	Failure to mitigate poverty and equity issues may lead to misaligned resource allocation.	As above, and with the implementation of the prevention and early intervention strategy the Council is able to help mitigate this risk.	Low	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	Failure to act on poverty and equity issues may lead to the risks highlighted here becoming issues.	As above.	Low	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	None	None	-	-

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</a></u>	
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<b>Impact of Report</b>  The recommendations contained in this report will widen our knowledge of specific areas that correspond with the aims of the Policy Statement.
<u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</a></u>	



Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposal to provide additional monies to help with energy costs supports the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes:  1 - No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026
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## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 IIA completed and accessible <a href="#">here</a> .
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

## 11. APPENDICES

None.

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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