



Every child, every chance

**Tackling Child Poverty
Delivery Plan**
Fourth year progress report 2021-22



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Ministerial Foreword



Tackling child poverty is a national mission for this Government. We remain absolutely committed to driving progress against the ambitious targets we set in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and to improving the lives and outcomes of children and families despite the most challenging of times.

We have set out ambitious next steps for the period 2022-26 in our second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan *'Best Start, Bright Futures'*. It retains our sharp focus on the three drivers of poverty reduction and the six priority families at greatest risk of poverty, recognising the need for wider holistic support that wraps around families. The actions will be delivered alongside our partners; further strengthening support for families, driving progress toward the ambitious targets set and helping to break the cycle of child poverty.

Across the four years, from 2018 – 2022, of our first child poverty delivery plan *'Every Child, Every Chance'* we delivered a range of new and strengthened support – helping to tackle child poverty head on and to offer more help to families. This report is the last highlighting the progress in that plan. We have now delivered on all the actions in *'Every Child, Every Chance'*. This includes bringing in the statutory duty for eligible children to receive 1,140 hours of fully funded Early Learning and Childcare, achieving our ambitious target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes and providing increased financial support to families including through Scottish benefits such as our Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods.

We have also gone further than original commitments set out in 2018 for example by providing immediate financial support to school age children through innovative Bridging Payments of £520 a year and expanding free bus travel to children and young people under the age of 22.

As this progress report demonstrates, we have used the powers available to us to provide financial support to families that is unparalleled across the UK. In 2021-22 we invested almost £2.6 billion in support targeted to low income households, of which over £1.1 billion benefitted children. This brings investment over the four years of *'Every Child, Every Chance'* to almost £8.5 billion targeted toward low income households, of which almost £3.3 billion benefitted children. This is significant investment, and our Resource Spending Review sets out our plans to go further – including through investment estimated at almost £1.8 billion in awards of our Scottish Child Payment across 2023-27.

We also continued to support people impacted by the pandemic. This includes delivering a £41 million Winter Support Fund and providing children opportunities to socialise, reconnect and access healthy, nutritious food through our ambitious £20 million *'Get into Summer'* programme.

We are also taking action to support people through our COVID Recovery Strategy. In that we reaffirm our commitment to working differently with our partners and to build on the learning from our collective response to the pandemic focusing on three key outcomes: financial security for low income households; the wellbeing of children and young people; and good, green jobs and fair work. We have also set out our vision for a wellbeing economy and the actions needed to deliver this through our National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

As we look forward, we recognise the acute pressure the cost of living crisis is putting on low income families with children. We remain committed to doing everything in our power to help. We have already doubled the value of our Scottish Child Payment and will further increase it to £25 per week by the end of this year. This is in addition to delivering a package of cost of living measures and increasing the value of eight Scottish social security benefits by 6%. We will continue to explore what additional steps we can take to support people impacted at this challenging time.

I am grateful to all of our partners across Scotland who have supported the implementation of *'Every Child, Every Chance'* and the development of *'Best Start, Bright Futures'* – in particular those individuals who have shared their lived experience with us. We remain firmly committed to strengthening these partnerships in the months and years ahead in order to drive progress on our national mission to tackle child poverty.



Shona Robison
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government

Executive Summary

This progress report captures the range of action taken between April 2021 and March 2022 (2021-22) to tackle child poverty in Scotland. This is the final of four annual progress reports published in relation to the first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, [‘Every Child, Every Chance’](#), which covered the period 2018-22.

Progress over the past financial year has been delivered in the context of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The lifting of almost all restrictions in Summer 2021 enabled key activity, for which progress was paused or severely impacted during 2020-21, to continue and regain momentum. However, families have been faced with a range of pressures including the ongoing impacts of UK Government welfare reform and EU exit, and significant increases in the cost of living – with this government taking further action to provide much needed support.

As of 31 March 2022, all actions set out in *‘Every Child, Every Chance’* had been delivered, this includes additional actions committed within annual progress reports.

Across the reporting year we took a range of key steps to tackle child poverty, including:

- Launching the new **Scottish Living Hours Accreditation Scheme** encouraging businesses to provide secure contracts, flexible hours and payment of the real Living Wage;
- Bringing the statutory duty for all eligible children to receive 1,140 hours of funded **Early Learning and Childcare** (ELC) into effect from August 2021;
- Delivering the ambitious **‘Get into Summer’ 2021** programme, estimated to have supported in excess of 130,000 children and young people;
- Further increasing the value of the **School Clothing Grant** from a national minimum of £100 to at least £120 for every eligible child in primary school and £150 for eligible secondary school pupils from the start of the 2021-22 academic year;
- Increasing universal provision of **Free School Meals** to all children in primaries 4 and 5 and investing £21.8 million to provide alternate provision for children from low income households during school holidays;
- Delivering 9,757 **affordable homes** across Scotland, an increase of 51% on the previous year, and the highest figure in a single financial year since 2000-01;
- Extending **concessionary travel** to young people under the age of 22 in Scotland, with around 930,000 young people now eligible for free bus travel;
- Launching the **Social Security Advocacy Service**, supporting disabled people across the country to access and apply for Social Security Scotland assistance;
- Providing immediate support worth £520 in both 2021 and 2022 through **Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments**, reaching 145,000 children as of spring 2022;
- Making over 530,000 **Low Income Pandemic Payments** of £130 to low income households by the end of 2021 to help with costs of living;

- Providing another extra payment of **Carers Allowance Supplement** in December 2021. Giving an increase of £231.40 for around 82,000 unpaid carers;
- Broadening eligibility for **Child Winter Heating Assistance** to include young people in receipt of Personal Independence Payment, expanding the reach of this support to a further 4,500 children;
- Launching the **Child Disability Payment** nationwide, following an initial pilot period, and opening applications for **Adult Disability Payment** for people living in three pilot areas;
- Increasing in year investment to improve attainment and outlining plans for the next phase of the **Scottish Attainment Challenge**;
- Delivering a **£41 million Winter Support Fund** to support low income households impacted by rising living and fuel costs, including a £10 million Fuel Insecurity Fund, £25 million of flexible funding for local authorities and £6 million for third sector partners.

In addition, we set out future plans to drive progress in tackling inequalities and to make Scotland a fairer and more prosperous country. This includes through actions set out in our [COVID Recovery Strategy](#), [Fuel Poverty Strategy](#), [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) and [Promise Implementation Plan](#).

Complementing these strategic plans, and the actions taken through ‘*Every Child, Every Chance*’, we worked together with partners and stakeholders across Scotland to inform and develop the second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2022-26.

We published ‘[Best Start, Bright Futures](#)’, on 24 March 2022, which outlines a range of ambitious action to be taken forward by partners across Scotland to drive progress against the interim and final child poverty targets. The annual progress report to be published by the end of June 2023 will relate to the second delivery plan.

Introduction

This is the fourth and final annual report due under [‘Every Child, Every Chance’](#), the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan for the period 2018-22. It covers the period of moving from COVID-19 response into COVID-19 recovery, with the vast majority of restrictions lifted and implementation of planned activity able to restart or regain momentum that had been lost during the height of the pandemic. It reflects progress delivered to 31 March 2022, including the emerging cost of living crisis and actions to support families.

Over the course of 2021-22 we estimate that almost £2.6 billion was invested in support targeted at low income households, of which more than £1.1 billion benefitted children. This includes investment in a range of additional financial support for families in 2021-22 to support recovery from the pandemic and to assist with the rising cost of living.

Through Low Income Pandemic Payments and Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments we put over £148 million into the pockets of Scottish households. We also delivered a £41 million Winter Support Fund, building on learning from our COVID-19 response, to tackle the increased cost of living over the winter period. This includes providing £25 million of flexible funding to councils to tackle financial insecurity in their local areas, £10 million to establish a new Fuel Insecurity Fund and £6 million to third sector partners to deliver targeted support to low income families with children. We announced a further £290 million package of measures to tackle the cost of living crisis in February 2022 in order to provide continued support in the year ahead.

In March 2022 we published our second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, [‘Best Start, Bright Futures’](#), which sets out action to be taken across 2022-26 to drive forward progress toward the ambitious child poverty targets set and to improve the wellbeing and outcomes of children and families across Scotland. This Plan sets out wide ranging action building upon the steps taken over the life of [‘Every Child, Every Chance’](#). This includes further increasing the value of the Scottish Child Payment to £25 per child per week by the end of 2022, delivering a further 110,000 affordable homes by 2032 with 70% for social rent and building upon devolved employability services to deliver a new employability offer for parents.

We will publish the first annual progress report against delivery of [‘Best Start, Bright Futures’](#) by the end of June 2023.

This report focuses on delivery of the actions outlined in [‘Every Child, Every Chance’](#), accompanied by a revised evaluation strategy and improved measurement framework.

The first section of the report focuses on the key steps we have taken together with partners across the life of [‘Every Child, Every Chance’](#) – from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2022. This includes a summary of key actions aligned to the three drivers of poverty reduction¹ identified in the Plan and what has been delivered has a result of these actions.

¹ Increasing incomes from work and earnings; reducing households costs; maximising incomes from social security and benefits in kind.

A series of timelines are also included, capturing key milestones in respective years since 2018, helping to demonstrate the momentum building behind our national mission to tackle child poverty. Whilst the timelines do not capture external factors, including the world-wide disruption caused by COVID-19, key actions taken in response are set out. This includes the launch of the Communities Funding Package.

The actions taken over this time have further strengthened the unique support provided to families in Scotland and provided invaluable learning to inform our overall approach to tackling and reducing child poverty in Scotland. It is these foundations from which we will deliver the wide ranging actions set out in *'Best Start, Bright Futures'*.

Section two provides an update on the implementation of actions set out within *'Every Child, Every Chance'* and details of the impacts for actions directly related to the three drivers of child poverty reduction.

As with other annual reports in this series, updates are set out under headings A-E, focusing on: increasing income from employment and earnings; costs of living; social security; helping families in other ways; and partnership working.

Unlike other annual reports, this progress report does not set out additional actions that will be taken in the year ahead given this is the final report for *'Every Child, Every Chance'*. Future action is set out within *'Best Start, Bright Futures'*.

In section three we set out the latest information in relation to progress made toward the ambitious targets set through the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. This includes data in relation to the drivers of poverty and progress for each of the six priority family types identified².

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the face to face collection of survey data, it has not been possible to update three of the four target measures. It is anticipated that data covering the period 2021-22 will be published by the end of March 2023. More recent data is reflected for the Persistent Poverty target, whilst this shows a 5% point reduction from previous levels further data will be required to determine how much of this reduction is sustained.

This section also reflects on progress made in relation to each of the three drivers of poverty reduction. It includes a further section with updated child poverty data amongst the priority family groups most at risk of poverty.

The final section of this report provides a series of tables summarising action, investment and how we have met the requirements of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

This shows that all 68 actions committed within the Plan, and those subsequently added within annual progress reports, are either being delivered or have been completed. We have also invested over £50 million through the Tackling Child Poverty Fund, supporting a range of activity including the Parental Employability Support Fund,

² Priority family types include: Lone parent families, the large majority of which are headed by women; Families which include a disabled adult or child; Larger families; Minority ethnic families; Families with a child under one year old; Families where the mother is under 25 years of age.

Access to Childcare Fund and The Innovation Fund, as part of the wider Social Innovation Partnership.

As in previous years we have provided best estimates of spend targeted toward low income households and children in 2021-22. Alongside this we have provided estimates of spend for 2018-22 inclusive, based on estimates published in previous years.

The final summary, in addition to outlining how we have met the requirements of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, details responses to the comments and recommendations of the Poverty and Inequality Commission.

Alongside this report, we have published additional information in Annex A – which is summarised in section three of this report.

Annex A provides an update for each of the 23 measures included as part of our Child Poverty Measurement Framework, including trend data for the time period for which comparable data is available.

In addition, we will publish two further annexes in the summer detailing an evidence review focused on mothers aged under 25 and families with a child under the age of 1. This review will further strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by each of the six priority family types identified – complementing the three focus reports published in previous years^{3 4 5} and the summary of evidence⁶ published in October 2021.

Informed through engagement with families, this annex will also present, where possible, breakdowns of the Child Poverty Measurement Framework by family type.

³ Focus report on minority ethnic families: [Tackling child poverty: first year progress report - Annex C - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/plain-text/tackling-child-poverty-first-year-progress-report-annex-c-gov.scot)

⁴ Focus report on lone parents: [Tackling child poverty: second year progress report - annex C - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/plain-text/tackling-child-poverty-second-year-progress-report-annex-c-gov.scot)

⁵ Focus report on families with a disabled person: [Tackling child poverty - third year progress report : annex B - child poverty in families with a disabled adult or child - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/plain-text/tackling-child-poverty-third-year-progress-report-annex-b-child-poverty-in-families-with-a-disabled-adult-or-child-gov.scot)

⁶ Overview of the latest evidence on the six priority family types: [Tackling child poverty priority families overview - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/plain-text/tackling-child-poverty-priority-families-overview-gov.scot)

1. Summary of actions delivered through Every Child, Every Chance

Across the life of ‘Every Child, Every Chance’ we have taken key steps, together with partners, to directly tackle child poverty and to strengthen the foundations from which we will take the next ambitious steps outlined in Scotland’s second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan – ‘Best Start, Bright Futures’.

This includes action across the three drivers of poverty reduction.

To **increase incomes from work and earnings** we have supported parents to access and progress in employment through devolved employability services, based on the principles of dignity and respect and which are provided without fear of sanctions. We have also taken action to tackle low pay and to advance equality in the workplace including through the delivery of actions set out in key strategies to tackle workplace inequalities, such as [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People – Employment Action Plan](#); the [Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#); the application of Fair Work First Criteria to public sector funding; continued support for Living Wage accreditation; and launch of a Living Hours accreditation scheme for Scotland. Our [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) sets out ambitious action that we will take in the period to 2030 to deliver economic prosperity for all Scotland's people and places.

To **reduce household costs** we have continued delivery of our Affordable Housing Supply Programme and set out our long term vision for housing in Scotland through [Housing to 2040](#). We have set in statute ambitious targets to significantly reduce levels of fuel poverty in Scotland, and have continued to take strong action to tackle fuel insecurity for families through our Home Energy Scotland service and through Warmer Homes Scotland and Area Based Schemes. We have also published our [Fuel Poverty Strategy](#) identifying future action we will take to continue to tackle fuel insecurity. In addition, we have almost doubled fully funded Early Learning and Childcare hours which, alongside saving families money, is helping improve outcomes for children and giving parents more time to access training, employment and learning.

To **maximise incomes from social security and benefits in kind**, we established our new social security agency and have commenced delivery of 12 Scottish benefits, seven of which are entirely new and unavailable anywhere else in the UK. This includes our Scottish Child Payment, which was delivered within 18 months of being announced, and opened for those responsible for eligible children under the age of 6 in February 2021. We will further increase the Scottish Child Payment to £25 by the end of 2022, when the benefit is expanded to eligible children under the age of 16. Our analysis suggests that Scottish Child Payment could reduce the relative child poverty rate (after housing costs) by an estimated 5 percentage points in 2023-24. This represents lifting 50,000 children out of relative poverty. We have also increased the value of School Clothing Grants and taken a range of steps to support families to access the benefits they are entitled to, including launching the Money Talk Team services and through the wide ranging action outlined in our Benefit Take-up Strategies.

Over the life of the Plan all of the actions that we committed are either being delivered or are completed. As a result we have:

- Provided support to over 8,300 parents through **Fair Start Scotland**, with nearly 3,000 job starts by parents, including around 1,200 job starts by lone parents, between April 2018 and March 2022;
- Provided support to nearly 2,900 parents, including over 1,800 lone parents, through **No One Left Behind local employability services**, including the Parental Employment Support Fund, between April 2020 and December 2021;
- Applied **Fair Work First** conditionality to over £2.4 billion worth of public sector funding between April 2019 and March 2021, which includes nearly £620 million worth of contracts, promoting security of contracts and payment of the Real Living Wage;
- Increased the number of **real Living Wage** accredited employers by just over 1,800, with almost 25,000 employees seeing an increase in their wages as a result – this has helped to support a 5% point increase in the proportion of people earning the real Living Wage or more in Scotland, rising from 80.6% in 2018 to 85.6% in 2021;
- Almost doubled funded hours for **Early Learning and Childcare** from 600 hours in 2018 to 1,140 hours as of August 2021 – available for every child aged 3 and 4, and for 2 year olds who need it most – which saved families up to £4,900 per eligible child in 2021;
- Helped more than 20,400 clients to be better off by an average of £2,000 per household – collectively better off by over £44 million – through the **Money Talk Team** service between November 2018 and end of March 2022. Of those supported over 11,500 were from our six priority family types, with 3,500 of those supported collectively better off by £12.5 million;
- Delivered 35,095 **affordable homes**, 25,562 of which were homes for social rent (which included 9,519 council homes) between April 2018 and March 2022 – supporting an estimated 11,580 households with children into affordable housing;
- Increased **School Clothing Grant** from the previous lowest level of £40 to at least £120 for every eligible primary school age child and £150 for every eligible secondary school age child from the current academic year – with over 485,000 payments issued across 2018-21;
- Expanded universal **Free School Meal** provision to children in primaries 4 and 5, saving families around £400 per child, and delivered alternate Free School Meal provision during school holidays across 2020-22 for children from low income families – benefiting around 145,000 children from low income households;
- Tackled the digital divide by providing nearly 20,000 devices and over 13,250 connectivity packages to families with children through the **Connecting Scotland** Programme since May 2020;
- Extended **concessionary travel** to all under 22's in Scotland, with approximately 930,000 young people eligible for support estimated to save families up to £3,000 by the time their child turns 18;

- Introduced the **Scottish Child Payment**, issuing more than 1.2 million individual payments to more than 95,000 clients between 15 February 2021 and 31 March 2022 – awarding £58.6 million to eligible families with a child under the age of 6.
- Significantly increased the value of support available across the early years through our package of **five family payments** – which includes Best Start Foods, three Best Start Grants and the Scottish Child Payment. By the end of 2022 this support will be worth a maximum of over £10,000 by the time an eligible family's first child turns 6, this is over £8,200 more than is available elsewhere in the UK;
- Delivered over 650,000 **Carer's Allowance Supplement** payments between September 2018 and December 2021, totalling £188 million to around 126,000 carers, with carers continuously in receipt of this support receiving over £2,270 more than carers in the rest of the UK.

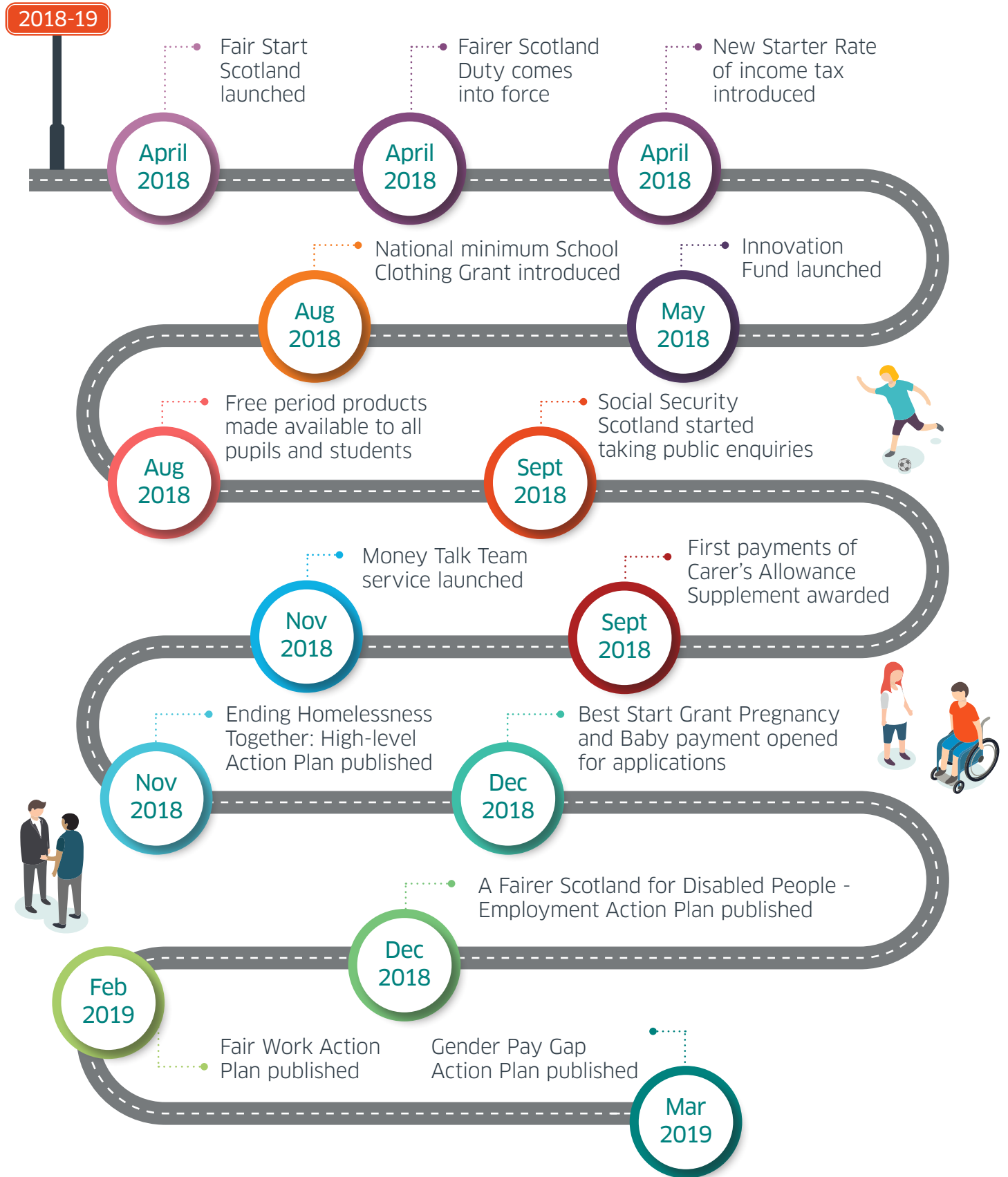
When *'Every Child, Every Chance'* was published in 2018 we had no way of predicting the impact of COVID-19 on child poverty. The immediate crisis response required a whole of Scotland approach, with many key child poverty policies requiring adaptation or redesign to meet the needs of families in Scotland. The ongoing cost of living crisis has exacerbated some of the hardship experienced during this time, further testing the ability of our child poverty interventions to provide immediate assistance and longer term support for a sustained exit from poverty.

Whilst the pandemic has undoubtedly hampered progress on some of the policy ambitions of *'Every Child, Every Chance'*, it has also provided valuable lessons to inform our future efforts in this area. The pandemic response demonstrated what is possible when barriers are removed; when public, private and third sector organisations work together to deliver a shared objective; and when direct support is readily available for those who need it most.

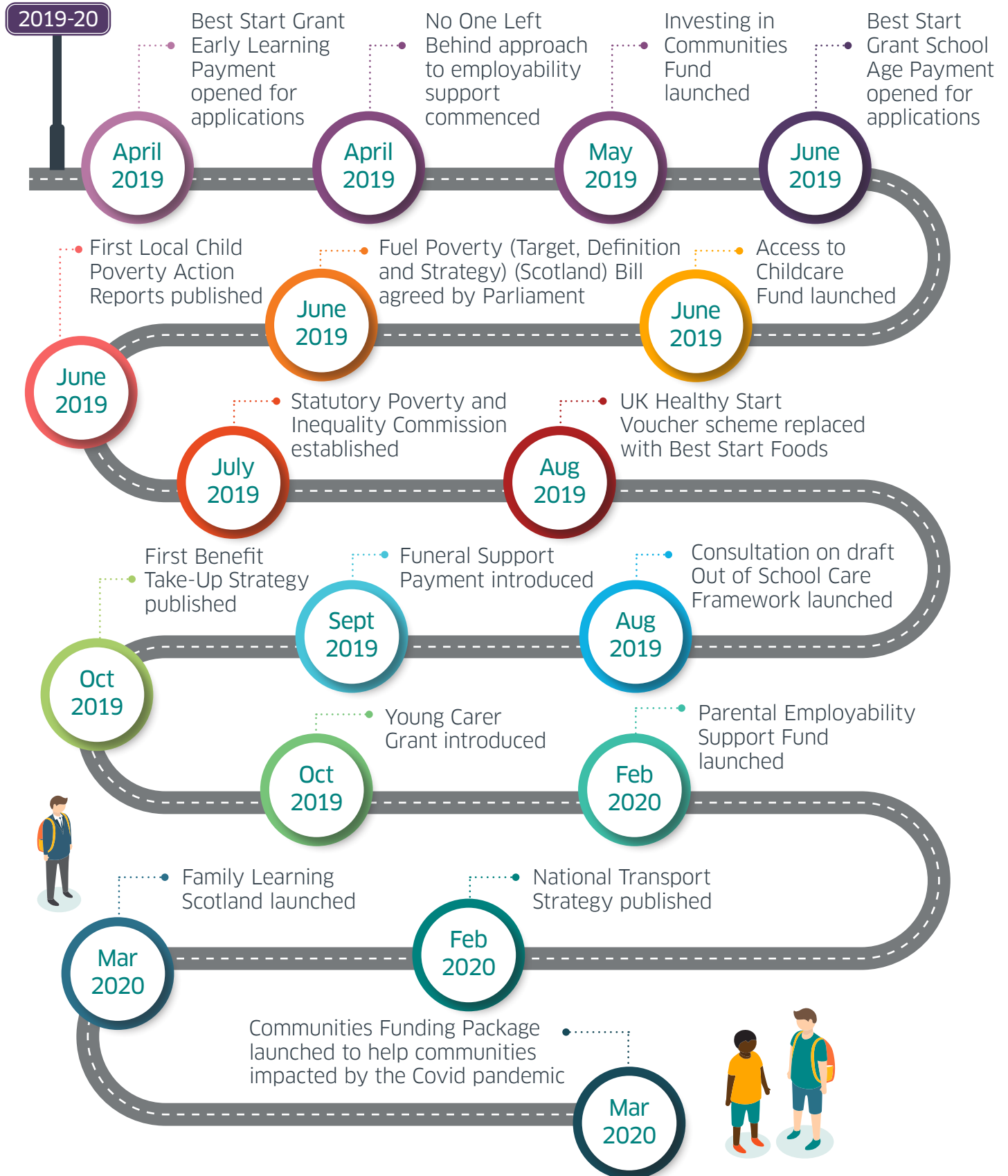
These lessons are ones that have informed the final year of this delivery plan, and the development of *'Best Start, Bright Futures'*.

Key milestones reached over the life of *'Every Child, Every Chance'* are set out in each of the four time lines set out below, reflecting each year of the Plan's life.

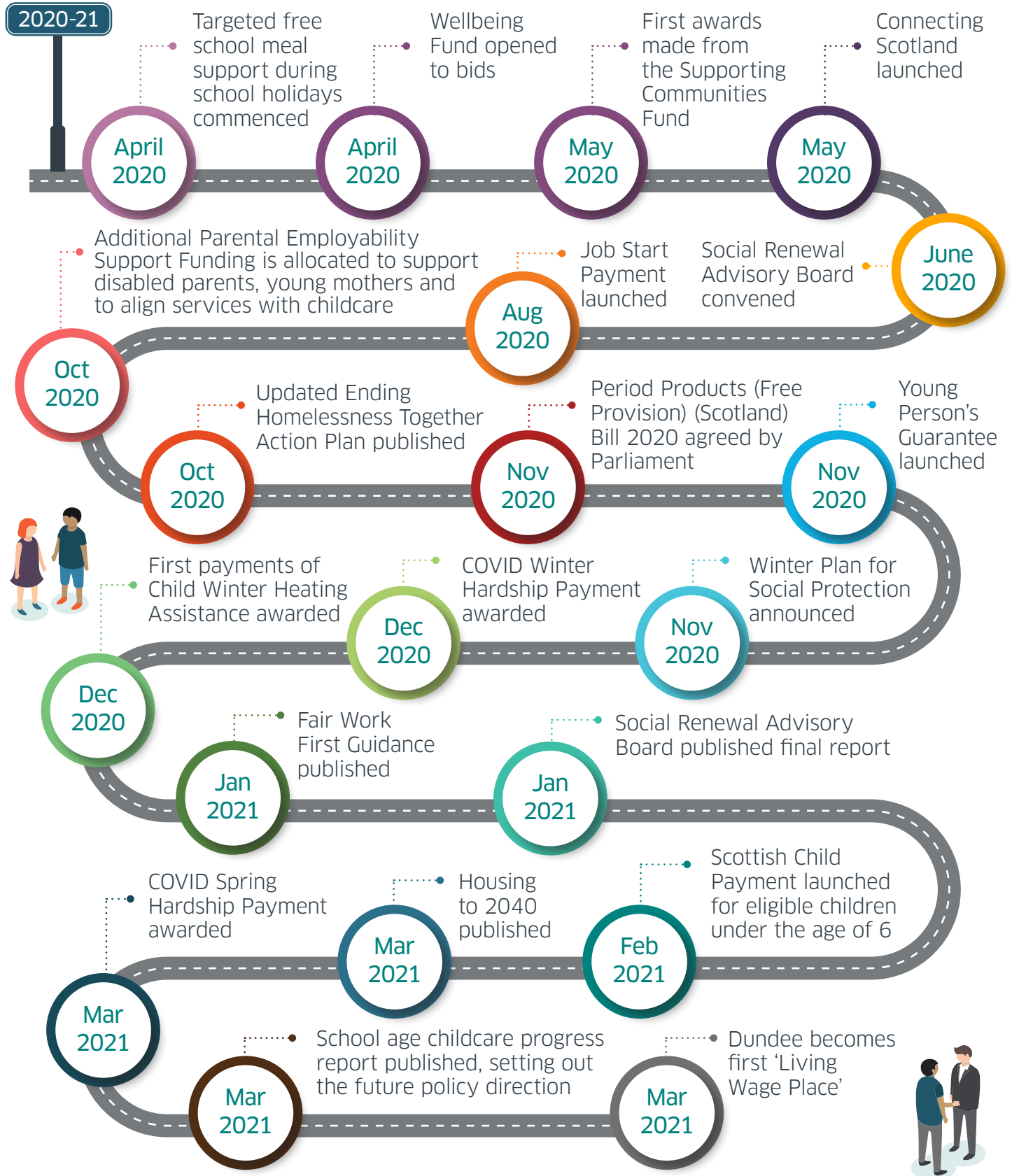
TIMELINE OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



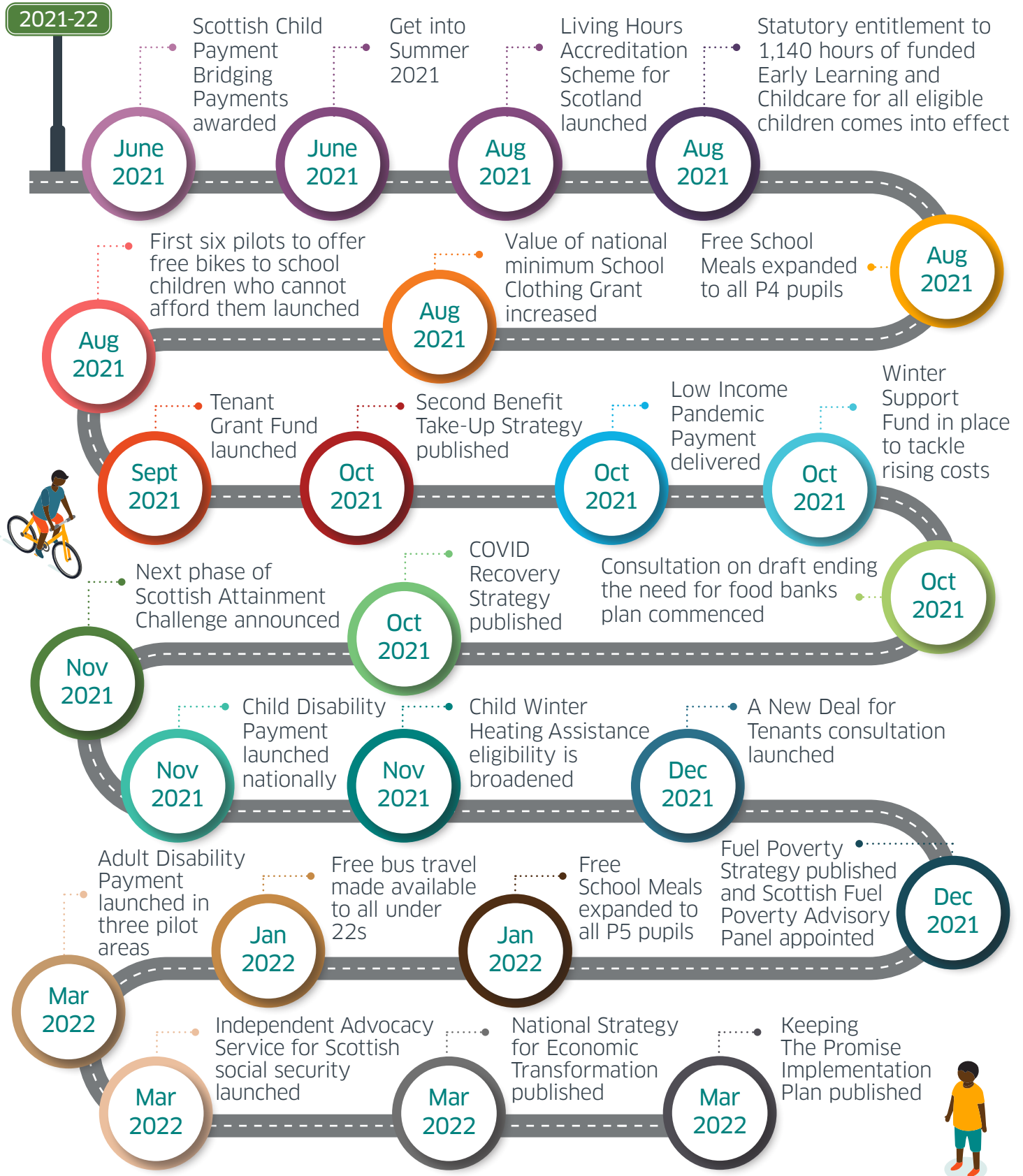
TIMELINE OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



TIMELINE OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



TIMELINE OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



2. Reporting on progress 2021-22

Within this section we provide updates against each of the actions set out within the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan together with actions included in the 2020-21 annual report.

The actions are arranged under the headings of the five original chapters set out in *'Every Child, Every Chance'*.

- A. Increasing income from employment and earnings
- B. Costs of living
- C. Social security
- D. Helping families in other ways
- E. Partnership working

Impact summaries are included for action under headings A-C, aligned to the drivers of poverty reduction.

Future action, to be taken in the period 2022-26, is set out in *'Best Start, Bright Futures'*.

A. Increasing income from employment and earnings

Introduction

Across 2021-22 we have continued to support parents to access and progress in work through our devolved employability services, and we have also supported the next generation of parents through our Young Person's Guarantee. To improve pay and conditions for workers across Scotland and to tackle labour market inequalities we have continued to take wide ranging action, including through our Living Wage Accreditation Scheme, Living Hours accreditation scheme, Fair Work First policy and support for flexible working.

In March 2022 we published our National Strategy for Economy Transformation (NSET), setting out the vision and roadmap for the actions we will take, with partners, over the next ten years to create a wellbeing economy, thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions. Central to that is how economic transformation can support our national mission to tackle child poverty – helping to drive reductions in poverty, address inequalities and create good, secure and well-paid jobs.

Updates on key actions are set out below.

Employment support for parents

Impacts:

- Around 3,000 parents supported during the April 2021 to March 2022 period of Fair Start Scotland (FSS) delivery

- Nearly 900 jobs were started through FSS by parents. Of these job starts, 40% (around 355) were by lone parents, 20% (around 175) were by parents with 3 or more children and 10% (around 90) were by minority ethnic parents
- Early evidence that FSS outcomes for parents are broadly in line with those for all FSS participants
- Nearly 1,900 parents supported through No One Left Behind local employability services, including Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) investment, during April 2021 to December 2021
- Of parents supported through No One Left Behind; 64% (around 1,190) were lone parents, 14% (around 255) were disabled parents, 12% (around 220) had a disabled child within family, 12% (around 215) were parents from minority ethnic groups, 16% (around 305) had a youngest child aged under 1, 13% (around 250) were mothers aged under 25 and 24% (around 445) were parents with 3 or more children

Fair Start Scotland

In 2021-22 we increased investment in Fair Start Scotland (FSS) by around £6 million, to over £27 million, to ensure appropriate and adequate support for those at risk of long-term unemployment and those facing the greatest barriers to accessing fair and sustained work.

To better reflect the current labour market context we also introduced changes to the FSS service delivery model. These included: reducing the eligibility criteria for 'length of time unemployed' from 24 to 12 months; allowing a 'right of return' to previous FSS participants who still require support to access work, and; continuing to allow participants to 'pause' their engagement for personal or health reasons. The latest published statistics⁷ show that 2,447 participants re-joined the service during the 2021-22 period.

The latter two of these changes reflect our understanding that due to personal circumstances and health reasons, FSS participants may have had to leave the service early. These changes will ensure that support is available to people, including parents from the six priority groups, when they feel they are ready to engage again to progress towards and into fair and sustainable work.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we continued to progress activities to increase the reach of FSS to under-represented groups, including through external Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training for Service Provider frontline staff in both disability, and culture & diversity awareness. This aimed to enhance Service Providers' knowledge and understanding of the range of challenges faced by disabled people, people with limiting health conditions and people from a wide range of cultural and minority ethnic backgrounds, and to consider how they could then improve the support offered through FSS.

We have built on this training to inform our ongoing work with specialist support organisations. This includes working in collaboration with CEMVO Scotland to support Minority Ethnic participation in FSS and working with Disabled Persons Organisations

⁷ Source: [Supporting documents - Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/supporting-documents/scotland-s-devolved-employment-services-statistical-summary) May 2022

to support disabled FSS participants to transition into work through building capability of FSS key workers and employers to understand and provide appropriate support. Through partnering with organisations with deep, embedded knowledge we hope to strengthen FSS's reach and support to improve services for underrepresented groups.

We also commissioned a series of 'test and learn' pilots which included work to support women facing commercial sexual exploitation, and prisoners awaiting release.

Parental Employability Support Fund

The Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), delivered through our 'No One Left Behind' approach, has continued to help low-income families most at risk of or experiencing poverty to increase their earnings through employment in the past year. By providing pre-employment and in-work support, this investment has focused on supporting parents to gain, sustain and progress in fair work through keyworker support tailored to their individual needs – including support to upskill and/or re-train to help to increase family income.

In 2021-22 we invested £8.65 million in PESF, with total investment over the period 2019-22 reaching £23 million. This included £3.65 million investment in the past year focused on supporting young parents and parents accessing funded Early Learning and Childcare places, including eligible 2 year old places.

To better meet local need, from April 2021, we agreed to implement further flexibilities within PESF where there was difficulty in parents securing funding for childcare costs. This has enabled key workers to provide a discretionary payment of support where funding cannot be secured from existing sources.

To support further implementation of 'No One Left Behind' and the local governance approach we have taken steps to strengthen Local Employability Partnerships, ensuring user voice and stakeholder experience are utilised to deliver better outcomes for service users. This has involved co-designing a Customer Charter and Service Standards with users and partners to ensure expectations are clear, consistent and aligned with the wider policy landscape.

We also worked with partners to refine the data we will be collecting on parents throughout all of the employability provision delivered under the 'No One Left Behind' approach. This, alongside ongoing continuous improvement activity around data collection, will enable us to strengthen our understanding of the impact our provision has on key priority family groups. To that end, our [Shared Measurement Framework](#) was published in April 2022.

Whilst COVID-19 has continued to impact upon take-up of support we continue to work with partners to promote uptake of the service and have commenced Phase 2 of 'No One Left Behind' as of April 2022 – helping to drive forward the delivery of person-centred, flexible, joined up services and better outcomes for parents and families.

The pathway to meeting Scotland's child poverty targets requires a significant step change in supporting parents to increase their income from employment. The new Offer to Parents, set out in '*Best Start, Bright Futures*', will be delivered through the 'No One Left Behind' approach, with additional funding being used to increase the reach of our

services to parents; to build stronger links with other services locally to ensure wrap-around support; and to enable creative approaches to tackle labour market challenges.

The case studies below set out how support through this approach is being experienced by families.

Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) – Case Study [Dundee]

Supported by funding through ‘No One Left Behind’ and the Parental Employability Support Fund, One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) provide support to parents in Dundee via All in Dundee - part of Discover Work Employability, a local consortium of local support organisations led by Enable Scotland.

Sam* is a single mother with two children, aged 5 and 7. Her Jobcentre Plus work coach made a referral to the OPFS pathway as she was struggling with completing forms and had a lack of confidence in applying for job vacancies as well as concerns over childcare arrangements and the impact on her social security benefits. Sam had wanted to work but her anxiety and lack of confidence had previously prevented her from applying for paid work or attending interviews.

OPFS Dundee worked in partnership with Sam through weekly support sessions which focused on her lack of confidence and the root causes. In the first instance Sam’s confidence issues stemmed from her severe anxiety. Sam’s keyworker spoke about the impact this was having on her and how Sam would like her life to be in the future. She was supported along to group -based sessions which gave advice and examples of coping strategies. OPFS staff also worked one on one to pick out Sam’s transferable skills and looked at how she could apply these in the workplace.

An action plan of steps was compiled. Sam explored childcare options along with her OPFS key worker and was supported to complete a range of different job applications both online and paper based. Advice was also given on the financial impact of different employment options to ensure the family income improves and financial stability is maintained.

Over the next few months, again on a weekly basis, Sam and her key worker looked for suitable vacancies particularly to ensure they would match with the childcare available. Support was provided to complete applications, having someone to look over her applications before submitting gave a huge boost to Sam’s confidence and self-esteem. Sam then gained employment with a local bus depot cleaning the buses and was delighted, the post was 15 hours per week and fitted in well with the school times.

Sam is now in part-time employment which fits in with childcare and family life. She is not only financially better off but this has improved her confidence significantly and opened a new social circle to her. OPFS continues to support her in work with any issues that arise, such as problems with Universal Credit or childcare, so they can be dealt with quickly to ensure her employment is sustained.

* Name changed to protect identity.

Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) – Case Study [Glasgow]

Peter* is a 34 year old single parent from Glasgow with a 5 year old daughter. He was struggling to maintain employment due to conflict and bullying in the workplace.

Peter's mental health was poor when he started receiving support and he was struggling to keep up with financial obligations. He had built up good workplace skills but had not engaged with the job market in a long time. The Family Finances project was able to support Peter to improve his mental health, employment and income – securing immediate support for him through the Scottish Welfare Fund.

With support from his key worker, Peter was referred onto One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) and maintained his relationship with his employer. Peter enjoyed talking about his progress with these organisations, and it helped to put his progress with mental health into perspective.

Peter's confidence had suffered greatly whilst working with his current employer, as he did not feel he was good at anything anymore. Family Finances mentoring helped to list and evidence Peter's skillset, which he found demonstrably useful during interviews.

Peter found interviews and job searching to be daunting, as he had been in the same job since school. Through his key worker, Peter was linked up with a Jobs and Business Glasgow (JBG) advisor shortly after registration for support. The keyworker and JBG worked with Peter to produce a CV, which he had never done before. The key worker also supported Peter through Family Finances mentoring to build his confidence and complete interview skills exercises provided by the Reed employability agency.

When Peter lost his job he was supported by his keyworker to complete a benefits calculation from turn2us, he then used this information to apply for Universal Credit. However, during this time Peter found new work but the employment did not last and project support resumed. Peter was then supported into new work as a supervisor in a fast food restaurant which he enjoys. The hours are variable, but he estimates that his monthly income has increased by £1,200 compared to his unemployment benefits.

Peter said:

"I've been kept down for so long and it's time to build myself back up. I felt miserable when I lost my job but you've made me realise it's an opportunity to move on and be appreciated elsewhere.

"When my new job didn't work out I knew you'd still be there to keep up the momentum and keep the progress going. I'm not really used to asking for help and it's always been a headache when I've tried. It's nice to just have one person I know to keep it on track."

* Name changed to protect identity.

Tackling low pay and supporting equality at work

Impacts:

- Around 700 further accredited Living Wage employers in 2021-22
- 7,613 additional workers received an uplift to the real Living Wage at the end of the 2021-22 financial year
- Public sector pay policy, estimated to apply to around 43,500 full-time equivalent employees in 2021-22, provided a guaranteed cash underpin of £800 for all those earning £25,000 or less
- Fair Work First criteria have been applied to over £2.4 billion of public sector funding, including £620 million of Scottish Government contracts, between March 2019 and April 2021
- In the 2020-21 academic year, through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund, there were over 28,500 worker enrolments in courses helping to improve their skills and earnings potential
- Over two years of the Fair and Flexible Work programme for Scotland a total of 2,895 parents and carers accessed advice via intermediaries and employers along with 2,900 employers

Becoming a fair work nation

Payment of the real Living Wage continues to be a key strand of our Fair Work agenda and is being progressed through the Scottish Living Wage Employer Accreditation scheme, our Fair Work First approach and our Public Sector Pay Policy. The hourly rate paid under the real Living Wage increased to £9.90 in 2021-22.

We provided £380,000 to the Poverty Alliance in 2021-22 to increase the number of Living Wage Accredited employers across Scotland and drive up the number of workers receiving a real Living Wage. Accreditations over this period have led to 7,613 additional workers receiving an uplift to the real Living Wage at the end of the financial year, almost double the target of 4,000 uplifts set.

Additionally, through our funding, the Poverty Alliance continue to expand the Make Living Wage Places initiative to promote payment of the real Living Wage in localities, including at town, city and regional levels. During this period Edinburgh gained recognition as a Make Living Wage Place with Aberdeen and the Scottish Borders progressing their ambitions to achieve their Living Wage Place accreditation, which will increase the number of workers receiving a decent wage.

Through our Public Sector Pay Policy we continued to focus on targeting higher increases at the lower paid, as well as requiring all bodies covered to pay at least the real Living Wage. We announced the Scottish Government's [Public Sector Pay Policy for 2022-23](#) on 9 December 2022 which included the introduction of a Scottish public sector wage floor of £10.50 per hour.

In recognition that hourly rate of pay is only one of the elements needed to tackle in work poverty, we launched a new Living Hours Accreditation Scheme in August 2021, building on the success of the Real Living Wage Accreditation scheme. We allocated a further £380,000 to the Poverty Alliance in 2021-22 in order to support employers to

become Living Hours accredited and to drive forward this important work, helping to alleviate in work poverty and create more secure, sustainable and satisfying jobs.

In September 2021 we also strengthened our Fair Work First criteria to include the requirement to offer flexible and family friendly working to all workers from day one of employment, and to oppose the use of fire and rehire practice. Building upon this, we committed, by summer 2022, to making it a requirement for recipients of public sector grants to pay at least the real Living Wage, subject to limits on devolved competence, and to provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition.

At the end of 2021, we ran a consultation on Scotland becoming a Fair Work Nation⁸ to gather views on the action needed to achieve our 2025 vision and how we ensure Fair Work remains central to our economy. The consultation will be used to inform the refresh of our Fair Work Action plan alongside and aligned with a refresh of the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan and Disability Employment Gap Action Plan, as well as a new Ethnicity Pay Gap Strategy, to be published jointly later in 2022.

New support for flexible working

In 2021-22, we continued to support Timewise through our Tackling Child Poverty Fund to deliver year two of 'A Fair and Flexible Work programme for Scotland'. This included a programme of webinars and guidance to employers across Scotland on how to manage flexible working. Alongside this they provided a four month training programme focusing on those delivering key support including the Parental Employability Support Fund, provided comprehensive guidance and resources for employers and employees, and updated the Flexible Jobs Index for Scotland.

We also funded Flexibility Works £94,850 to support and promote the development of flexible and family friendly workplaces. This included offering vital advice and support to business and organisations on the benefits of flexible working practices such as working from home, hybrid and remote working, as well as the publication of their [#FlexForLife 2022 report](#).

To help tackle the gender pay gap, raise family incomes and grow our economy we need to support women who have taken a break from paid work back into jobs that match their skills and experience. We supported 12 projects in 2021-22 through the Women Returners Programme to support women to access employability skills, peer support and access to a variety of skills sessions such as on digital skills and, 'Resilience and Change'.

⁸ [Becoming a Fair Work nation: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

B. Costs of living

Introduction

Reducing the essential everyday costs faced by households – such as those related to housing, transport, food and childcare – is one of the fundamental ways we can reduce child poverty levels. This is more important than ever in the context of events over the last year, with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and the UK's exit from the European Union exacerbated by the removal of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit and rising energy costs, all contributing to the current cost of living crisis.

In the past year we have enhanced support available to families through Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants, continued delivery of more affordable homes, completed the roll out of 1,140 hours of fully funded Early Learning and Childcare and expanded the reach of concessionary bus travel so that 930,000 young people under the age of 22 are able to benefit. In addition, we invested £41 million through our Winter Support Fund to help those on low incomes, children and people at risk of homelessness against a backdrop of rising living and fuel costs.

Updates on key actions are set out below.

Enhanced support through Early Learning and Childcare

Impacts:

- In September 2021 the ELC census showed that:
 - 97% of eligible 3 and 4 year olds were registered for funded ELC (95% in 2020)
 - 13% of all 2 year olds were registered for funded ELC (9% in 2020) (We estimate that around a quarter of 2 year olds are eligible for funded ELC)
- Improvement Service monitoring data indicates that 97% of the 111,574 children who were accessing funded ELC as of end February 2022 were taking up more than 600 hours, up from 86% in 2021
- Similarly, the percentage accessing the full 1,140 hours has risen from 65% in 2021, to 88% in 2022
- The full offer of 1,140 hours saved families up to £4,900 per child in 2021

Expanded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

In August 2021 the statutory duty for all eligible children to receive 1,140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) came into effect. Funded ELC is available for all 3 and 4 year olds, and 2 year olds who would benefit most. As noted in previous progress reports this ensured that, by 2022, eligible children could access almost twice as many funded hours of ELC as they were entitled in 2018, when *'Every Child, Every Chance'* was published. Scotland is the only part of the UK to offer 1,140 hours of funded ELC to all eligible children regardless of their parents' working status, putting children first. To deliver the expansion, we allocated £476 million to support local authorities to invest in extending, refurbishing, or building new ELC settings. There have been over 900 capital projects, delivering around 22,000 additional spaces.

Uptake of the expanded entitlement in its first year has been very encouraging. The latest monitoring data from January 2022 indicates that 97% of children who were accessing funded ELC were accessing more than 600 hours (the previous entitlement) and 88% of children were taking up the full 1,140 hours entitlement.

We are now focused on realising the benefits of the expansion - including through increasing uptake (among 2 year olds in particular), ensuring that quality remains at the heart of ELC services, and supporting children and families to flourish and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. ELC is primarily targeted at children themselves, and, through providing high quality learning and development experience, aims to improve their outcomes long-term. The expansion of funded ELC also makes a contribution to child poverty through its impact on household finances. With the increase to 1,140 hours of funded ELC, eligible households now save up to £4,900 per child per year. Families who were previously paying for regulated childcare are able to retain more of their income. The expansion also allows parents to move into work, study, or training.

Our evaluation strategy, to be published later in 2022, will set out how we will gather evidence on whether ELC expansion is contributing to its intended outcomes for children and families.

School Age Childcare

Building on the expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare, we have committed to build a system of wraparound school age childcare, providing care before and after school, all year round, and during the holidays. Those on the lowest incomes will pay nothing.

The £3 million Access to Childcare Fund has been delivering a range of services for families on low incomes allowing them to access different models of school age childcare at no or low cost, helping to inform policy development and aid our understanding in how funded provision can support families to lift themselves out of poverty.

In order to further develop our understanding of the types of service models that families on low incomes could benefit from, in March 2021 we announced we would fund a number of pilot projects, additional to the Access to Childcare Fund projects, that would look to understand innovative forms of childminding provision, the role of organised children's activities, and particular issues with the establishment of services in remote and rural areas.

We worked with the Scottish Childminding Association, Ayr United Football Academy, and the Mull and Iona Trust respectively to develop services that could benefit local communities.

Due to local factors the needs of families – and the resources available to meet those needs – may vary between communities in Scotland and, as such, we recognise that co-design may lead us to distinct solutions to providing childcare in different places. Our commitment to exploring a person-centred approach means that school age childcare policy and delivery plans will be refined through early community adoption of local place based systems of childcare to support families living on low incomes.

Case Study – Access to Childcare Fund

Jamie* (6 years) attended out of school care for mornings three days per week. Alison*, his mum, works part-time in a hotel. She had her hours cut during COVID-19 and her work no longer provided set shift patterns, meaning she required a childcare service five days per week. This was a cost Alison felt unable to make, even while claiming Universal Credit which partially funded her childcare. School holidays were also a huge issue as the cost of a full day was much more than a morning service.

Alison was worried about losing her job as she is an EU citizen in the process of applying for her residency and she required five years in her employment as a part of her application. There had been confusion with Jamie's application, which caused a great deal of stress and financial pressure for Alison as she has had to pay for a passport application and attend appointments for Jamie.

Alison was under a lot of financial pressure due to being a lone parent family, rising food and energy costs as well as a £900 repayment to HMRC that was causing additional financial distress on the family. As a result, Alison was struggling to afford things such as Wi-Fi; the only digital access they had was through her phone and data was expensive.

As Jamie's father had died the previous year, they were both emotionally and financially impacted as Jamie was struggling with his grief and had begun using pull-ups again. This was financially impacting on Alison, and she no longer had the essential childcare Jamie's father provided as well as the emotional impact of supporting her son and the death of her ex-partner.

By accessing the Access to Childcare Fund and family support, Alison was able to cover the additional mornings, as well as holiday cover. Alison reported that knowing this helped to reduce her stress levels and fear that she could lose her job and, ultimately, her residency status.

The Family Support Co-ordinator from Indigo worked with Alison and ensured she has had access to food parcels, supermarket and energy vouchers to support her with pull-ups and general grocery costs, as well as signposting to more sustainable options such as the new Castlemilk Pantry and Home Energy Scotland for advice, and welfare advice and support to manage her HMRC repayments and residency application.

Following a successful funding application, Indigo were able to provide Alison with an iPad, Mi-Fi device and 6 month loaded mobile SIM card through Connecting Scotland. Alison said her phone bill reduced by £40 per month now she was no longer using mobile data for everything and Jamie is able to do his homework on the iPad.

* Name changed to protect identity.

Family Learning Programme

Family learning is an early intervention and prevention approach aimed at encouraging family members to learn together, with a focus on intergenerational learning. It can also enable parents to learn how to support their children's learning.

The Family Learning Scotland Programme aimed to enhance family interactions and outcomes for children by supporting parents to enrich the home learning environment, and equip parents with skills and qualifications which could help them move out of poverty.

The Programme ran until December 2021 and the broad aims of the funding were achieved despite significant disruption due to COVID-19. Peep, a charity that supports parents and children to learn together, offered training and support in all local authorities in Scotland to up to 432 ELC practitioners in their Peep Learning Together Programme and Peep Progression Pathway.

Peep re-worked their original plans to deliver training in person to online offers. As COVID-19 restrictions eased, Peep supported practitioners to deliver support to parents online and in outdoor sessions.

A welcome outcome from the work is the creation of a Peep Champions Network across all 32 local authorities. We are now considering what more we can do to build on the Programme to support positive outcomes for children and families.

Tackling the cost of the school day

Impacts:

- School Clothing Grant increased from a minimum of £100 for every eligible child to £120 for children in primary school and £150 for children in secondary school, benefitting over 178,000 children and young people in 2020-21
- Over 112,000 children in primaries 4 and 5 are now entitled to free school lunches which save families around £400 per child, per year
- Alternate Free School Meal provision during school holidays estimated to support around 145,000 children from low income households
- £22.3 million invested in Education Maintenance Allowance, providing financial support of £30 per week to young people aged 16-19 from low-income households
- In excess of 130,000 children and young people accessed 'Get into Summer' 2021 provision, providing opportunities to socialise, reconnect, get active and access nutritious, healthy food

Supporting families during the school term

To further support children and families, universal provision of free school lunches during school term-time was expanded to include all children in primary 4 starting from when schools returned from the summer holidays in August 2021. Universal provision of free school lunches was then further expanded to include all children in primary 5, starting from when schools returned after the Christmas and new year holidays in

January 2022 – resulting in more children benefitting from access to healthy and nutritious food during term time and more families saving money on the cost of school lunches.

We also implemented a further increase to the minimum value of School Clothing Grants for every eligible pupil from the start of the 2021-22 academic year. This further increased the national minimum from £100 to at least £120 for every eligible child in primary school and £150 for eligible secondary school pupils.

Supported by ongoing funding, the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland Cost of the School Day project team provided strategic leadership to encourage and facilitate action on school costs and support for children and families on low incomes. This included engagement with school communities, local authority partners, policymakers and the third sector. This has led to nearly all local authorities taking action to reduce costs with Cost of the School Day evidence used to inform local and national policy and strategy. With Scottish Attainment Challenge support, the Cost of the School Day project has produced a new set of resources for school staff in Scotland, including new talking about costs and money at school resources helping schools to communicate well with children and families about costs, entitlements and wider financial support.

We also continued to support young people from low-income households to participate in post-16 education, with £22.3 million invested in Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in the 2021-22 financial year.

As well as providing funding to all 32 local authorities, and the Scottish Funding Council to facilitate payment of EMA, we issued updated guidance to organisations on eligibility and participation to ensure EMA continued to be paid during the pandemic including where students were not physically in attendance due to closure or self-isolation.

Supporting families outside the school term

Following recommendations by the COVID Education Recovery Group, Social Renewal Advisory Board, and the Poverty and Inequality Commission, we announced £20 million funding in March 2021 as part of the 100 days commitments to support an enhanced summer offer for children, young people and families.

£15 million was allocated to local authorities to deliver a targeted programme for those children and young people most impacted by COVID-19, particularly those from low income households and who fall within the Tackling Child Poverty priority groups, giving them the opportunity to socialise, reconnect and get active in the context of COVID-19 recovery whilst ensuring access to nutritious, healthy food. A £5 million national offer was also delivered via a coalition of 18 national partners⁹ to provide opportunities for all children and young people to socialise, play and reconnect.

Research evaluation and analysis¹⁰ of ‘Get into Summer’ highlighted the benefits for children and young people of taking part and informed the decision to repeat the programme for a further year with a targeted, rather than universal, approach this

⁹ [Get into Summer - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

¹⁰ [Supporting documents - Get into Summer 2021 evaluation: research findings - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

summer. This reflects changes in policy intention to align to the national mission to tackle child poverty.

We also provided £21.8 million to local authorities to put in place support for free school meals eligible families during the school holidays, covering the summer, Christmas and Easter school holidays as well as the mid-term holidays in October and February. It is estimated that this will have reached approximately 145,000 eligible children and young people.

To further support effective holiday provision, we commissioned SPIRU (the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit) to map and evaluate different holiday food and childcare models and produce practical resources to assist local authorities in further understanding the need and services in their area.

We also continued to support innovation to provide dignified access to food, including through the Young Scot #YS Attain phase 3 campaign. The technology in the YS National Entitlement Card has allowed additional meal entitlements to be delivered during school hours beyond young people's Free School Meal entitlements. As a cashless catering card, this has allowed pupils access to free, healthy breakfasts, removing stigma and 'get the best start to their day'.

Summer programmes – Case Study: Dundee City Council

Dundee City Council integrated food into activity provision through several different means. Funding partner organisations such as Dundee Bairns, whose mission is to ensure that no child goes hungry over the school holidays, helped provide food to organisations who work with children and families over the school holidays.

The parcels included food vouchers, period products and passes to local attractions. There was emphasis on raising greater awareness of support that was available, and links to food larders helped signpost families to relevant services in their area.

Provision was made for children attending activities to be offered a free nutritious meal and wider family support. Food parcels were distributed to a number of families through partnership with local supermarkets and local charities.

The council also promoted local community cafes offering free meals through the Young Scot card. This created forums for young people to build relationships with Community Learning and Development workers, and discuss issues with regards to housing, school uniforms, places to go for support, and provided opportunities for further support/discussions moving forward.

These sorts of initiatives show how integrating food into holiday programmes can go beyond simply providing meals. In this case young people gained access to 1:1 support giving more scope to use, and feel comfortable attending, local cafes.

Tackling food insecurity and the wider issues surrounding it was also part of Dundee's holiday provision through the Summer Tasty Teas project. The project ran for seven weeks, involving targeted young people and their families. The project was based around the principles of dignity, choice, and involvement. Young people were responsible for choosing recipes for the types of foods that they and their families

would enjoy eating together. Discussion was facilitated online and the peer support and encouragement in the group was evident from the first week.

Doorstep drop-offs of fresh ingredients took place weekly and facilitated an ongoing face to face contact with young people and families. They used these recipes as a foundation to build upon, with the inclusion of additional nutritious ingredients and the swapping out of ingredients – this was alongside promoting discussion around health and nutritional needs as part of developing knowledge and the skills to make nutritious and affordable food choices. The project's approach was built on learning from delivering a pilot project last year.

For future programmes the council intends to put out a survey to children and young people in order to get a better understanding of what food they would like and how they would like best to engage with it.

Delivering warm and affordable homes

Impacts:

- An estimated 3,220 households with children have been helped into affordable housing from April 2021 to March 2022, and all priority groups are expected to have benefitted from the affordable housing supply programme
- Latest quarterly statistics (14 June 2022), show that from April 2021 to March 2022, we have delivered 9,757 affordable homes, of which 7,306 were homes for social rent – including 3,201 council homes. This is an increase of 3,279 affordable homes on the same period in 2020-21 (where there were 6,478 recorded completions).
- 262 loans were issued under the Tenant Hardship Loan Fund, resulting in support totalling £732,565
- As of 31 January 2022, local authorities had made 1,354 payments for grants totalling £1.8 million through the Tenant Grant Fund
- During 2021-22, Warmer Homes Scotland helped more than 5,300 households living in or at risk of fuel poverty, including those with children under 16 who are on qualifying benefits, to have warmer and more affordable to heat homes following the installation of heating and insulation measures through Warmer Homes Scotland – with households expected to save an average of £230 per year on their energy bills.
- Early estimates suggest that the Fuel Insecurity Fund has supported in excess of 140,000 awards to support households with fuel costs

Ensuring housing affordability

As a result of continued investment, we have now delivered over 51,000 affordable homes between April 2016 and March 2022, over 35,000 of which have been for social rent (including over 12,600 council homes). Having met the previous 50,000 affordable homes target we are now progressing towards our target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, 70% of which will be for social rent and 10% will be in remote, rural and island areas.

In order to keep social rent affordable, over the course of 2021-22 we continued to compare proposed Registered Social Landlord social rent levels for homes at the point of completion with our published social rent benchmarks when assessing projects for Scottish Government grant funding at tender stage – we sought justification for proposed levels which exceeded benchmark(s) by more than 5% (and approved levels at more than 10% over in exceptional circumstances only). We also completed a review of affordable housing investment benchmark levels with the affordable housing sector, with maintaining rent affordability a key consideration in this work.

Additionally, we advised Registered Social Landlords of our intention to mandate participation in a programme of procurement support as a condition of grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. Previous work in this area highlighted scope for financial savings (across most areas of activity), which may help to reduce some pressure on costs which may in turn ease pressure on future rent increases.

With reference to private residential tenancy, during 2021-22, we published our consultation '[A New Deal for Tenants](#)' which set out that in order to realise the right to an adequate home – and for the overall housing system to work well for the people of Scotland – there must be options for people to live in quality, affordable rented accommodation.

We also set out a commitment to continue working with stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of affordability that is fit for the future and takes into account the drivers of poverty and inequality, the housing market, the distribution of homes, the supply of affordable homes, the financial sustainability of the affordable rented sector and the real costs of living in a home and a place.

In addition, we have committed to taking legislative action to ensure that for private tenants seeking rent adjudication, such adjudications can only maintain or decrease rent at the level proposed by the landlord. And, as part of the Bute House Agreement, we have committed to introduce national rent controls by 2025 for the private rented sector.

To help tenants impacted by the pandemic we continued to offer help to tenants struggling with rent through our Tenant Hardship Loan Fund as part of our range of measures. The Tenant Hardship Loan provided interest free loans to tenants in both the private and social rented sectors who were struggling with rent and did not have other means of housing support. The loan provided an additional short-term offer that supported tenants to manage rent arrears, helped them to come back into paying their rent and to remove the risk of eviction.

We also launched a Tenant Grant Fund in September 2021 and provided £10 million in emergency funding to support tenants who were struggling financially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Fund supports people to reduce or pay off rent arrears accrued between 23 March 2020 and 9 August 2021, helping to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness. Funding has been allocated to local authorities who are able to best target this funding to help the people who need it most. Work is underway to assess the impact of the fund and to determine the need for further financial support.

Homelessness

The Scottish Government/COSLA [Ending Homelessness Together action plan](#) was updated in October 2020. We published our latest annual report on progress, which includes updates on how the homelessness system in Scotland responds to the needs of children, in October 2021¹¹. We doubled our £50 million ending homelessness together fund in 2021 and will invest the additional £50 million over this parliamentary term to implement the next phase of our work with partners to end homelessness and rough sleeping.

We are making steady progress in developing prevention pathways for the groups most at risk of homelessness. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, rapid rehousing is our primary response to homelessness. We have allocated £52.5 million (multi-year funding package) for the delivery of rapid rehousing transition plans (RRTPs) and Housing First. The transition to rapid rehousing in Scotland is well underway – all 32 local authorities have RRTPs in place, and more than 1,110 Housing First tenancies have started across 24 local authorities.

Although COVID-19 has created a significant increase in demand for temporary accommodation, we are committed to reducing the number of households with children in temporary accommodation and the length of time spent there. Local authorities take a household's circumstances into consideration when identifying an appropriate property of the correct size and type to meet their needs which can take time, but adopting this person-centred approach helps to reduce instances of repeat homelessness for families.

Following the expiry of temporary exceptions to the 2014 Homeless Persons Unsuitable Accommodation Order (Scotland) Order in September 2021, local authorities can only use unsuitable accommodation for seven days without recording a breach. Following the invasion of Ukraine, local authorities are experiencing more pressure on temporary accommodation than before, and we are working with them to support compliance with the Order.

New help with fuel poverty

Having been paused due to COVID-19, work on the Fuel Poverty Strategy resumed in the first half of 2021. A series of online consultation events were held with stakeholders in September, and the Strategy was laid in Parliament in early November for the required period of forty days before being published on 23 December 2021.

The Strategy sets out how we plan to achieve our targets that in 2040 no more than 5% of households are in fuel poverty, no more than 1% of households are in extreme fuel poverty and the median fuel poverty gap is not more than £250 (adjusted for 2015 prices). It includes actions to tackle each of the four drivers of fuel poverty: poor energy efficiency of the home; high energy costs; low household income; and how energy is used in the home. It also includes a commitment to explore all opportunities to align the actions we take to tackle both fuel and child poverty and recognise the ways in which these experiences overlap for low income households.

¹¹ [Ending Homelessness Together: annual report 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

As required by the 2019 Fuel Poverty Act, a new statutory Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel was appointed at the end of 2021 and met for the first time on 31 January 2022. The Panel is a new advisory non-departmental public body which will oversee the implementation of the Fuel Poverty Strategy, providing an important means of external scrutiny of our progress towards meeting the statutory targets. The Panel will work collaboratively with the Poverty and Inequality Commission to inform advice to the Scottish Government on implementation of the second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

To support households to have warmer and more affordable to heat homes, we continued to invest in the demand-led Warmer Homes Scotland scheme. We also funded a national marketing campaign, which ran from December 2021 to March 2022, to raise awareness of [Home Energy Scotland](#) who act the referral mechanism of all Scottish Government funded energy efficiency schemes, including Warmer Homes Scotland.

Building on the success of the funding we first provided to help people struggling with their energy costs over winter 2020-21, £10 million was allocated to the Fuel Insecurity Fund for winter 2021-22. This money was delivered through a number of trusted third sector partner organisations – namely the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Fuel Bank Foundation and Advice Direct Scotland – and aimed at helping people at risk of self-rationing their energy use, self-disconnecting entirely, or who cannot afford their energy bills. Through this funding support was made available to households on any tariff type and using any kind of fuel. We anticipate that final data on awards made through the fund will be available in summer 2022

In response to the recent increase in the energy price cap by Ofgem and the wider cost of living crisis, a further £10 million has been allocated to the Fuel Insecurity Fund so that it can continue providing people with support during 2022-23.

Supporting financial inclusion

Impacts:

- Between 1 May 2021 to 31 March 2022 the Money Talk Team service supported just over 5,500 low income families across Scotland and, of those, more than 1,300 clients were better off by almost £4.3 million – an average of around £3,200 per household
- Supported by Scottish Government investment, the One Parent Families Scotland Advice and Information Service provided support to 2,090 single parents who achieved financial gains totalling £2.12 million – an average of £1,015 each – including £1.87 million from Welfare Rights advice and interventions
- 9,775 people, including 1,888 lone parent families, were supported with advice on debt and income maximisation through Stepchange in Scotland
- 5,309 people, including 1,231 low income families, were supported with debt advice by the Citizen's Advice Bureau network between June 2021 and March 2022

The Money Talk Team service

We provided further funding of £1.5 million per annum to Citizens Advice Scotland in 2021-22 to continue delivery of the Money Talk Team service, bringing total investment to £6.3 million since launch in November 2018.

The service, targeted at low-income families and older people, aims to support at least 15,000 households per year and ensure people are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to and are not paying more than they need to for basic goods and services. People can access this free confidential and personalised service in a number of ways including by Freephone, online and by visiting their local Citizens Advice Bureau. While this local service has continued to be reduced due to lockdown restrictions, where possible – and in line with government guidance – bureaux have provided face to face service for those needing it during the pandemic.

Since the launch of the service until March 2022 it has supported over 52,500 clients across Scotland. Of those, more than 20,400 clients are better off by over £44 million – averaging over £2,000 per household. Over this time the service has helped 11,539 clients from the six priority family types and put over £12.5 million into the pockets of 3,500 of these clients.

In delivering the Money Talk Team service, the Citizens Advice network in Scotland continues to create and maintain strategic partnerships with other agencies in their local areas to establish and enhance reach to the priority family groups. These partnerships vary from simple referral routes and training opportunities to co-location, and involve a wide range of stakeholders including food banks, housing associations, local authorities and health and social care professionals.

Benefit Take Up Strategy for devolved entitlements

Ensuring that families access all of the Social Security Benefits to which they are entitled is a moral duty and fundamental priority of the Scottish Government. Our second [Benefit Take-up Strategy](#), published in October 2021, sets out how we are working to ensure people can access the support they are entitled to. Our approach to maximising Benefit Take-Up Strategy remains focused on: removing social barriers to people accessing Scottish benefits; on addressing complex or costly access; and on improving access to information.

The publication also sets out [estimated take-up rates](#) for six low income benefits including our three Best Start Grants, Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment and Scottish Child Payment. We aim to publish updated take-up rate estimates for those six benefits in 2022 incorporating latest data and methodology developments. We continue to develop approaches to estimating take-up rates for Scotland's other benefits and will report on progress in our next update.

The Scottish Government has committed to investing up to £10 million over the current Parliament to increase access to advice in accessible settings to maximise incomes and tackle poverty. As part of this, we have committed to investing £3.17 million over two years from September 2021 in Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships, placing advice workers in 150 GP surgeries in Scotland's most deprived areas. Currently 139 of the GP practices identified have Welfare Advisors in place and the service operational,

and we continue to work closely with the Improvement Service to get the 11 remaining GP practices up and running with the service.

As a result, vulnerable individuals of all ages are able to quickly access welfare rights and money advice in a safe, non-stigmatising place. This improves health and wellbeing, increases family incomes and reduces stress and worry.

We also launched the new Social Security Advocacy Service on 31 January 2022. The service supports disabled people across the country to access and apply for Social Security Scotland assistance. The Scottish Government has committed to investing up to £20.4 million in the service over the next four years.

The service is delivered by VoiceAbility, a charity with 40 years' experience of providing independent advocacy services, and is free to anyone who identifies as disabled and requires support to engage effectively with Social Security Scotland.

We continue to work to ensure that social security is accessible to all in Scotland, and that it is part of a holistic package of support helping people to maximise their incomes. We are resourcing significant work to develop robust referral pathways between Social Security Scotland and a range of partners in the public and third sectors, as well as targeted signposting. We are also exploring options and opportunities for automating entitlement to Scottish forms of assistance.

New support for affordable credit

The Scottish Government remains committed to supporting the affordable credit sector to ensure access to affordable credit for people on low incomes. The impact of COVID-19 has been stark and with household bills rising due to the increases in the cost of living, we must do all we can to support households and the sector.

We are supporting the sector through a number of initiatives, this includes the Affordable Credit Loan Fund. The Fund, backed by £1 million from the Scottish Government, is now fully committed and is continuing to support the affordable credit sector by enabling social lenders, such as Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) and Credit Unions (CUs), to provide access to affordable credit to low income households. The fund is also helping these organisations market their services effectively.

In November 2021 we launched the £2.5 million Scottish Community Lenders Investment Fund, previously known as the Credit Union Investment Fund, and widened its reach to offer CUs and CDFIs low cost and flexible loan capital. The fund supported their short-term plans that required capital before 31 March 2022, and plans that require capital from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024.

In response to a recommendation from the Carnegie UK Trust's [Advancing Affordable Credit](#) report in February 2022, we launched a national affordable credit marketing campaign to promote awareness of the community lending sector. This campaign was part of a wider marketing strategy that also promoted benefit uptake and free debt advice. In addition, the [Money Support Scotland](#) website was developed to support the campaign and help point people to a range of organisations committed to providing relevant support.

Tackling problem debt

In 2021-22 we allocated £7.4 million of debt advice levy funding to advice agencies to provide income maximisation and debt advice to households across Scotland. We continued to support agencies to provide debt advice across multiple channels including face to face advice (when permitted), telephone and digital channels, such as webchat. This multi-channel approach to advice has provided people (including low income households) with access to income maximisation and debt advice services throughout 2021-22 in a way that best suits their needs.

This included funding of £1.25 million to Citizens Advice Scotland and the Citizens Advice Bureau network to meet the anticipated demand for debt advice in 2021-22 as a result of COVID-19, including for priority families.

We funded Stepchange in Scotland to provide income maximisation advice and welfare benefits alongside its core debt advice function. And, from November 2021 to March 2022, we ran a Money Support Scotland national marketing campaign to promote benefit uptake, affordable credit and debt advice, which encouraged people to seek help with their debts before they reached a point of crisis.

We also provided £259,000 to One Parent Families Scotland to support their Advice and Information Service, which provides support to lone parents including advice on income maximisation. The service is available nationally via a national helpline and digital platform as well as local, targeted support in six local authorities.

Tackling problem debt – Case Study - Stepchange Welfare Benefits advice

Stephanie* is a single mother with children who was receiving Universal Credit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit and help with housing costs. Stephanie sought help from Stepchange because she was worried about her income.

After speaking with an advisor Stephanie was advised to claim the Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Foods and the Best Start Grant: Early Learning payment for her youngest child. She was also advised she might be entitled to the School Clothing Grant and Free School Meals for her older child, aged 9, following a recent change in her circumstances.

In addition to the support provided by Stepchange, Stephanie was signposted to One Parent Families Scotland for further help. Stephanie stated that it was useful to know that the charity could help with other issues as a single parent.

Stephanie's applications were successful: she received £40 monthly of Scottish Child payment, a £250 Early Learning payment, £17 monthly payment of Best Start Food, £120 School Clothing Grant and Free School meals. As a result of Free School Meal entitlement she was also awarded a £100 COVID Spring Hardship Payment.

This additional income made a real change to Stephanie's finances and she noted that the support she received changed her life.

*Name changed to protect identity

Help for basic essentials

Impacts:

- Initial data indicates nearly 20,000 devices and over 13,250 connectivity packages were awarded to families with children across the three Phases of Connecting Scotland
- Of this devices were awarded to almost 1,400 lone parent families, almost 3,300 families with a disabled adult or child, over 5,050 devices for families with 3 or more children, almost 1,350 families with a child under the age of 1 and over 8,900 families with a mother aged under 25
- Connectivity packages were awarded to over 900 lone parent families, almost 2,200 families with a disabled adult or child, almost 3,200 families with 3 or more children, over 1,050 families with a child under the age of 1 and over 5,850 families with a mother aged under 25.
- Phase 3 of Connecting Scotland awarded over 2,300 devices to digitally excluded young people and adults to support access to employment

Access to period products

We continue to fund the provision of free period products across a range of settings including, schools, colleges and universities, wider public spaces and targeted action through community groups for those on low incomes.

The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill gained Royal Assent on 12 January 2021 to become the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021. The main duties on local authorities and education providers will come into force in August 2022, but voluntary provision will continue in the meantime. The Scottish Government provided £3.4 million in 2021-22 for access to free period products for students at school, college or university, and £2.8 million to local authorities to provide wider access to period products across Scotland.

Following consultation with relevant organisations, we published guidance¹² in September 2021 for bodies with duties under the Act, to support them in implementation of local delivery.

Scottish Government funded the social enterprise Hey Girls to develop an app (PickupMyPeriod¹³) that allows users to identify locations where period products can be accessed for free in Scotland. The app was launched in January 2022 and currently links to over 1,000 venues in communities across Scotland where free products are available. The app is available to all local authorities to input their locations. Many local authorities have already chosen to utilise the app, however it is not universal at this time and the locations currently listed may change as local authorities develop their implementation of the Act. For areas not listed in the app, information on how to access free period products should be available through local authorities.

¹² [Period Products \(Free Provision\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021: guidance – September 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance/2021/09/period-products-free-provision-scotland-act-2021-guidance-september-2021/pages/11/)

¹³ PickupMyPeriod app available on the [Google Play Store](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.heygirls.pickupmyperiod) for Android devices and the [App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/pickupmyperiod/id1544444444) on Apple devices

Eradicating digital exclusion through Connecting Scotland

Connecting Scotland aims to close the digital divide by providing devices, connectivity, and training and support to digitally excluded people on low incomes. During 2021-22, the programme reached the milestone of bringing 60,000 people online, backed by £48 million investment.

Phase 2 of the programme, which ran until the end of April 2021, focussed on families and young people on a low income who either had no or a poor internet connection (internet access through mobile/satellite broadband or public wi-fi). It also included support for young care leavers. A total of 22,632 devices were awarded to groups through Phase 2 of the programme.

Through Phase 3, which ran from June 2021 to March 2022, support was focused through three different approaches. This firstly focussed on organisations working to remove barriers related to digital exclusion for unemployed young people and adults (aged 16+), with over 2,300 devices awarded. Secondly, a fast-track process was established in summer 2021 to provide an opportunity for organisations to apply for a small number of devices (up to 10) to meet immediate need for digitally excluded people. This enabled a wide and diverse range of organisations across the sector to apply for service users who may not have fit the criteria of previous rounds or who were newly identified, with over 8,600 devices awarded. Finally, a dedicated round of applications was welcomed from colleges in order to address the need among college students who are digitally excluded, with over 900 devices awarded.

We continue to publish evaluation from Phases of Connecting Scotland in order to inform our future approach. [Phase 1 evaluation](#) was published in May 2022.

Action on transport strategy, policies and programmes

Impacts:

- Approximately 930,000 young people expected to benefit from new under 22's free bus concession scheme estimated to save families up to £3,000 by the time their child turns 18
- By early June, over 390,000 free bus travel cards have been despatched and over 17,000 young people have downloaded free bus travel to their existing cards – with over 11 million customer journeys made under the scheme.
- As of April 2022, 1,708 bikes have been delivered through the free bikes pilot programme

Over the last year we have focused on understanding the barriers to transport faced by the priority families, and taking specific action to reduce transport costs and promote active travel through initiatives such as the launch of the under 22's free bus concession scheme and the delivery of free bikes to children who cannot afford them.

In June 2021 the Poverty Alliance published Transport Scotland commissioned [research exploring the relationship between transport and the six priority groups](#) set out in 'Every Child, Every Chance'. A key finding of the research was that transport is an

essential part of the lives of low income families and is critical in terms of shaping their experience of poverty.

Since the Poverty Alliance field work and publication we have taken action to address affordability of public transport with the launch of the under 22's free bus concession scheme in January 2022 – further detail is provided about this below. The research findings will also form part of a broader evidence base that will inform our Fair Fares Review. The review is considering the cost and availability of public transport services and the range of discounts and concessionary schemes which are available on all modes including bus, rail and ferry, and will consider options that take cognisance of the relative changes to the overall cost of travel. The review will conclude towards the end of 2023.

As part of the first 100 days commitments, Transport Scotland launched the first six projects to test the delivery models to provide free bikes to children who cannot afford them. An additional four pilots were added by December 2021. Over 3,000 school aged children across Scottish communities are expected to benefit by the time all pilots are concluded in August 2022.

On 20 January 2022 the [Second Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) (STPR2) was published. One of the key objectives of the review was to consider how to enhance choice and access to active travel and public transport by improving accessibility for residents, visitors and businesses. STPR2 was developed in partnership with stakeholders from across the country and the review looked to identify, sift and appraise options for changing our transport system.

Also in January 2022, the under 22's free bus concession scheme was launched. Approximately 930,000 young people are eligible to join a third of Scotland's population who already benefit from free bus travel through the Older and Disabled Persons Free Bus Scheme. We are working closely with our delivery partners in the Improvement Service, local authorities, the National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO) and Young Scot to ensure that children and young people can receive their entitlement to free bus travel.

Subsequent to the launch we have taken steps to help improve communications about the scheme, simplify information about the application processes, encourage young people to use the bus, and provide tips for young people, parents, guardians and carers on safe travel, through the launch of [freebus.scot](https://www.freebus.scot) in May. We have also provided information to various stakeholders and third sector organisations – including a range of anti-poverty groups – to reach more children, young people and families so that they are aware of the scheme and how to apply.

Transport Scotland are undertaking an evaluation of the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel scheme to assess the short and medium term outcomes and impact of the scheme on children, young people and their families, by comparing conditions at different stages. To understand the impact on child poverty, the evaluation will assess whether the scheme has contributed to a reduction in poverty rates amongst children, young people and their families. Data outputs on household spend on travel; household income levels; how affordable people find travel and transport; how affordable people find buses; and the main barriers people have to accessing buses, will be monitored throughout the course of the evaluation to evidence the impact on poverty rates:

C. Social security

Introduction

In the final year of *'Every Child, Every Chance'* we have continued to deliver support through social security in Scotland – helping to tackle child poverty, aid recovery from COVID-19 and to help families impacted by the rising cost of food and fuel across winter 2021. This includes launching a further two benefits, including Child Disability Payment and a pilot of Adult Disability Payment.

Beyond support delivered by Social Security Scotland we worked closely with local authorities to deliver additional financial help to families. This includes awarding over £52 million through the Scottish Welfare Fund, supporting over 90,000 Scottish households through mitigation of the UK Government Bedroom tax, and providing increased financial assistance through Low Income Pandemic Payments and Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments.

Updates on key actions are set out below.

Pandemic Payments

Impacts:

- Over 145,000 school age children received Bridging Payments as of spring 2022, with £520 to be paid for each child in 2021 and 2022. Over 581,000 awards were made to eligible children in 2021-22.
- Over 530,000 Low Income Pandemic Payments were awarded to households by the end of 2021 with awards totalling £68.9 million
- Low Income Pandemic Payments were awarded to over 494,000 households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction in April 2021. Of these it is estimated in the region of 77,000 were lone parent households and 29,000 were couples with children.
- 2,200 Low Income Pandemic Payments were awarded to care leavers, over 6,800 to households in temporary accommodation, and around 24,500 to households with a Severe Mental Impairment exemption

To provide immediate financial support to families of school age children ahead of the full roll out of the Scottish Child Payment by the end of 2022, and to support low income households impacted by COVID-19, the Scottish Government worked together with local authorities to deliver additional payments across 2021-22.

Building on the success of the COVID Winter Hardship Payment and COVID Spring Hardship Payment, Scottish Ministers committed to provide £520 in both 2021 and 2022 for eligible children through Bridging Payments. Paid for each child in receipt of Free School Meals on the basis of low income, these innovative payments provided additional financial support almost two years in advance of the full roll out of the Scottish Child Payment. A total of £79.72 million was awarded by local authorities through Bridging Payments in 2021-22.

For families this meant that, in addition to the £100 paid through the COVID Spring Hardship Payment, local authorities awarded £100 prior to the start of the summer

holidays and £160 prior to both autumn and Christmas holidays – with up to £520 awarded for each eligible child across 2021. A further £130 was awarded for each child prior to the start of Easter holiday in 2022. Three further payments of £130 will be made in 2022 for each eligible child, with a total of up to £520 to be awarded over the calendar year.

Families also benefitted from the £130 Low Income Pandemic Payment, which was delivered by local authorities for households who received Council Tax Reduction in April 2021 and additional households who were either exempt or had no liability for Council Tax – including those in temporary accommodation. As of the end of 2021, local authorities have made over 530,000 awards to eligible households, including almost 35,800 awards for households either exempt from Council Tax or who had no liability.

To tackle the cost of living crisis, a further £150 Cost of Living award was announced in February 2022 for all households in Council Tax bands A to D, all households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction in any band, and households exempt from Council Tax. Backed by funding of £280 million, this additional payment was estimated to reach in the region of 1.85 million Scottish households and has subsequently been delivered by local authorities.

Five Family Payments

Impacts:

- £55.1 million of Scottish Child Payment awards made to families in 2021-22 with payments being actively made for 103,000 children as of 31 March 2022
- From 1 April 2021 to 28 February 2022, over £13.9 million was made in awards of Best Start Grant
- This includes £5.9 million in Pregnancy and Baby payments, £3.7 million in Early Learning Payments and £4.4 million in School Age Payments
- From 1 April 2021 to 28 February 2022, we authorised over 33,000 Best Start Foods applications and provided over £12.7 million of support to low income families

Following the first payments of Scottish Child Payment being made in February 2021 we have continued to deliver all five of our family payments in 2021-22 – including Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Foods and all three Best Start Grants – providing financial support across the early years which is unparalleled in the UK.

Within the early months of this reporting period, efforts were focused on processing applications and making payments of the new Scottish Child Payment for children under the age of 6. An interim evaluation of Scottish Child Payment has been undertaken with a final report to be published in summer 2022. We also announced plans to accelerate the doubling of the Scottish Child Payment to £20 a week from 1 April 2022, which has now taken effect for all children under the age of 6 in receipt of this support.

On 1 April 2021 due to the additional stresses that low income households experienced as a result of COVID-19, all three Best Start Grant payments were increased by 1%,

which was 0.5% higher than the inflation-adjusted level of assistance, providing £1,111 for a first child and £808 for subsequent children across the three payments.

In relation to Best Start Foods, we increased the value of support by 5.88% from August 2021 – increasing the value of payments from £4.25 to £4.50, and from £8.50 to £9.00 within the first year of a child’s life – as well as increasing the income threshold for relevant qualifying benefits.

We extended eligibility for Best Start Foods to children under the age of three, with British citizenship, and whose parent or guardian meets the financial eligibility criteria but do not have a qualifying benefit due to having no recourse to public funds. Social Security Scotland opened for these applications on 13 December 2021 and applications can be made through the normal channels – by phone, online or on a paper form.

We also began research for an evaluation of Best Start Foods to look at the impact of the Best Start Foods payments. The research seeks to understand the experience of families who had received Best Start Foods in the first two years of the benefit, from the perspective of clients and healthcare professionals. The research also seeks to explore the experiences of participating retailers on administering the scheme. The evaluation report is due to be published in summer 2022.

Across the reporting year a significant effort has been made to increase the take-up of payments including through the Five Family Payments multimedia campaign launched in March 2021. Social Security Scotland has been proactive in the promotion of the family payments including Scottish Child Payment by using the information on eligible families available to them through Universal Credit and Tax Credit databases and inviting them to apply. This activity is in line with the approach set out in our second Benefit Take-up Strategy set out earlier in this report.

Five Family Payments – Case Study

The quotes below highlight the impact of these payments for families in 2021-22

Mum of 2 Ashley* said:

“I was made redundant during COVID and it meant we had no money for basic things – going from work to relying on benefits was hard. I have a disability and my son does too.

“Having that additional payment (Scottish Child Payment) was a big help – I used to save it up and it helped so much towards things I could not have bought. My son was diagnosed with lactose intolerance so that money helped me to buy coconut milk and special yogurts and other dairy-free food. People might say it’s only £80 but it goes a long way – in my eyes it did – it was a real booster for us. It makes a massive difference to our everyday way of life. I think it’s great that this payment was brought in and then doubled.”

Mum of 3 Elsie* said:

“I get Best Start Grant School Age Payment and the Scottish Child Payment, just having it, it’s a big help you know. I’m so grateful for it. They really helped me, especially this year with my daughter starting school. If I buy cheap shoes, she kicks them out within a week. We ended up getting her good school shoes which cost £45, but they last. So the payments really helped us, we couldn’t cope without them.

“In the holidays we were able use Scottish Child Payment to do things with the kids, which made a difference.”

* Name changed to protect identity.

Wider support through social security

Impacts:

- More than 85,000 Carer’s Allowance Supplement payments were made following the April 2021 qualifying date, and around 82,000 Carer’s Allowance Supplement payments were made following the October 2021 qualifying date
- From April 2021 to January 2022, 1,865 awards of Young Carer Grant were made totalling nearly £575,000
- Over £853,000 awarded through Job Start Payment between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, with over £245,000 awarded to clients with responsibility for a child
- 6,095 Funeral Support Payments totalling £11 million have been issued to support bereaved families between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. The average payment received by families between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 was £1,810.
- 19,865 Child Winter Heating Assistance payments had been issued totalling £4 million, by the end of March 2022, for winter 2021-22
- Approximately 4,500 additional young people in receipt of the enhanced rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment received Child Winter Heating Assistance due expanded eligibility criteria
- As of the 31 March 2022, it is estimated that 3,050 children were receipt of Child Disability Payment. Of this 2,500 children were new applicants and 555 were children who had their award transferred to Child Disability Payment.
- Between 26 July and 31 March 2022, the total value of Child Disability Payments issued to families with a disabled child or young person was £3.25 million

During 2021-22 we continued to deliver wider financial support for families through devolved benefits in Scotland – this includes through our Job Start Payment, Young Carer Grant and Funeral Support Payments.

To provide support to more families with disabled children, in November 2021 the Scottish Government broadened eligibility for Child Winter Heating Allowance (CWhA) to include young people in receipt of Personal Independence Payment, enabling us to support approximately 4,500 more children with support worth £202 in winter 2021. From winter 2022, CWhA will also be paid to eligible young people in receipt of the enhanced rate of the daily living component of Adult Disability Payment.

We also made another extra payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement in December 2021, with a total of £462.80 paid for those in receipt of Carer's Allowance. Around 82,000 received this additional support with most receiving this on 15 December 2021. Carers continuously in receipt of Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement in Scotland will have received over £2,270 more than those in the rest of the UK since 2018 as a result of Carer's Allowance Supplement and extra payments provided.

Following a pilot for new applicants living in three local authorities, Child Disability Payment launched nationwide to all new applicants living in Scotland on 22 November 2021. The launch of Child Disability Payment marks the first time anywhere in the UK that disability benefit applicants can apply online, as well as by phone, by post or face to face. In March 2022 we also launched Adult Disability Payment in three pilot areas.

In line with our commitment to improve support for Scotland's community of unpaid carers we launched [a consultation on proposals for Scottish Carer's Assistance](#) – a new Scottish benefit which will replace Carer's Allowance, and be delivered by Social Security Scotland – on 28 February 2022. The consultation outlined proposals aimed at improving the service that carers receive, including increased financial support and links to wider support in areas such as social care, employability, education and bereavement and ran until 23 May 2022.

D. Helping families in other ways

Introduction

Whilst we continue to focus efforts on addressing the three drivers of tackling child poverty, COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis continue to demonstrate the need to provide support to children and their families in other ways, including support for their wellbeing and support to ensure children have the best start in life, with access to opportunities that will enable them to realise their full potential.

In the final year of '*Every Child, Every Chance*' we have continued to deliver support to give children and their families the best start in life, ensure all children can thrive by tackling the poverty related attainment gap and increasing access to sport and leisure activities. As the longer term impacts of the pandemic continue to unfold, we have further enhanced our support for children and families' mental health, and recently published The Promise Implementation Plan, reinforcing our commitment to Keep The Promise.

Updates on key actions are set out below.

Working to deliver the best start to life

We recognise the importance of supporting the wellbeing of children and their families from the earliest possible opportunities. Over the last year we have continued to make progress on actions from our first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan to support children to have the best start in life.

This includes continued investment in the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme, offering the programme to every eligible young, first time parent, and providing support to 3,000 families at any one time. The programme aims to improve pregnancy and birth outcomes, improve child health and development outcomes and improve economic stability of the family.

A recent report found positive outcomes for both the child and the mother which will impact on the economic stability of the family, and we will use this data to continue to support young mothers to improve their economic stability.

In addition to the targeted support provided through the FNP, all families with a child up to school starting age are entitled to benefit from the Universal Health Visiting Pathway (UHVP). This consists of a minimum of 11 contacts with all families and includes the opportunity to discuss income maximisation. Discussing financial issues starts with a routine enquiry about finances at the ante-natal contact at 32-24 weeks of pregnancy and continues throughout the Pathway.

An [evaluation of the UHVP](#) was published in December 2021 which found that the pathway: allows health visitors to build trusting and positive relationships with families; supports children and families in a constructive way, and; allows health visitors to identify children and families' strengths and concerns.

The evaluation also identified areas where further improvement can be achieved, including the extent to which Health Visitors are skilled and confident in providing families with support around money worries. Work to allow Health Visitors to support income maximisation has been taken forward in 2021-22, with partners from the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, Citizens Advice Service and the Improvement Service collaborating with Health Visiting teams across six NHS Boards/HSCP localities. This work aimed to support Health Visiting teams to either develop an integrated financial inclusion pathway between Health Visiting and Money Advice Services, or improve an existing one.

All participating localities demonstrated positive financial inclusion outcomes for families. The collaboration has informed the articulation of enablers and barriers to financial inclusion for families and also supported the development of a national theory of change on how to embed the financial well-being pathway.

In addition to health services providing an important entry point to support families at the start of their child's life, we know that some families will have further engagement with health services, including if children require additional hospital visits. Families play a vital role in the treatment of their children while they are in hospital, and the cost of hospital visits should not create a barrier to that care and support.

The Young Patients Family Fund (YFFF) was launched on 26 July 2021. It allows the parents/primary carers and/or siblings aged under 18 of young inpatients (also under 18) to claim for costs associated with hospital visits. This includes support to cover costs associated with travel, subsistence and accommodation.

The fund is available across Scotland and a total of over £2 million was paid out to Scotland's 14 territorial Health Boards to cover the cost of claims under the YFFF in 2021-22.

Support to Disabled Children and Young People

In 2021-22, we provided £3.47 million in funding to the Family Fund Trust, including an additional £500,000 through 'Get into Summer' investment and the Winter Support Fund. This investment enabled the Family Fund to provide support to 8,026 families on a low income who are raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people in order to buy items they otherwise could not afford.

Family Fund's vision is 'that all families raising disabled or seriously ill children have the same choices, quality of life, opportunities and aspirations as other families'. Through the Family Fund grant scheme, each family has choice and control over what grant items they request, based on what they think would best help to meet their own family needs and improve their quality of life. Items provided can include digital technology, white goods, family breaks, furniture and sensory items.

In addition, we committed further funding to the Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland to continue to lead the work of its Scottish Transitions Forum, and to deliver the two-year 'Principles into Practice' trial programme which launched in December 2020.

'Principles into Practice' is a draft framework, based on the 'Principles of Good Transitions', which has been developed by ARC Scotland in consultation with young people, parents and carers, and professionals across many sectors. The purpose of the trial is to improve the lived experiences of young people who need additional support to make the transition to young adult life, and to ensure young people are at the centre of all transition planning for their future; and to test and bring 'Principles into Practice' and its associated resources to completion.

Improving inclusion and wellbeing

Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma

Over 2021-22 we have continued to work in partnership with a wide range of sectors and services to help reduce the incidence and impact of all types of childhood adversity and trauma. This has focused on: support for children, parents and families to prevent ACEs and trauma; mitigating ACEs and trauma for children and young people; developing trauma-informed workforce and services, and; raising societal awareness about ACEs and trauma, and supporting local actions across communities.

Since 2018, we have invested over £4 million in the National Trauma Training Programme (NTTP) to increase the confidence and skills of our workforce to be able to recognise and respond appropriately to the ways in which trauma and ACEs impact on children, young people and adults. This includes £1.6 million of funding distributed to all local authorities in 2021-22 to work with community planning partners to further progress trauma-informed services, systems and workforces.

In addition, the NTTP has continued to prioritise trauma training support for those working with and caring for looked after children, as well as deliver more targeted support for trauma-informed justice services, maternity services and the wider health and social care sector.

The Programme funds a network of 'Transforming Psychological Trauma Implementation Coordinators' who are based in Health Boards across Scotland to help facilitate trauma training requirements across every sector. In 2021, a network of 'Trauma Champions' was also established. This includes senior leaders from across local authorities, health boards, and key community planning partners who work collaboratively to influence change across local areas.

The Improvement Service, in partnership with NHS Education for Scotland, are delivering a programme of work to support champions to share learning, good practice, and discuss challenges and opportunities.

Action on parental imprisonment

In 2021-22 we have maintained essential grant funding of £700,000 for Scotland's 12 prison visitor centres, ensuring that families impacted by imprisonment are able to receive support and assistance with issues arising from their family members' incarceration.

Visits to prisons continued to be impacted due to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the Scottish Prison Service continued vital measures aimed at maintaining family ties and parental bonds through the provision of mobile phones to prisoners and provision of virtual visits. Visitor centres played a vital role in supporting families with the return to in-person visits, with accessing virtual visits and with important public health messaging around the pandemic and promotion of other health campaigns. Where appropriate visitor centres ensured that families in need of specific support, such as housing and benefit advice, were referred to specialist external partners.

In addition to grant funding for Prisoner Visitor Centres, Families Outside was allocated £50,000 from the Winter Support Fund in December 2021 which enabled direct support to be provided to families experiencing hardship over winter. 99 families received support through this route with the money being used to cover things such as utility bill debts, heating costs and also to purchase items including food, white goods and clothing.

Supporting redesign of the care system

We published the [Keeping The Promise Implementation Plan](#) on 30 March 2022 which sets out the actions and commitments the Scottish Government is taking to Keep The Promise by 2030. The Implementation Plan was developed with input from 26 policy directorates across the Scottish Government. Key commitments include investment of £500 million over the course of this Parliamentary session, beginning with £50 million in financial year 2022-23 in preventative spend through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.

The Scottish Government has committed £4 million per year for The Promise Partnership Fund which launched in 2021. Funding is confirmed until 2024-25 and to date, over 70 organisations have benefitted. In 2021-22, the Promise Partnership Fund awarded 40 projects between £40,000 and £100,000 totalling £3.2 million. This included the likes of Home-Start Angus, who received funding to research and implement service redesign, exploring what services are needed to best support families. Overall investment in 2021-22 aimed to build upon or put structures in place that will create the space to think, plan and co-design changes that ensure a good childhood.

In the coming year, we will continue to work collaboratively with The Promise Scotland and partners across Scotland towards fundamentally transforming the care system and making sure every child and family in Scotland has what they need to thrive. To ensure the voice of children and families is at the centre of our work, we will apply the Scottish Approach to Service Design to policy development, as well as delivery, support and funding.

Help for children's neighbourhoods

Driven by participation, strengthening the voices and priorities of children and young people, and supporting partnerships and collaboration between organisations and services, Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland (CNS), led by the University of Glasgow and the Glasgow Centre for Population and Health, worked to improve outcomes for children and young people living in neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty.

2021-22 was the final year of a four year partnership with CNS, during which time CNS engaged in six different community sites, building relationships to better understand the concerns of local communities, and facilitating locally led action and the tailoring local strategies and activities to better meet these needs and concerns.

CNS Local Coordinators in each of the six sites enabled and facilitated collaboration, listening to, working with and understanding issues, priorities and concerns at the community level. Specific activities developed as a result of CNS include establishing place based action groups to address local concerns and increase a sense of pride in place, setting up a new mental health group at Dalmarnock Primary school, facilitating support for parents to develop basic English language skills, supporting community centres to better provide a safe and engaging space for young people, and engaging children and young people in climate change and sustainability.

Building on children's identification of environment and climate change as a key priority, CNS facilitated a partnership with children in Chile in the lead up to COP26. Through this partnership children in Dunbartonshire learnt about pollution and extreme weather, planned climate action, and identified similarities and common causes with children and young people on a global scale. This work was presented at a COP26 event in Glasgow University, and is being taken forward by new projects linked to the circular economy.

Using a mixed methods approach, the CNS Research and Evaluation team developed a capabilities research model for each site, identifying and examining processes of change as children and young people amplified their voices and developed in confidence to better influence policy decisions. The programme generated a vast range of insights and learning, and has contributed to a growing body of evidence in this field through research reports, journal articles, conference papers, policy roundtables, webinars and blogs, amongst other well received communications outputs. These insights also helped to inform the development of '*Best Start, Bright Futures*', ensuring the priorities and concerns of children and young people were reflected in national policy making.

CNS had a strong focus on monitoring, evaluation and learning and lessons from this project are helping to inform future place based initiatives. This includes the importance of bringing partners together and re-energising relationships, bringing fresh energy to

activity, ensuring the views and voices of young people are amplified and making sure efforts to tackle poverty place enough emphasis on wellbeing and the importance of physical space. These lessons are continuing to inform local action in the six CNS sites, and wider approaches to participatory, place based working.

Targeted opportunities for cultural participation, including access to music education

We recognise the importance of culture in children and young people's wellbeing, and in supporting them to fulfil their potential and explore their talents. As such, we have continued to fund a range of programmes and projects which increase opportunities and improve access for young people to participate in cultural activities.

In 2021-22, we invested £1.1 million in Sistema Scotland, a music education and social change programme that works intensively with children, young people and families within targeted communities. Sistema Scotland continue to tackle child poverty by supporting existing Big Noise projects in Raploch, Govanhill, Torry and Douglas, along with a new satellite Big Noise in Fallin and a new Big Noise project in Wester Hailes, providing opportunities for cultural participation for children living in poverty through music.

We have continued to fund the £9 million Youth Music Initiative, providing opportunities for music-making to young people who might not otherwise have them. This includes projects targeted at disabled children and children with additional support needs; children from a minority ethnic background; young parents and carers, and; children aged 0-5.

We also partnered with Creative Scotland to extend the Nurturing Talent Funding (NTF) – a fund for young people, by young people that allows any young person or groups of young people in Scotland, between the ages of 11-25, to apply for a small grant to support a creative or artistic project – to additional New Routes projects. New Routes is a series of smaller scale approaches to funding children and young people groups that have been historically underrepresented in the main NTF, and included specific funding rounds for care-experienced young people, and disabled young people or young people with additional support needs. The latter supported 106 young people to access arts opportunities, and distributed £68,000 for projects ranging from dance to drama and visual art to television.

Scottish Ministers committed to abolish fees for music and arts education, including instrumental music tuition in schools. In the 2021-22 academic year, we provided £8 million to support this across local authorities. We continue to support the removal of core curriculum costs for all primary and secondary pupils, ensuring that families do not have to meet the costs of resources and materials for practical lessons. To support this, we provided £6 million in 2021-22 to prevent charges being levied on families for the participation of children and young people in primary, secondary and special schools in core curriculum subjects and thereby to remove limitations on participation by young people whose families are not able to meet such costs.

Improving inclusion in sport

In the past year **sportscotland** worked closely with all 32 local authorities to support Active Schools to restart safely as restrictions lifted. As we continue to recover from the pandemic, **sportscotland** are providing leadership to the Active Schools workforce to support them to be more inclusive and targeted in their work, specifically focusing on areas of deprivation, disabled children and young people, and inactive children and young people. This restart of Active Schools is taking place within the context of our commitment to work with **sportscotland** to ensure that Active Schools programmes are free for all children and young people by the end of this Parliament, providing them with more opportunities to take part in sport before, during and after school.

In the last year, **sportscotland** published new equality outcomes for their work from 2021 to 2025. These outcomes identified four focus groups who are less likely to participate in sport and physical activity, including people who live in poverty and low income. **sportscotland** will work with partners and people from these groups to make sport and physical activity more inclusive, more welcoming and open to a wider range of needs

In partnership with **sportscotland** and the Robertson Trust, we have developed the Changing Lives through Sport and Physical Activity programme to support sporting and non-sporting organisations to use sport & physical activity to achieve wider social outcomes. This included launching a £1 million fund, supporting 17 partnership projects. Seven of the projects aimed to break down barriers, including financial barriers, for young people to access sport or physical activity.

Increased funding for mental health

We have invested in a range of approaches to support the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families through our £120 million COVID-19 Mental Health Recovery and Renewal Fund.

We know that the provision of early intervention support in school settings is also a significant factor in mitigating the impacts of poverty on mental health and wellbeing, which is why our investment of £16 million to ensure that every secondary school has access to counselling services and the provision of mental health training for all school staff in Scotland is so important.

In the last year we have also invested £1 million to support the mental health and wellbeing of those experiencing relationships issues, including parents and carers, through 'The Spark' Scotland's relationships helpline. In 2020-21 the helpline received 18,256 calls and directly supported 12,561 callers. The service also provided 5,044 free counselling appointments during this period.

To improve Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), in 2021-22 we allocated around £40 million to NHS Boards from the Mental Health Recovery and Renewal Fund to support implementation of the [National CAMHS Service Specification](#).

Through the [Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework](#), we provided local authorities with £15 million in 2021-22 and will again in 2022-23 to fund 230 community-based mental health supports for children and young

people aged 5-24 (26 if care-experienced), their families and their carers. This builds on the £3.75 million allocated at the end of 2020-21 to establish these new and enhanced services.

This funding gives councils the flexibility to implement supports on the basis of local priorities, and to make services available to children and young people for whom CAMHS is not suitable or who are awaiting CAMHS treatment. The services include supports for positive mental health and wellbeing as well as emotional distress, and are focused on prevention and early intervention, making sure that children and young people receive the help they need when they need it. Local authorities have informed us that more than 18,500 people used the community-based supports and services in the second half of 2021.

We are currently investing in Infant Mental Health by increasing service provision and driving forward awareness raising/stigma reduction. This includes up to £3 million per annum in the implementation of integrated infant mental health provision in Health Boards across Scotland. Additional advice and support to parents with young children is available through The Wellbeing for Wee Ones Hub on Parent Club and the Solihull Online child development programmes available for free through www.parentclub.scot.

For those who require specialist support, family-centred care is core to the delivery of perinatal mental health services. Our regional Mother and Baby units facilitate this ethos by supporting women's mental health needs whilst continuing to support them in caring for their baby. Our Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund is designed to help partners/ fathers/ main carers, plus existing children up to school leaving age (16 years old), offset the cost of traveling to and from a Mother and Baby Unit when visiting a woman being treated there for perinatal mental illness. This facilitates support for the woman and baby in the unit, enabling continued family bonding, and allows staff in the unit to work with the family group.

Supporting better life long outcomes through education

Scottish Attainment Challenge and Education Recovery

As we progress through this new Parliamentary term, our mission to tackle the poverty related attainment gap is as important as ever and we are committed to strengthening the links between this and our national mission on child poverty.

In recognition of this the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge Programme was launched on 30 March 2022, with a new mission: *'To use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.'*

We are investing £1 billion in the Scottish Attainment Challenge over the course of this parliamentary term, an increase from the £750 million over the last Parliamentary term. In 2021-22, we invested £260 million to support local authorities to recruit additional teachers and other staff, including £20 million to provide extra support such as tutoring and mentoring or other local interventions to support children and families.

Children and young people living in Scotland's most deprived communities benefitted from over £215 million of targeted funding in 2021-22 to help close the poverty-related attainment gap. This record funding – the largest amount awarded under the Attainment Scotland Fund for a single year – enabled headteachers, schools, councils and other partners to provide targeted help for some of our most disadvantaged pupils.

The Attainment Scotland Funding was distributed across five different programmes in 2021-22. This included providing £43 million between nine local authorities with Scotland's highest concentrations of deprivation, known as 'Challenge Authorities', to enable them to adopt strategic approaches to closing the gap, and a further £7 million from the Schools' Programme shared between 73 additional schools with the highest concentration of pupils from areas of deprivation, enabling additional focussed support for those pupils. Headteachers received an enhanced £147 million Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) – including a one-off £20 million PEF Premium for the most disadvantaged children and young people – enabling them to target additional support for their most disadvantaged pupils. Evaluation of year 6¹⁴ (2020-21) of the Fund was published on 17 June 2022.

Local authority work to help improve the attainment of care experienced young people was supported with £11.5 million, which provided additional support through various means, including mentoring programmes, outdoor learning and the continued development of a virtual school Headteacher network. Further targeted investment supported a number of national programmes, including third-sector partners, to support their targeted work to raise attainment.

We have worked extensively with stakeholders across the education system and beyond to refresh the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme over the last year, building on the progress to date and recognising the impact of the pandemic. This refresh has been developed in partnership with COSLA and builds on the evidence set out in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland 5 year report¹⁵ on progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap, the Equity Audit¹⁶, the Audit Scotland report¹⁷ on educational outcomes, and the OECD review¹⁸. It will continue to provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty through Strategic Equality Funding to all 32 local authorities, Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People funding and a number of national programmes.

By removing barriers faced as a result of low income we can ensure children and young people have the same opportunities to succeed, regardless of their backgrounds – improving their outcomes now and in the future and breaking cycles of poverty. In delivering on this mission, we will see a key contribution from education services to the Government's targets on Tackling Child Poverty.

Underpinning this, a new [Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress](#) has been developed, which is designed to reinforce our collective commitment to equity in

¹⁴ [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: fifth interim report - year 6 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

¹⁵ [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

¹⁶ [Equity Audit \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

¹⁷ [Improving outcomes for young people through school education | Audit Scotland \(audit-scotland.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁸ [Executive summary | Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence : Into the Future | OECD iLibrary \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#)

education, to mitigate the impact of poverty on children's outcomes and tackle the poverty-related attainment gap.

As set out under heading B above, we are also tackling the costs of the school day: ensuring children have access to the same opportunities, including digital devices, school trips and school uniforms, as well as extending free school lunches for Primary 4 and Primary 5 pupils as a first step to delivering free school breakfasts and lunches for all primary school pupils.

Tailored learning support for Gypsy/Traveller families with children

We have provided £63,700 of funding for STEP in 2021-22 to support local authorities in delivering culturally appropriate education and supporting links between schools and families. This includes providing professional learning resources, training and support networks so that practitioners have the knowledge and skills to support the educational needs of Gypsy/Traveller pupils and their families. STEP also work to raise awareness of community entitlement to education and associated policy and legal frameworks.

We are also engaging with STEP and the Gypsy/Traveller community as part of our refresh of the [Additional Support for Learning Action Plan](#) to ensure their priorities and needs are captured in this work. This includes the development of the Measurement Framework, which seeks to capture and reflect the wider achievements of all learners including those from Gypsy/Traveller families.

In 2022-23 we are providing STEP with additional funding of £28,020, to conduct research into the educational experiences of Gypsy/Traveller children and their families. This will build on our previous investment to help inform a strategic approach to better support these learners

Support to address bullying

In 2021-22 we provided almost £300,000 to respectme, Scotland's anti-bullying service, which continues to provide direct support to local authorities, youth groups and all those working with children and young people to build confidence and capacity to address all types of bullying effectively, aligned to 'Respect for All'. In 2022-23, we will provide increased funding of £373,000 to respectme.

We also continued to support Childline to provide a helpline giving confidential advice and information to children and young people affected by any issues including bullying. The service, backed with over £115,000 of Scottish Government funding per year, has provided invaluable support to children and young people throughout the pandemic.

Going forward, a formal evaluation will be carried out in 2022 to assess how successfully the new approach for recording and monitoring bullying incidents in schools has been introduced across Scotland.

Support for students and communities from further and higher education

We are committed to supporting students facing hardship in further and higher education, and ensuring that disadvantaged students are able to continue their education.

We provided £20 million to the further and higher education sectors in June 2021 to deliver the Summer Student Support Fund commitment, and are undertaking a survey on summer hardship and looking at establishing guiding principles for supporting students over summer months.

Recognising the impact of the pandemic on further and higher education, additional financial support was provided to higher education students over the summer of 2021 for those who had courses which required to extend as a result of COVID-19, alongside continuation of bursary support for further education students on courses which were required to extend.

The Scottish Funding Council provided £6 million of repurposed funding to colleges in February 2022 to support students, including hardship funding, until the end of the academic year. Over £17 million of hardship funding was issued to the higher education sector during the course of the 2021-22 academic year.

In February we announced a £350 loan uplift for the 2022-23 academic year for students in higher education. This means that the most disadvantaged students can access £8,100 per year through bursary and loan and is the first step in our commitment to provide student support in line with the Living Wage.

To support students to access financial information, the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) developed the Student Information Scotland (SIS) website¹⁹. Its aim is to provide clear, accessible information to improve financial literacy. This includes centralising the provision of financial and funding information and guidance across both further and higher education. The site hosts two unique budget and funding calculators and was launched in April 2021. It provides a digital assist helpline for potentially vulnerable students, parents or carers who need additional support navigating the website and relevant information.

Work also commenced in 2021 to enable SAAS to develop and implement a new 12 monthly payment option for higher education students from academic year 2022-23; which will enable students to receive their payments over the summer. This will be supported by clear and robust guidance via the SAAS and SIS websites to ensure students are aware of the funding options available to them.

SAAS also continue to reach out to the most vulnerable groups to put further study on their radar. Specifically targeting parents and carers in areas of deprivation through marketing campaigns and Funding Awareness outreach to encourage further study as an option.

We have resumed work on Widening Access, re-launching the Access Delivery Group, rejuvenated activities on which measures (in addition to SIMD) could be used to ensure widening access policy and practice is inclusive of learners who do not live in the most deprived areas of Scotland but face similar socioeconomic barriers, and working with the Commissioner for Fair Access to publish his fifth Annual Report.

¹⁹ [Extra financial support for students \(discretionary funding\) \(studentinformation.gov.scot\)](https://www.studentinformation.gov.scot/)

Supporting positive outcomes through Colleges

A number of colleges across Scotland continue to deliver programmes aimed at addressing various aspects of child poverty, backed by investment from our Tackling Child Poverty Fund.

This includes the 'Building Better Futures' Programme, an innovative city-wide partnership project between Glasgow Clyde and Glasgow Kelvin Colleges, and community partners, designed to provide structured engagement programmes and provide opportunities to develop learners' skills and confidence to build better futures for themselves and their families. The programme focuses on low-income parents, unemployed individuals; parents with children at school; lone parents; and shift workers. It supports disadvantaged people in local communities to become more engaged, more socially included and be more economically active, thereby encouraging participants to make career choices, engage with formal learning and training, and move into employment.

In 2021-22, the Programme engaged with 350 young people and parents experiencing child poverty (including 54 lone parents and 98 families with a disabled adult or child), over 400 children directly through children of young people and parents, and more than 2,000 children indirectly through engagement with community partners.

E. Partnership working

Introduction

In June 2021 the Scottish Government launched our national mission to tackle child poverty. This national mission cannot be delivered by government alone, but requires a truly national effort – with partners across the public, private and third sector, alongside individuals and communities across the country – coming together to make a real difference to families today, and to sustainably reduce child poverty to support a better future for parents and families of the future.

Delivery of the COVID-19 response demonstrated the importance of partnerships, and showed what is possible when silos are broken down and different organisations can come together, draw on their strengths, and support delivery of a shared goal. In the final year of '*Every Child, Every Chance*' we have sought to build on this approach, embodying partnership working in the COVID Recovery Strategy, working in partnership to deliver the actions of the first delivery plan and to develop the second.

Updates on key actions are set out below.

Investing in innovative action to tackle child poverty

Investing in Communities Fund

We have continued the delivery of the Investing in Communities Fund in 2021-22 supporting community-led projects approved in 2019 delivering services and activities addressing poverty, child poverty and inequality.

We have worked with the current recipient organisations to develop proposals for the further extended year of funding made available for 2022-23, enabling stability and continuity during the recovery from the pandemic.

We are also preparing for and developing the fund in anticipation of launching a second round of the fund for investment from 2023-24 to 2025-26. The funding criteria have been reviewed to enhance the focus on addressing child poverty as well as supporting community action to address climate change. Processes supporting the funding application round have been developed to enable improved capture of information on the priority family groups that proposed projects will support and work continues on developing monitoring and outcome information gathering.

Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund has continued, as part of the wider Social Innovation Partnership (SIP) with The Hunter Foundation, to support a range of partners to deliver and scale approaches that seek to support people to flourish. This includes providing support through flexible childcare, flexible working, relational employability support, advice and advocacy and support for wellbeing and self-care.

Our Learning Partner, I-Sphere at Heriot Watt, has continued to assess the impact of the overall SIP and published its first report on that work. The learning partner has described the SIP's wellbeing and capabilities approach as distinctive to Scotland, offering important lessons for policy and practice in Scotland²⁰.

The learning partner has found that the SIP approach is not only supporting people's short-term requirements but also their long term goals. This prioritises people's agency in making life choices about what matters to them, recognising that people differ in their view of what makes for a good life and have reason to value a range of potential life goals and ambitions.

As part of the SIP's aim to influence wider system reform, we are working with local authority partners through the Tayside Collaborative and the Clackmannanshire Family Wellbeing Partnership to support more person-centred, holistic and enabling services, with a focus on children and families. We are using a programme of values-based leadership in these partnerships to create the enabling conditions to support that change. Values-based leadership allows participants to gain a deeper understanding and respect for each other's roles in supporting families, thereby promoting greater collaboration across boundaries and organisations. While this work is in an early stage, feedback from participants has been very positive. Approximately 300 colleagues, from frontline staff through senior leadership, have engaged in the values-based leadership experience in Tayside and Clackmannanshire.

The Scottish Mentoring and Leadership programme completed its first year, with additional investment announced in March 2021 to allow the programme to reach up to 15,000 care experienced and disadvantaged young people over five years. During 2021-22, the programme's first full year, MCR Pathways was rolled out to 35 new

²⁰ [Findings from the Social Innovation Partnership Learning Programme – I-SPHERE, Herriot-Watt University](#)

schools and Columba 1400 to ten – backed by £1.5 million of Scottish Government investment.

Innovation Fund, Social Innovation Partnership – Case Study

MsMissMrs is a social enterprise supported by the SIP focused on supporting women and girls to overcome stress, trauma and hardship.

Pauline was first introduced to MsMissMrs in 2019. She had been referred by debt services as her mental health was low and she was heavily medicated to cope.

Pauline joined the MsMissMrs Get S.E.T. Rebuild programme and later went on to do a Women in Community Leadership course. After 8 months with MsMissMrs, Pauline was doing much better and secured herself a job working in community care.

Unfortunately, due to shift working and being a lone parent to two boys, one of whom has complex needs, she lost her zero-hour contract. Pauline got back in touch with MsMissMrs after her mental and financial wellbeing had taken a strain, debt was increasing again, and life felt overwhelming.

Through SIP investment, MsMissMrs supported the family with basic needs as well as their wider wellbeing. In April 2021, when Pauline was feeling stronger, and was offered a position at MsMissMrs working 13 hours per week, supplementing her existing benefits of Carers Allowance and Universal Credit. Pauline is also currently undergoing training towards full-time employment in the summer of 2022.

* Name changed to protect identity.

Investment in the STV Children’s Appeal

We again provided £1 million to STV Children’s Appeal during the year to allow it to continue its work to tackle both the cause and consequences of poverty. 2021 marked the Appeal’s tenth anniversary. In total in 2021, the Appeal invested £3.5 million in projects across every local authority area in Scotland, reaching thousands of families with a variety of support including with mental health and wellbeing, counselling and around addressing material needs.

Building stronger links between economic development partnerships and tackling child poverty

Community wealth and localism

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an economic development model which looks to change our current economic system for the benefit of people, places and the environment. CWB takes a place based focus to addressing the economic determinants of poverty, with practical actions taken to ensure local people have a greater stake in producing and owning wealth.

This approach is a long-term strategy to bring about policy, culture, practice and legislative change, if necessary, ensuring fairer and more equal economic opportunities.

Over the last year, we have seen important and significant progress made in several of the pilot localities and regions – Clackmannanshire, South of Scotland, Western Isles, Tay Cities/Fife and Glasgow City Region – with all developing bespoke CWB action plans.

A number of sectors including the NHS, National Care Service and Housing are working to integrate CWB principles, embracing their role as ‘anchors’ and the wider contribution they can make to reduce inequalities by taking a progressive and local approach to procurement, recruitment and physical assets.

Through the enhanced support of local supply chains we are seeing more SME, Third sector and Social Enterprises getting involved in the local supply chains. In the Ayrshire Growth Deal the CWB approach taken by Business Support advisers has seen local firms benefit, securing additional contracts that have facilitated employment growth.

Through CWB we are seeing links develop and strengthen between economic development, progressive procurement and employability programmes locally within the pilot areas. By both stimulating and meeting demand for local jobs, partners are matching the supply of workers and skills with demand created and supported through CWB approaches – creating secure, fair employment opportunities supported by procurement practices which develops local supply chains and a resilient local economy.

In addition, CWB can also influence the costs of living driver of poverty, as evidence in the development of community owned green energy sources. Two of the pilot areas are using land as tool to achieve Net Zero and develop CWB pathways to community energy production: Western Isles and Fife.

Within the Western Isles the approach taken with community owned wind turbines has seen increased employment locally, including taking over the local shop, developing a garden to supply locally grown food to the store for sale at cost price. The income generated also supports wider employment through a home maintenance scheme and the provision of grants for young people embarking on further and higher education.

Due to the success and popularity of CWB we are seeing this model extending into other areas, including South Lanarkshire, Moray, East Renfrewshire, Highland, West Lothian, Edinburgh & SE Scotland Region, Renfrewshire and Dundee City.

Our partnership with Economic Development Association Scotland is supporting the further implementation of CWB through Communities of practice, Open workshops, Peer Support and development of materials to support anchor organisations develop, implement and realise the benefits of CWB approaches.

Town Centre Fund and Business Improvement Districts

We have helped improve and revitalise towns and secure and support local economies, businesses and hundreds of jobs in local communities via the Place Based Improvement Programme (PBIP), the Scotland Loves Local Programme and the £500,000 additional support for Business Improvement Districts in 2021-22. The PBIP is delivered mainly through the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and local authorities,

and has provided capital funding for community-led regeneration, town centre revitalisation and 20 minute neighbourhoods. The 2021-22 Scotland Loves Local Programme included a £1.5 million fund open to local community and business groups.

A further £80 million COVID-19 economic recovery fund was provided to local authorities in early 2022 allowing them to direct support to their local area in the way they consider best. Some local authorities have chosen to direct funds via the Scotland Loves Local gift card targeted at low income households. This has the potential to secure jobs by keeping money in the local economy.

A strong partnership with local areas

We have continued to work together with partners to support local action to tackle child poverty, to ensure that local capacity is strengthened and local priorities listened to, including through the development of '*Best Start, Bright Futures*'.

In the past year we have continued to fund the National Coordinator for child poverty at the Improvement Service and continued our partnership with SPIRU, hosted at Glasgow Caledonian University, to strengthen capacity for local child poverty action. This has included tailored support to local authorities and health boards, and the production of resources to strengthen local capacity to design, deliver, monitor and learn from action to tackle child poverty.

Specifically, SPIRU have: supported local partners to develop child poverty strategies and prepare their Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPARs) with a particular focus on analysis and interpretation of local data; developed research resources including cataloguing 'grey' literature relevant to the work of local policy makers; and led a Data Working Group to support capacity building in gathering and analysing evidence on child poverty. The Improvement Service have further supported local authorities and health boards to ensure their policy and practice is supported by the best available data and intelligence, delivering several webinars on data and lived experience, publishing data maps showing rates of child poverty for all 32 local authorities, and working with the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland to identify key barriers around information sharing at local level.

The Improvement Service has continued to support the Local Child Poverty Peer Support Network to share good practice, support ongoing communication between local and national work and to strengthen links with other relevant disciplines, for example employability leads. This network was initially established in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic but has continued and is greatly valued by local child poverty leads.

Progress in delivering LCPARs is discussed further in Chapter 3.

SPIRU have also conducted analysis of the relationship between the work of Regional Economic Partnerships, City Growth Deals and child poverty. This work will help to further identify and share interesting local practice, and to understand potential bottlenecks and help both national and local partners tailor their activities to have greater impact under '*Best Start, Bright Futures*'. This research will be published in the coming months.

We have continued to showcase and celebrate local success and support partners to share learning through initiatives such as the National Child Poverty Conference, hosted virtually in October 2021. Increasing engagement in events such as the national conference and the child poverty peer support network, demand for analytical support and policy advice, and the improvement in successive LCPARs indicates that a high-level commitment, strong learning and improvement culture is being embedded across local authorities.

Working with our partners and people with lived experience

Throughout the development and delivery of *'Every Child, Every Chance'* we have placed the highest importance on hearing from those with experience of poverty and supporting them to inform responses to reduce poverty at a community, local and national level.

Over the past year we have continued to support the Poverty Alliance's Get Heard Scotland (GHS) programme with £185,000 in 2021-22, with a particular focus on engaging individuals and grassroots organisations with direct experience to inform the actions and approach of *'Best Start, Bright Futures'*. Through this engagement people with lived experience were central to informing policy choices, and in particular a focus on simplifying public sector systems and making those easier to navigate for those who need them most.

Additionally, GHS has worked with partners to ensure people with experience of poverty fed into policy making processes. For example, people who had been engaged with GHS were invited to take part in discussion workshops as part of the Scottish Parliament's Social Justice and Social Security Committee Inquiry on debt. Views gathered through GHS have been fed into the Scottish Government's Benefit Take Up advisory group and a meeting with the Minister for Transport and people with experience of poverty was organised to discuss issues of transport poverty.

We have also continued to support the Glasgow Poverty Community, through funding of £25,000, for their ongoing work. This has helped their Community Members build networks and develop confidence in articulating their voices to feed into discussions around poverty. Work has included raising issues around asylum through hosting open conversation webinars, and taking part in Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan sessions and meetings on Climate Change during COP 26. Members have also fed into national networks and their work through organisations including Nourish Scotland, Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees and the APLE Collective (Addressing Poverty with Lived Experience).

Our focus on supporting those with lived experience to inform responses to reduce poverty has been complemented by wider action to maintain and sharpen the focus on tackling poverty – and child poverty in particular – across Scotland.

Informed by a [review of learning](#) from the COVID-19 response, the Scottish Leaders Forum Action Group on Child Poverty published a new [Call to Action for Leaders in Scotland](#) – focused on three key actions all leaders should take to help improve the lives and outcomes of children and families across Scotland. The Call to Action was

launched at an online event in January 2022, with over 80 leaders from across Scotland joining the demonstrate their commitment to taking action.

In addition, we continued to work with representatives of the Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum to help inform efforts to tackle child poverty in Scotland. Building on this approach, we worked to establish new governance approaches, including representation from external stakeholders, in order to drive forward delivery of '*Best Start, Bright Futures*'.

Finally, the Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty') has continued to be an important tool to drive better decision-making across the public sector, to reduce poverty and inequality, and improve outcomes. In 2021-22 we continued to fund a Fairer Scotland Duty Co-ordinator post within the Improvement Service to provide support, advice and training on the Duty to public bodies.

Reflecting the learning and practice over the last three years, since the Duty was first introduced in 2018, we published revised [guidance](#) for public bodies in October 2021. The guidance was revised in partnership with the Fairer Scotland Duty Co-ordinator and the Equality and Human Right Commission following consultation with the public bodies and poverty and inequality third sector organisations.

3. Assessing progress against the targets

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on many aspects of the Scottish economy, the labour market and in turn, people's lives. It has exacerbated inequalities which already existed.²¹

It is evident from the data considered in this report that the impact of the pandemic on the drivers of poverty around employability and cost of living was significant. In line with general labour market trends in Scotland, there have been increases in underemployment and drops in employment rates. This has been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of income spent on food and other essentials.

At the same time, however, the measure for persistent poverty shows a marked drop. While difficult to read for impact on longer term trends, the various emergency responses during the pandemic could have supported this decline. Further evidence shows that the increased financial help provided was crucial in supporting families in poverty, with the rapid response of local authorities and third sector organisations also playing a key role.

While the rest of this report looks at progress from April 2021 to March 2022, including in relation to the implementation and impact of action, this chapter covers up to March 2021, as per available data. It builds on the previous progress report²² which looked at the period April 2019 to March 2020. This report is framed upon the evaluation strategy and measurement framework²³.

Specifically, this chapter includes:

- overall progress towards the child poverty targets;
- updated child poverty data amongst priority groups;
- trends on child poverty drivers (income from employment, cost of living and income from social security and benefits in-kind).

Most of the data sources used to monitor and interpret progress towards meeting the targets were significantly impacted by COVID-19. Many national surveys which relied on face to face interviews could not continue as normal. This affected the robustness and reliability of many data sources for Scotland, including our ability to measure progress towards child poverty targets, and progress towards the drivers of poverty. Details on how COVID-19 impacted data collection can be found in Box 1. Progress towards targets and measures will be fully updated again in June 2023.

²¹ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): impact on equality \(research\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/04/Coronavirus_COVID-19_impact_on_equality_research.pdf)

²² [Tackling child poverty: third year progress report 2020-2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/04/Tackling_child_poverty_third_year_progress_report_2020-2021.pdf)

²³ [Child poverty strategy documents - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/04/Child_poverty_strategy_documents.pdf)

Box 1: Impact of COVID-19 on data collection

Which child poverty measures could be updated and why?

Only one out of the four statutory child poverty measures could be updated in 2022, that is persistent poverty. The other three targets (relative poverty, absolute poverty, and low income and material deprivation) rely on data from the Family Resources Survey. Due to the impact of the pandemic on data collection, primarily the halting of survey interviews, the survey did not provide a representative sample for Scotland.

As such, data on relative poverty, absolute poverty, and low income and material deprivation, as well as other poverty and income estimates for Scotland for the latest three-year period (2018-21), were not robust enough to be published as official statistics. This report includes data up to and including 2019-20 for these three targets. These statistics were already reported as part of the year 3 report.

Data for persistent poverty is collected via Understanding Society. This survey was affected less by the pandemic. We are thus able to publish an indicator of persistent poverty for the period 2016-2020, to go alongside the indicators of relative and absolute poverty, and low income and material deprivation we published for 2017-20 in last year's progress report.

Similarly, some indicators from the measurement framework rely on data sources which had also been impacted by the pandemic restrictions (e.g. the Scottish Household Survey). Details of indicators affected can be found in [Annex A](#).

What was the impact of the pandemic on the Family Resources Survey?

The Family Resources Survey (FRS) is a UK-wide annual household survey. Interviews are conducted face to face in people's homes. The FRS is owned by the UK Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

When the first UK-wide lockdown happened in spring 2020, interviews could no longer take place in person. Instead, households participating in the FRS were sent a letter and asked to contact their interviewer to arrange a phone interview. Participating in the survey is voluntary and, initially, only a small proportion of households did call to arrange an interview. With restrictions loosening later in the year, DWP implemented a range of improvements for contacting households, which improved response rates, although not to the level of a usual year (23% response rate in 2020-21 vs. 49% in 2019-20), and not enough for the Scottish sample. Sample size as well as sample composition were affected.

During the data quality assurance process, which involved analysts from all devolved administrations, issues were found in the Scottish and Welsh subsamples. DWP analysts concluded that the data quality of the regional samples did not satisfy Official Statistics standards, and resulting statistics could potentially be misleading. In Scotland, the data suggested that a higher proportion of higher income households responded. This means that low income households, and importantly those in poverty, were under-represented. For transparency, data for Scotland on relative poverty, absolute poverty and material deprivation were [published](#) though not as official statistics. The latest estimates are unreliable as they are not based on a representative sample of Scotland.

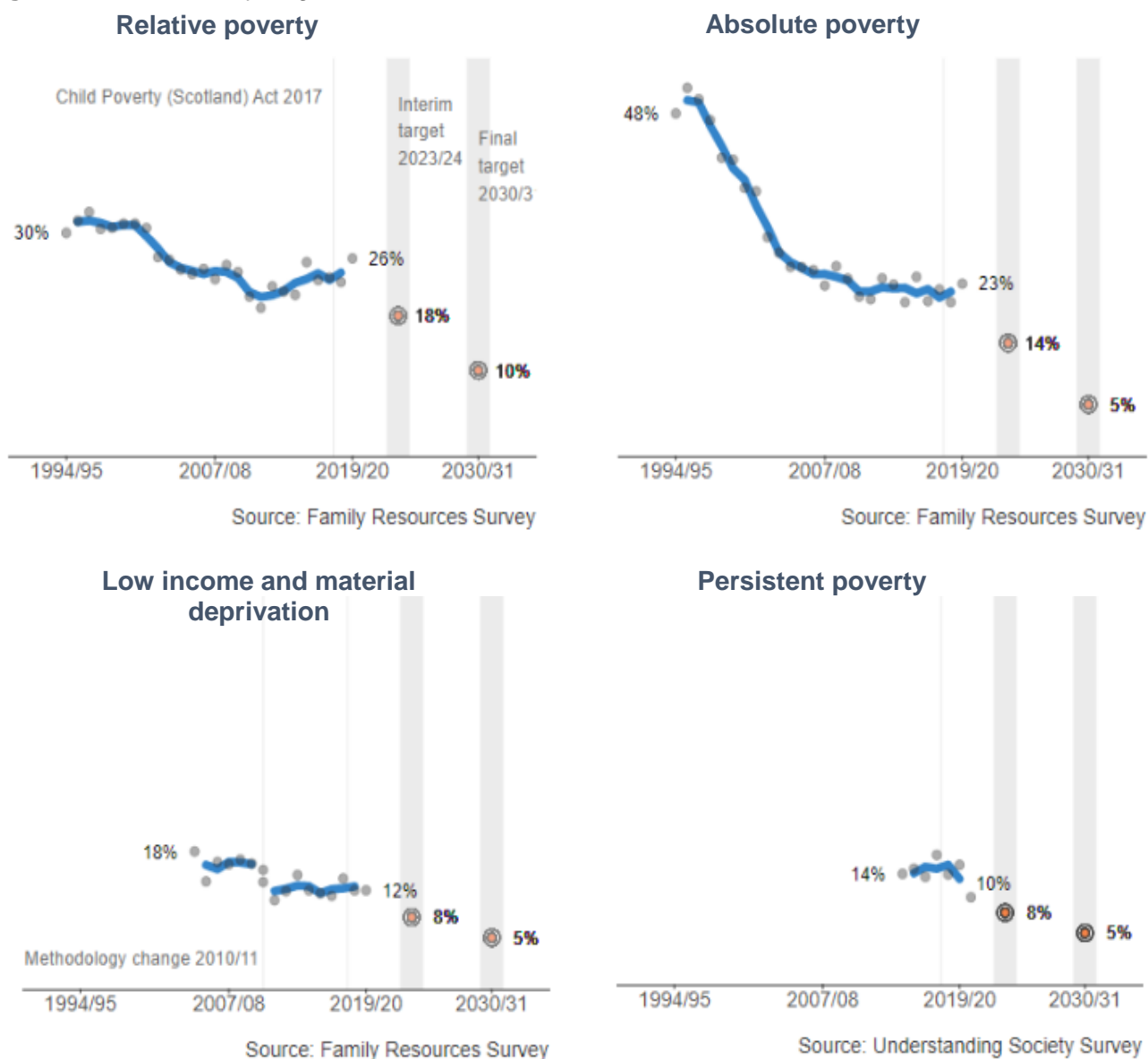
Child poverty rates

This progress update is the first one to report on data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the significant impact of the pandemic on data collection, we could only update the persistent poverty measure which now covers the period until the end of 2020. For the other three indicators data shown is the same as per reported last year. We have still included it in this report for completeness.

The charts in Figure 1 show change over time for the most recent official statistics. Single-year estimates (grey markers) help understand the situation at a certain point in time, while three-year averages (blue lines) show trends more accurately.²⁴

Only Persistent Poverty could be updated in this report, which shows a marked drop to 10% (2019-20). This includes data from the first year of the pandemic, that is until December 2020.

Figure 1: Child Poverty targets



²⁴ Further information on historical trends over time: [Child poverty summary \(data.gov.scot\)](https://data.gov.scot/publications/child-poverty-summary/)

Child poverty priority groups

As we set out *‘Every Child, Every Chance’*, there are some households which have a higher than average risk of being in poverty. We refer to these as ‘priority groups’. These are households with a disabled person, three or more children, a baby aged under 1, minority ethnic households, mothers aged under 25, and lone parent families.

In this progress report, we can now look at persistent poverty for two priority family groups; that is households with a disabled person and families with children under 5.²⁵ Data for other priority groups is not available due to limited sample sizes. However, amongst the data available, it is clear that persistent poverty remained higher amongst priority groups (at 18%) when compared to levels for all children (at 10%).

Table 1: Percentage of children in persistent poverty after housing costs 2016-20
(Source: Understanding Society)

	Persistent poverty
All children	10%
Disabled adult in benefit unit	18%
Children under 5 in benefit unit (note: there is no data for baby under 1)	18%

The other three child poverty targets were not updated for 2020-21. However, we are providing last year’s statistics for completeness (see Table 2). Further details on poverty rates among priority groups over time are published online²⁶.

Table 2: Percentage of children in poverty after housing costs 2017-20
(Source: Family Resources Survey)

	Relative poverty	Absolute poverty	Low income and material deprivation
All children	24%	22%	13%
Lone parent household	38%	35%	26%
Minority ethnic household	38%	34%	17%
Baby aged under 1 in household	34%	30%	13%
3+ children in household	32%	29%	19%
Disabled person in household	29%	26%	20%

In addition, we have deepened our understanding of the priority groups around the drivers of poverty and what works for them. In the past year we have published:

- A summary slide pack on latest evidence for the priority groups²⁷. The aim of the pack was to inform policies and programmes to reduce child poverty in development of *‘Best Start, Bright Futures’*. This publication includes information for each priority group on: key demographics, drivers of poverty and key issues to consider;

²⁵ To note that the priority group most at risk of child poverty is households with a baby aged under 1. However, due to limited sample sizes, the persistent poverty measure was expanded to include children under 5 as a proxy.

²⁶ [Additional child poverty analysis 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/additional-child-poverty-analysis-2022/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

²⁷ [Tackling child poverty priority families overview - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-priority-families-overview/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

- An evidence review on what works²⁸. The report includes a chapter (see Chapter 2) which explores in further detail what the evidence says works or should work for each of the priority groups. However, it is important to remember that there is considerable overlap across the different priority groups, with families in poverty likely to fall into two or more of these categories.²⁹ Those families with entangled characteristics are those experiencing particularly complex and layered forms of disadvantage and adversity.

In order to better understand the issues priority groups face and how their characteristics overlap, we will shortly publish two focus reports. The first focuses on households where mothers are aged under 25 and the second on households where there is a baby under the age of 1. These reports will be published in summer 2022 and will then be available as part of the annex to this report.³⁰

The drivers of child poverty

Our approach is to look at the drivers of poverty to explain trends in overall indicators. We have continued with this approach even where data on overall outcomes is uncertain, such as for 2020-21. As such, this report examines the three main drivers of poverty, i.e. income from employment, cost of living and income from social security and benefits in-kind³¹.

It should be noted, however, that due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the data collection of many national surveys, as with the overall poverty measures, some indicators on the measurement framework could not be updated. Where the data is available and can be trusted to be reliable and robust, new data and trends have been added. Full information available in [Annex A](#).

The year three report indicated that some child poverty drivers were moving in the right direction. Change was anticipated to take time. During 2020, families had to adjust to living during a pandemic with all the implications this could have had on their incomes and family life in general.

Since then, evidence showed that:

- The impacts of COVID-19, arising from the direct and indirect effects of contracting the illness, as well as the lockdown measures put in place to control spread of the virus, were significant and unequal. Before the pandemic hit, there were already inequalities across many domains such as income, wealth, living standards, labour market participation, health, education and life chances. COVID-19 has exacerbated many of these pre-existing inequalities and exposed

²⁸ [Tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026 - annex 6: what works - evidence review - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

²⁹ Children in Poverty after Housing Costs Who Are in More Than One Priority Group, [Additional child poverty analysis 2019 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

³⁰ Previous focus reports are: [Minority ethnic households](#), [Lone parents](#), and [households with a disabled person](#)

³¹ Details on the drivers of child poverty can be found in the 'Child poverty measurement framework'. [Child poverty strategy documents - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). For future progress reports on the [second delivery plan](#), [Best Start, Bright Futures](#), the [measurement framework](#) has been updated. From 2023 onwards, monitoring of progress will be made on the updated measurement framework.

the vulnerability of some population groups to adverse shocks. The crisis has also drawn out more harshly the effect of deprivation as a spatial focus for multiple inequalities and poor outcomes. The groups most adversely impacted included those already on low incomes, children and young people, disabled people, people of minority ethnicities and women;³²

- The quick emergency response provided by Scottish Government was welcomed by low income households. There are indications that it indeed supported people in poverty to cope with the financial pressures during the first year of the pandemic.^{33,34} Longer term impacts of the pandemic on child poverty and the impact of policies to support families through the pandemic are still to be seen.

Looking now at each driver of poverty in detail.

Income from employment

Being in work can have a positive impact on poverty outcomes as earnings from paid work are the single largest source of income for most households in Scotland. However, evidence shows that it is not only a matter of having a job, but instead a well-paid, stable and secure contract that allow families to not live in poverty.

COVID-19 has impacted the Scottish labour market as a whole. Over the first year of the pandemic there were general (amongst the 16 to 64 population) drops in employment rate, an increase in underemployment and an increase in those economically inactive.³⁵ People on low income were more likely to be working in shutdown sectors and on insecure contracts and, as such, were more likely to be harder hit by changes to their employability status.

Indicators showed a positive trend in terms of a continued slight increase in hourly pay and hours worked amongst low income families. However, this is in line with continuous increases in most years from 2012-2015.³⁶ At the same time, however, there was a slight increase in the proportion of children in households where no one is working. Similar to general trends, underemployment increased for low income households, which can be partly explained by the furlough scheme and restrictions on businesses during 2020.

To understand the longer term prospects for low income families, the measurement framework includes data on the attainment gap. That is the gap in educational outcomes amongst children living in the most and least deprived areas of Scotland. Despite considerable impact of COVID-19 across the 2020-21 academic year, the evidence indicates positive progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap.³⁷ This is expected to reduce the differences in longer term outcomes, such as progression to Higher Education or work.

³² [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): impact on equality \(research\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-impact-equality-research/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

³³ [2. Research aims and approach - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) support in low income households: evaluation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-support-low-income-households-evaluation/pages/2-research-aims-and-approach.aspx)

³⁴ [Executive Summary - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) support in low income households: evaluation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-support-low-income-households-evaluation/pages/1-executive-summary.aspx)

³⁵ [Key Points - Scotland's Labour Market: People, Places and Regions - Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2020/21 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/key-points-scotland-labour-market-people-places-and-regions/pages/1-key-points.aspx)

³⁶ [Labour market statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/labour-market-statistics/pages/1-labour-market-statistics.aspx)

³⁷ [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: fifth interim report - year 6 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/attainment-scotland-fund-evaluation-fifth-interim-report-year-6/pages/1-attainment-scotland-fund-evaluation-fifth-interim-report-year-6.aspx)

For school aged children, international evidence shows that school building closures are likely to have had a negative effect on pupil progress and attainment, and socio-economically deprived children and young people are amongst those who may have been most negatively affected.³⁸ Scottish stakeholders reported similar experiences to that suggested by international evidence. They identified that both the mental and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people may have been negatively impacted during school building closures. In fact, data from Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels in primary schools showed an increasing level of pupils meeting expected levels in both literacy and numeracy until 2020-21. It is important to remember that 2020-21 was a period of school building closures and other disruptions for pupils. Over the period 2020-21, attainment decreased and the gap between pupils from most and least deprived areas widened.³⁹

For younger, pre-school aged children, recent data from Public Health Scotland, based on Child Health Reviews from the Child Health Surveillance Programme, indicates that there has been a rise in developmental concerns noted at Child Health Reviews at the 13-15 month and 27-30 month points. Similar trends have been found for children's performance in early primary school.⁴⁰

Cost of living

The cost of living is the term used when referring to the prices of day-to-day goods and services. Price increases have a particular impact on low income households as they spend a higher proportion of income on essential goods and services.

During the first year of the pandemic, many families saw their income from employment being reduced. The reduced income impacted on many aspects of families' lives. When looking at affordability of housing specifically, experiences since the pandemic started were mixed. Individual circumstances differed by job sector, housing tenure, and a number of other factors including which social security benefits and financial relief schemes people within households had access to. Given this complexity and the lack of robust data on trends during this period, it is difficult to compare housing affordability in this period to pre-2020 levels. We await further data on housing affordability to better understand how this has been impacted.

The indicators show a very slight upward trend on the percentage of income spent on food, particularly for low income households. Evidence indicated that the strengthened income support provided during that first year of the pandemic, including furlough, the £20 uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits, pandemic support payments and the continued provision of free school meals during closed down periods, eased household worry about food and other essentials.⁴¹

³⁸ [Equity Audit \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

³⁹ [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020/21 \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁴⁰ [The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people: 2 to 4 year olds \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](http://publichealthscotland.scot)
[COVID-19 wider impacts \(shinyapps.io\)](http://shinyapps.io)

⁴¹ [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2017-20 \(data.gov.scot\)](http://data.gov.scot), [Additional child poverty analysis 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot), [Local-responses-to-food-insecurity-Sept-20-21-Full-Report.pdf \(shf.ac.uk\)](http://www.shf.ac.uk), [2. Research aims and approach - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) support in low income households: evaluation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

For many families the cost of childcare can be a significant expense. The [Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) expansion](#) in particular helped families who already use ELC with childcare affordability. There appeared to be more childcare places opened during school holidays and out-of-school hours. While the long term effects of the pandemic on families and the economy are still not known, the growing evidence from a range of research studies suggests many young children and their families have been negatively affected in terms of their wellbeing and development, especially those who were already disadvantaged.⁴²

Looking forwards, the cost of living crisis⁴³ faced during 2022 is anticipated to have a more detrimental impact on those already on low incomes, including those experiencing poverty. Some priority families will be adversely and disproportionately affected, such as larger families and families with a disabled family member. The full impact of the current cost of living crisis will not yet be reflected in the data used in this report. However, this is something that will be monitored going forwards.

Income from social security and benefits in-kind

Social security is designed to supplement the income that households receive from other sources, primarily employment. As such, income from social security and benefits in-kind can play a significant role in supporting parents out of poverty.

The provision of social security and benefits in-kind for families in Scotland is delivered by DWP, Social Security Scotland, and Scottish local authorities. Currently, around 85% of benefits are reserved to the UK Government, with the rest being devolved to the Scottish Government.⁴⁴

From the indicators collected, the value of out-of-work benefits to a family of two adults and two children has gone down in 2021 after an increase in 2020. The overall trend reflects a period of holding rises to benefits of 1 per cent for three years from 2013, and then freezing of benefits in cash terms for four years from 2016. This indicator does not include the extra support, in addition to benefits, that was extended during the pandemic, which we have covered in more detail below.

The value of in-work benefits is on a more prominent downward trend. As well as the approach to uprating benefits noted above, this period has also seen increases in the National Living Wage, which means more wage income for a full-time worker has replaced money received in benefits. A temporary boost for Working Tax Credit for workers in 2020-21 has also been withdrawn by the UK Government, so the increase in this indicator seen in 2020 was not sustained.

⁴² [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues - children, schools, early learning and childcare settings - evidence summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
[Ensuring our future: addressing the impact of COVID-19 on children, young people and their families \(scotphn.net\)](#);
[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): children, young people and families - evidence summary - June 2021 - gov.scot](#);
[COVID-19 Early Years Resilience and Impact Survey](#)

⁴³ The 'cost of living crisis' refers to the fall in 'real' disposable incomes (that is, adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits) that the UK has experienced since late 2021. This means that prices of goods and services go up faster than wages and benefits, reducing the amount of money households have.

⁴⁴ [Scotland's finances 2019-2020: key facts and figures - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

A recent research study⁴⁵ evaluated the impact of the wide range of additional financial and in-kind support funded by the Scottish Government and delivered through local authorities, Social Security Scotland, and the third sector. This range of support was designed to assist people to manage the challenges experienced over the course of the pandemic. It included amongst others: COVID hardship payments; Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments; Low Income Pandemic Payments, and; self-isolation support services. The temporary £20 weekly increase in Universal Credit was generally seen as the most valuable extra financial support. This was especially the case for people who were not eligible for Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments and those at risk of severe financial hardship. Many people were concerned about losing the Universal Credit £20 increase, and how they would make ends meet without it. The payments, and extra pandemic support, reduced the financial difficulties that came from using more food and energy through working from home, higher food and energy prices, and the extra costs of schooling and entertaining children at home.

However, it is anticipated that the loss of income through the cut to Universal Credit and loss of furlough are likely to further increase financial hardship for families. For example, analysis has shown that reversing key UK Government welfare reforms that have occurred since 2015 would bring an estimated 70,000 people out of poverty in Scotland, including 30,000 children in 2023-24. In isolation, reversing the benefit freeze or reversing the two-child limit and the removal of the family element, would lift 10,000 out of poverty for each of those policies.⁴⁶

Details of trend data for the drivers of child poverty are presented in [Annex A](#).

Evaluating our policies

Updates on individual policy evaluations are provided in section 2 of this progress report. As set out in the evaluation strategy, our evaluation efforts have been focused on those actions likely to have the biggest impact on the child poverty targets.

'*Every Child, Every Chance*' also made a commitment to investigate methods to produce a quantitative, cumulative impact assessment of the policies on child poverty. This modelling underpinned the development of '*Best Start, Bright Futures*'. It assessed the cumulative impact of a package of Scottish Government policies on child poverty, including policies already in place, in addition to those introduced in the second plan.

The modelling indicated that based on the data available at the time, around 17% of children would be living in relative poverty in 2023-24. This would represent a reduction of around 9 percentage points compared to 2019-20, the latest year of official statistics. The absolute child poverty rate was modelled to fall by 7 percentage points between 2019-20 and 2023-24, to around 16%.

The assessment indicated that the policy package plays a significant role in driving a lower poverty rate. We estimated that the relative child poverty rate would have been 2 percentage points higher in 2019-20 if the policy package of the time had not been in

⁴⁵ [2. Research aims and approach - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) support in low income households: evaluation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

⁴⁶ [Welfare reform - impact on households with children: report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

place, with 20,000 more children living in poverty.⁴⁷ By 2023-24, with the introduction of additional policies, this impact was projected to increase to 10 percentage points.⁴⁸ However, it is not possible to fully disentangle its effects from that of external factors in the wider economy; for example, benefit caseloads will be impacted by changes in the labour market, while benefit rates will be impacted by inflation. These external factors also represent significant sources of uncertainty, particularly in the current economic climate.

The current cost of living crisis poses a challenge to progress to reach both the interim and final targets, at least until increases in wages and benefit rates offset the current high inflation rates. This issue is particularly relevant for the absolute poverty and material deprivation targets. The absolute poverty line is updated each year for inflation, so increases in the cost of living will have a direct impact on absolute child poverty rates. It is also likely that families will report higher levels of material deprivation while inflation rates remain high – particularly for essential items like energy and food which are currently driving high inflation. On the other hand, relative poverty (and therefore persistent poverty) is not directly adjusted for the cost of living. This underscores the importance of having four targets of child poverty and using a basket of indicators to track progress.

Local action

Local Child Poverty Action Reports are jointly developed by local authorities and Territorial Health Boards to outline activities and commitments to reducing child poverty in local areas. The 2020-21 reports describe activity between April 2020 and March 2021, and include planned future activity for the year ahead. The Improvement Service analysed each report around commitment, partnership working and a range of key policy levers.

The Improvement Service considered the 2020-21 reports and found that, in general, the reports indicated a sustained, high-level commitment to addressing child poverty at local level. The reports demonstrate an increased awareness of the importance of involving those with lived experience in policy development.

Despite the pressing challenges posed by COVID-19, the reports suggest an increasingly strategic approach to tackling child poverty at local level and a willingness to engage a range of policy levers including housing, procurement and the role of local authorities and health boards as anchor institutions. This has developed through practice sharing, collaboration and engagement. Data and evidence is not consistent throughout the reports, however. Although some areas have been successful in innovative approaches to understanding their population and the impact their actions are having.

⁴⁷ [Tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026 - annex 4: cumulative impact assessment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/delivery-plan-2022-2026/annexes/annex-4-cumulative-impact-assessment/pages/110.aspx)

⁴⁸ A large part of the increase in impact between 2019-20 and 2023-24 is due to the introduction and doubling of the Scottish Child Payment, followed by the further increase to £25 per child per week set out in the Delivery Plan. A number of other policies also come into effect, including mitigation of the Benefit Cap through Discretionary Housing Payments, the introduction of Best Start Foods along with the removal of income limits, the increase in minimum levels of School Clothing Grant, and the extension of universal Free School Meals to all primary school children. The interactions between the policies in the package will also contribute to the cumulative impact.

While there is still a long way to go to ensure support reaches those at highest risk of poverty, targeted initiatives are in place in many areas to help overcome the barriers that those in the priority groups can face. For example, Fife has focused the community engagement around '[No One Left Behind](#)' by involving those with lived experience in service planning and initiatives targeted at the priority groups.

There is a sharpened focus on the need to support families in a joined up, holistic and intuitive way and an awareness that local reports have an important role to play in delivering that.

4. At a glance summaries

Introduction

The following section provides a series of 'at a glance' tables providing a summary overview of activity in 2021-22.

The first table provides overall progress on each of the actions committed, all of which are now being delivered. It also sets out which of the priority families are anticipated to benefit and the expected outcome.

Table two sets out what has been spent from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund across 2018-22.

Table three sets out an estimate of Scottish Government investment in 2021-22 directed at low income households with children and investment targeted at low income households more generally – where children are also expected to benefit.

Table four sets out estimates of Scottish Government investment across 2018-22 directed at low income households, and those with children.

The final table outlines the requirements of the Child Poverty Act, and how we have addressed each within this report. Responses to the comments and recommendations of the Poverty and Inequality Commission are also noted here.

Progress against actions and impact on priority families

The following table provides an at a glance update on the status of all actions in 'Every Child, Every Chance', with all actions being delivered as of 31 March 2022. The table also summarises which priority group(s) are expected to have benefited from the action and how it helps us to tackle child poverty.

Key:	
▲	means early stages of development, ● means in progress and ✓ means currently being delivered or completed.
Priority families:	
LP	Lone Parents
YM	Mothers Aged <25
3+	3+ Children
ME	Minority Ethnic
<1	Youngest Child Aged <1
DAC	Disabled Adult or Child
Expected outcome:	
EMP	Increasing income from employment – relevant to all four targets
HC	Reducing housing costs – relevant to all four targets
OC	Reducing other costs of living – relevant to the low income and material deprivation target
SS	Increasing income from social security and benefits in kind – relevant to all four targets
LC	Improving children's life chances in ways that are not about increasing current income or reducing costs of living – potentially relevant to future child poverty levels, when these children become parents themselves

Table 1 – Summary of action status

Action	Priority groups expected to benefit	Expected outcome	Status
Fair Start Scotland	ALL – but especially LP, DAC, ME	EMP	✓
Parental Employability Support Fund	ALL – but especially LP, DAC	EMP	✓
Additional investment to support disabled parents	DAC	EMP	✓
Additional investment to support young parents	YM	EMP	✓
Additional investment – ELC alignment	ALL	EMP	✓
Building a Living Wage Nation	ALL – but especially LP, YM	EMP	✓
Tackling low pay in the public sector	ALL – but especially LP, ME, YM, DAC	EMP	✓
New action on the gender pay gap	ALL – but especially LP, ME, <1, YM	EMP	✓
Flexible Workforce Development Fund	ALL – but especially LP, DAC, ME, YM	EMP	✓
The Workplace Equality Fund	ALL – but especially DAC, ME	EMP	✓
New support for flexible working	ALL – but especially LP, DAC	EMP	✓
Expanded Early Learning and Childcare	ALL – but especially LP, 3+	EMP, OC	✓
After School and Holiday Childcare	ALL – but especially LP, 3+	EMP, OC	✓
A new Family Learning Programme	ALL	EMP	✓

An increased School Clothing Grant	ALL – but especially 3+	SS	✓
Reducing food insecurity in the school holidays	ALL – but especially 3+	OC, SS	✓
Further support on costs of the school day	ALL – but especially 3+	OC, SS	✓
New support, incentives and rewards with the Young Scot Card	ALL	OC	✓
Making sure young people receive EMA payments	ALL – but especially YM	SS	✓
Work with the social housing sector to agree the best ways to keep rents affordable	ALL	HC	✓
Ensure that future affordable housing supply decisions support our objective to achieve a real and sustained impact on child poverty	ALL	HC	✓
Evaluate the impact of the private residential tenancy on families with children	ALL	HC	✓
Scottish Housing Regulator	ALL	HC	✓
New action on homelessness	ALL	HC, LC	✓
Increase uptake of our Warmer Homes Scotland programme amongst low income families	ALL	OC	✓
Target fuel poverty and energy efficiency measures on those most in need, including low income families	ALL	OC	✓
Money Talk Team Service	ALL	SS, OC	✓
Health and Income Maximisation	ALL	SS	✓
Benefit Take Up Strategy for devolved benefits	ALL	SS	✓
New support for affordable credit	ALL	OC	✓
Tackling problem debt	ALL	OC	✓
Access to period products	ALL – but especially 3+	OC	✓
Connecting Scotland	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
Action on transport strategy, policies and programmes	ALL	EMP, OC, LC	✓
Pandemic Payments	ALL	SS	✓
Scottish Child Payment	ALL	SS	✓
Best Start Grant	ALL – but especially 3+, <1, YM	SS	✓
Enhanced support through Best Start Foods	ALL – but especially 3+, <1, YM	SS	✓
Increased support for carers	ALL	SS	✓
New Job Start Payment	ALL	SS, EMP	✓
Widened Funeral Support Payment eligibility	ALL	SS	✓
Child Winter Heating Assistance	ALL - but especially DAC	SS	✓

Extra help for families with children's health in the early years	ALL	LC	✓
A new resource for disabled children, young people and their families	ALL	SS, LC	✓
Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences	ALL	LC	✓
Action on parental imprisonment	ALL	LC	✓
Supporting redesign of the care system	ALL	LC	✓
New action on transitions	ALL	LC	✓
Help for children's neighbourhoods	ALL	LC, EMP	✓
Targeted opportunities for cultural participation	ALL	LC	✓
Facilitating access to music education	ALL	LC	✓
Improving inclusion in sport	ALL	LC	✓
Increased funding for mental health	ALL	LC	✓
Tailored learning support for Gypsy/ Traveller families with children	ME	LC	✓
Support to address bullying	ALL	LC	✓
Support for students and communities from further and higher education	ALL – but especially YM	LC, EMP	✓
Innovation Fund with the Hunter Foundation	ALL	LC, EMP, SS, OC, HC	✓
Investment in the STV children's appeal	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
Investing in Communities Fund	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
Partnership between the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Region on inclusive growth and child poverty	ALL	EMP	✓
Community Wealth and Localism	ALL	EMP	✓
Town Centre Fund and Business Improvement Districts	ALL	EMP	✓
A National Child Poverty Co-ordinator	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
A new analytical partnership on local child poverty	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
A new Fairer Scotland duty	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
Bringing the voices of people with experience of poverty into local decision-making	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
New support from the Poverty Alliance	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓
A role for the Children's Sector Strategic Forum in monitoring implementation	ALL	EMP, HC, OC, SS, LC	✓

Investment through the Tackling Child Poverty Fund

Investment made from the £50 million Tackling Child Poverty Fund, across 2018-22, is set out below. The table below outlines recorded and provisional levels of investment, correct at the point of publication, all totals expressed are £0.000m:

Table 2 – Summary of Tackling Child Poverty Fund investment

Programme	Year				Total (2018-22)
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
Parent Employability Support Fund (PESF)	£0.050	£2.000	£4.822*	£5.050	£11.922
PESF - Support for disabled parents	-	-	£6.000	-	£6.000
PESF - ELC alignment	-	£0.100	£1.000	£3.000	£4.100
PESF - Support for Young Parents	-	-	£0.350	£0.650	£1.000
Timewise	-	£0.026	£0.133	£0.167	£0.326
Homelessness prevention	-	-	£0.250	£0.500	£0.750
Tenant Grant Fund	-	-	-	£0.500	£0.500
Family Learning Scotland	-	£0.050	£0.188	£0.147	£0.385
Access to Childcare Fund	-	£0.016	£1.305	£1.296	£2.617
Get into Summer**	-	-	-	£7.500	£7.500
Food Insecurity	£0.100	£0.500	-	-	£0.600
Healthier Wealthier Children	£0.250	£0.250	-	-	£0.500
Affordable credit marketing	£0.080	-	-	-	£0.080
Money Talk Team Marketing	-	£0.220	-	-	£0.220
Bridging Payments**	-	-	-	£5.150	£5.150
Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland	£0.250	£0.374	£0.727	£0.262	£1.613
Preventative work for low income young people at college	£0.242	£0.308	£0.300	£0.500	£1.350
Gypsy / traveller	-	£0.030	£0.035	£0.125	£0.190
New Innovation Fund	£1.100	£2.534	-	£1.366	£5.000
National Child Poverty Coordinator	£0.069	£0.070	£0.091	£0.089	£0.318
Local analytical partnership	£0.020	£0.020	£0.048	£0.052	£0.140
Local support - first year reporting	£0.190	-	-	-	£0.190
Total investment	£2.351	£6.498	£15.249	£26.354	£50.452

* final outturns lower than anticipated, due to impacts of COVID-19 pandemic

** contribution toward total investment

Investment to support children in poverty

In the 2021-22 financial year, it is estimated that nearly £2.6 billion was invested across a range of programmes targeted at low-income households. Of this, we estimate that over £1.1 billion benefited children. These totals, along with the breakdown of estimated spend on individual programmes, can be seen in table 3 below.

These figures are estimates. They comprise a mixture of outturn, budgeted, and forecasted figures, depending on what was available at the time. Some of the figures are published, whereas others were sourced internally. Furthermore, although we have attempted to stay consistent with the figures included in the equivalent table in previous progress reports, inconsistencies could remain. For policies targeted at all people on a low income, we have used the latest statistics on the proportion of people in poverty who are children (25% in 2019-20) to derive an estimated spend on children in poverty. We have excluded administration costs where possible.

As in previous years, these estimates do not include spend on universal services from which children in poverty will also benefit, including services focused specifically on children such as funded Early Learning and Childcare and universal Free School Meal provision in primary schools, or wider support including free prescriptions, healthcare or free tuition. Wider investments such as these are key to our overall strategy to reducing child poverty.

Table 4 sets out estimates of investment across 2018-22, drawn from Table 3 and calculations published in the respective progress reports. It is estimated that across the life of 'Every Child, Every Chance' £8.47 billion was invested across a range of programmes targeted at low-income households. Of this, we estimate that over £3.28 billion benefited children. Comparative to 2018-19 estimates, this represents an increase of £1.18 billion in spend targeted to low income households in 2021-22, and an increase of £576 million in spend which benefited children.

Table 3 – Estimate of spend to support children in poverty 2021-22

Policy	Estimated 2021-22 spend on low income households (£m)	Estimated 2021-22 spend on children in low income households (£m)
Targeted at low income households with children		
Attainment Scotland Fund	67.80	67.80
Pupil Equity Funding	147.00	147.00
School Meals, including Free School Meals ⁴⁹	155.60	155.60
School Meal alternate holiday provision	21.75	21.75
Get into Summer 2021	15.00	15.00
Education Maintenance Allowance	22.30	22.30
Best Start Foods / Healthy Start	13.60	13.60
School Clothing Grant	11.80	11.80
Best Start Grant	14.90	14.90
STV Children's Appeal	1.00	1.00
Parental Employability Support Fund	8.65	8.65
Innovation Fund	1.37	1.37

⁴⁹ Includes funding for all school meals, including resource costs of providing paid meals

Bridging Payments	79.16	79.16
Children's charities (cost of living)	6.00	6.00
Scottish Child Payment	55.10	55.10
<i>Total</i>	621.02	621.02
Targeted at low income households – not necessarily with children		
Affordable Homes ⁵⁰	627.26	156.81
Council Tax Reduction - revenue foregone ⁵¹	351.00	77.22
Fuel Poverty / Energy Efficiency ⁵²	187.97	46.99
Fuel Insecurity Fund	10.00	2.50
Discretionary Housing Payments	78.80	19.70
Scottish Welfare Fund	35.50	8.88
Regeneration Strategy ⁵³	102.73	25.68
Fair Start Scotland	27.47	6.87
Advice Services (Income max/financial advice) ⁵⁴	2.50	0.63
Fair Food Fund	0.78	0.19
Social Innovation Partnership	1.00	0.25
UC Scottish Choices ⁵⁵	0.32	0.08
Money Talk Team	1.50	0.38
Digital Start Fund	1.00	0.25
Funeral Support Payment	10.91	2.73
Carer's Allowance	299.70	74.93
Carer's Allowance Supplement	59.39	14.85
Financial Insecurity (Winter)	25.00	6.25
Connecting Scotland	26.60	6.65
Low Income Pandemic Payment	68.95	17.24
Self-Isolation Support Grant ⁵⁶	55.60	13.90
<i>Total</i>	1,973.98	482.96
Total	2,595.00	1,103.99

Table 4 – Estimate of spend to support children in poverty 2018-22 (£m)

Group	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	TOTAL (2018-22)
Estimated spend on low income households	1412.08	1966.72	2498.8 ⁵⁷	2,595.00	8,472.60
Estimated spend on children in low income households	527.22	672.1	978.5 ⁵⁸	1,103.99	3,281.81

⁵⁰ Provisional capital spend only

⁵¹ Calculation of spend targeted to children is based on latest available data on CTR (22%).

⁵² Level 4 published budget figure

⁵³ £14.81m Empowering Communities Programme (resource), £41.27m Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (capital), £5m Clyde Gateway (capital), £0.5m Clyde Gateway (resource), £0.02 Business Improvement Districts Place Based Investment Programme £38.15m

⁵⁴ Total spend of £4.69m. Estimate of targeted spend based on data from funded agencies.

⁵⁵ This is a forecasted figure

⁵⁶ Based on published Management Information. Does not take into account backlogged awards made in 2022-23 based on 2021-22 applications

⁵⁷ Of which £434.5 was additional COVID-19 funding

⁵⁸ Of which £206.1m was additional COVID-19 funding

Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requirements

Section 10 of the Child Poverty Act sets out a range of requirements around progress reports. This table explains how we have met those requirements, with directions to the relevant sections or specific pages within the Plan.

Table 5 – Summary of Child Poverty (Scotland) Act requirements

<p>The Scottish Ministers must, before the end of the period of 3 months beginning with the last day of each reporting year, prepare a report (a “progress report”) on the progress made during the year—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • towards meeting the child poverty targets, and • in implementing the relevant delivery plan. 	<p>This is the fourth progress report due under the Child Poverty Act.</p> <p>Section 3 outlines our approach to assessing progress toward meeting the targets. It presents the most recent data for the four targets. The most recent child poverty statistics available describe the situation in 2019/20, which covers the second year of the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.</p> <p>Progress in implementing the delivery plan (2018-22) is set out in sections 1 and 2.</p>
<p>A progress report must in particular describe -</p>	
<p>The measures taken by the Scottish Ministers in accordance with that delivery plan.</p>	<p>Section 2 contains an update on each action committed.</p>
<p>The effect of those measures on progress towards meeting the child poverty targets.</p>	<p>Section 4 provides impact summaries, where appropriate, for actions aligned to the drivers of child poverty reduction.</p> <p>Economic Modelling was published alongside the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 setting out anticipated impacts on the targets.</p>
<p>The effect of those measures on reducing the number of children living in single-parent households against each of the four targets.</p>	<p>Section 3 presents the most recent child poverty statistics for the six priority families identified in ‘<i>Every Child, Every Chance</i>’ – including children living in single parent households.</p>

	Section 4 sets out which of the actions in the Delivery Plan are intended to benefit these children.
The effect of those measures on children living in households whose income is adversely affected, or whose expenditure is increased, because a member of the household has one or more protected characteristics.	Section 3 presents the most recent child poverty statistics for the six priority families identified in ‘ <i>Every Child, Every Chance</i> ’ – including children living in families that include a disabled adult or child, minority ethnic families, families with a child under one year old, and families where the mother is under 25 years of age. Section 4 sets out which of the actions in the Delivery Plan are intended to benefit these children.
If, in preparing a progress report -	
Scottish Ministers consider that the measures taken in accordance with the relevant delivery plan have not delivered sufficient progress towards meeting the child poverty targets, the progress report must describe how the Scottish Ministers propose to ensure sufficient progress is delivered in the future.	The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 , published in March 2022, sets out further actions to deliver progress against the child poverty targets.
In preparing a progress report, the Scottish Ministers must —	
Consult the Commission on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the progress made during the reporting year towards meeting the child poverty targets, whether it appears to the Commission that such progress is sufficient to meet the child poverty targets, what further progress the Commission considers is required to meet the child poverty targets. And, include any comments or recommendations made by the Commission on the matters mentioned above.	The Poverty and Inequality Commission shared their advice with the Scottish Government in May 2022. The response received from the Commission is reflected below.

Responding to the advice and comments of the Poverty and Inequality Commission:

<p>In relation to the progress made during the reporting year towards meeting the child poverty targets the report of the Commission notes:</p>	
<p>“Due to data quality issues resulting from the pandemic it is difficult to draw conclusions from the child poverty statistics about the progress that has been made towards meeting the child poverty targets. It seems likely that levels of child poverty may have reduced on some measures due to a fall in median income and temporary increases in social security. The temporary nature of these factors means that it is unlikely to indicate longer term progress. What we can say is that, after delays caused by the pandemic, we have started to see progress being made again on delivering major commitments such as the Scottish Child Payment, funded early learning and childcare, affordable housing and employability support.”</p>	<p>As set out in Section 3, only one out of the four statutory child poverty measures could be updated in 2022 (persistent poverty). The other three targets rely on data from the Family Resources Survey, and due to the impact of the pandemic we were unable to obtain a representative sample for Scotland.</p> <p>Economic modelling published alongside ‘<i>Best Start, Bright Futures</i>’ estimates that the Scottish Government policy package reduced levels of relative child poverty by 2% points in 2019-20.</p>
<p>In relation to whether it appears to the Commission that such progress is sufficient to meet the child poverty targets the report of the Commission notes:</p>	
<p>“While the progress made during 2021-2022 was very unlikely to be sufficient to meet the child poverty targets, commitments made during the year and in the 2022-2026 Delivery Plan now make it more likely that the Scottish Government will meet the 2023-24 interim relative child poverty target. Increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £25 per week is likely to have the biggest impact.</p> <p>The Scottish Government is less likely to meet the absolute poverty interim target and it is unclear whether it will meet the other interim targets. There is also a strong risk that the rapidly rising cost of living will make it much harder to meet the absolute poverty and low income and material deprivation</p>	<p>We agree with the Commission that further action is needed to deliver at pace and scale across a range of policies to meet the child poverty targets.</p> <p>Whilst this report focuses on action taken in 2021-22, our second tackling child poverty delivery plan ‘<i>Best Start, Bright Futures</i>’, published in March 2022, sets out how we will build on the foundations of ‘<i>Every Child, Every Chance</i>’, to deliver greater progress across the areas identified by the Commission.</p> <p>The advice of the Commission on the development of the second</p>

<p>interim targets, and that families will not see an improvement in their quality of life.</p> <p>The Scottish Government’s cumulative impact assessment does not project as far as the 2030-31, but acknowledges that meeting the 2030 targets will require an unprecedented reduction in child poverty of a further eight percentage points, which is unlikely to occur without considerable changes to the drivers of poverty. The Scottish Government cannot wait until the next Delivery Plan in order to identify what more is needed as by then it will be too late to implement the kinds of the transformative policies that will be required in order to meet the final targets.”</p>	<p>delivery plan informed the combination of policies, delivery and accountability mechanisms established under that plan.</p>
<p>In relation to what further progress the Commission considers is required to meet the child poverty targets the report of the Commission notes:</p>	
<p>“The Scottish Government must now focus on implementing existing commitments, while also developing the transformative policies needed to meet the 2030 targets. The commitments made over the last year and the new actions set out in the 2022-26 Delivery Plan will need to be implemented effectively and at pace in order to deliver on their potential to meet the interim relative child poverty target. More transformational change to address the drivers of poverty will be needed if the Scottish Government is to meet the 2030 targets. The Scottish Government must start developing further action now, on shaping the economy, housing and transport in particular, in order to be on track to meet the 2030 targets.”</p>	<p>Specific responses to recommendations are set out below, and will be taken forward through the implementation of <i>‘Best Start, Bright Futures’</i>.</p>
<p>The Commission provided 8 recommendations in relation to further progress required to meet the child poverty targets:</p>	
<p>1. Focus on implementing at pace and scale over the period of the Delivery Plan, demonstrating this focus by ensuring detailed delivery plans and timetables are in</p>	<p><i>‘Best Start, Bright Futures’</i> clearly commits to delivering at pace and scale. ‘Scotland’s offer to families’ sets out an approach to delivery</p>

<p>place, published, and robustly scrutinised both inside and outside government.</p>	<p>focused on testing, adapting and scaling holistic approaches, embedding an approach to continuous learning and improvement.</p>
<p>2. Put in place a system to ensure that policies across government contribute towards reducing child poverty in a meaningful way and that this contribution can be clearly demonstrated to the Commission and others.</p>	<p>The breadth of policy contained in <i>'Best Start, Bright Futures'</i> demonstrates the commitment to child poverty across SG policy.</p>
<p>3. Commit to publishing robust monitoring data and evidence about actions in the Delivery Plan, and about the impacts for the priority families in particular, and demonstrate a culture of continuous learning and improvement where evidence is used to adapt and improve action.</p>	<p>Child poverty was one of four priorities in the recently published Resource Spending Review, reiterating its importance at the centre of government.</p>
<p>4. Publish details of how experts by experience have contributed to the design, delivery and evaluation of actions in the Delivery Plan.</p>	<p>Newly established governance mechanisms will facilitate stronger accountability, with internal and external scrutiny more firmly established.</p>
<p>5. Engage closely with the Commission from now onwards to develop further action now to meet the 2030 targets, focusing particularly on shaping the economy, housing and transport.</p>	<p>A refreshed evaluation strategy and monitoring framework were published as Annex 2 and 3 alongside <i>'Best Start, Bright Futures'</i> and will be used to monitor and report on progress annually.</p>
<p>6. Take specific and urgent action to mitigate the cost of living crisis.</p>	<p>The revised monitoring framework sets out a wider range of indicators that will be used to inform</p>
<p>7. Ensure that its assessment of what further action is needed to mitigate the impact of the crisis is informed by data and analysis for all four child poverty target measures and other relevant indicators that are sensitive to the impact of the crisis, and commit to publishing these assessments.</p>	<p>assessment of progress, in addition to the four statutory targets.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Commission in monitoring the impact of <i>'Best Start, Bright Futures'</i>, and seeking their advice on what further measures may be required to meet the 2030 targets.</p>
<p>8. Advocate at UK level for urgent, progressive revenue-raising measures in order to fund greatly enhanced social protection measures in response to the cost of living crisis</p>	<p>Experts by Experience were involved in the development of <i>'Best Start, Bright Futures'</i>, both through a partnership with the Poverty Alliance and through the Commission's own experts by experience panel. The delivery plan provides specific examples of how this will be taken</p>

	<p>forward, including lived experience panels to inform employability and childcare offers.</p> <p>Whilst data collection for 2020-21 was hampered by the pandemic, going forward we will continue to use and publish data for all four child poverty measures.</p> <p>We are acutely aware that households across the country are facing a serious cost of living crisis, and that those on the lowest income are being hit hardest. We are taking and will continue to take specific action to mitigate the cost of living crisis, and we continue to advocate for more action at UK level.</p>
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