

Item: 13

Policy and Resources Committee: 21 June 2022.

Child Poverty Strategy 2022 to 2026.

Joint Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions and Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider a Child Poverty Strategy for Orkney for the period 2022 to 2026.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 placed a duty on local authorities and health boards in Scotland to report annually on activity they are taking, and will take, to reduce child poverty.

2.2.

That a multi-agency Child Poverty Task Force was convened to address the new duty and subsequently incorporated into the Orkney Partnership Board as a short life working group.

2.3.

That the Child Poverty Task Force has now compiled three annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports for Orkney, which have been submitted to the Scottish Government, with a fourth, covering 2021/22, in preparation.

2.4.

That a strategic framework is required for the future planning, monitoring, reporting and scrutiny of partnership activity to combat child poverty in Orkney.

2.5.

That the Child Poverty Task Force has drafted a Child Poverty Strategy for 2022 to 2026 to provide a framework for the coherent planning, monitoring, reporting and scrutiny of partnership activity to combat child poverty.

2.6.

That the draft Child Poverty Strategy is currently being considered by partner agencies prior to its submission to the Orkney Partnership Board on 29 June 2022 for adoption by the Partnership.

It is recommended:

2.7.

That the Child Poverty Strategy 2022 to 2026, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved insofar as it applies to the Council.

3. Child Poverty Action Reporting

3.1.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 placed a duty on local authorities and health boards in Scotland to report annually on activity they are taking, and will take, to reduce child poverty. Reports must be submitted to the Scottish Government by 30 June following the end of the reporting year.

3.2.

In response to the new duty, the statutory agencies convened the Child Poverty Task Force, a multi-agency group supported initially by the Northern Alliance and reporting to the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing. In June 2020 the Child Poverty Task Force was adopted by the Orkney Partnership Board as a short life working group, chaired by the Interim Head of Children, Families and Justice Services, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership. The Child Poverty Task Force reports to the Orkney Partnership Board via the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group.

3.3.

On joining The Orkney Partnership Board in 2020, the remit of the Child Poverty Task Force was:

- To complete Orkney's Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2019/20.
- To develop a longer-term partnership strategy to address child poverty in Orkney.
- To establish a sustainable framework for the future planning, monitoring and reporting of partnership work relating to child poverty in Orkney.

3.4.

The Child Poverty Task Force has now submitted three Local Child Poverty Action Reports for Orkney, for the years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, to the Scottish Government, and a fourth report for 2021/22 is in preparation.

4. Child Poverty Strategy

4.1.

A shortcoming noted in successive Local Child Poverty Action Reports has been the absence of a coherent strategic framework against which to plan, implement and report collective activity to combat child poverty and mitigate its effects. The Child Poverty Task Force has now developed a Child Poverty Strategy for Orkney, with a planning period of 2022 to 2026, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.2.

The Child Poverty Strategy is linked with the Children's Services Plan through the latter's key priority of Overcoming Disadvantage. This theme sets the Partnership's child poverty work in the overall context of barriers which may prevent a child getting the best start in life, but which can be overcome with appropriate intervention.

4.3.

In order to inform the strategy, a public consultation, Making Ends Meet, was conducted in late summer 2021 to gather the views of families in Orkney with experience of hardship. As well as being made available online, paper copies of the survey were distributed by the statutory agencies and third sector partners to families they were supporting. 42 families responded from across Orkney and provided a wealth of information about their practical experience of living in poverty and the sorts of interventions which would be of most assistance to them.

4.4.

A series of workshops was held in autumn 2021 with the Child Poverty Task Force and other partner agencies, informed by the consultation, to determine the key actions to be included in the strategy under its five themes of Pockets, Prospects, Places, Prevention and Priorities. An outline action plan is included in the strategy. Many of these actions are already in train and the action plan is intended to provide a structure for their future monitoring and reporting. It is currently being developed into a SMART action plan, to be monitored by the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group. Reporting against the action plan will be included in future Local Child Poverty Action Reports covering the years from 2022/23 onwards.

4.5.

The Child Poverty Task Force is a short life working group and its terms of reference state that it will be wound up once it has fulfilled its remit. The Orkney Partnership Board will consider, at its meeting on 29 June 2022, a sustainable framework for the future planning, monitoring and reporting of partnership work relating to child poverty in Orkney.

4.6.

The Child Poverty Strategy is currently being circulated for consideration by partner Boards and approval insofar as it applies to each partner. Subject to any amendments requested by partners, the final draft Strategy will be submitted to the Orkney Partnership Board at their meeting of 29 June 2022 for approval and adoption.

5. Equalities Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

6. Island Communities Impact

An Island Communities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

7. Links to Council Plan

7.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Caring Communities.

7.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority 3.9 – We will continue to deliver the Fuel Poverty Strategy, to seek to secure appropriate funding and in turn to reduce fuel poverty – of the Council Delivery Plan.

8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the new Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Community Wellbeing.

9. Financial Implications

9.1.

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

9.2.

Any future proposals with financial implications arising from the implementation of the Child Poverty Strategy will be submitted to the appropriate Committee for consideration.

10. Legal Aspects

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

11. Contact Officers

James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2401, Email james.wylie@orkney.gov.uk

Karen Greaves, Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, extension 2202, Email karen.greaves@orkney.gov.uk

Stephen Brown, Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, extension 2601, Email stephen.brown3@nhs.scot

Jim Lyon, Interim Head of Children, Families and Justice Service and Chief Social Work Officer, Orkney Health and Care, extension 2611, Email jim.lyon@orkney.gov.uk

Anna Whelan, Service Manager, Strategy and Partnership, extension 2160, Email anna.whelan@orkney.gov.uk

12. Appendices

Appendix 1: Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022 to 2026.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 3: Island Communities Impact Assessment.



FINAL DRAFT

Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022-26

Draft version 3.2
7 June 2022



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Introduction

“A child can have three meals a day, warm clothes and go to school, but still be poor because her parents don’t have enough money to ensure she can live in a warm home, have access to a computer to do her homework, or go on the same school trips as her classmates.”

Child Poverty Action Group¹

There is a perception that Orkney is an idyllic place to live and bring up children, and for many it is. However, we cannot ignore evidence of an undercurrent of poverty in our islands. It may be less visible than in other areas, but it exists and is rising.

We know there is child poverty in Orkney. Front line service workers have daily contact with families in dire need, and the impacts of poverty on children and young people can be seen in their ambition, achievement, social participation, and health. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted disproportionately on low-income families, and many have experienced hardship and disadvantage for the first time, evidenced by a huge increase in demand for crisis services.

Island communities experience deprivation and challenges on a scale that other areas do not face, including availability and cost of transport, housing and fuel, access to services for health and education, isolation and loneliness. Because of the lack of anonymity, people may feel increased social stigma or simply prefer to keep their problems to themselves. Poverty can be invisible to those who do not encounter it and is often hidden by those who do. Signs of hardship may not be recognised or acknowledged and this can make it difficult to assess the level of need in our communities and to design and deliver services which can help.

This strategy has been developed collectively by Orkney’s Child Poverty Task Force, a working group of our community planning partnership. Tackling child poverty in Orkney needs an effective and co-ordinated approach, working closely with communities affected by hardship and informed by their lived experience. Our aim is to ensure that every partner agency with responsibility for the wellbeing and future of our children is focused on combating child poverty.

Through this strategy, all members of the Orkney Partnership undertake to mitigate, reduce, and prevent child poverty in Orkney using every mechanism available, to ensure Orkney’s children and young people have the best possible chances in life, and to avoid perpetuating the impact of poverty on future generations.

Councillor James Stockan
Chair
Orkney Partnership Board



Meghan McEwen
Vice Chair
Orkney Partnership Board

¹ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/what-poverty>

Executive Summary

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 introduced a requirement for public agencies to report annually on the measures they were taking to combat child poverty.

Orkney's Child Poverty Task Force has now produced three Local Child Poverty Action Reports for 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21, and is working on its report for 2021-22.

The Task Force launched a public consultation in September 2021, "Making Ends Meet". Many families have responded to tell us of their own day to day challenges, bringing to life the statistics on poverty in Orkney and underlining the importance of this work. This new strategy provides a coherent framework for the joint planning and implementation of future action to combat child poverty, and the monitoring and reporting of progress. It builds on the strategic priority of "Overcoming Disadvantage" contained in Orkney's Children's Services Plan.

Our strategy incorporates elements of the Scottish Government's national strategy for child poverty, adapted for local circumstances. The national framework has three themes which drive the strategy: Pockets, Prospects, Places. To these, Orkney has added Prevention and Priorities.

Pockets aims to maximise the financial resources of families on low incomes.

Prospects aims to improve the life chances of children and young people.

Places aims to improve housing and regenerate disadvantaged communities.

Prevention aims to prevent the long-term persistence of poverty.

Priorities aims to focus attention on especially vulnerable children and families.

The Task Force has considered each of these policy drivers in detail and developed a plan for action with five big ambitions to combat child poverty in Orkney:

Pockets Every family can make ends meet	Prospects Every child has a good start in life	Places Every family has a sustainable home	Prevention Future generations can escape from poverty	Priorities No child is left behind
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This strategy describes the impact of poverty on children and shows how the experience of Orkney's children and families compares with Scotland. We summarise the output to date from the "Making Ends Meet" consultation and consider what we can do locally to meet the needs identified by the survey. Our outline action plan sets out the actions we will take to meet immediate need and to address the longer term prevention of child poverty in Orkney.

Outline Action Plan 2022-26

Our target outcomes	Short term actions 2022-23	Medium 2022-25	Long term 2022-26
Pockets Every family can make ends meet	Raise awareness of entitlements and maximise family incomes		
	Adopt a 'one stop shop' approach to streamline access to services and new ways to engage		
	Explore with Scottish Government the scope for piloting Minimum Income Guarantee in Orkney		
Prospects Every child has a good start in life	Remove barriers to participation in school trips and experiences		
	Improve take-up of free school meals and associated benefits		
	Remove barriers to participation in family leisure/holiday activities		
Places Every family has a sustainable home	Improve the energy efficiency of new/existing housing in the private and social rented sectors		
	Extend more employment opportunities to the isles		
	Explore options to apply the benefits from wind power developments to reduce home energy costs		
Prevention Future generations can escape from poverty	Promote good employment practice, flexibility and fair pay, and their benefits to employers		
	Increase the capacity of Orkney's advisory agencies		
	Explore people-centred strategies for local development such as Community Wealth Building		
Priorities No child is left behind	Make inter-island ferry travel affordable to children and families on the ferry-linked isles		
	Improve the availability and affordability of wraparound childcare/after-school provision		
	Prioritise early financial support for families at risk, to avert crisis and family breakdown		

The impact of poverty on children

This strategy uses the widely accepted definition of poverty formulated by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which acknowledges the effects and impacts of poverty beyond financial security:

Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation²

Being extremely poor can lead to health and housing problems; being a victim or a perpetrator of crime; drug or alcohol problems; lower educational achievement; homelessness; teenage parenthood; relationship and family problems. In addition, poverty in childhood increases the risk of unemployment and low pay in adulthood and lower savings later in life and can have biological effects: poverty early in a child's life can have a harmful effect on their brain development.

The Child Poverty Action Group³, a campaigning charity, defines the differences between poverty, inequality and destitution:

Destitution	Poverty	Inequality
Lacking food Lacking fuel Lacking clothing Lacking shelter	Struggle to pay for essentials and to participate in society	Some having a lot less than others

Poverty and disadvantage do not only affect families without employment. Families in work may also struggle to afford the basics of food, clothing, shelter and participation in society. While the poverty risk is much lower for children in working households compared to those in non-working households, recent research shows 68% of children living in poverty in Scotland are in households where someone works⁴.

There are millions of children living in poverty who have at least one employed parent. Low paid jobs and zero-hour contracts mean many working families live hand to mouth. The Covid-19 crisis - loss of jobs, closure of schools, bigger bills - will have pushed even more over the edge.

The Children's Society⁵

² [What is poverty? | JRF](#)

³ [What is poverty? | CPAG](#)

⁴ <https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/child-poverty/facts>

⁵ [Ending Child Poverty | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)

The effects of child poverty should not be underestimated. A family's situation affects children in myriad ways, illustrated by CPAG⁶:

Figure 1: How poverty feels to children



Child Poverty Action Group

Growing up in poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing, and educational attainment of children. The impacts on children are described in the Scottish Government's first delivery plan for tackling child poverty 2018-22, Every Child, Every Chance⁷:

"If your parents are stressed about money and argue a lot, it'll impact you and you feel like you can't do anything about it."

Member of the Children's Parliament, age 10

Families in poverty are more likely than others to come into contact with the care system. The care system is concerned with the protection and care of children, young people and families in need of advice and support. Child abuse and neglect is caused by many interlocking factors: poverty alone is not a necessary or sufficient cause, but it may be a contributory factor.

There are various plausible explanations for the relationship between family socio-economic circumstances and the prevalence of child abuse and neglect. There may be a direct effect through material hardship or lack of money to buy in support, or an indirect effect through parental stress and neighbourhood conditions.

⁶ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/pages/7/>

No data is collected by UK governments on the socio-economic circumstances of families in which children are, or have been, at risk of significant harm. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation conducted an evidence review in 2016 into the relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect⁸ and reached the following conclusions:

- There is a lack of joined-up thinking about the relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect in the UK.
- Evidence of the contributory impact of poverty on child abuse and neglect is limited but nonetheless compelling.
- Policy and practice change should not wait for more detailed evidence to emerge.
- Reducing family poverty across the population is likely to reduce both the extent and severity of child abuse and neglect in childhood and its later consequences on survivors in adult life, as well as its wider economic cost to society.

⁸ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/relationship-between-poverty-child-abuse-and-neglect-evidence-review>

The national context: child poverty in Scotland

Scottish Government pre-pandemic statistics⁹ for all children in Scotland show that:

- 20.5% live in families with savings of less than £20.
- 17.7% live in families who cannot afford to repair/replace broken electrical goods.
- 13.9% live in families with no money to spare for leisure activities.
- 12.8% live in families who cannot afford to go away on holiday.
- 7.5% get no pocket money and 14.2% have no money of their own to save.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act (2017) aimed to reduce the number of children in Scotland experiencing the effects of poverty¹⁰. It defines four categories of poverty and sets interim targets for 2023-24 and final targets for 2030-31.

Measure	Definition
Relative poverty	Children in families with incomes less than 60% of the contemporary UK median income
Absolute poverty	Children in families with incomes less than 60% of inflation adjusted 2010-11 median income
Combined low income and material deprivation	Children in families with incomes less than 70% of the contemporary median and who cannot afford a number of essential goods and services
Persistent poverty	Children in families who have been in relative poverty for three out of the past four years

Absolute poverty is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are seeing their incomes rise in real terms. Relative poverty is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole.¹¹ Incomes are adjusted to reflect family size because a larger family requires a higher income to achieve the same standard of living as a smaller family.

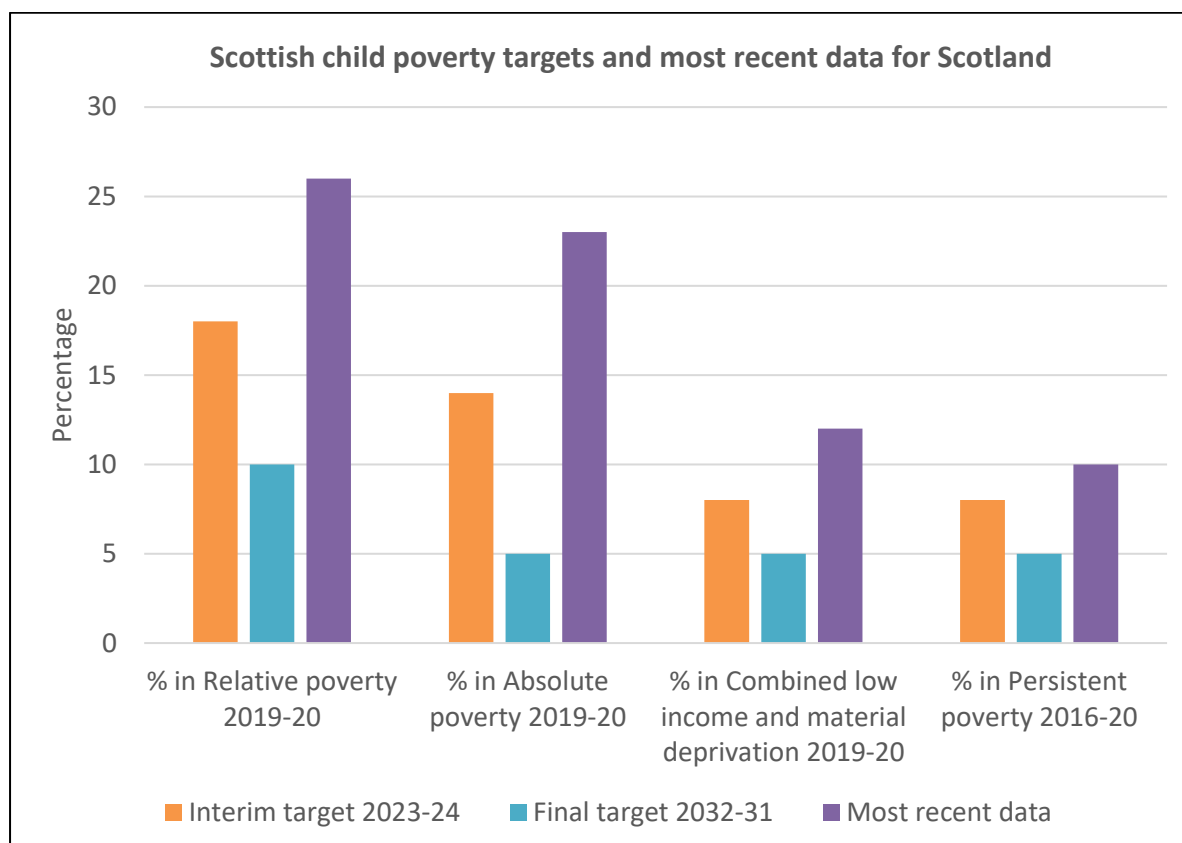
The targets set in 2017 were ambitious. The second national child poverty delivery plan, “Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-26”, published in March 2022, is clear that the targets will be even harder to achieve post-Covid-19, Brexit and the cost of living crisis.

⁹ [Children in families with limited resources - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/poverty-and-social-justice/child-poverty/>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/poverty-in-scotland-methodology/pages/poverty-definition/>

The most recent data for Scotland was published in March 2022 but due to difficulty in obtaining new data it does not reflect recent events and only the fourth measure, persistent poverty, has been updated since the 2021 release¹². In these statistics, a dependent child is defined as a person aged 0-15 or a person aged 16-19 who is living with their parents and in full-time education or training.



Even before the pandemic, child poverty in Scotland was increasing. In their interim report for 2020-21¹³ the Scottish Government acknowledged that:

“...child poverty targets will be even more challenging to achieve given the pandemic and subsequent longer term impact on the economy. The economic effects of COVID-19 are likely to disproportionately affect those on low incomes with limited savings, many of whom work in sectors that have been subject to restrictions: hospitality, tourism, manufacturing, entertainment, non-food retail and wholesale, as well as sectors where working from home is more problematic. People working in these sectors were already much more likely to be in poverty.¹⁴ Tackling child poverty: third year progress report 2020-2021

¹² <https://data.gov.scot/poverty/2022/cpupdate.html>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-third-year-progress-report-2020-2021/pages/5/>

¹⁴ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/01/Living-standards-outlook-2021.pdf>

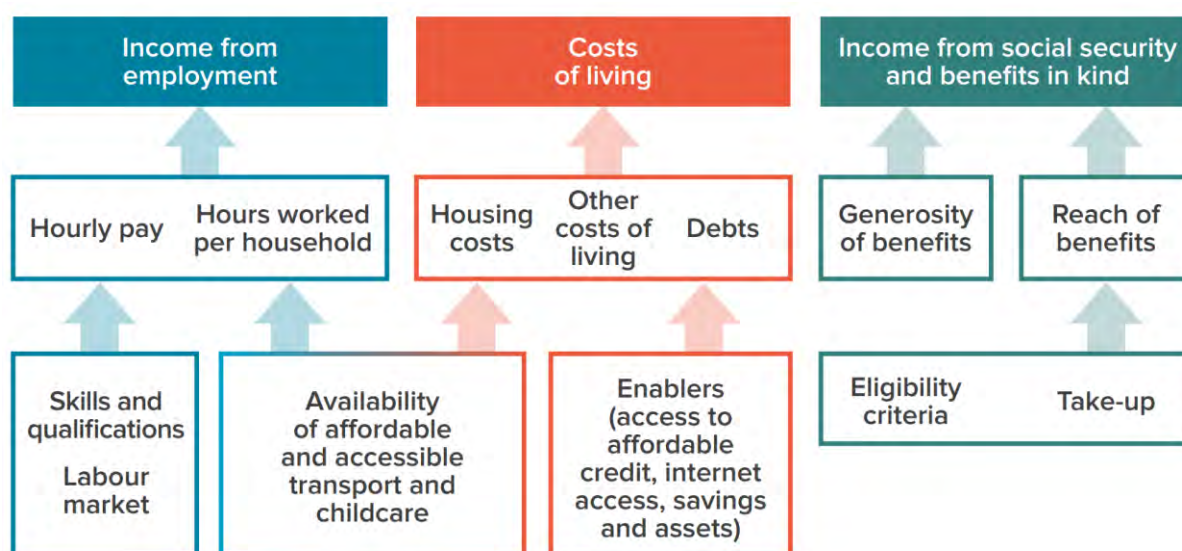
The report includes a summary of actions taken to protect people and communities through COVID-19. Key provision to help families included:

- Scottish Child Payment for eligible children aged under 6 (£10 per week).
- Continuing free school meal provision during school closures and holidays.
- Two £100 hardship payments to children and young people from low income households (doubled by Orkney Islands Council to £200).
- Provision of free digital devices through the Connecting Scotland programme.

Local agencies managed these programmes and distributed extra funding provided via the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments, along with emergency funds to combat food insecurity and financial insecurity.

Preventing, alleviating and mitigating against child poverty requires a range of actions, at national and local levels. The Scottish Government has identified drivers of poverty in economic terms and created a simple logic model focusing on changing economic circumstances for those in poverty:

Drivers of child poverty reduction



Scottish Government “Best Start, Bright Futures”¹⁵

“Best Start, Bright Futures” references multiple policy initiatives designed to combat poverty and benefit families in general, under three themes:

- Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work.
- Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs.
- Supporting the next generation to thrive.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/documents/>

Immediate measures to address child poverty include an increase in Scottish Child Payment to £20 per week from April 2022 and £25 per week by the end of 2022, and the rollout of Scottish Child Payment to eligible children under 16. Specific initiatives are targeted to supporting employment, childcare, digital connectivity, post school transitions, fuel poverty and the cost of living. In the longer term, there is a commitment to introduce a Community Wealth Building Bill, and work with local public, private and third sector partners to create sustainable fair work opportunities for parents, tackling the structural inequalities which prevent priority families from participating in the labour market.

Actions to prevent or alleviate poverty by increasing national income or benefit levels requires control of levers to which we in Orkney do not have access. Scottish Government has started to explore longer term solutions, including the option of a Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG). MIG is an assurance that everyone will receive a minimum level of income that enables them to live a dignified life, which may be met through employment, provision of services, tax relief, and social security benefits. A MIG is means tested and targeted to those on low incomes and recognises that there is a role for business to help raise incomes, not just the welfare state.

In March 2021, the Scottish Government adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹⁶. Article 27 affirms “the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development” and mandates that governments “shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing”.

“Best Start, Bright Futures” notes, in its Islands Impact Assessment, that the incidence of child poverty in remote, rural and island areas is mostly lower than in urban areas, but recognises that this does not take into account the higher cost of living. Children’s Neighbourhoods Scotland published a review of evidence¹⁷ in November 2020 into the effects of rural poverty and social exclusion on children and young people. Among their key findings are:

- Children and young people are vulnerable to the risk of poverty in rural areas because their needs tend to be invisible behind the ‘rural idyll’.
- It costs 10% to 30% more for families with children to live in rural Scotland than in an urban area.
- Lack of access to affordable, high quality and flexible childcare can be a driver of child poverty in rural areas.
- Rural lone parents are particularly affected by greater distance and cost to access employment and childcare, and limited social housing options.

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/human-rights/childrens-rights/>

¹⁷ <https://childrensneighbourhoods.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CYP-Rural-Review-02112020.pdf>

- Patterns of inequality affect rural youth transitions, with the local labour market generally reliant on low-qualified, low-paid, part-time/seasonal jobs.
- There is often a lack of social housing and/or affordable, single-person dwellings in rural areas, which can affect young people's housing options.
- Sub-standard and expensive public and private transport infrastructure can exclude rural young people from the education system/labour market.
- Many specialist health/support services are distant from rural communities, creating social inequalities for those without private transport.

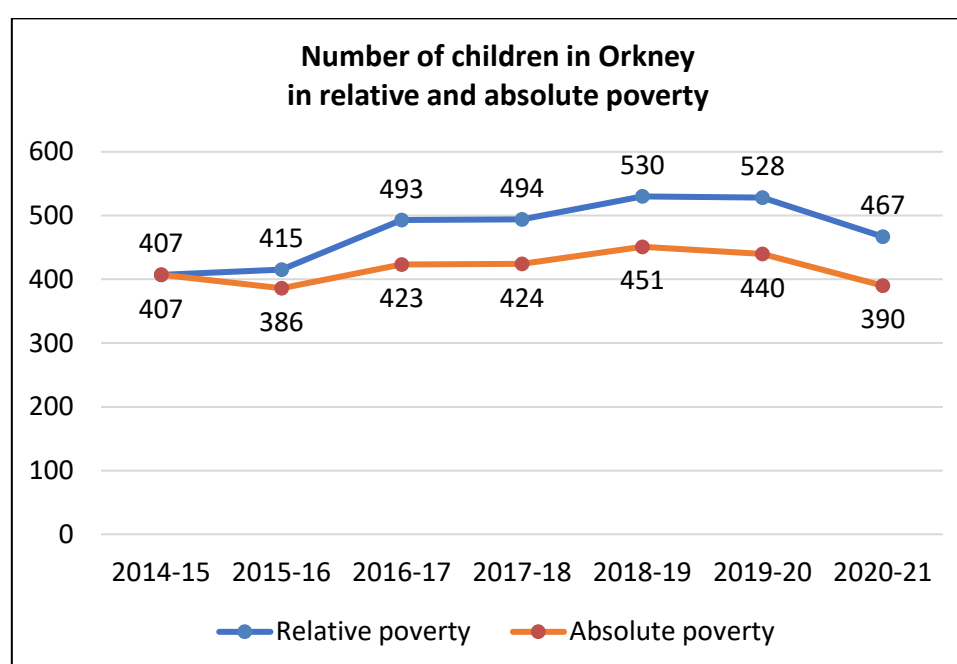
These findings will come as no surprise to families in Orkney, and underline the doubly negative effect of poverty in exacerbating those factors which already constrain children's lives and future prospects in rural areas. Partner agencies will continue to campaign for socio-economic, cultural, and attitudinal change, both locally and nationally.

The local context: child poverty in Orkney

Meaningful statistics for child poverty in Orkney are not easy to obtain. Published data may be years old and the small numbers in rural and island communities mean that data may be misleading due to averaging, scaling up and rounding, or may not be publicly available at all due to the risk of identifying individuals.

The UK Department of Work and Pensions publishes figures for the numbers and percentages of children living in absolute and relative poverty for every local authority in the UK¹⁸. Figures for the other two measures used by the Scottish Government – ‘Combined low income and material deprivation’, and ‘Persistent Poverty’, are not available at Orkney level at present.

The DWP statistics include only children aged 0-15, due to difficulty in establishing whether 16 and 17 year olds are dependents or not. DWP has advised that the incidence of child poverty in 2020-21 is likely to be under-reported because of issues in surveying families remotely during lockdown, rather than face-to-face. Nevertheless, the data is the best we have at present.

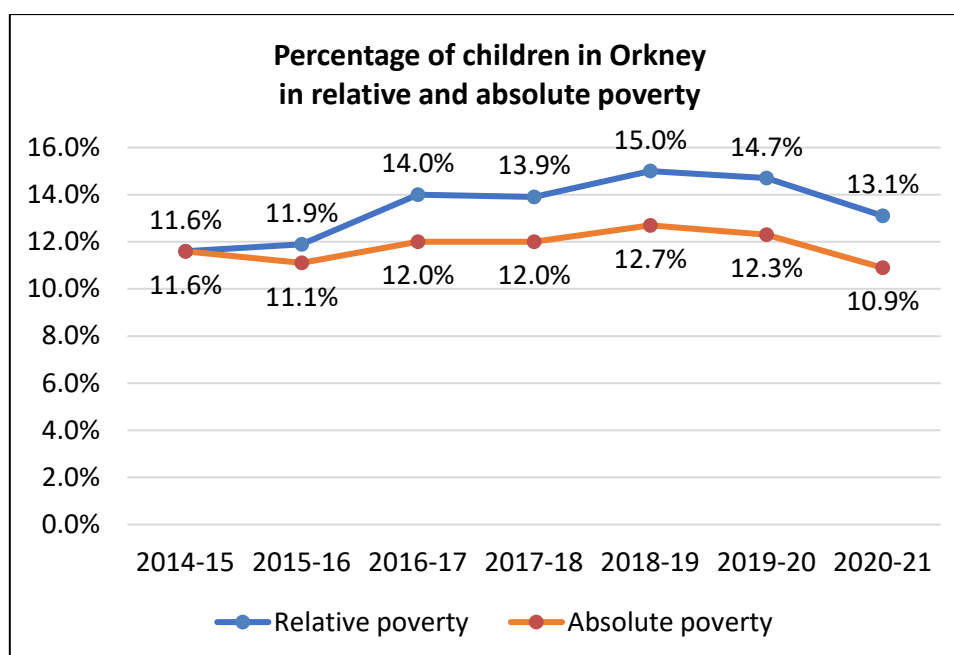


Equivalised income is income Before Housing Costs (BHC) and includes contributions from earnings, state support and pensions. Equivalisation adjusts incomes for family size and composition, taking an adult couple with no children as the reference point.

A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income.

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics>

Relative low income is defined as a family in low income (BHC) in the reference year. Absolute low income is defined as a family in low income (BHC) in the reference year in comparison with incomes in financial year 2010-11.



Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of children aged 0 to 15 living in low income families in a local authority by the population aged 0 to 15 in that area. Populations have been taken from mid-year population estimates which are an estimate of the usual resident population as at 30 June of the reference year.

These figures suggest that the lowest income households in Orkney are not keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole. Although the figures appear to have improved in 2020-21, for the reasons given above they may not be reliable. We would want to see this trend continuing in future years before we could be sure that our actions were making a positive impact.

Figures for the other two measures used by the Scottish Government – ‘Combined low income and material deprivation’, and ‘Persistent Poverty’, are not available at Orkney level at present.

Other data to help understand child poverty in Orkney is available from the Scottish Government’s child poverty dashboard of local area statistics, last updated in January 2022¹⁹. The dashboard contains a selection of indicators at local authority level which can be used to understand the local context and how that might be changing. Some of these can be found in Appendix 1.

Orkney’s data is more variable than Scotland’s due to the inherent volatility of small population statistics. Some current findings are:

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-statistics-january-2022/>

- The percentage of children in working families in Orkney fell sharply from 80% in 2019 to 58% in 2020, dipping below Scotland at 63%.
- 8% of Orkney adults have no savings.
- 12% of Orkney households with children contained an adult with a long term health problem.
- 66% of Orkney households are managing well financially (34% are not).
- 3% of Orkney households are single parent families and 5% have 3+ children.
- Of all family households in Orkney, 17% are single parent families and 26% have 3+ children.
- 14.7% of first-time mothers in Orkney are under 25.
- The End Child Poverty Coalition estimate for child poverty in Orkney after housing costs are deducted from household income is 23%, reflecting the relatively high cost of housing in Orkney.

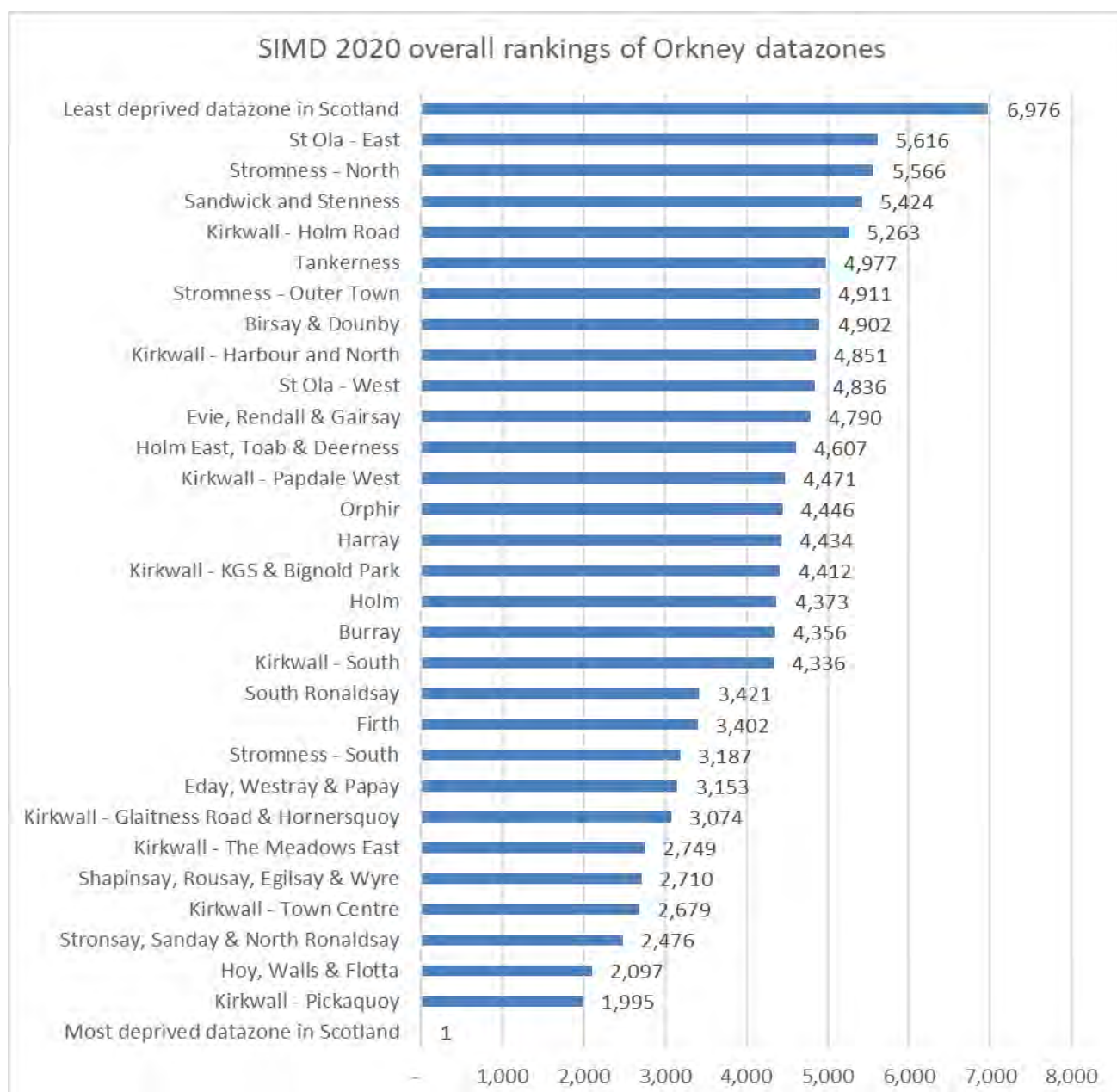
We currently do not have a measure of educational attainment which can assess the degree of correlation in Orkney between attainment and socio-economic deprivation. The Council's Education Service is working with Education Scotland to develop an approach which will enable us to collect this information in future years.

As well as the scale of poverty in Orkney, it is helpful to know where it is most likely to be found. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020²⁰) shows the relative deprivation of different places in Scotland. It calculates a set of composite measures for six factors: income, employment, health, education, housing, crime and access to services. The index combines all of these to come up with a single overall measure for each datazone, or geographical place.

The chart on page 16 shows the relative deprivation of Orkney's 29 datazones. We can see that the Pickaquoy area of Kirkwall is the most deprived, and St Ola East is the most prosperous. We would expect to find more families in poverty in the areas towards the bottom of the chart, but it is important to remember that there will be individual families in all areas experiencing hardship.

Appendix 4 compares SIMD 2020 data with household income and shows that the lowest average annual income is in Hoy, Walls and Flotta (£24,092) and the highest in St Ola East (£50,836). However, for the lower quartile (25%) of households, average annual income is only £10,915 in Hoy, Walls and Flotta compared with £26,740 in St Ola East. Lower quartile incomes are significantly lower than average in the isles in general, as well as in some areas of Kirkwall, reflecting the pattern in the chart above.

²⁰ Corrected release see <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>



Fuel poverty is a significant cause of hardship in Orkney. The Scottish House Condition Survey²¹ includes data for fuel poverty, averaged over three years to improve accuracy. A household is defined as being in 'fuel poverty' if total fuel costs necessary to maintain a satisfactory heating regime are more than 10% of the household's net income and the remaining income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living. 'Extreme fuel poverty' follows the same definition except that a household would have to spend more than 20% of its net income.

Orkney's weather, older housing stock and lack of mains gas contribute to some of the highest rates of fuel poverty in Scotland. The most recently published figures for

²¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-local-authority-analysis-2017-2019/documents/>

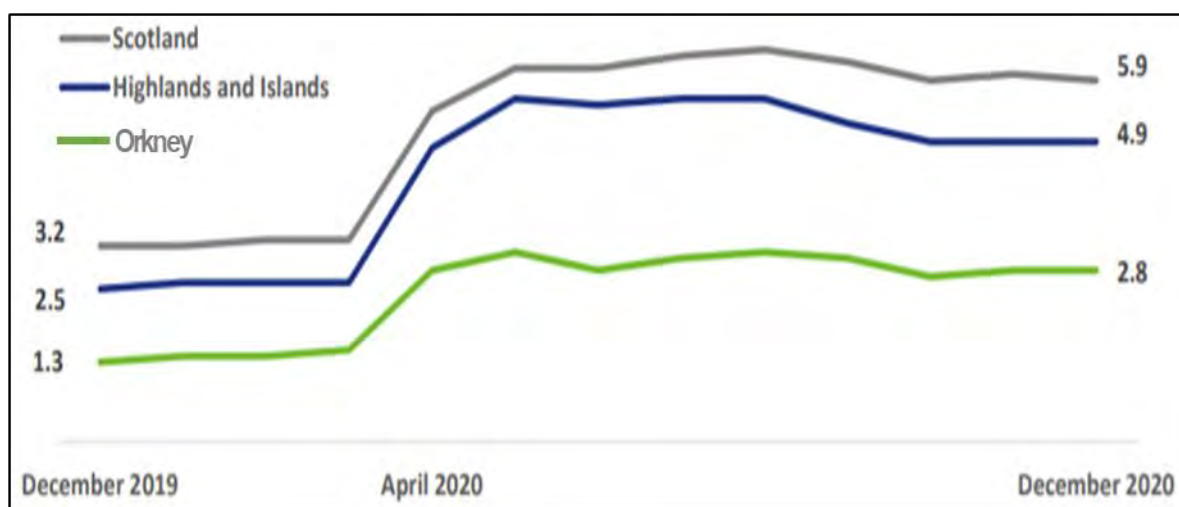
Orkney show that 30.5% of Orkney households were in fuel poverty during 2017-19, compared with a Scottish average of 24.4%. 21.8% of Orkney households were in extreme fuel poverty over the same period, compared with a Scottish average of 11.9%. The massive increases in energy costs due to take effect in 2022 will undoubtedly push many more families into extreme fuel poverty.

The pandemic caused many families in Orkney, who were just about managing, to suffer a sudden fall in income which tipped them into poverty. During the year to December 2020, unemployment in Orkney more than doubled, 800 people were furloughed, and youth unemployment in Orkney rose from 2.1% to 5.3%.

The charts below illustrate the changing unemployment rate in Orkney during 2020 and 2021, using the Office of National Statistics “Claimant Count” measure of unemployment related benefit claimants as a percentage of the total working-age population. This measure does not capture those who were furloughed or self-employed and not claiming benefits, but is an indicator of the volatility of the labour market. Orkney’s unemployment rate increased from 1.3% in December 2019 to peak at around 3% in May 2020. The rate fell steadily during 2021 but remained at 1.9% in January 2022.

Unemployment in Orkney during 2020 (HIE²²)

Claimants as a percentage of population aged 16-64

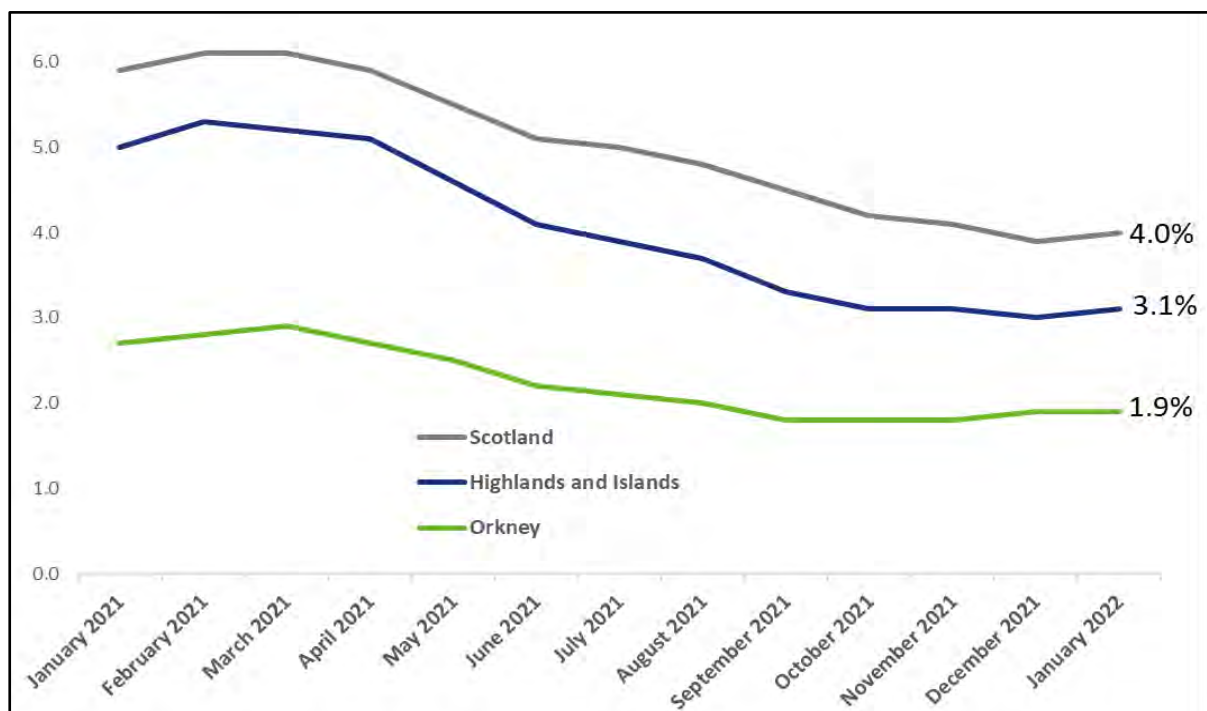


During 2020-21, service providers in Orkney focused on delivering a humanitarian response to assist those shielding and those affected by loss of earnings and/or managing lockdown at home, with emergency action to address food insecurity, digital inclusion, access, and awareness of benefit entitlement. This response continued during 2021-22 as government support for businesses and furloughed employees was phased out.

²² <https://www.hie.co.uk/media/10595/orkney-area-profile-2020.pdf>

Unemployment in Orkney during 2021

Claimants as a percentage of population aged 16-64



Source: HIE Orkney


An added complication during this period was the effect of Brexit. It is not easy to differentiate between the effects of Brexit and Covid-19 on the economy, but early indications are that many exporters of Orkney produce have been affected by delays and bureaucracy, impacting particularly on smaller businesses. In the past year we have seen further disruption from increased haulage costs, shortage of migrant labour and escalating fuel costs. Most recently the war in Ukraine has brought a new level of uncertainty to our economic futures.

We anticipate continuing disruption to people's livelihoods as the long term costs of all of these factors play out during the lifetime of this strategy.

Local experience: Making Ends Meet

Developing a Child Poverty Strategy for Orkney 2021-2023

Making ends meet – is your family getting by?



The Orkney Partnership is asking for the views of families with experience of hardship and disadvantage.

Some families were just about managing before the pandemic but have since found themselves short of money, perhaps for the first time. For others, getting by is a daily struggle.

We recognise the impact money problems have on people, especially those responsible for children – as parents, caregivers, grandparents or in some other way. Your answers will help us develop a strategy to tackle child poverty in Orkney and enable all of our children to get the best start in life.

Mostly, poverty depends on your income, whether from work or social security, and the cost of living. But there are other factors that make a difference too, including:

- Skills, employment and childcare for parents and carers
- Children's wellbeing, physical and mental health
- Education, social opportunities and life skills
- Local infrastructure including housing, transport, sporting and community facilities

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

If you do not have responsibility for children you do not need to complete this survey.

There is no need to answer all the questions if you'd rather not – your responses will still be useful. All answers are completely confidential so we are not asking for your name, but quotes from your comments may be used anonymously.

If you would like help with managing money, please ask any of the contacts in the support list provided separately. You can ask local contacts to help you complete the survey.

Please tick the boxes, indicate yes/no or write in the text boxes below as applicable.

Q1 ABOUT YOU & YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Are you a...

Parent

Caregiver

Grandparent

Responsible for a child in another way?

How many children under 18 in your household are...

Under 1 year old

Pre-school

Attending school

Attending college/university

Formally looked after either at home or away from home by the local authority

Other?

Where do you stay?

Mainland Orkney

Linked South Isles

Ferry linked isles

Does anyone in your household have a disability?

Yes No

If yes, do you think this makes a difference to your cost of living? (tell us more below if you wish)

Do any of these statements apply to you and your household?

More than 2 children born after April 2017

Someone in my household has an alcohol, drug or gambling problem

We don't always agree what to spend our money on

I don't have wider family support

English is not the first language in the house

I can't afford to give my child(ren) pocket/spending money

page 1

In autumn 2021, the Child Poverty Task Force launched a survey²³ to gather the views of families who had experienced, or were experiencing, socio-economic disadvantage and poverty. The purpose of the survey was to help services in Orkney understand what help families needed and to inform the Orkney Child Poverty Strategy. A factsheet listing sources of help and support was distributed along with the survey questionnaire.

Making Ends Meet was promoted by agencies in Orkney who support families directly experiencing hardship, for example the Orkney Foodbank. It was distributed to wider groups of families by front line practitioners, including Health Visitors.

The survey is open-ended and to date 42 parents, all of whom reported they were struggling financially, have responded. We are grateful to all of them for taking the time to complete the survey. Statistics from small samples are of limited value, but the narrative detail which respondents provided about their daily lives has been hugely helpful in planning the action we need to undertake.

Results from the survey and quotations taken from responses have been included in the framework for action in this strategy under the five Ps: Pockets, Prospects, Places, Prevention and Priorities. Nothing has been included which might inadvertently identify a particular respondent.

A second phase of the survey is in preparation which will consult children and young people directly about their experience of hardship and how it affects their lives.

²³ <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MakingEndsMeet>

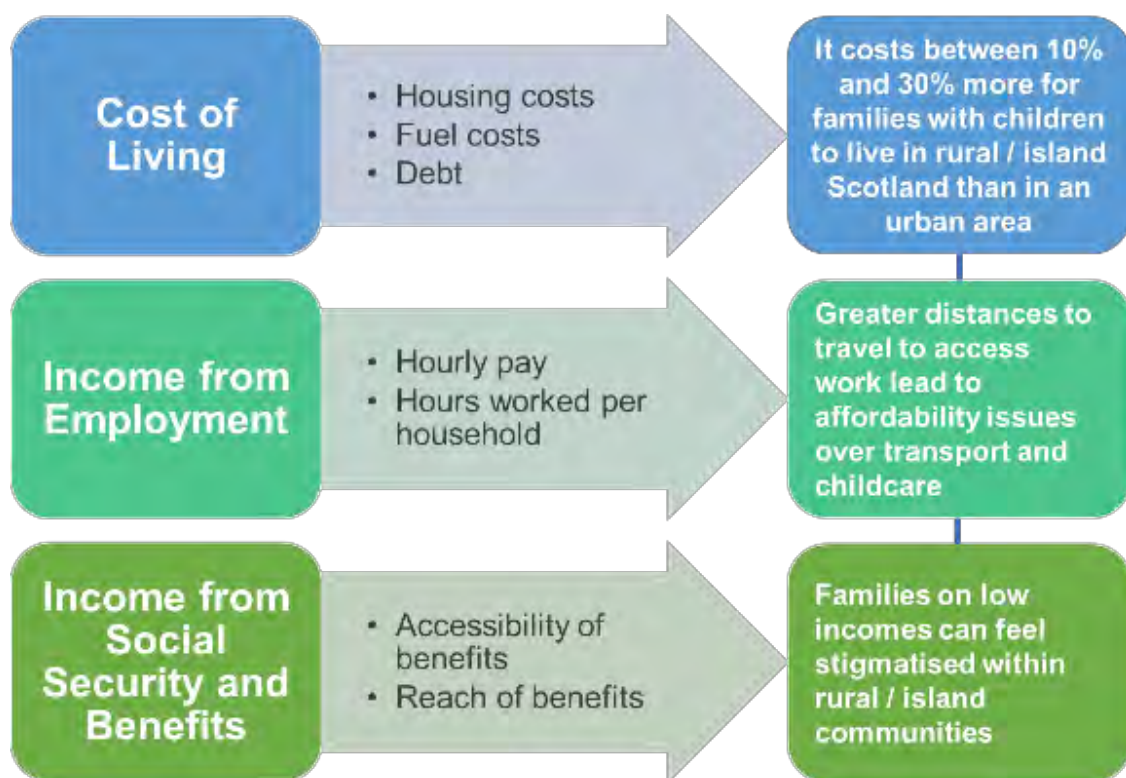
A framework for action: the five Ps

We have chosen to align Orkney’s Child Poverty Strategy with national aims and targets so that local impacts can be measured against evidence gathered nationally. Our strategy focuses on actions we can take ourselves, but we are keen also to explore longer-term national solutions which could potentially be piloted in Orkney.

Our strategy also complements key local plans and priorities, building on Orkney’s Children’s Services Plan 2021-23 developed by the Orkney Children and Young People’s Partnership²⁴. The Children’s Service Plan focuses on five strategic priorities: mental health and wellbeing, equality and empowerment, options and opportunities, care and protection and overcoming disadvantage. Child poverty is a vital consideration in addressing all these priorities.

Research commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise²⁵ demonstrates how local factors impact on the Scottish Government’s three main drivers of poverty – income from employment, income from social security and benefits and cost of living:

Drivers of poverty: local impacts



The Orkney Partnership

²⁴ <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/S/ocyp>

²⁵ <https://www.hie.co.uk/media/6441/aplusminimumplusincomeplusstandardplusforplusremoteplusruralplusscotlandplus-plusapolicyplusupdateplus2016.pdf>

Scotland's child poverty strategy has three "Ps" which underpin national delivery plans:

Pockets aims to maximise the financial resources of families on low incomes

Prospects aims to improve the life chances of children and young people

Places aims to improve housing and regenerate disadvantaged communities

To these, Orkney has added two more "Ps": Prevention and Priorities.

Prevention aims to prevent the long-term persistence of poverty

Priorities aims to focus attention on especially vulnerable children and families

Our 5 Ps inform our approach, the actions we will take, and the data we need to collect to evaluate our impacts. Respondents to the "Making Ends Meet" survey have provided a wealth of data, commentary and insight into their experience of hardship and how it affected their family life in Orkney. During autumn 2021, the Child Poverty Task Force explored each of the five Ps in a series of workshops, during which they developed the action plan which forms part of this strategy.

Pockets

"Pockets" is about ensuring people get the benefits they need and are entitled to, supporting people to take up work and working with employers to boost productivity and pay. Another strand is making sure that local markets work effectively for low-income families, so they are not paying more than they should for essential goods and services like food, fuel and transport.

Some of the things we are doing to support Pockets

- Maximising the financial entitlements of families on low income through advice, support, advocacy and referrals to agencies that can help.
- Promoting good quality employment, employability and skills, e.g. Living Wage employer accreditation.
- Freezing rent increases for emergency housing.
- Supporting families to access emergency food and grants, fuel vouchers, free school meals and clothing allowances, essential household items, free period products and access to IT equipment for learning.
- Delivering an 'Every Child Deserves a Christmas' grant programme of financial support to eliminate festive poverty.
- Actively pursuing an Orkney pilot of a Cash First Partnership, which aims to ensure that families have enough money for essentials without needing to resort to charitable food.

What our survey told us about Pockets

Most survey respondents reported difficulty in finding the money to pay for home energy costs, especially for heating and cooking. Other regular challenges were childcare, running a car, council tax and home insurance. Unexpected bills would present a major problem, notably funeral costs and replacing things that break down. School costs highlighted included after school activities, school uniform and school meals when household income was just over the threshold for free school meals. Slightly over half of survey respondents had used the Orkney Foodbank. An issue for many families was demands for advance payments to block-book leisure and holiday activities.

“School trips are an expense I can’t afford”

“Feeding my family is often a burden”

“Having to purchase an extra pair of trainers/gym kit to have in my daughter’s tray at school is simply wasted money”

“The added cost of over £50 a month for school meal tickets is not an option all the time”

“Any non-routine/non-weekly expense is prohibitive”

“The costs of living keep increasing (food/fuel/heat etc)”

“THAW Orkney have been fantastic, they helped with fuel grants, food bank and hydro vouchers”

Actions we will take to support Pockets

Our target outcomes	Short term actions 2022-23	Medium 2022-25	Long term 2022-26
Pockets Every family can make ends meet	Raise awareness of entitlements and maximise family incomes		
	Adopt a ‘one stop shop’ approach to streamline access to services and new ways to engage		
	Explore with Scottish Government the scope for piloting Minimum Income Guarantee in Orkney		

Prospects

“Prospects” aims to improve the life chances of children, enabling them to escape poverty in a sustainable way. Three things are vital if families are to plan for the future: stability, confidence and reliable support. This includes supporting child development and educational achievement, supporting families through crisis and encouraging employers to provide family-friendly jobs and opportunities to progress. Equality and inclusion are vital to improve young people’s prospects, since discrimination reduces opportunities to participate in work and society. Health inequalities impact significantly on life chances, the more so in Orkney due to the difficulty of accessing services.

Some of the things we are doing to improve Prospects:

- Reducing health inequalities through support for pregnant women and families with children e.g. Childsmile, encouraging uptake of Best Start grants, free vitamins.
- Baby Box for all parents, delivered to their home, containing everything needed for a new baby: clothing, books, toys, a new mattress, thermometer, baby-carrying sling etc.
- Breastfeeding support for new mothers to help reduce the health disadvantages that children born into poverty experience throughout life.
- Low or no cost baby massage classes, provided by Health on both Orkney mainland to promote parent/child bonding and responsive relationships.
- Promoting activity and fitness through the Active Schools programme and ActiveLife Budget Membership for young people and families.
- Promoting social inclusion for young people through Young Scot cards, Youth Achievement Groups and the Orkney Youth Forum.
- Services to support mental health, family relationships and loneliness, to help people become more resilient and better able to cope day-to-day.
- Improving attainment through careful tracking and monitoring of individual children's progress and achievement with a particular focus on those experiencing poverty.
- Family mediation to reduce conflict, and post-separation support with finances, housing and co-parenting.
- Support for women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Building a new £1.5 million nursery for early learning and childcare.
- Providing access to musical instrument tuition for every child.
- Scottish Government has increased funding for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). The service is being redesigned to better meet the needs of Orkney's children and young people.
- The Orkney Partnership's Community Wellbeing Delivery Group is leading several workstreams to improve local resilience and wellbeing, including a self-management network for people with long term conditions living in the ferry linked isles, the reopening of community spaces, support for people with social anxiety following the pandemic, and the local distribution of the Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.

What our survey told us about Prospects

A high proportion of survey respondents reported problems with their own physical or mental health, and a worrying high number reported concerns about their children's mental health. More than half of households responding were single parent families, and a quarter included someone with a disability. Half of respondents had no wider family support in Orkney. Of those responding to specific questions, nine out of ten

could not afford to save any money and 84% felt that they did not have enough money to give their children a “good enough” start in life. 88% expected things in the next year to be about the same or worse.

“Stress related health issues which have worsened since the Pandemic”

“We have to attend hospital appointments which means taking time off work and all the extra costs of being away”

“My child has special needs and he just isn't getting it”

“I have been unable to work for several years which makes everything more difficult, including things such as references”

Actions we will take to improve Prospects



Places

The places where people live shape their lives, affecting their job prospects and access to essential goods, services and housing. Community planning partnerships are required to publish locality plans which seek to level up localities experiencing high levels of socio-economic deprivation.

The chart on page 15 showed the relative prosperity of different places in Orkney. Policies designed to regenerate communities must address transport availability and accessibility as well as the quality and affordability of housing. Service providers must aim to ensure that skills provision matches the needs of the local labour market. Of increasing importance is the need for a “Just Transition” to net zero, ensuring that the impacts of climate change – and the actions taken in mitigation – do not exacerbate poverty and disadvantage in particular places.

Some of the things we are doing to support Places:

- The Partnership’s first Locality Plan for 2018-21 focused on the ferry-linked isles and brought in “Your Island Your Choice”²⁶ project funding, with projects chosen by popular vote via participatory budgeting.
- Public sector service providers in Orkney carry out Island Communities Impact Assessment²⁷ on proposed new policy and plans to prevent any unintended or unfair impacts on isles residents.
- The Islands Wellbeing Project²⁸ provides community larder boxes, pop-up charity shops, fuel voucher schemes etc, and acts as a link between the community and service providers.
- From June 2021 standard fares on Orkney Ferries were reduced by 38%.
- From April 2022 the Council will subsidise inter-island ferry travel for children and young people under 22.
- Working towards bringing all social housing in Orkney up to Energy Performance Certificate Band B in line with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (2020).
- Campaigning for lower heating costs and recognition of the unique circumstances in Orkney as a net renewable energy exporter with the highest occurrence of fuel poverty.
- The Community Wellbeing Delivery Group is trialling work/learning hubs in remote and isles localities to support homeworking and remote learning, especially in areas with poor digital connectivity.
- During lockdown travel restrictions, Orkney Islands Council supported families in the isles, as well as the local economy, by issuing vouchers for use in isles shops.²⁹

What our survey told us about Places

Transport costs were raised as a concern by many respondents, both for ferry fares and fuel for essential car journeys. Childcare was non-existent in some places, with one respondent doing a 30 mile round trip to access a childminder. The issue of high food prices in the isles shops rose to prominence during lockdown but was already well known to isles families on low incomes. Half of all respondents were in social rented housing (Council or housing association) and 29% were buying their own home. 39% couldn’t always afford their rent or mortgage and 68% had difficulty paying their council tax. Home heating costs were made worse by outdated housing.

“In the depth of winter I cannot afford to run more than 2 heaters in my home due to the ridiculous price of energy and having the awful storage heaters does not help”

“The council should be replacing the outrageous heating systems in old houses. How is it that people with money have the cheapest running heating systems but yet people in poverty have the most expensive running types”

²⁶ <https://pbscotland.scot/blog/2017/4/3/7jdqopdjr6b5bu56vu32v9ghyt4p5a>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-toolkit/>

²⁸ <https://www.islandwellbeing.org/>

²⁹ <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/OIC-News/Fund-established-for-isles-shopping.htm>

“Affordable heating not storage heaters. Winter will be a struggle finding the money for heating house damp so have to have heating on.”

“More support for young people who are entering further education off the island”

“Help find a secure tenancy - am facing homelessness”

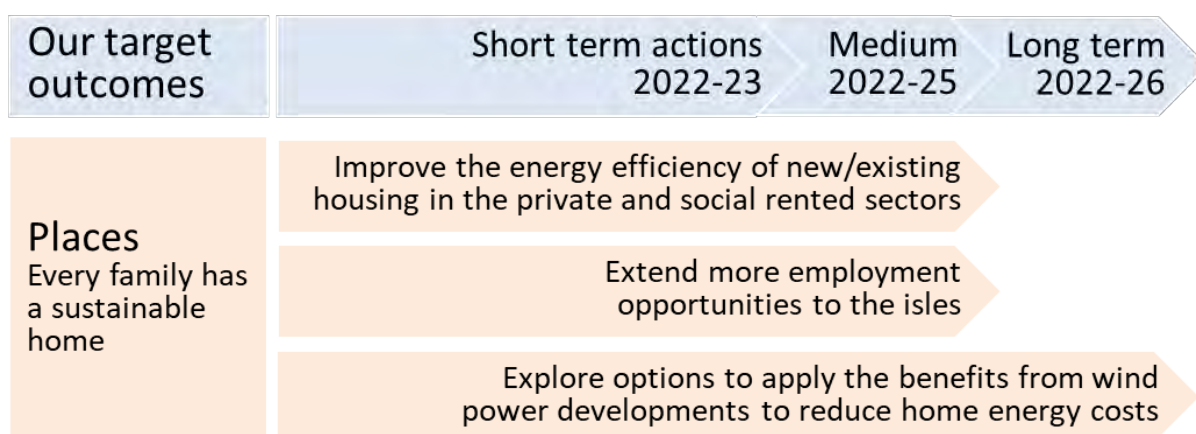
“Travel to dentist is too expensive via ferry”

“Public transport in rural areas is very limited and not reliable”

“Little work on island”

“Isles shops cost so much more than mainland shops so we can afford less”

Actions we will take to support Places



Prevention

Almost anyone can experience poverty during their lifetime, so policies that protect against poverty are important. Unemployment, illness or relationship breakdown can strike at any time and it is often said that many of us are only two months' pay away from homelessness. Once in poverty, it is difficult to escape, and hardship can persist for generations.

Research by Glasgow Caledonian University³⁰ suggests two key strands of activity on which prevention measures should be focused:

- Preventing people on the margins of poverty from falling into poverty.
- Enabling people to increase their own and others' chances of living a poverty-free life.

In looking at Prevention in Orkney we are interested in what we can do in the short term to prevent families sliding into poverty, and in the longer term to bring about social and economic change which will put fewer families at risk of poverty in future.

³⁰ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/JohnMcKendrick23092016.pdf>

Some of the things we are doing in Orkney to help Prevention

- Enabling people to access advice and support early via public and other essential services, rather than waiting for a crisis.
- Investigating mechanisms to help people to protect against future poverty risk such as savings and access to low cost credit.
- Promoting the positive alternatives of credit unions instead of higher-rate lenders.
- Identifying local triggers by consulting those with experience of hardship.
- Asking people with experience of hardship what they would like other people to do to help.
- Developing our understanding of child poverty in Orkney by working with researchers, professional service providers and other agencies to improve our data gathering and analysis.

What our survey told us about Prevention

For those not in work, there was no common factor but a range of reasons including ill health, lack of computer skills or inability to find a suitable job. Fourteen respondents were receiving benefits of one or more types, but another six weren't sure if they were eligible and/or needed help to apply. 29 respondents were in debt, including six with payday loans. 46% of respondents had sought help with their finances and 40% had received it.

“Looking into whether I qualify for other benefits and help in applying for those.”

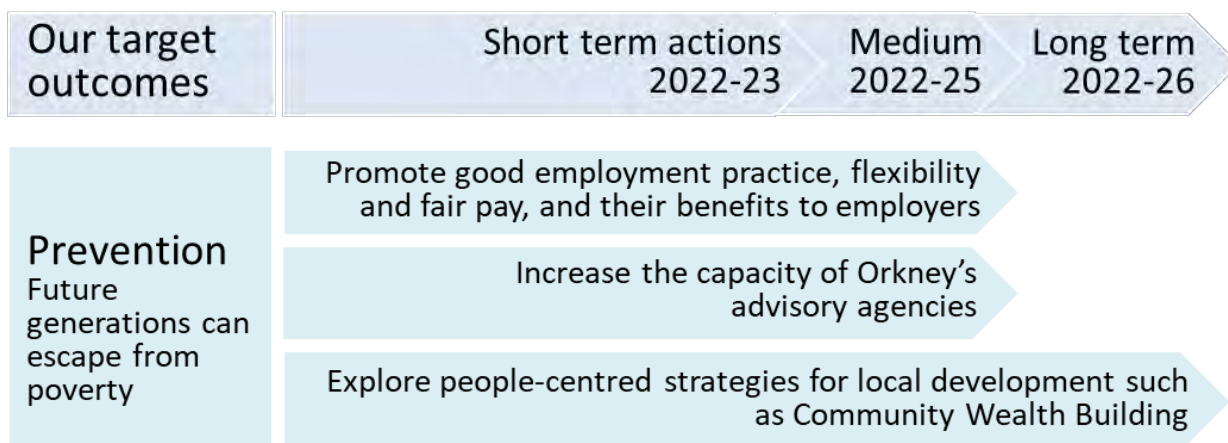
“My case is maybe one in a handful and I hope that other people are getting the correct amount of money because it would be very disturbing to learn that other peoples experiences have been similar”

“It should be reviewed on a case by case circumstance not just based on if you are in receipt of benefits, working families struggle financially too.”

“Be more open to support working families.”

“I feel there is a big divide - some people seem to have a lot and some (probably more than we know of) have very little. I think making everyone aware of that and trying to find ways that we can all help each other would be good but I don't know how we do that”

Actions we will take to help Prevention



Priorities

The Scottish Government has identified six minority groups at high risk of experiencing hardship³¹. Nationally, the proportion of children from families in these groups who are living in relative poverty is as shown below.



The Orkney Partnership recognises two more local groups of families at higher risk of poverty.



Care experienced children and young people include those that are “looked after” by the local authority – this may be in their own home, in kinship care with a relative, or in residential, foster or secure care. The connection between poverty and families with experience of the care system is described on pages 7-8.

We do not have sufficiently detailed statistics available at local level to calculate the proportion of children in these groups who live in poverty, and in most cases the numbers would be too small to cite without risk of identifying individual families. We

³¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/pages/9/>

can, however, gain anecdotal evidence from our survey about the experiences of individual respondents who reported being in one or more of these groups.

Some of the things we are doing to support Priorities:

- Supporting women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Supporting individuals and families to manage relationships, improve mental health and reduce drug and alcohol misuse.
- Delivering the Baby Box and Hungry Baby services, including baby milk, baby food, nappies etc for children under 2 years.
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessment on new policy and plans to ensure that they do not have unintended or unfair impacts on people in minority groups.
- Implementing the Fairer Scotland Duty to consider the socio-economic impact of new policy and plans, especially on people with lower incomes.
- Intensive support for children at risk of abuse or neglect is led by the Children and Families Social Work Service, with early intervention to support families with complex, multiple needs as soon as issues emerge.
- Prioritise school-based interventions and support to raise attainment for children impacted by poverty and other vulnerabilities; for example, care experienced children and young people.
- The Council is increasing by 10% in 2022-23 the grants that it pays to third sector agencies, which support many people in these priority groups.
- Orkney Charitable Trust in partnership with NHS Health Visitors delivers a 'Bairns Need Nappies' project to eligible families.
- The Local Employability Partnership is campaigning for fair work practices and living wage among local employers and promoting childminding as a career option which supports other parents to move into the workplace.
- Through Orkney's Good Parenting Plan 2020-25³², all members of the Orkney Partnership have committed to be good parents to Orkney's care experienced young people and to support them throughout their transition to adult life, assisting them to access housing, leisure, education and employment opportunities.

What our survey told us about Priorities

All responses to the survey were anonymous to ensure confidentiality. 23 (55%) of survey respondents were in single parent families, markedly more than the estimated incidence of single parent families in Orkney of 17%. Three respondents had children under 1, and eight had three or more children in the household. Ten (24%) said that someone in the family had a disability, with four mentioning autism

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https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/OHAC/Child_Protection/Orkneys%20Good%20Parenting%20Plan%202020%20-%202025.pdf

specifically, and nine said that someone in their family had special dietary needs. One household included a child who was “looked after” by the care system and four respondents lived on the isles. We didn’t ask about ethnicity specifically, but nobody said that English was not the first language spoken in their home. Everyone responding was aged from 25-64.

Respondents were asked whether their family circumstances affected their income or cost of living.

“Yes. I cannot work full time because I care for my daughter and husband”

“Yes, it makes employment unlikely and/or unstable”

“Yes, electric is used all day and into evening”

“Had to give up work for autistic child”

“Be more inclusive as a community to newcomers, single parents in particular seem to be a very small minority in Orkney. I often feel unsupported and marginalised because I don't have a partner”

“As a single parent I am expected to provide everything on my own with no extra help or support. DWP expects me to work full time despite no childcare and minimal financial help with childcare costs. During school holidays, my childcare costs are higher than my salary!”

“Women's aid and home start have been a life line to me, helping me through some extremely challenging times...People wonder why women stay with abusive partners, the alternative isn't that much better if I am honest”

Actions we will take to support Priorities

Our target outcomes	Short term actions 2022-23	Medium 2022-25	Long term 2022-26
Priorities No child is left behind	Make inter-island ferry travel affordable to children and families on the ferry-linked isles		
	Improve the availability and affordability of wraparound childcare/after-school provision		
	Prioritise early financial support for families at risk, to avert crisis and family breakdown		

Monitoring and evaluation

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 introduced a requirement for public agencies to report annually on the measures they were taking to combat child poverty. One of the purposes of this strategy is to provide a framework for reporting progress.

In small, rural, island communities, it is difficult to extract useful local data from national data sources. We monitor and report progress using the most relevant and up to date information available, principally from the following datasets:

- Our own ongoing 'Making Ends Meet' survey³³ and further related surveys
- Scottish Government's Child Poverty Dashboard³⁴
- The National Islands Plan Survey results explorer³⁵ with data from October 2020 (and biennial follow-up surveys)
- The annual Scottish Household Survey³⁶ data explorer

Orkney's Child Poverty Task Force has now produced three Local Child Poverty Action Reports for 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21, and is working on its report for 2021-22. Published reports can be found on the Improvement Service website.³⁷

³³ <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MakingEndsMeet>

³⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-statistics-january-2022/>

³⁵ https://mappingrd342.shinyapps.io/online_tool/

³⁶ <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-household-survey-data-explorer/>

³⁷ <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/consultancy-and-support/local-child-poverty-action-reports>

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Orkney Partnership

The diagram below shows where the Child Poverty Task Force sits within the Orkney Partnership. The Task Force was integrated into the Partnership in 2020 as a short life working group with a remit to complete Orkney's Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2019-20, develop a longer-term partnership strategy to address child poverty in Orkney and establish a sustainable framework for the future planning, monitoring and reporting of partnership work relating to child poverty in Orkney.

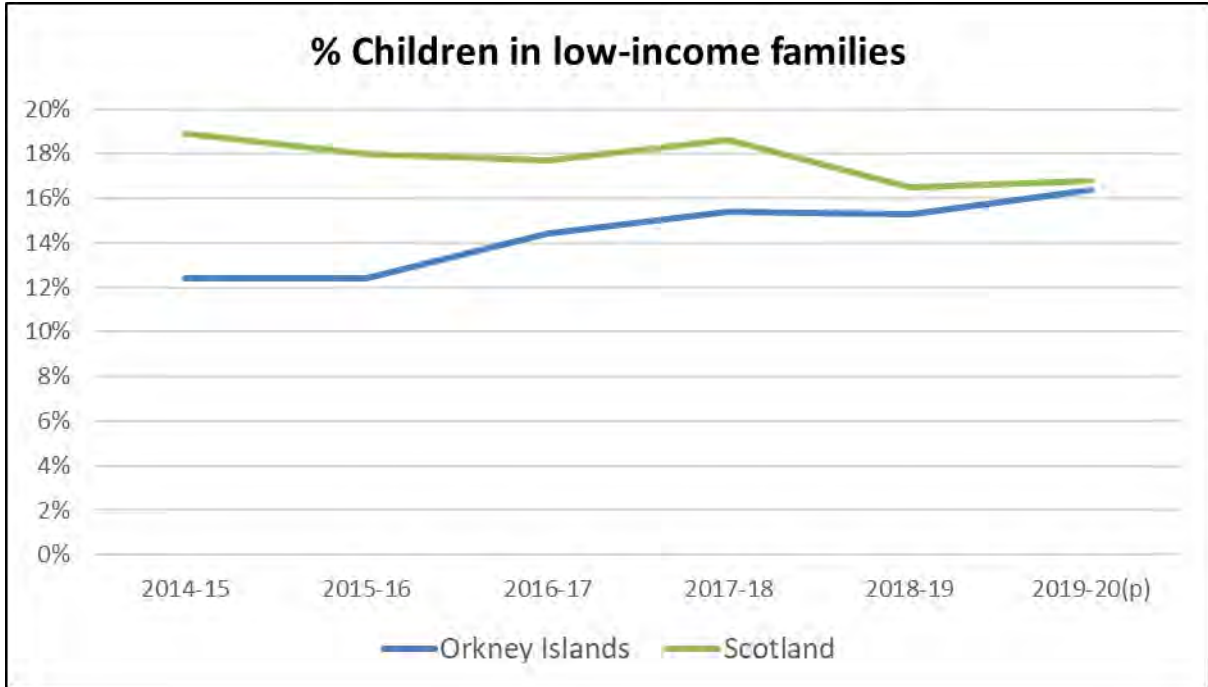


The Child Poverty Task Force reports to the Orkney Partnership Board via the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group and is chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer, OIC. Membership at April 2022 comprised:

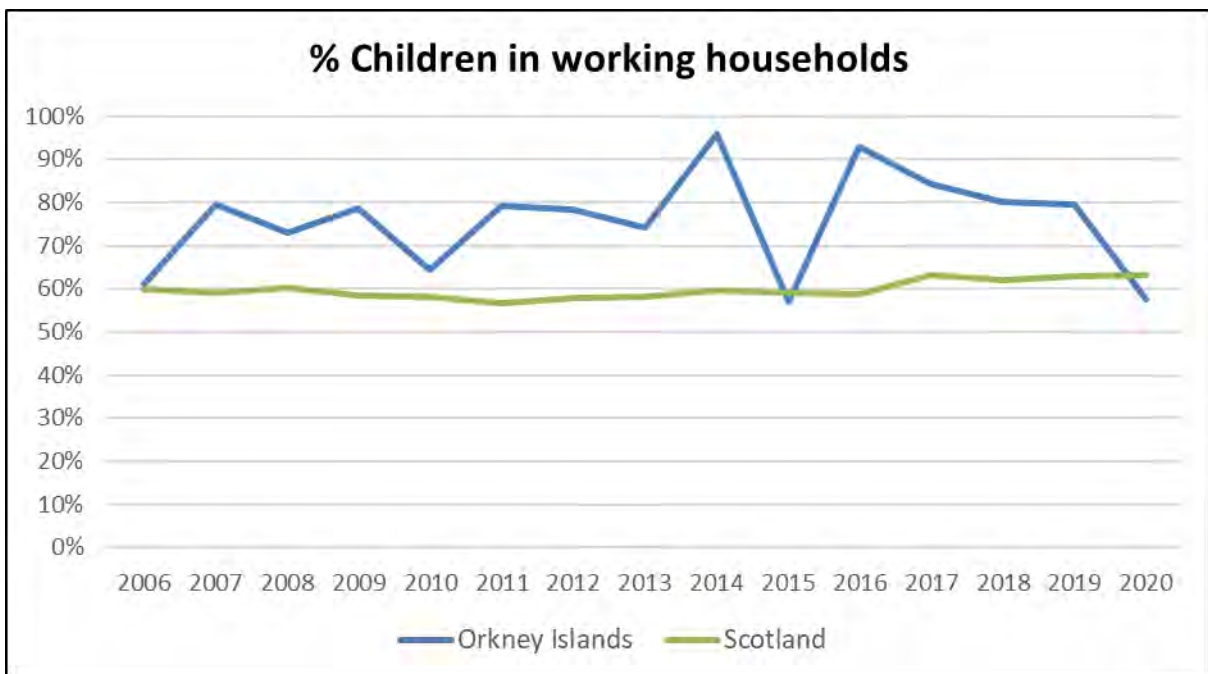
- Orkney Islands Council (Social Work, Education, Housing, Community Learning and Development)
- Orkney Health and Care (Children's Services)
- NHS Orkney (Public Health)
- Voluntary Action Orkney
- THAW Orkney
- Orkney Housing Association
- Orkney Charitable Trust
- Education Scotland
- The Northern Alliance
- Relationships Scotland

Appendix 2: Child poverty dashboard data

The following graphs show how Orkney compares to the Scottish average and are extracted from the Scottish Government local child poverty dashboard³⁸. The original source of each data set is noted under the relevant graph.

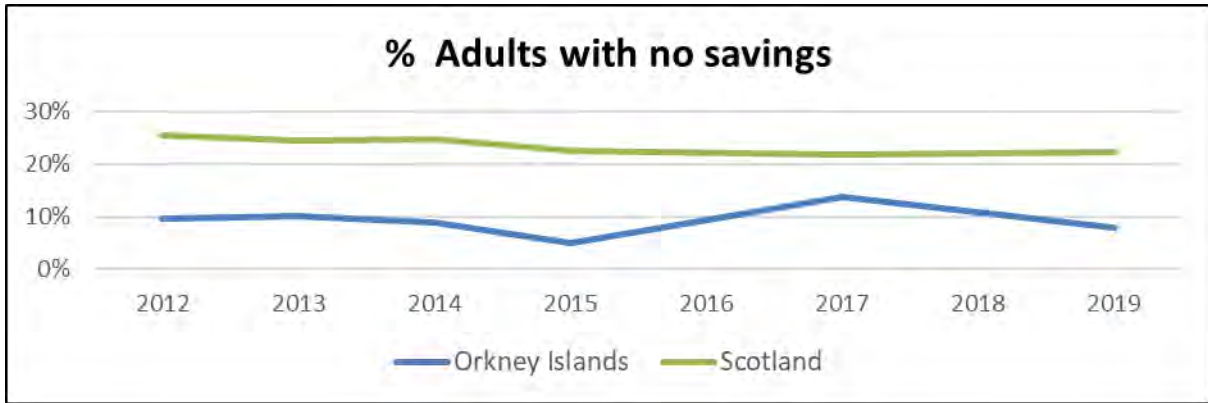


Source: DWP/HMRC children in low-income families local measure (before housing costs)

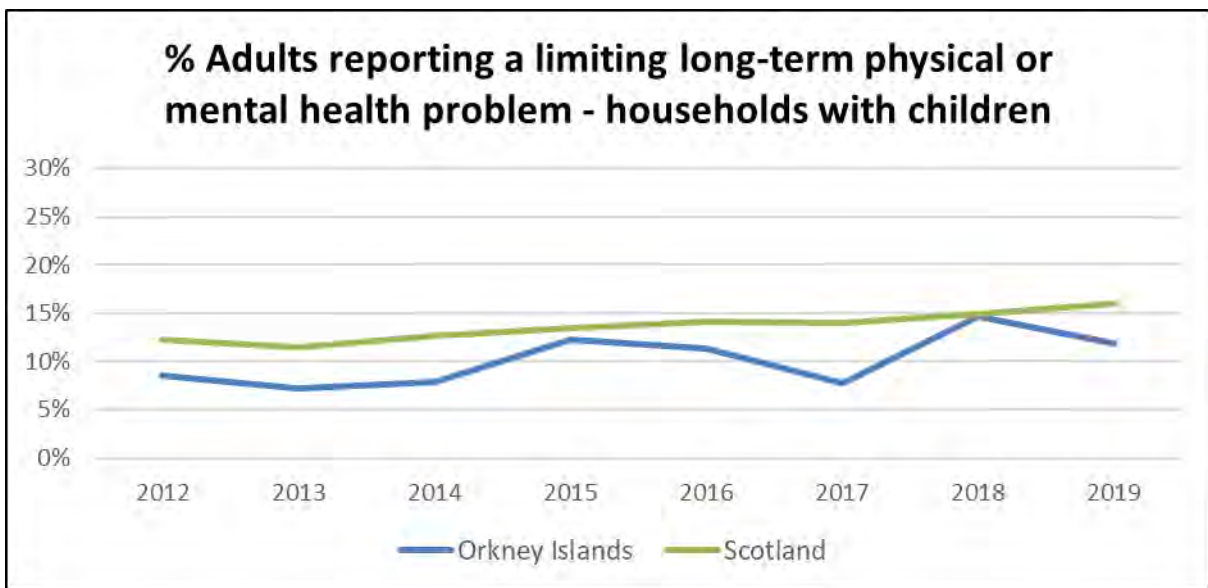


Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, household economic activity status

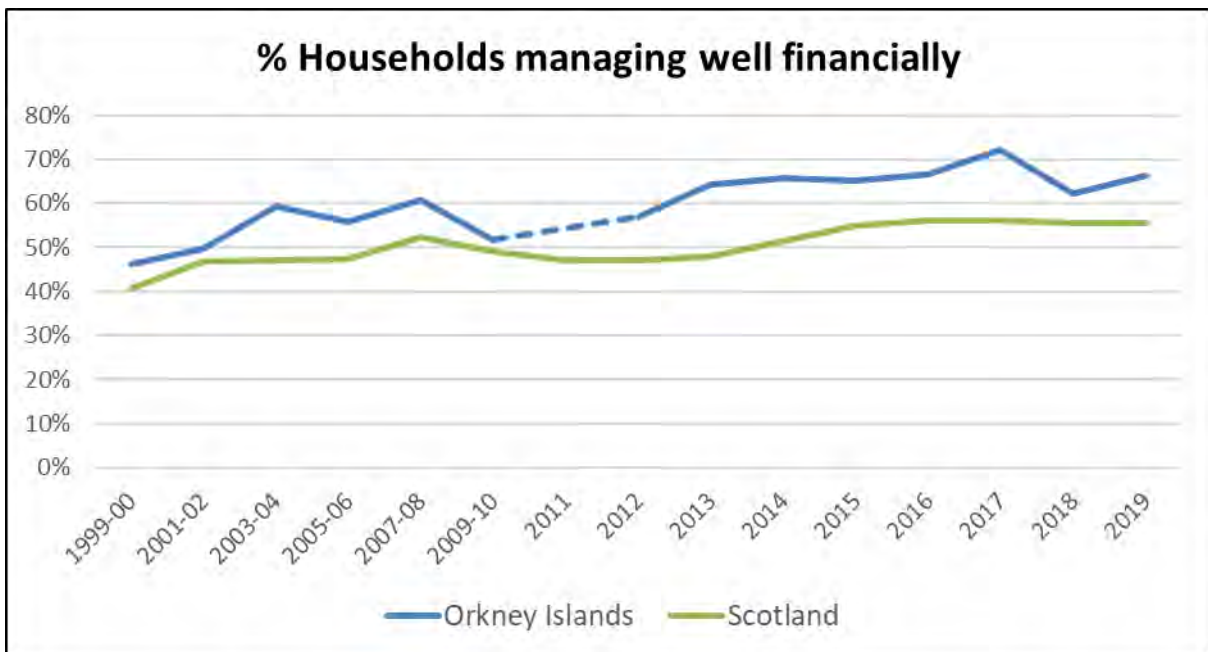
³⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-statistics-january-2022/>



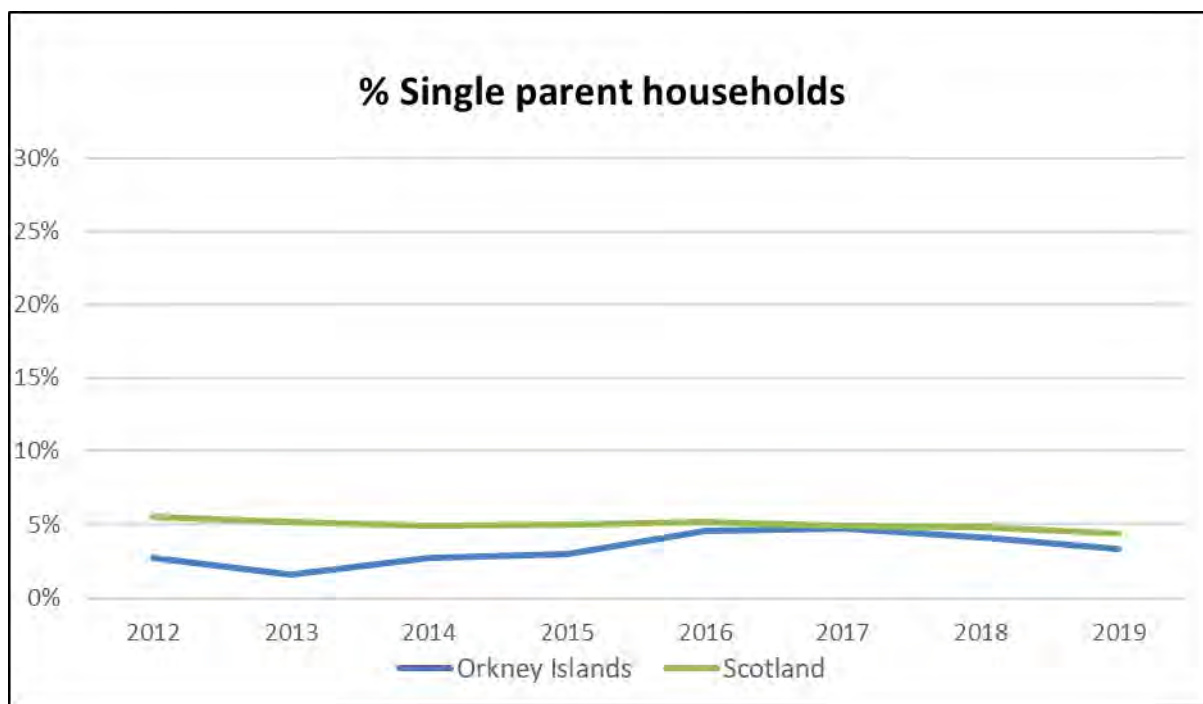
Source: Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey - Adults dataset



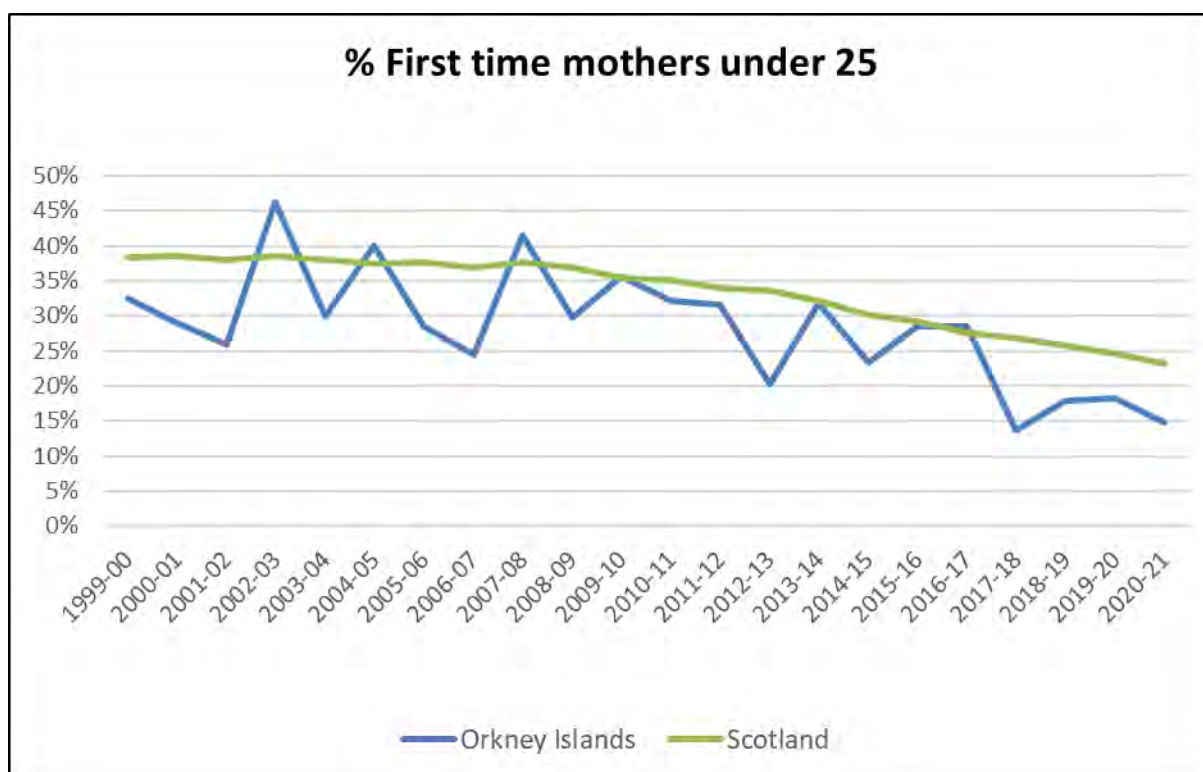
Source: Scottish Government, Scottish Surveys Core Questions



Source: Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey - Adults dataset



Source: Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey

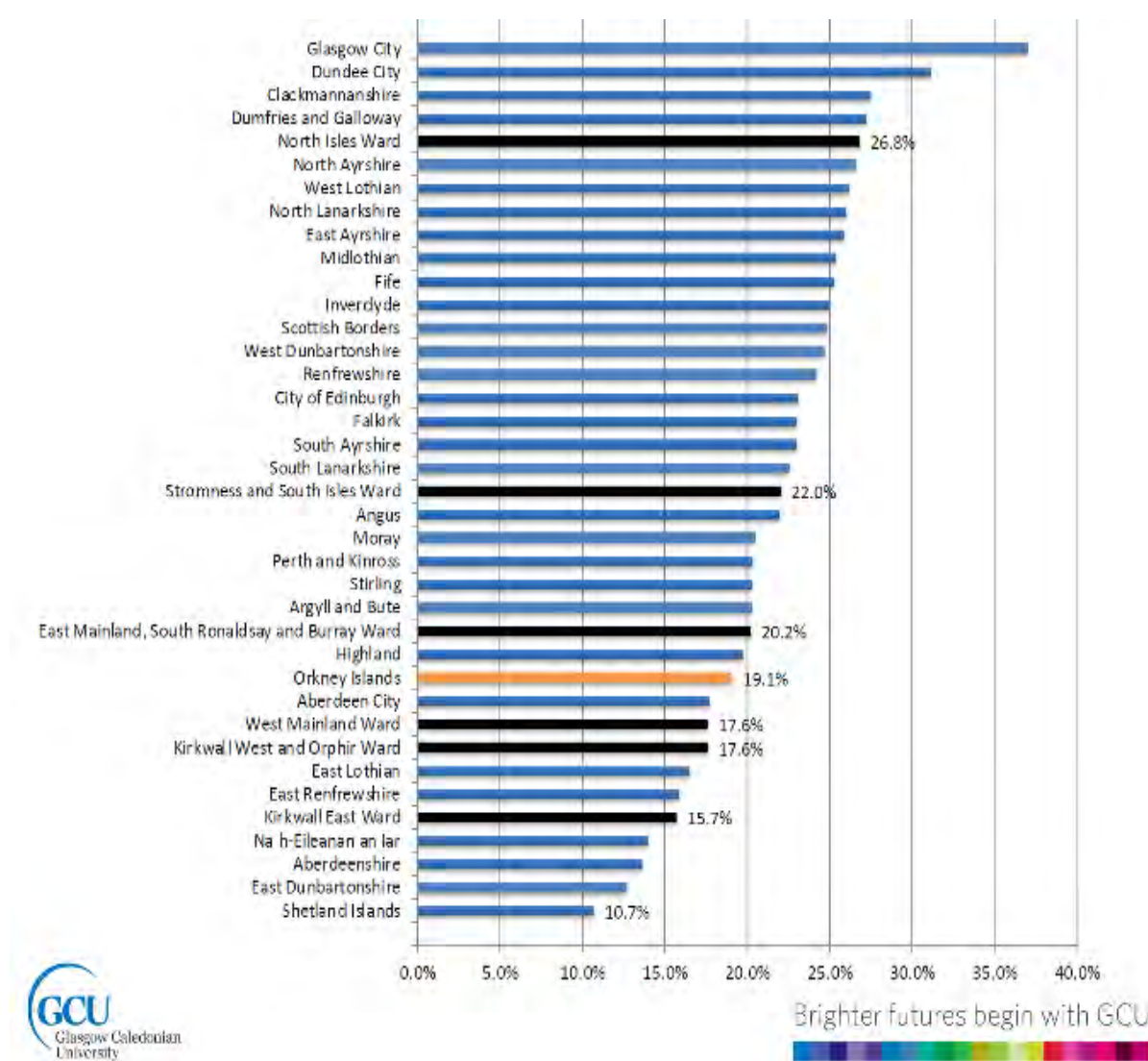


Source: Public Health Scotland, Scottish Morbidity Record 02

Appendix 3: Families with limited resources by electoral ward

Supplied by Glasgow Caledonian University, the chart below shows the percentage of children who live in families with limited resources, defined as combined low income and material deprivation. Orkney’s individual electoral wards are compared with Orkney as a whole, and with other local authorities in Scotland. (This chart was included in Orkney’s Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2020-2021.³⁹)

There is a striking disparity between Orkney’s most and least deprived wards. It is notable that the ferry-linked isles, both north and south, are the two most deprived wards. There is a strong correlation here with SIMD 2020 findings for relative deprivation by datazone, shown on page 14 and in Appendix 5.



³⁹ <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Committees-and-Agendas/Policy-and-Resources/PR2021/PR22-06-2021/118 Local Child Poverty Action Report.pdf>

Appendix 4: SIMD 2020 and household incomes

The table below shows the correlation between Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020)⁴⁰ rank and household income, the latter supplied by CACI Paycheck⁴¹. CACI Paycheck calculates gross household income from all sources including earnings, benefits and investments. The table shows average (mean) household income overall for each datazone, and average (mean) household incomes for households in the bottom quartile and top quartile, a quartile being a quarter or 25% of households.

Data Zone	Location	Overall SIMD 2020 rank	Overall decile 2020	Lower quartile household income	Mean household Income	Upper quartile household income
S01011821	Kirkwall - Pickaquoy	1,995	3	£13,202	£27,665	£36,627
S01011827	Hoy, Walls & Flotta	2,097	4	£10,915	£24,092	£31,307
S01011831	Stronsay, Sanday & North Ronaldsay	2,476	4	£12,354	£25,674	£33,566
S01011822	Kirkwall - Town Centre	2,679	4	£14,125	£29,352	£38,940
S01011830	Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre	2,710	4	£15,161	£30,587	£40,254
S01011824	Kirkwall - The Meadows East	2,749	4	£13,943	£30,876	£41,800
S01011820	Kirkwall - Glaitness Road & Hornersquoy	3,074	5	£14,729	£34,474	£46,610
S01011832	Eday, Westray & Papay	3,153	5	£13,123	£27,604	£36,556
S01011804	Stromness - South	3,187	5	£15,239	£32,734	£43,753
S01011808	Firth	3,402	5	£18,273	£37,753	£50,105
S01011828	South Ronaldsay	3,421	5	£15,969	£34,307	£45,863
S01011819	Kirkwall - South	4,336	7	£14,788	£30,833	£41,204
S01011829	Burray	4,356	7	£20,895	£41,094	£54,104
S01011813	Holm	4,373	7	£21,412	£42,433	£56,600
S01011823	Kirkwall - KGS & Bignold Park	4,412	7	£17,039	£36,474	£48,449
S01011810	Harray	4,434	7	£18,945	£38,175	£50,365
S01011809	Orphir	4,446	7	£20,655	£39,834	£52,300
S01011825	Kirkwall - Papdale West	4,471	7	£17,314	£35,743	£47,441
S01011814	Holm East, Toab & Deerness	4,607	7	£21,139	£40,849	£53,943
S01011812	Evie, Rendall & Gairsay	4,790	7	£20,558	£41,212	£54,840
S01011817	St Ola - West	4,836	7	£20,719	£41,422	£54,711
S01011826	Kirkwall - Harbour and North	4,851	7	£19,226	£38,188	£49,974
S01011811	Birsay & Dounby	4,902	8	£20,168	£39,741	£52,667
S01011806	Stromness - Outer Town	4,911	8	£19,093	£38,916	£51,152
S01011815	Tankerness	4,977	8	£21,532	£43,412	£57,938
S01011818	Kirkwall - Holm Road	5,263	8	£18,129	£38,884	£52,062
S01011807	Sandwick and Stenness	5,424	8	£21,943	£43,139	£57,183
S01011805	Stromness - North	5,566	8	£16,724	£35,085	£46,288
S01011816	St Ola - East	5,616	9	£26,740	£50,836	£66,972

⁴⁰ Corrected release see <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>

⁴¹ The applicable copyright notices for CACI data can be found at https://www.caci.co.uk/sites/default/files/imce/Copyright_and_Third_Party_Notices.pdf

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 6: Island Communities Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve public services, plans and policies by making sure they promote equality and do not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of a new or revised service, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022-26.
Service / service area responsible.	The Orkney Partnership Board (Community Planning Partnership) wrote the Strategy. The statutory duty for child poverty sits with Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Anna Whelan, OIC, tel. 01856 873535 x 2160 anna.whelan@orkney.gov.uk Jim Lyon, Orkney HSCP, tel. 01856 873535 x 2611 jim.lyon@orkney.gov.uk
Date of assessment.	24 August 2021, updated 27 April 2022.
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	This is a new strategy.

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	<p>This strategy seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people experiencing the impacts of poverty in Orkney by addressing the drivers of poverty identified by the Scottish Government and ameliorating and mitigating the effects of poverty in our community.</p> <p>The strategy is designed by community planning partners to ensure understanding and delivery of services is integrated and to avoid duplication or gaps in service provision. It is focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches, and dedicated to safeguarding and supporting children and young people.</p>

<p>State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.</p>	<p>Children and young people and their families in Orkney who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage or who may experience it in future. .</p>
<p>Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?</p>	<p>Yes. The Orkney Child Poverty Strategy itself is not a statutory document but local authorities and health boards have a duty to report annually on measures taken to combat child poverty. There is an expectation on the part of Scottish Government that this will be done through community planning partnerships. Developing a shared strategy will provide a joint framework through which to target interventions, prevent duplication, monitor progress and report via the statutory Local Child Poverty Action Report, published annually.</p> <p>Overcoming disadvantage was selected as a key priority of Orkney's Children's Services Plan 2021-23, and the development of a dedicated strategy to combat child poverty was one of the actions included in that plan.</p>
<p>How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?</p>	<p>Consultation with families with experience of socio-economic deprivation was carried out as part of the preparation of this strategy. A survey, Making Ends Meet, was distributed widely in late summer 2021 and 42 completed responses were received from parents, all of whom reported that they were struggling financially.</p> <p>Partner agencies in the public and Third sectors who work with children and families experiencing poverty and disadvantage sit on the short life working group which developed the strategy.</p>
<p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>Scottish Government undertook an EqlA for the national child poverty delivery plan, Every Child Every Chance 2018-22. This established that the following minority groups experienced higher rates of child poverty than the wider population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households with a disabled parent or child • Minority ethnic households • Larger families (many of which are minority ethnic families) • Lone parents (90% of whom are women). • Mothers aged under 25 • Families with a child under one year of age. <p>These were selected as priority groups in ECEC and carried through into the second national child poverty delivery plan, Best Start Bright Futures 2022-26, published in March 2022. They are included as priority groups in the Orkney strategy</p>

	<p>alongside two additional groups identified locally as especially vulnerable: families with experience of the care system, and families living on the ferry-linked isles. Current and future work recorded in the strategy is categorised by 5 “Ps”, one of which is Priorities. This is to ensure that consideration is given to these groups when planning mitigating actions.</p> <p>The local child poverty survey, Making Ends Meet, contained questions which identified respondents in each of these priority groups, enabling their responses to be analysed separately to establish if their experiences differed locally from the wider respondent base. In the event, too few responses were received from people identifying themselves as being in these groups to allow any quantitative analysis, but commentary provided by individual respondents provided very useful and detailed information about the challenges they faced on a daily basis. Anonymised quotations from respondents have been included in the local strategy.</p>
<p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.</p>	<p>Socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome are the main drivers behind the Child Poverty Strategy. There is a significant body of evidence available, notably the Scottish Government’s child poverty dashboard, which brings together key indicators for local authorities and others working to combat child poverty in Orkney. The impact on children and families has been exacerbated by the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, with many families who were “just about managing” funding themselves in poverty for the first time. Local work in Orkney co-ordinated by the Child Poverty Task Force has been reported in Local Child Poverty Action Reports for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21. Orkney’s Children’s Services Plan for 2021-2023 takes “Overcoming Disadvantage” as one of its five key themes, reflecting the importance of this work locally.</p> <p>Other data sets which contribute to local understanding of socio-economic disadvantage and child poverty include the annual Scottish Household Survey and Scottish House Condition Survey and the National Islands Plan Survey, first reported in 2021 and due to be repeated every two years.</p>

Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?	(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	None.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	None.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	None.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	None.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	Yes. Mitigating actions planned in the strategy start before birth.
6. Age: people of different ages.	Yes. This strategy focuses on the needs of children and young people, along with their families, and seeks to improve access to resources and support for parents and carers.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	None.
8. Caring responsibilities.	Yes. This strategy focuses on the needs of children and young people, along with their families, and seeks to improve access to resources and support for parents and carers.
9. Care experienced.	Yes. One of the local priority groups identified in the strategy is families with experience of the care system.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	None.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Yes. One of the national priority groups identified in the Strategy is households with a disabled parent or child. The impact of poor mental health is specifically identified in the strategy, and mitigating actions are included in future plans.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Yes. Socio-economic disadvantage is the main driver behind child poverty. The strategy's

	purpose is to mitigate the effects on children and young people of growing up in hardship.
--	--

3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Yes. Current and planned future mitigating actions set out in the Strategy address differential impacts on specific groups.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	The Strategy as implemented will impact positively on the specific groups identified.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes.

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	Yes, as per the Strategy.
What action is to be taken?	Specific actions are outlined in the strategy and will be developed further.
Who will undertake it?	Child Poverty Task Force or successor group, supported by the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group.
When will it be done?	Over the lifetime of the strategy to end of March 2026.
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Local Child Poverty Action Reports will be published annually.

Signature:



Date: 27 April 2022

Name: Anna Whelan

Signature:



Date: 27 April 2022

Name: Jim Lyon

Child Poverty Strategy 2022 – 2026.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS	Responses
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022 to 2026.
STEP 1 - Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Responses
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?	To prevent, reduce, mitigate and ameliorate the impacts of poverty on children.
Do you need to consult?	Yes.
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?	The strategy covers all of Orkney, including all its inhabited islands. It differentiates between the Mainland and linked south isles, and the ferry-linked isles, since their socio-economic circumstances are distinctly different.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	The strategy aims to reduce and ideally eliminate child poverty in Orkney, although elimination will take longer than the lifetime of this particular plan. This aim applies to all areas of Orkney but will require differential policies on the Mainland/linked south isles and the ferry-linked islands because the causes, contributory factors and services available are different.
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	The strategy is developed by the Community Planning Partnership with all statutory and co-opted partners and is part of an ongoing strategic approach to addressing child poverty in Orkney.
STEP 2 - Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Responses
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	Data is available for Orkney as a whole but mostly not for individual isles. A selection of available data relating to child poverty in Orkney can be found in Orkney's Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) 2020-21, including benefit claimants, children in low income households, households managing well financially, fuel poverty and energy efficiency, single parent households, attainment, health, free school meals and SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).

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	<p>Scottish Government maintains a dashboard of indicators relating to child poverty (last updated January 2022). Evidence of specific issues emerges from time to time e.g. the Area Dental Committee raised with the Orkney Partnership Board in 2021 the issue of isles residents missing dental appointments because of the cost of ferry travel. A survey conducted to inform the strategy generated 42 responses from families experiencing financial hardship (see below for further detail). An ICIA was conducted by Scottish Government to inform the second national child poverty delivery plan, Best Start Bright Futures 2022-26 published in March 2022. This noted that although child poverty statistics indicated that fewer children were living in poverty on Scotland’s islands than in urban areas, the statistics did not take into account the significantly higher cost of living on islands, demonstrated in several previous pieces of research. The ICIA concluded that it was likely that more children were experiencing poverty and hardship on the islands than was suggested by the data alone. Mitigating actions proposed included the possibility of including one of the island councils in the “Pathfinder” pilot programme which forms part of the national delivery plan.</p>
Do you need to consult?	Consultation has taken place locally, starting in July 2021. A survey targeted at families experiencing financial hardship, Making Ends Meet, was distributed widely and respondents were asked to indicate whether they lived on the Orkney mainland or ferry-linked isles.
How does any existing data differ between islands?	Very little data is available at the level of individual isles. Statistics published by datazone include several islands in each datazone e.g. SIMD but can still be useful to indicate differences between islands linked to the Orkney mainland by causeways and those that are dependent on ferry and/or air links. SIMD 2020(v2) demonstrates that the ferry-linked isles experience higher ongoing levels of deprivation than all areas of the Orkney Mainland/linked south isles other than parts of Kirkwall. All of the ferry-linked isles are found in the lowest

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<p>scoring eight (the bottom 28%) of Orkney’s 29 datazones. This is due to a combination of factors including restricted local employment options (reflected in reduced income), restricted housing options and restricted access to public services, historically due to constraints on transport but increasingly attributable to inadequate digital connectivity.</p> <p>The socio-economic disparity between the ferry-linked and Mainland/south-linked isles led to the “Non-linked” isles being selected as the subject of Orkney’s first Locality Plan for 2018-21.</p> <p>The table below summarises the SIMD 2020 data and illustrates this disparity.</p>

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SCOTTISH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION 2020*				
Data Zone	Location	Overall SIMD 2020 rank	Overall decile 2020	Total population 2020
S01011821	Kirkwall - Pickaquoy	1,995	3	411
S01011827	Hoy, Walls & Flotta	2,097	4	516
S01011831	Stronsay, Sanday & North Ronaldsay	2,476	4	845
S01011822	Kirkwall - Town Centre	2,679	4	638
S01011830	Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre	2,710	4	560
S01011824	Kirkwall - The Meadows East	2,749	4	623
S01011820	Kirkwall - Glaitness Road & Hornersquoy	3,074	5	920
S01011832	Eday, Westray & Papay	3,153	5	808
S01011804	Stromness - South	3,187	5	727
S01011808	Firth	3,402	5	720
S01011828	South Ronaldsay	3,421	5	981
S01011819	Kirkwall - South	4,336	7	734
S01011829	Burray	4,356	7	457
S01011813	Holm	4,373	7	816
S01011823	Kirkwall - KGS & Bignold Park	4,412	7	627
S01011810	Harray	4,434	7	1,036
S01011809	Orphir	4,446	7	696
S01011825	Kirkwall - Papdale West	4,471	7	512
S01011814	Holm East, Toab & Deerness	4,607	7	760
S01011812	Evie, Rendall & Gairsay	4,790	7	665
S01011817	St Ola - West	4,836	7	1,034
S01011826	Kirkwall - Harbour and North	4,851	7	606
S01011811	Birsay & Dounby	4,902	8	1,113
S01011806	Stromness - Outer Town	4,911	8	829
S01011815	Tankerness	4,977	8	895
S01011818	Kirkwall - Holm Road	5,263	8	1,022
S01011807	Sandwick and Stenness	5,424	8	1,070
S01011805	Stromness - North	5,566	8	553
S01011816	St Ola - East	5,616	9	826
* Corrected release SIMD 2020v2				22,000

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<p>Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?</p>	<p>During lockdown, Orkney Islands Council implemented a food voucher scheme for isles residents to mitigate against the higher cost of food in the isles shops. This was a universal provision to avoid people needing to claim, thereby minimising delay and potential stigma.</p> <p>Cash payments were provided to eligible families to cover the cost of free school meals during lockdown and holiday periods. The Council doubled to £200 the Scottish Government's £100 holiday payments (at Christmas 2020 and Easter 2021) per child, for children in receipt of free school meals, in part to encourage uptake of free school meals and associated benefits such as school clothing allowance.</p> <p>Targeted mitigation measures are introduced where possible when agencies become aware of a need but much poverty on the isles is hidden.</p>
STEP 3 - Consultation	Responses
<p>Who do you need to consult with?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children who experience disadvantage and poverty. 2. Parents/carers in families experiencing disadvantage and poverty. 3. Service providers for clients who are experiencing or have experienced disadvantage and poverty, who have insights into how these experiences impact on children.
<p>How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?</p>	<p>Initial consultation with families took place in summer/autumn 2021. A survey was designed by the Child Poverty Task Force and community planning partners actioned their field staff to distribute the survey and/or interview clients as appropriate. This was extended into a wider public consultation for a limited period, to assess the degree of need which was not already known to agencies.</p> <p>Service providers have direct input into the Strategy via the Child Poverty Task Force and feedback provided for successive LCPARs via Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO). The strategy has been drafted in liaison with the Task Force and with the members of the wider Community Wellbeing Delivery Group.</p> <p>Consultation directly with children has yet to take place and will</p>

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	<p>need careful planning in liaison with schools. This will be actioned as part of the implementation of the strategy.</p>
<p>What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?</p>	<p>A question on residency on the ferry-linked isles was included in the survey so that answers from isles families could be collated separately and compared with those from Orkney Mainland (and linked isles) families.</p> <p>Specific questions also addressed whether families thought that living on the ferry-linked isles made a difference to their family's situation.</p>
<p>What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?</p>	<p>The Making Ends Meet survey generated 42 responses from families experiencing financial hardship, including four families on the ferry-linked isles. This was insufficient for meaningful quantitative analysis but respondents provided detailed commentary about the challenges they faced in their daily lives, including the additional challenges associated with living on the ferry-linked isles, which has been valuable in developing the strategy. Particular issues raised were the cost and inconvenience of inter-island ferry travel and the higher cost of living (notably fuel and food) on the isles.</p> <p>The Orkney Partnership Board consulted on proposed new strategic priorities for its Local Outcomes Improvement Plan in spring 2021. This consultation demonstrated a high level of public concern about the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on families in Orkney. A new delivery group was convened to progress actions relating to the priority of “Community Wellbeing”. The Child Poverty Task Force, a short life working group within the Orkney Partnership Board, reports to this group and will do so until a permanent framework for the planning, monitoring and reporting of children’s services in Orkney – including those relating to child poverty – has been established. This is scheduled to be done during 2022/23.</p> <p>VAO conducted a Place Standard consultation in spring 2021 in the West Mainland and Kirkwall, the results of which informed the action plan drawn up by the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group and will also inform future locality planning by the Partnership to combat socio-economic deprivation.</p>

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	<p>The National Island Plan Survey, conducted by the James Hutton Institute and published July 2021, provides a wealth of information about the experiences of individuals aged 18-75 throughout Scotland's islands. In response to requests from island agencies, survey respondents were divided into "mainland" and "outer isles" categories in each island area. For Orkney this means that data for Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray is recorded separately from data for the ferry-linked isles. Scottish Government plans to recommission this survey every two years for the lifetime of the National Islands Plan.</p>
<p>Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?</p>	<p>Yes, with respect to families/caregivers and service providers. Further work is required with regard to consulting with children themselves.</p>
<p>STEP 4 - Assessment</p>	<p>Responses</p>
<p>Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?</p>	<p>Yes. Families and children living on remote islands and in remote rural areas experience poverty and disadvantage differently to those on the Mainland. Orkney's children experience poverty differently to those on the Scottish mainland. A key difference is that the cost of living is higher for families on islands, and higher still on the smaller isles. The available evidence demonstrates that measures available to assist families in Orkney are not always accessed by those eligible, especially on the isles.</p>
<p>Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?</p>	<p>Access to and communication with children in the outer isles and remote rural areas can be difficult. Some poverty is hidden for cultural and historical reasons, and may continue through generations.</p>
<p>How will you address these?</p>	<p>Our aim is to minimise disadvantage to children living in poverty, and our strategy will seek to ensure that all forms of support on the Orkney Mainland are also available to families and children in the isles. If delivering equal services isn't possible for some reason, then an equally fair solution will be sought – the aim is to level up, not level down. Where families on the isles experience unique disadvantages, then bespoke solutions will be found.</p>

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You must now determine whether in your opinion your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community, which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).

If your answer is **NO** to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and **you can proceed to Step**

SIX. If the answer is **YES**, an ICIA must be prepared and **you should proceed to Step FIVE**.

To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:

- Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as different levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)?
- Are these different effects likely?
- Are these effects significantly different?
- Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the Scottish mainland or between island groups?

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STEP 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Responses
In Step Five, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service:	
Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.	Consultation is continuing and will inform future iterations of the Strategy and local delivery plan. It is likely that different delivery mechanisms will be required during the lifetime of the strategy given that Orkney will be, at time of publication, still in the recovery phase from the pandemic.
Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	Consultation is continuing and will inform future iterations of the Strategy and local delivery plan. It is likely that different delivery mechanisms will be required during the lifetime of the strategy given that Orkney will be, at time of publication, still in the recovery phase from the pandemic.
Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	These will be developed during the lifetime of the Strategy and this ICIA will continue to be a work in progress.
Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	<p>Within the 2021 revision of the community planning framework in Orkney, the Child Poverty Task Force is currently reporting to the Board via the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group. Any additional resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for isles communities will be referred to the Delivery Group for consideration and onward to the Board as necessary. There is resource for islands coming on stream from the programme funding for the implementation of the National Islands Plan, including a Healthy Living funding stream, which is closely aligned to the aims of the Community Wellbeing strategic priority. There may also be future funding streams arising from the implementation of the Scottish Government's second child poverty delivery plan, Best Start Bright Futures 2022-26, including, as noted above, the possibility of an Islands Pathfinder pilot.</p> <p>The Community Wellbeing Delivery Group is working on the</p>

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	<p>development of a “Poverty Pledge” to be taken by members of the Orkney Partnership Board, which make the mitigation and prevention of poverty in Orkney a commitment for individual partner organisations as well as the Partnership as a whole. This proposal will be put to the Board in June 2022.</p> <p>As noted in the Strategy, there is not much that the Partnership can do about national fiscal policy, which largely determines the key drivers of poverty. Resourcing preventative measures is always a challenge. Some of the proposed actions in the outline delivery plan are aspirational and we acknowledge that the longer-term actions will require significant policy decisions, which can never be taken for granted.</p> <p>Nevertheless, by adopting this strategy, the Orkney Partnership Board will commit the Partnership for the foreseeable future to improving outcomes for children living in poverty, and we anticipate that partners will do everything in their power to achieve this.</p>
STEP 6 - Making adjustments to your work	Responses
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	<p>The survey was made available both online and in hard copy, and on request posted out to isles families who did not have enough bandwidth to complete it online. We will ensure that future consultation is also made as inclusive as possible.</p> <p>Interventions will be targeted to communities, families, and children where evidence of specific disadvantage is revealed. They will vary depending on local circumstances in each island community.</p>
Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	<p>Not with regard to the current strategy as this has already been done. Where necessary with regard to future interventions, consultation with specific communities will be factored into our ongoing consultation programme.</p>
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	<p>Orkney’s population is very small, and population in the remote islands and rural areas even smaller. Quantitative analysis of numerical results at this scale is not statistically significant due to small numbers. The qualitative findings from the consultation were more relevant and this will probably continue to be the</p>

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	case.
Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	<p>There is a range of nationally available local statistics and indicators included in the Strategy, and these will be monitored on an ongoing basis to assess progress and identify any change in trends, good or bad. These include data published as part of the Scottish Government’s Child Poverty Dashboard of indicators. However, little of this data is available at the level of individual islands.</p> <p>The Scottish Household Survey includes data on household income and whether families are doing well or are in financial difficulties. This measure has been included in the new Community Plan 2021-23 as it is a key indicator under the Community Wellbeing priority and will help to triangulate the data collected from the Task Force survey.</p> <p>The National Islands Plan survey includes questions on household finances e.g. “In the past year, I have had to choose between keeping my home warm and buying food or essentials for myself and my family”. This survey will be repeated in 2023 providing another source of data to triangulate our own survey results.</p>
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	The National Islands Plan survey differentiates between families on the isles and those on the Mainland/linked south isles. Local consultation also splits out these two groups. It should therefore be possible to monitor outcomes for the isles and the mainland separately.
How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	The strategy is new. The Child Poverty Task force (or any successor partnership group) will gather evidence of impact and report back as part of annual LCPAR reporting.
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	ICIA is a new process and learning from all ICIA’s conducted by partner agencies will be shared as part of the process of embedding it in future policy making.

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STEP 7 - Publishing your ICIA	Responses
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	No. The survey form was screened to ensure it was easy to read. General information about the Strategy will be provided in simple language and this will include information about the isles.
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No, but translation will be offered and available on request.
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	On websites www.orkney.gov.uk and www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/ .
Who will sign-off your final ICIA and why?	The ICIA will be attached to covering reports on the Child Poverty Strategy for submission to the Council, NHS Orkney and Orkney Partnership Board for scrutiny, and will be published alongside the Strategy itself on the websites cited above.

ICIA completed by:	Anna Wheelan.
Position:	Strategy Manager, Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.
Signature:	
Date complete:	24.05.22

ICIA approved by:	Stephen Brown.
Position:	Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.
Signature:	
Date approved:	24.05.22.