

**Sally Shaw (Chief Officer)**

Orkney Health and Care

01856873535 extension: 2601

[OHACfeedback@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:OHACfeedback@orkney.gov.uk)



Agenda Item: 14

## **Integration Joint Board**

Date of Meeting: 27 March 2019.

Subject: Child Poverty in Orkney

### **1. Summary**

1.1. This report advises Members of the Child Poverty in Orkney report.

### **2. Purpose**

2.1. To consider the Child Poverty in Orkney 2018 research.

2.2. To seek approval for the establishment of a Local Child Poverty Working Group.

### **3. Recommendations**

The Integration Joint Board is invited to Note:

3.1. The research into child poverty in Orkney and its pernicious effect on children, young people and families and the broader fabric of the community, as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.

3.2. The new statutory duties for local government to address child poverty.

#### **It is recommended:**

3.3. That the establishment of a Local Child Poverty Working Group be endorsed, to take forward the recommendations of the 2018 research commissioned by Orkney Children and Young People's Partnership into child poverty, as detailed in the executive summary attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

### **4. Child Poverty in Orkney**

4.1. Orkney is well recognised as an affluent community and is often cited as the best place to live and grow up in the UK, but it is also a community with wide levels of inequality. The research shows that 14% of Orkney children grow up in poverty with, statistically, the Northern Isles most greatly affected.

4.2. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a new duty on local authorities and health boards to jointly prepare an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report on what they are doing to reduce the impact of child poverty. The first Local Child Poverty Action Report is due for publication in June 2019. The legislation states that these reports must aim to provide a strategic forward look, as well as an account of progress to date, and should:

- "Describe any measures taken in the area of the local authority during the reporting year...for the purpose of contributing to the meeting of [national] child poverty targets."
- Set out information on measures that the local authority plans to take to contribute to the meeting of the [national] child poverty reduction targets.

4.3. To address these parallel aims, the Scottish Government has developed local authority guidance for the contents of Local Child Poverty Action Reports. The guidance recommends that the report requires a series of five steps:

**Step 1** - Identify local partners – The guidance recommends that Community Planning Partnership processes are used to provide a helpful vehicle to coordinate reports.

**Step 2** - Identify and assess child poverty in the local area – The guidance provides an analytical framework to support gathering of evidence of the scale and drivers of child poverty in local areas, and recommends this framework is used to guide local responses. See Appendix 1 for further information.

**Step 3** - Identify and assess existing action and existing plans that seek to reduce or mitigate child poverty in the local area.

**Step 4** - Identify new action to reduce child poverty or expansions or modifications to existing action to increase impact.

**Step 5** - Identify and share 'What is Working' and 'Lessons Learned'.

4.4. Within the Orkney Children and Young People's Partnership, early action is already underway to address Child Poverty and good partnership relationships already exist to support the meeting of the new reporting requirements. Indeed, Scottish Government Guidance emphasises that to ensure a streamlined approach and avoid duplication of effort development of new Child Poverty Action Reports should be undertaken alongside existing related statutory planning and reporting duties. In particular, new reports should link to and build on existing annual reports such as:

- Annual reporting on Children's Services Plans.
- Children's Rights reporting.
- Annual reporting on Local Outcome Improvement Plan progress.

## 5. The 2018 Research

5.1. The research carried out in 2018 carried some powerful messages as to the scale and impact of child poverty in our community today and was informed by the participation of 343 parents / guardians and 179 practitioners working with children

and young people along with a further 100 participants at a workshop held at the annual growing up in Orkney conference. For example, key messages included:

- 14% of children and young people are living in poverty after housing costs.
- Child poverty levels are highest in the Northern Isles (28%), Stromness and the South Isles (19%) and lowest in the West Mainland (9%) and East mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray (5%).
- 61% of respondents described themselves as being in a worse position financially than they were 12 months ago.
- 47% of respondents said their home is a bit, or much, colder than they would like.
- 75% of income and/or employment deprived people DO NOT live in our most deprived areas.

5.2. As a result of this research, a small number of actions have been initiated ahead of the creation of the working group. This has primarily been through coordination of the Orkney Children and Young People's Partnership members and joint work between Orkney Health and Care and Education colleagues to maximise benefit from Pupil Equity Funding.

5.3. The 2018 research commissioned by Orkney Children and Young People's Partnership into child poverty which can be found on the Voluntary Action Website with the executive summary attached to this report as Appendix 1. The full report can be found at: [http://www.vaorkney.org.uk/images/pdf/Poverty-in-Orkney\\_Final-Report.pdf](http://www.vaorkney.org.uk/images/pdf/Poverty-in-Orkney_Final-Report.pdf).

## 6. Contribution to quality

Please indicate which of the Council Plan 2018 to 2023 and 2020 vision/quality ambitions are supported in this report adding Yes or No to the relevant area(s):

<b>Promoting survival:</b> To support our communities.	Yes.
<b>Promoting sustainability:</b> To make sure economic, environmental and social factors are balanced.	Yes.
<b>Promoting equality:</b> To encourage services to provide equal opportunities for everyone.	Yes.
<b>Working together:</b> To overcome issues more effectively through partnership working.	Yes.
<b>Working with communities:</b> To involve community councils, community groups, voluntary groups and individuals in the process.	Yes.
<b>Working to provide better services:</b> To improve the planning and delivery of services.	Yes.
<b>Safe:</b> Avoiding injuries to patients from healthcare that is intended to help them.	No.
<b>Effective:</b> Providing services based on scientific knowledge.	No.
<b>Efficient:</b> Avoiding waste, including waste of equipment, supplies, ideas, and energy.	No.

## 7. Resource implications and identified source of funding

7.1. There are no financial implications attached to this report. The solutions to child poverty are complex and will require a collaborative use of resources in the future as the action plan is developed.

## 8. Risk and Equality assessment

8.1. This report highlights a new statutory duty placed on the local authority with a requirement to report in Child Poverty annually to Scottish Government.

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

## 9. Direction Required

Please indicate if this report requires a direction to be passed to:

NHS Orkney.	No.
Orkney Islands Council.	No.
Both NHS Orkney and Orkney Islands Council.	No.

## 10. Escalation Required

Please indicate if this report requires escalated to:

NHS Orkney.	No.
Orkney Islands Council.	No.
Both NHS Orkney and Orkney Islands Council.	No.

## 11. Author

11.1. Scott Hunter, Head of Children and Families, Criminal Justice and Chief Social Work Officer.

## 11. Contact detail

11.1. Email: [scott.hunter@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:scott.hunter@orkney.gov.uk), telephone: 01856873535 extension 2611.

## 12. Supporting documents

12.1. Appendix 1: Child Poverty in Orkney 2018 Research – Executive Summary.

12.2. Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.

# Poverty and Disadvantage factors that affect children and young people in Orkney

Orkney Childcare  
and Young People's  
Partnership



This study was commissioned by the Orkney Childcare and Young People's Partnership. The report captures the detail and analysis from research undertaken in the period October 2017 to March 2018. The objectives of the research were to identify:

*What poverty and disadvantage means to children and young people living in all areas of Orkney; and*

**1. How providers of services for children, young people and families can act to mitigate any adverse impact associated with growing up in Orkney**

The 2016 publication: *Poverty in Scotland, tools for transformation*<sup>1</sup> reports that poverty, disadvantage and inequalities remain significant features of contemporary Scottish society, despite significant progress on reducing child and pensioner poverty since the mid-1990s.

Nationally, poverty rates appear to be rising slowly. It is estimated that around two-thirds of children living in relative poverty before housing costs, or 120,000 children each year (in Scotland), were living in working households. This would equate to around 431 children in Orkney each year. The term 'working' here refers to paid employment. Often those in employment or who are self-employed will be ineligible for many benefits and other support, such as free school meals, clothing vouchers and cheaper participation in certain activities or leisure facilities. These families however may be on very low and fluctuating incomes and so can face disadvantage.

Local data suggest that 14 per cent of children in Orkney are in poverty (after household housing costs), and that this is highest in the North Isles (28 per cent) and Stromness and South Isles (19 per cent) and lowest in the West Mainland (nine per cent) and East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray (five per cent).

The Orkney Foodbank opened in 2013 and has since provided a large number of food parcels and other essential items to the community. Usage of the Foodbank in 2015-16 has shown a 17.8 per cent increase on 2014-15. In 2016-17 there were 513 adults and 238 children supported, representing growth of around 20 per cent and 29 per cent respectively.

In terms of attainment, Curriculum for Excellence data for Orkney show that there has been some improvement from 2016 to 2017 across all curriculum areas at P1, P4 and P7, with the exception of

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<sup>1</sup> Poverty in Scotland, 2016, Tools for transformation. Edited by John H McKendrick, Gerry Mooney, Gill Scott, John Dickie and Fiona McHardy. Available at: [www.open.edu/openlearn/sites/www.open.edu/openlearn/files/povertyinscotland2016aspublished.pdf](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/sites/www.open.edu/openlearn/files/povertyinscotland2016aspublished.pdf)

2<sup>nd</sup> level numeracy at Primary 7. However, consideration against the national figures show that Orkney still has some way to go in stabilising the judgements at most stages.

Poverty is often closely connected with health and wellbeing. Data indicate that in Orkney there are similar challenges to the national picture, so there are similar levels of P1 pupils that can be considered very obese, there are alcohol-related hospital stays at a rate nearly double the national average, with a drug-related hospital stay level just below the equivalent national average. There are children living in poverty and children in fuel poverty and low-income households in Orkney.

The data show lower than Scottish average levels of free school meals take-up, despite high levels living in fuel poverty, for example – perhaps recognising that aspects such as the higher cost of living in Orkney is not taken into consideration in terms of the eligibility for free school meals and that take up of free school meals is at a level significantly below what it should be in Orkney.

The survey in this study reveals what children in Orkney are going without. Most commonly (15%) households are going without a family holiday, followed by pocket money (10%). Also, 5% are often and 20% sometimes going without school trips or holidays, while 7% are often and 14% sometimes going without their own birthday party due to the inability to afford. In terms of essentials, 5% are often and 21% sometimes going without clothes, while 4% are often and 16% sometimes going without shoes.

In terms of activities, 8% of respondents, which equates to 18 respondents (representing 41 children), don't do and can't afford 'children's clubs or activities'. Factoring this up to the whole child population of Orkney, this might equate to around 114 children across Orkney. These respondents to the survey were approximately evenly split between locations in Kirkwall, in the rural Orkney Mainland and on the isles.

Looking at the respondents that didn't do and couldn't afford 'children's clubs or activities', one-third of these ALSO stated that they didn't do and couldn't afford school trips, and two-thirds of these ALSO didn't do and couldn't afford 'hobbies or leisure activities'. Hence, there is a small but not insignificant group of children that are not able to participate in various activities, which, as referred to in the wider literature will potentially limit their learning and other outcomes in life.

Survey respondents reported that for the majority (61%) they are financially in a worse position than they were 12 months ago. Thirty per cent of respondents are about the same, while just 8% are in a better situation than they were 12 months ago.

Some people are not able to pay every bill when it is due. Respondents reported a wide range of items that they had fallen into arrears with. Most commonly, respondents reported that they were in arrears in relation to credit card payments, followed by fuel bills and then Council Tax. This shows that for the vast majority of respondents in arrears (74%) have been in arrears in the last 12 months with only a single item. In addition, 10% of respondents have been in arrears with two items in the last 12 months, 5% have been in arrears with three items, and 10% reported that they had been in arrears with four or more items in the last 12 months

For a little over one half of respondents their home has about the right level of warmth, while for the other nearly one-half of respondents their home is a bit (33%) or much colder (14%) than they would like. Their cooler home typically meant that respondents were feeling 'miserable, anxious or depressed' plus many 'stayed in bed longer than they wanted to keep warm' and many also did not feel able to invite friends or family to their home. A smaller, but still significant number (15 respondents) stated that their cooler (than they would like home) has made an existing health

problem worse, and indeed five respondents reported that they felt their cold home had brought on a new health problem.

Respondents were asked how many pounds a week, after tax, that they thought it was necessary to keep a household such as the one in which they live, out of poverty. Most respondents felt that somewhere in the region of £250-£550 pounds per week (after tax) would be required to keep their household out of poverty. The majority of these respondents reported that they were a little below (21%), about the same (24%) or a little above that level (28%). That said, 13% of respondents stated that they were a lot below that level of income.

**A little over one-third of respondents reported that they had at some point felt embarrassed because of their income.** Given the wide mix of respondents to the survey, this is a high share of the sample that have felt embarrassed.

Stakeholders generally thought that the gap between rich and poor in Orkney is getting larger. It was suggested that there is a lot of hidden poverty, both by being geographically hidden in pockets across the community, and also in the fact that due to the high cost of living *“many folk can be in half decent jobs but still be facing poverty, debt and hardship.”*

The survey identified a small yet not insignificant number of children that were not able to afford to attend a number of activities that they would wish to attend otherwise. Stakeholders working with families highlighted the financial barriers to participation in activities, sporting, leisure, arts and other clubs.

Multiple stakeholders highlighted broad issues around wellbeing, suggesting that they observed that there was generally low levels of wellbeing within the families with which they were working and engaging. Wellbeing markers through the survey also showed some concerning metrics; it is thought that wellbeing is a good indicator of more general wellness, and indeed a predictor of future ill health. It can hence be suggested that addressing this poor wellbeing amongst the community would have wide-felt potential and benefits.

Through the study children and young people contributed their views on what it was like to grow up in Orkney. For many, Orkney IS a really good place to grow up. Young people and children appreciate the open spaces, the fresh air, the northern lights and the beaches, in varying measures. Some of the older young people recognised that they can take Orkney for granted. Young people are concerned about a number of issues, most commonly:

- Mental health – particularly that support and care for young people could be improved.
- Drugs and alcohol are a problem in Orkney, and that education on drugs and alcohol is felt to be old-fashioned and focuses on ‘just don’t do it!’
- Transport availability, or more so a lack of transport places real barriers on learning, on extracurricular activities and on getting into employment.
- Access to sport and other activities – young people commented that often sport is focussed on the very competitive end, and there aren’t opportunities to join in for fun.
- Attitudes – young people commented that Orkney can be rather conservative in views and opinions, such that it can feel discriminatory to particularly minority groups.

- Young people in the isles – it was felt that young people in the isles miss out on opportunities due to the cost and distances involved in attending activities on the mainland; and often the timing of events, activities etc, do not work well with ferry timetables.

At the *Growing Up in Orkney* Conference in February 2018 attendees participated in a group-based action-planning exercise to create a future vision and to set some tangible actions for how collectively Orkney can make progress toward the vision for children and families in Orkney that are in poverty or suffer disadvantage.

Generally, visions across the multiple groups focussed upon families being supported and children and young people feeling loved, valued, accepted and respected within the community.

The most common responses to the actions that would be taken to help realise the vision was firstly improving information sharing between all parties (including families), and secondly increasing access to and funding of schools, activities and sports.

In terms of what aspects may hinder realising the future vision, most commonly, and stated by the majority of groups were factors around budget constraints. Also frequently stated were aspects of societal exclusion and a lack of acceptance of poverty being an issue in Orkney.

Finally, in terms of the actions that are already in place that will be contributing to the vision, most commonly stated was aspects around partnership working, and active networks.

The factors explored and described throughout this study interact creating often complex and multifaceted inequalities. For example, a lack of finance in a household means taking sometimes potentially damaging choices, such as falling behind on bills and payments, having to turn down heating, so the home is below a tolerable level and also foregoing all manner of activities for the children and young people in the home (as well as the parents). Families in poverty are further penalised through 'poverty premiums', some of which have been created and sustained locally in Orkney.

The data collected through the survey, and supported by the qualitative inputs, suggests that around 10-15% of households are really struggling to be able to keep up with bills, to be able to heat their home adequately and to be able to eat healthy foods and for their children to get involved in events and activities in their community. Distance from activities is often a factor, and the cost and time associated with a child taking part through a combination of the journey and the cost of participating conspire as a barrier.

Throughout the study there has been a recognised gap between those with resources and those without. It has often been suggested that this gap is widening. Inequalities in Orkney are perhaps more keenly felt than in other areas, and are certainly spread right throughout the community.

Thinking about the whole person, about the child and the family as a whole, data collected through the survey and from the various research themes has portrayed a picture comprising lower levels of wellbeing in Orkney than may have been expected. This is a particular area of concern given the correlation between wellbeing and general health.

There are many good projects, initiatives and support available in Orkney, but it is probably not supporting all the families that would benefit, and furthermore, there is more that could be done through a combination of specific, tailored interventions, as well as considering those that may be living in poverty in all that is done, across ALL public and voluntary sector activities. The foundations are there that it is believed, with some further concerted efforts, no child in Orkney will be



disadvantaged through poverty. A multi-agency / multi-sector action plan accompanies this study and is summarised below.

It is recommended that these foundations are built upon through the creation of a local time-limited Task Force, mirroring the Scottish Government’s Ministerial Task Force on reducing health inequalities, which is referred to as being critical to the Scottish Government’s *Achieving our Potential* framework to tackle income inequality and disadvantage.

Orkney Poverty Taskforce	Whole Person Approach	Equality / Poverty Impact Assessments	Relationship and Information Sharing / Information
Awareness Raising, challenging attitudes	Poverty Proofing	Planning / Housing	Remove 'Poverty Premiums' from Orkney
Basic Income pilot	Hostel	Free School Meals and Clothing allowance	Breakfast clubs, after-school clubs
Wellbeing to tackle health inequalities	New approach to parenting support	New approach to life skills	Income Maximisation
Cost of going to school	Sustainability and Environmental Promotion	Pupil Equity Fund approach	Community Involvement



# Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of the Integration Joint Board (Orkney Health and Care) by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

<b>1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan</b>	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Introduction of statutory duty to report on child poverty action plans.
Service / service area responsible.	Orkney Health and Care and Education
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Scott Hunter, Head of Children and Families, Criminal Justice and Chief Social Work Officer.
Date of assessment.	8 March 2019.
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 statutory requirement.

<b>2. Initial Screening</b>	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	To provide Scottish Government with evidence of the impact of Orkney's Child Poverty Action Plan.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Children, Young People, Families. Orkney Islands Council Community Planning Partners.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	Yes.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	The work has been coordinated by the Orkney Children and Young People's Partnership and has also been presented to the Community Planning Board.

<p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>Forecasting Child Poverty in Scotland - A report for the Scottish Government by Howard Reed, Landman Economics and Graham Stark was published in April 2018.</p> <p>Orkney research was undertaken in 2018 resulting in a report on Poverty and Disadvantage factors that affect children and young people in Orkney.</p> <p>Joseph Rowntree Foundation report in October 2018 on Poverty in Scotland 2018.</p> <p>The Female Face of Poverty published by the Women's Budget Group in July 2018.</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 <a href="#">The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies</a> for further information.</p>	<p>The impact of child poverty and effects are well established via national documents such as the main report noted above.</p>
<p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?</p>	<p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p>
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p>	<p>Whilst there is no significant evidence relating to differential impact relating to race in Orkney at this stage, national evidence suggests that for example, poor white British boys are the least likely to group to access higher education but ethnic minority groups experience higher unemployment rates compared to White British groups. This results in a significant gap between educational attainment and social mobility for ethnic minorities No.</p>
<p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p>	<p>Yes. The risk of a child living in poverty is linked to the income of their household which is largely determined by parent's net earnings and benefits received. Data on children's poverty is not sex-disaggregated and so we don't know whether there are any significant differences between the number of girls and boys living in poverty. The impact of child poverty is more keenly felt in households with a single carer. National evidence suggests that in-work poverty impacts child</p>

	poverty; for single parents who are predominately women, many are unable to work. Gender and the role of women as primary care providers can have a significant impact on child poverty. In couple families, many families in poverty have mothers who are constrained in their labour market activity.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	Yes. The addition of siblings can affect benefit entitlements which will adversely affect the impact of child poverty.
6. Age: people of different ages.	Yes, as the statutory requirement seeks to address child poverty there is likely to be a positive impact for children and young people. As many factors contributing to child poverty are intrinsically linked to family type, there is likely to be differential impacts for adults specifically as parents and carers. No.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No.
9. Care experienced.	No.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Barriers to the labour market due to disability or ill health in the family and childcare responsibilities remain prevalent characteristics of child poverty. National figures suggest two in five children in poverty have a reported disability or ill health in the family, with many of these children having no parents in work. No.
12. Social-economical disadvantage.	Yes. Child Poverty disproportionately affects families who are disadvantaged. Evidence suggests that child poverty in Orkney is variable and the Isles locality has the greatest level of housing deprivation. Whilst Orkney does not have data zones within the greatest areas of deprivation across Scotland within the SIMD analysis, it is acknowledged that in remote and rural settings SIMD may be a less useful marker of deprivation.
13. Isles-proofing.	Many residents in Orkney are geographically disadvantaged by their distance from a major

	centre of population, except for the more easily accessible parts of the region, as they do not have access to all the services that their counterparts in a town/city centre may have. Combinations of circumstances such as low income, disability, poor quality accommodation and no private transport can exacerbate access deprivation for vulnerable people, making it more difficult for them to access services.
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### 3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Yes.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	The child poverty action plan will take cognisance of the above and take mitigating actions.
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.
What action is to be taken?	The production of an Orkney Child Poverty Action Plan.
Who will undertake it?	Orkney Children and Young People's Partnership.
When will it be done?	2019.
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Monitored through the Orkney Children and Young People's Partnership as well as Orkney Health and Care and Education, Leisure and Housing Committees.

Signature:

Date: 8 March 2019.



Name: Scott Hunter.