

# Tackling poverty and preventing crisis

**Annual Report 2023/24**

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# Introduction

This is Fife's annual report on Tackling Poverty & Preventing Crisis.

It sets out progress, priorities for 2024/25 and next steps towards our preventative approach.

Fife continues to face challenges in recovering from the health, social and financial crises of recent years. Through partnership work, people are being supported to meet these challenges and take control with dignity and respect.

A number of initiatives are underway to bring about change and improvement. Programmes aiming to enhance family support and provide 'no wrong door' services are underway so people can access the help they need as early as possible. These balance the urgent need for public service redesign alongside critical ongoing support for those facing the complex challenges of living on a low income.

Change on this scale takes time. A whole system approach to improvement, drawing on the evidence from the annual Winter, Cost of Living Programmes and more recently, the Fife Strategic Assessment published in August 2024, are identifying challenges and opportunities to increase the impact of anti-poverty projects.

This report highlights specific examples of progress to date on benefit maximisation, the Fife Advice Framework and Cash First and identifies next steps. It highlights actions specifically addressing child poverty, fulfilling the statutory requirement to produce an annual local child poverty action report under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

# Key Findings and Next Steps

Evaluations of recent programmes and research is telling us:

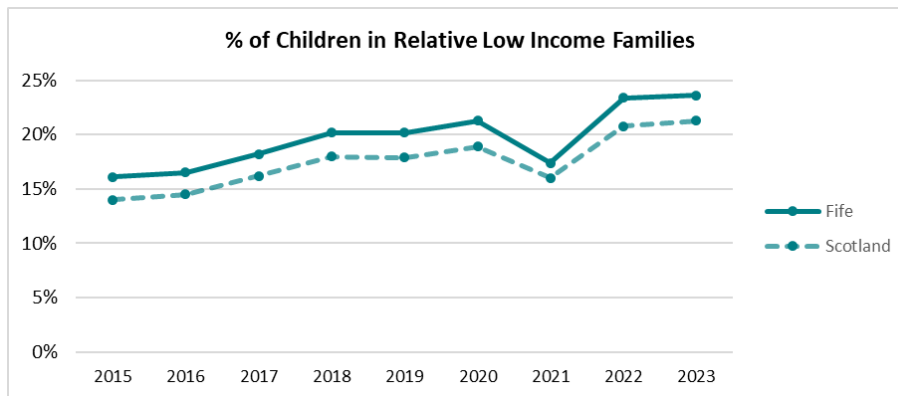
Findings	Fife Picture	Next Steps
<p><b>Significant levels of benefit underclaiming is leaving people with less than they need to manage on.</b></p> <p>Policy in Practice<sup>1</sup> estimates that the total amount of unclaimed income related benefits and social tariffs across Great Britain is now £22.7 billion a year.</p>	<p>Large scale benefit uptake campaigns in Fife are helping increase people's income from benefits and getting more people their full benefit entitlement.</p> <p>The financial gain to date is estimated to be £6.7 million.</p>	<p><b>A rolling programme of benefit take up campaigns is scheduled for 2024/25.<sup>i</sup></b></p>
<p><b>The need for emergency food is frequently not the only issue those using a food bank have.</b></p> <p>Many of those using food banks need help with other underlying issues such as debt, employment support and living with long term health issues and disabilities.</p>	<p>There is a need not to deal with the need for emergency food in isolation.</p> <p>The development and roll out of the Fife Advice Framework is better equipping front-line staff and volunteers to provide first level benefits advice.</p>	<p><b>Funding is secured to scale up Fife's Poverty Awareness and benefit checker training programme. This will build staff skills and knowledge in supporting people.</b></p> <p><b>Learning for Fife's Cash First programme approaches will increase dignity and reduce food bank use in Fife</b></p>
<p><b>The Scottish Welfare Fund</b> and the provision of home starter packs by a variety of Council and third sector organisations, is not meeting the level of need for household items in Fife.</p>	<p>People are struggling to get items to set up home. A range of organisations and Council services provide support in isolation of each other.</p>	<p><b>A review of the Scottish Welfare Fund is being undertaken.</b></p> <p><b>A Fife Council and third sector collaboration is scoping the improvements needed to create a joined-up system of household support.</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> [Missing out 2024: £23 billion of support is unclaimed each year - Policy in Practice](#)

Findings	Fife Picture	Next Steps
<p><b>Better intelligence</b> is needed to proactively reach people in need, with a focus on prevention rather than just responding to crisis</p>	<p>The use of data and the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) is providing evidence of both current and future need, helping to target support.</p> <p>This is key as available budgets to deliver support, decrease.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of the Low-Income Family Tracker and the Fife Benefit Checker will help Fife target support.</b></p>
<p><b>Warm and Welcoming Places</b> are community-led and helping to break social isolation experienced by many in the community. Meals and wider support and being provided,</p>	<p>A significant number of users have long term health issues and are experiencing poor mental health and are not accessing help elsewhere.</p>	<p><b>Develop community led welcoming places to provide wrap around advice and support.</b></p>
<p><b>Lived Experience</b> <b>People with lived experience of poverty are having an increased number of opportunities to be able to influence change.</b></p>	<p>Project Assistants who have lived experience of poverty have been employed to work in some Areas in Fife. This is being rolled out across more areas in Fife.</p>	<p><b>In partnership with the Poverty Alliance, Fife is developing mechanisms for working with those with lived within the Cash First programme.</b></p>

# Poverty in Fife

- Child poverty in Fife continues to track just above Scotland for both relative and absolute poverty rates (see table 1)
- 23.6% of children in Fife are now living in relative poverty (in households with an income of less than 60% of UK median income) compared to 21.3% for Scotland (DWP, FYE 2023).
- While both Fife and Scotland have seen an increase in child poverty between 2019 and 2023, this had been projected before the cost-of-living crisis so was not unexpected. Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes Areas all have higher child poverty rates than Fife as a whole. This is broadly consistent with income and employment deprivation (SIMD 2020).



- As of March 2024, 25,320 children in Fife were actively benefitting from the Scottish Child Payment (Social Security Scotland, 2024). The Fife Benefit Checker (Entitled To) is updated with new benefits as legislation changes occur. The Scottish Child Payment was included in the benefit checker since its introduction promoting the uptake.
- There were an estimated 33,888 low-income households in Fife in April 2024 (Low Income Family Tracker dashboard).
- Single households are the largest group, accounting for two thirds of all low-income households, and 92% of those who are in a cash shortfall (expected take-home income less than expected expenditure).
- Lone parent households (5545 households, approx. 10,700 children) were the second largest group (16.4%), followed by couples without children (9.7%). Couples with children accounted for 4.8% of low-income households (1632 households, approx. 4,000 children).

## Prevention

Fife has focused on income maximisation and targeted programmes of winter support, as ways to address poverty and prevent crisis during the cost-of-living crisis. Partnership work training and raising the capacity of front line staff and volunteers to give advice and support, has increased the number of people and places where early help can be accessed in Fife communities.

### **Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis Board and Winter Programme 2023/24**

Fife's Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis Board refocused its delivery plan this year building on learning from the winter support and cost of living programmes.

This is the second year of delivering the Winter Programme and was supported with £5.3 million of funding. This was in addition to a £1.8million top up to the Scottish Welfare Fund. The support has been shared across fuel, food, and cash support, mostly accessed at the point of crisis. (See Infographics below highlighting the key aspects of the programme)

Preventative measures have focussed on benefit maximisation campaigns and a new partnership with the Fuel Bank and Cosy Kingdom<sup>2</sup>, which has provided both energy advice and emergency fuel top ups.

Welcoming Places have been developed by a range of voluntary groups and some areas have developed welfare hubs where wrap around support can be offered.

Given Fife's longstanding challenges of deep-rooted poverty and inequality, alongside pressing budget reductions and constraints, there is a need to be smarter in how whole system change is delivered.

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<sup>2</sup> Cosy Kingdom is a free and impartial energy and debt advice service available to all tenants and homeowners across Fife.

# Winter and Cost of Living Programmes

## Food



**277,112 meals**

were provided by Fife Council over the school holidays for the year



**17,112 food parcels**

distributed by Trussell Trust in Fife 2023/24 from 11 centres

**£1.3 million**

was spent on crisis awards for food from the Scottish Welfare

## Fuel



**£155,317**

worth of fuel top ups issued

**1,220 people**

have received first level energy advice



**199 frontline workers**

trained to give energy advice

**33 households**

benefited from Boiler Repair Scheme, with a spend of **£73,147**



**£30,000**

spent on Winter Warmer packs to help those in crisis situations, including heated blankets, fleeces, gloves, hat and scarves

**87**

Welcoming and Warm Places were provided

**Additional £1.8m**

provided by Fife Council on top of Scottish Government SWF allocation



**8,865**

completed benefit checks over the past 12 months

**44,190 views**

on the Our Fife/Get Help website

## Benefit Maximisation

**£6.7 million**

Large scale benefit uptake campaigns gain to date is estimated to be

**867**

have increased their income by **£860,870** through Pension Credit campaigns - an estimated lifetime value of **£3.9 million**

**Approx. £470,980**

additional financial gains from Pension Credit campaigns, with a lifetime value of **£2.8 million**

**440**

new Tax-Free Childcare accounts, saving each family **20%** of their total childcare costs each month.

# Fife Advice Framework and Poverty Awareness Training

*Providing staff and volunteers with the knowledge they need to signpost and offer first level benefits advice.*

A huge range of cost of living and welfare support is available. For those who aren't eligible for any benefits, some of the support which is offered is universal, meaning anyone can get it.

**Crisis support**  
**Community Support Line**  
If unable to access information online, staff will be able to assist or arrange an appointment.  
**0800 952 0330 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)** or call **07432 609475**

**Benefit Checks**  
**Self help** - Free online benefits checker at: [our.fife.scot/gethelp/income](http://our.fife.scot/gethelp/income)  
For those under 18, not a UK national or having trouble using the online calculator a benefit check appointment can be arranged by calling the Community Support Line.  
Welfare support staff can offer support & help at our **community job clubs**. visit: [www.fife.gov.uk](http://www.fife.gov.uk) or call **07432 609475**

**Drop-in advice & help**  
**Local support**  
Welfare support staff can offer support & help at our **community job clubs**. visit: [www.fife.gov.uk](http://www.fife.gov.uk) or call **07432 609475**  
**The Well** is a place where you can drop-in, both in the community and online. Call **03451551500** or visit: [www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org](http://www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org)

**One to one support**  
**Support & Connect**  
For families with children in education. Referral only- online form  
**CARF** (Citizens Advice and Rights Fife)  
Welfare benefits **0345 140 0092**  
General Advice **0345 140 0095**  
Debt Advice **0345 140 0094**  
[www.cabfife.org.uk](http://www.cabfife.org.uk)  
**Frontline Fife**  
Homelessness, housing advice, short-term housing and addictions support.  
[www.frontlinefife.co.uk](http://www.frontlinefife.co.uk)  
**Cosy Kingdom**  
Free, impartial energy and debt advice.  
[www.cosykingdom.org.uk](http://www.cosykingdom.org.uk)

For useful information, advice, help with benefits, energy bills and food go to: [our.fife.scot/gethelp](http://our.fife.scot/gethelp)

The awareness and knowledge to use the Our Fife /Get Help website alongside the Fife Benefit Checker has been scaled up this year. Citizen's Advice and Rights Fife (CARF) have proactively engaged with public sector staff teams and community groups to embed income maximisation into their usual offer of support.

Local Authority teams already undertaking this approach include Housing Officers, Rent Officers (debt collection), Welfare Support Officers, customer facing staff in local council offices and telephone helplines, revenues officers and fuel poverty officers. Elected Members in Fife have undertaken the training to support their constituency casework and some Community Council members have also participated. Third sector agencies involved has included local health condition support groups, employability support agencies and even a local grass roots football coaching team. Most recently, Scottish Autism have been able to upskill staff to embed income maximisation into their practice.

This work has been jointly delivered with the Health Promotion Service who have delivered this targeted 'Level 1 Fife Benefit Checker and Our Fife Toolkit Training' to key teams/services. Innovative approaches to the delivery of training including lunchtime poverty discussions, online modules, and the creation of a 'training the trainer' network has helped reach a wide range of staff and volunteers.

In total, 722 staff and volunteers were trained in 2023/24 and a group of 35 training the trainers was established to continue rolling out the programme.

Targeted Poverty Awareness information sessions on how poverty can impact children and young peoples' health, education and developmental milestones has been created. The training covers having a healthy conversation with children and young people about poverty and increases knowledge of national and local sources of support.



## Social Inclusion and Stigma

Key to tackling the stigma surrounding poverty, is to involve people with lived experience of poverty in the design of services.

Project Assistants with personal experience of poverty, have been employed to work in Areas Teams in Fife. They have so far inputted to issues around recruitment, communication, system changes (No Wrong Door Approach) and the evaluation of winter funding. They are involved in the cash first pilot and will be part of the steering group for the next Rural Poverty Conference in October 2025.

A Food4Fife Strategy was launched in May 2024 with the aim of preventing food poverty by providing a dignified, fair and just access to healthy and affordable food for all one. The Council adopted the Dignity Principles in May 2018, and these underpin the work that is done in relation to food insecurity including Cafe Inc. Key principles include giving people the power to choose their meals and including families in decision making. A research project including both surveys and a focus group is planned for summer to discover from families (both children and adults) about what can be improved in the delivery of Cafe Inc and the difference it is making.

Cash First is an approach rooted in human rights that can have an immediate impact on people's lives by offering flexibility and respect for people to decide what their immediate needs are. Following a successful bid, Fife Council has been awarded funding by the Scottish Government to run a series of tests of change over the next 24 months in each of the seven Area Committee areas exploring Cash First approaches to mitigating and preventing poverty. Building on Kirkcaldy's Choice First cash first initiative and the Hardship Grants provided during COVID, the tests of change will help understand and overcome specific local barriers experienced by individuals and families facing crisis. The chosen areas reflect diverse local circumstances and levels of maturity in developing cash-first approaches.

To ensure more children and families are involved in service design, Fife's Whole Family Wellbeing Fund is funding projects to help shape a better understanding of current experiences of services, what needs to improve and how change can be facilitated by working together through a co-production/co-design approach. This is being achieved by improving the interface across the third sector, statutory services, and community planning partnerships and through meaningful involvement of families in Fife in the design, development and delivery of services. The project is led by FVA and the third sector who have a track record in this area to develop and spread this approach with and alongside families learning what works.

## Tackling Poverty & Preventing Crisis Delivery Plan 2021-2024:

The progress updates in the tables below provide the detail of the projects to:

- Get people the benefits they are entitled to
- Protect people from cost-of-living increases with a focus on support for food, fuel and childcare costs
- Prevent crisis through a No Wrong Door approach ensuring early and joined up support
- Improve the use of data relating to poverty and crisis to target spend on prevention of crisis
- Tackle Homelessness

### **Next steps for Fife 2024/25 include:**

- Implementing a No Wrong Door approach with the emphasis on prevention and earlier intervention
- Reducing long term food poverty through the delivery of the Food4Fife Strategy launched in May 2024 and Cash First tests of change
- Developing a joined-up system of household support
- Working with communities to create welcoming places that provide wrap around advice and support.

## Outcome:

### Get people the benefits they are entitled to

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<b>Welfare benefit take up campaigns to increase take up in benefit entitlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tax-Free Childcare targeted campaign reached people with no entitlement to welfare benefits but were impacted by low income. The campaign secured and increased of 440 new Tax-Free Childcare accounts and used which saved each family 20% of their total childcare costs each month.</li><li>• 35 families who use Fife Council childcare provisions mitigated the annual price increase as actually reduced their childcare costs. A case example evidenced a household saving of £684.50 per year. This campaign is currently being delivered again following improvement recommendations from the last campaign activity.</li><li>• Campaigns ran to reach those entitled to Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Foods.</li><li>• Managed migration and the start of new replacement benefits such as health-related benefits and unpaid carers</li></ul>	<b>Child poverty</b>

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<p><b>Access to services and advice out with office hours</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to services and support is available 24 hours per day via the Our Fife Toolkit (<a href="#">Cost of Living Support (Fife. Scot)</a>). This one stop shop website for Fife residents hosts self-service access to The Fife Benefit Checker, information on local food and fuel support provision, health support, support for your family and a section specifically for young people.</li> <li>• The site also hosts a self-service portal for debt advice provided by Citizens Advice &amp; Rights Fife.</li> <li>• Organisations such as faith-based groups, sports clubs and community councils enable income maximisation and crisis support information to be cascaded not only in locations the community are accessing, but also at a suitable time for them.</li> <li>• To support campaign activity to promote the take up of Tax-Free Childcare accounts, Fife Council staff who provide childcare in breakfast and after school clubs have all undertaken training to provide support and guidance to parents either before 9am, or until 6pm. These staff also operate over the holiday and in-service days.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Child Poverty Strategic Assessment completed on benefit max delivery against 6 priority groups by TPPC Board</b></p>
<p><b>Income maximisation provided in a range of settings</b></p>	<p><b>Embedding income maximisation advice into maternity services</b> continues to work well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 508 families have engaged with the dedicated worker either while pregnant or while they have a child under the age of 5 in the household. 29% are under the age of 25- yrs. and 32% are lone parents.</li> <li>• Over the course of the financial year, the adviser has achieved client financial gains of £645,232.57 As a return on investment for every £1 invested, the return has been over £11.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support &amp; Connect</b> (Education led welfare and benefits support)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Education Welfare Network has been established to improve the knowledge about what support is available in their local area to support the families in their school.</li> </ul> <p>91 Referrals were made £145,579 of financial gains were made for the families.</p> <p><b>Breakdown of referrals by child poverty priority groups are shown below</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ethnic minority families 4</li> <li>○ Families with more than 3 children 40</li> <li>○ Families where the mother is aged 25 or under 6</li> <li>○ Mothers and families with a child under 1 year 3</li> <li>○ Families with a disability 43</li> <li>○ Lone parents: 57</li> </ul>	<p><b>Child Poverty Data matched against 6 characteristics Support and Connect</b></p>

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
	<p><b>Boosting Budgets (a 7-week financial capability group for parents and carers across various schools)</b> Total financial gain for the families who took part in 2022/23 - £51,258.07.</p>	Child Poverty
<p><b>Direct support lone parents to increase the take up of child maintenance</b></p>	<p><b>Child Maintenance – Child Maintenance Update 23/24</b></p> <p><b>Family Support</b></p> <p>Provision of direct support to resident lone parents in Fife focused on income maximisation and a child's right to fair financial support (wherever possible) from both their parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 57 referrals received</li> <li>• 55 families engaged in advice or casework.</li> <li>• Financial Gain £20,569 to benefit 19 children living in 13 households.</li> </ul> <p><b>Training Development</b></p> <p>Developing a training module which will enable workers and volunteers to include Child Maintenance in all income maximisation conversations with lone parent families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tested and developed “Confident conversations about Child Maintenance” course (2-hour in person module)</li> <li>• Delivered 5 training sessions with 72 participants from Fife Gingerbread, FRASAC and Fife Women's Aid</li> <li>• Hosted introductory “mini talks” with Scottish Women's Aid and Citizens Advice Scotland Money Talks team</li> </ul>	Child Poverty
<p><b>A tiered training programme on welfare support to increase the range and number of staff participating in the Health Promotion poverty awareness training</b></p>	<p><b>The Poverty Awareness Training Programme</b> – 722 people received training broken down as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• virtual workshops - total of 173 participants</li> <li>• 43 face-to-face and virtual workshops were delivered with 361 participants in attendance.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to this there were 3 x Train the Trainer Workshops – In total there are now 35 trained trainers from across all sectors supporting the delivery of Poverty Awareness Training.</p>	Child Poverty

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<b>Provision of community-based advice and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2711 engagements with welfare support assistants across Fife</li> <li>• 865 telephone calls to the Welfare Support help line - a way to contact preferred by families.</li> <li>• 18 additional welfare support assistants employed through Community Recovery Funding</li> <li>• Increased joint working with Citizen's Rights and Advice Fife staff</li> </ul>	

## Outcome:

### Protect people from cost-of-living increases with a focus on support for food, fuel and childcare costs

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<b>Tackling Fuel Poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coordinated crisis fuel support</b> through the partnership with the Fuel Bank (a national charity), Cosy Kingdom and the Council created a single point of contact for people needing immediate help with a fuel top up. Since October 2023 when the partnership with the fuel bank started, 2048 Council tenants have received £134,390 and 431 vouchers have been awarded to non- Council tenants totalling £20,927. The Housing Service has proactively provided additional HRA funded support to tenants in low fuel efficiency houses and those with damp and mould where fuel poverty is assessed as a contributory factor.</li> <li>• The <b>Handy service</b> installs small measures to help reduce heat loss, save energy, and keep participants warmer at home. Measures can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LED Light bulbs</li> <li>○ Thermal curtains</li> <li>○ Reflective radiator Foil</li> <li>○ Draught excluders</li> <li>○ Window &amp; door draught proofing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can also provide microwaves, electric blankets, halogen heaters &amp; cosy packs where needed too. The Handy Service was funded to increase its reach by a third. Below are the figures for the additional funded work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 717 additional households have received Handy Service measures.</li> <li>○ Average financial gains because of receiving the handy service £168 per home.</li> <li>○ 59 households have received income maximisation support.</li> <li>○ 1,220 people have received first level energy advice.</li> <li>○ 199 frontline workers trained to give energy advice.</li> <li>○ 33 households benefited from Boiler Repair Scheme, with a spend of £73,147.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Winter Warmer Packs</b> Winter Warmer packs were provided for people in crisis situations. Heated blankets in the packs. This has cost £30 k with 1000 packs distributed including to Afghan refugee families.</li> <li>• <b>Warm Spaces</b> – Warm and Welcoming Places are providing community-led local provision helping break social isolation, provide meals and the opportunity to access wider support and services. This has developed as an offer over the 24 months from a starting point of funds for the purchase of food to meet the demand the community food providers were experiencing through to a Hub type model where people are comfortable to attend and get wider support. A significant number of users have long term health issues and are experiencing poor mental health.</li> </ul>	
<b>Free period products</b>	<p>The online ordering service was re-instated in September of last year, so people can order products directly to their home.</p> <p>New community groups have come on board over the last 12 months to further expand the provision in the community.</p>	
<b>Improved access to local, affordable and flexible childcare</b>	<p><b><u>Early Adopter Community Work</u></b></p> <p>Fife Council continues to work with the Scottish Government through the School Aged Childcare Early Adopter Community Team. The work is focussed in the Levenmouth Area, with opportunities to capture learning and apply this to other areas of Fife. The aim of the project is to ensure there are sufficient, affordable and sustainable childcare options for school aged children across Levenmouth.</p>	<b>Child Poverty</b>

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<b>Employability Support</b>	<p>In 2023 with UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation from UK Government 14 projects were added to the employability pathway. This activity commenced in July 2023 and will run to March 2025.</p> <p>This included additional provision supporting those with mental health issues as a barrier to work, green skills training, a volunteering into work project, industry specific qualifications as well as additional projects supporting vulnerable families.</p> <p>Making it Work for lone parents is a partnership project with staff from Fife Gingerbread, Clued Up and Citizens Advice &amp; Rights Fife working collaboratively. Lone Parents are a high priority group (disproportionately impacted by child poverty) facing multiple and complex barriers. The project is largely funded through the City Deal but has received Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to expand the cohort of families eligible for support. This is helping improve outcomes for children, young people and families that are affected by substance use and poor Education attendance/engagement.</p>	<b>Child Poverty</b>
<b>Community Wealth Building</b>	<p>Life Chances is a progressive approach to recruitment that seeks to re-wire existing systems and processes to change the mainstream ways the Council recruits by applying a Community Wealth Building lens.</p> <p>The Life Chances model was developed and tested in 2023/24 to design employability provision into public sector recruitment. The programme works with people who find it difficult to overcome labour market challenges (such as long-term unemployment, little or no work experience) to progress into fair, sustainable work in the public sector.</p> <p>The Life Chances pilot started in June 2023 with 24 placement opportunities across Fife Council lasting 13-weeks with participants paid the real Living Wage (as a minimum) alongside access to employability support. By the end of 2023/24, 11 participants had secured ongoing employment with Fife Council and a further 12 have had their placements extended to allow access to upcoming vacancies.</p>	
<b>Food4Fife Strategy</b>	<p>A Food4Fife Strategy was launched in May 2024 with the aim of preventing food poverty by providing a dignified, fair and just access to healthy and affordable food for all one. The delivery plan is being developed to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce long term food poverty by better integrating support for people experiencing food insecurity.</li> <li>• Increase financial inclusion through increasing benefits maximisation.</li> </ul>	



## Outcome:

### Prevent crisis through a No Wrong Door approach ensuring early and joined up support

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<p><b>Develop the ‘No Wrong Door Approach’</b></p>	<p>The NWD approach will ensure easier access to services, more joined up partnership working and less duplication of services maximising hr resources to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <p>The emphasis is on prevention and earlier intervention through the development of a streamlined pathway which avoids people having to navigate across a whole range of services to address the issue that matters to them.</p> <p>A programme of work has been underway to support transformational change. The design of the model is now focusing on one locality ie Cowdenbeath which will inform the development of an operational model which can be scaled up across the 7 localities in Fife.</p> <p><b>Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF)</b></p> <p>The WFWF is funding an extensive programme of work and is supporting the development of the <b>No Wrong Door</b> business case, including design work to develop a Fife-wide early intervention approach. This is supporting Fife in its vision to localise provision as part of a people and place-based model, which is accessible and avoids multiple interventions across the system, involving issues such as money advice, housing, food and fuel poverty, and wellbeing.</p> <p>One of the projects is a test of change - Putting People First (PPF) has provided holistic wraparound support on a 1:2:1 and community basis. To date this team has supported 168 households in the Kirkcaldy Area with a wide range of interlinked issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46% of the cohort are in one or more of the child poverty Priority Groups</li> <li>• 23% of people have been care experienced or have had a child placed in care.</li> <li>• Project data estimates that where support was given 60% of people were facing poverty related issues e.g. low to negative household income, poor living conditions and material hardship that required simultaneous council and partner service responses.</li> </ul> <p>A further initiative is being tested in Cowdenbeath building on the learning from this work .</p> <p>The programme of activity for the WFWF is aligned to priorities in the Children’s Services Plan 2023-26. A report on progress of the development and delivery of whole family support in Fife has been submitted to the Scottish Government and is included in the annual report for the Children’s Services Plan 2024. The next stage of Whole Family Wellbeing will continue to focus on the key drivers for</p>	<p><b>Child Poverty</b></p>

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
	change to support service redesign across the partnership leading to a sustainable model of delivery within communities in Fife.	

## Outcome:

### Improve the use of data relating to poverty and crisis to target spend on prevention of crisis

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<b>Use data and project intelligence to deliver better outcomes.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Fuel Poverty Needs and Demand Assessment was undertaken to learn from winter 2022/23 and inform approach to support over winter 2023/24. Recommendations included Fife Council partnering with the Fuel Bank, to deliver fuel top-ups, and training of frontline organisations in provision of first level home energy advice.</li> <li>• Through the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) there was an annual gain of £1,331,850 to Fife households via the Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance campaigns</li> <li>• LIFT enabled us to use our administrative datasets to quickly and accurately identify households that were subject to the benefit cap and met the criteria for DHP. This criteria includes those who were claiming Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. A total of £111,979.28 April 23 was paid out for a total of 73 cases in 2023/24.</li> <li>• Tracking of impact of Unpaid Carers Campaign (September 2023)</li> </ul>	

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debt profiling of LIFT data identified that 1 in 4 low-income households are in some kind of debt to Fife Council (the majority of debt relates to Council tax arrears). This identified a number of potential groups to target for support.</li> </ul>	
<b>Improve data sharing across the Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The LIFT Dashboard continues to provide valuable insight to services that enables them to target support to low-income households to maximise benefits and tackle debt.</li> <li>We met regularly with Social Security Scotland (SSS) to share Fife's information needs to inform what could be put in place for all council areas. This included facilitating links between SSS and SAVVI (Scalable Approach to Vulnerability Via Interoperability)</li> <li>A Fife briefing on analysis of first release of sub-local authority data on take up of Scottish Child Payment (SCP), showed strong positive correlation between take up of SCP and relative child poverty, suggesting that SCP is mitigating the impacts of poverty for those households in greatest need.</li> <li>We met with Julie Arnot from Public Health Scotland to explore new indicators being developed to assist in measuring child poverty at a local level. This included sharing innovative examples of how we have been using data locally, including use of LIFT for targeting, and local interpretation of nationally published data.</li> <li></li> </ul>	
<b>Targeting anti-poverty spend focussed on tangible impact that increases prevention measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits maximisation projects were reviewed to assess the scale of each project relative to the size of the target group, including priority groups where possible.</li> </ul>	<b>Data collected against 6 characteristics</b>
<b>Improve community voice structures</b>	<p><b>North East Fife Lived Experience – Project Assistants</b></p> <p>The area team in North East Fife have recruited three Project Assistants, all with experience of living in poverty, to help the design, development, monitoring and review of projects, Project Assistants work closely with the area's Rural Poverty Group, which is focused on tackling poverty and improving access to services in the rural area of North East Fife.</p> <p><b>WFWF co-production and co-design approach</b></p>	

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
	<p>The fund has enabled the creation of a Family Services Improvement Co-ordinator in FVA. A 2-day training course for the co-production project team was held in June 2023. The co-production team, which has been named 'Together for Change', identified the theme of service disconnection as an area of enquiry. Collaborative Conversations with CYPF and the workforce have been held across the seven localities. This is focusing on service users' perspectives and experiences of using services – what is working, what could be better, and how involved they are in shaping services. CYPF involvement has consisted of 135 C&amp;YP and 184 Parents/Carers. An independent evaluation is being undertaken by IRISS and will be completed by August 2024.</p>	

## Outcome: Tackle Homelessness

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<b>Tackling homelessness</b>	<p>Fife Council declared a housing emergency in March 2024. A three-year plan to tackle homelessness highlighted the need for an estimated £67.3 million to help the escalating number of families without permanent housing.</p> <p>Between March 2020 and March 2024, the number of households in temporary accommodation in Fife increased by 110%, rising from 525 to 1,100. As at March 2024, 387 children were living in temporary accommodation, up from 315 in 2020. Between 2023 and 2024 there was a 36% increase in households in temporary accommodation, however the number of children in temporary accommodation decreased by 5.6% over this period.</p>	
<b>Implement the Housing First Model for 75 tenancies per year focussed on groups at risk of homelessness</b>	<p><b>Progress in 2023/24</b> - Housing First was provided by 4 providers in 2023/24 to support all age groups across Fife. The number of Housing First Tenancies at the end of March 2024 was 66. Awareness sessions on the benefits of Housing First have been delivered to all Area Housing Teams, RSL Housing Officers, Temporary Accommodation and Safer Communities Teams.</p> <p><b>Priorities in 2024/25</b> – The aim is to continue to grow Housing First to 115 tenancies and build on partnerships within Health &amp; Social Care partnership to improve wraparound support services.</p>	
<b>Recommission a range of housing support and homelessness services with</b>	<p><b>Progress in 2023/24</b> - Our commissioned services have remained the same over this period as we are still trying to stabilise our support services after the disbanding of the PSP. Over the 23/24 period, 1771</p>	

	2023/24 progress update and priorities for 2024/25	Status / notes
<b>an enhanced focus on prevention and early intervention</b>	<p>people have received support which includes both accommodated and visiting support clients, with over 90,000 hours of support being provided.</p> <p><b>Priorities in 2024/25</b> - Our aim is to continue to assist those most vulnerable, ensuring they receive the most appropriate support tailored to their needs. We will also strive to ensure that current commissioned services are performing to their potential in line with their SLAs.</p>	
<b>Implement the Transitional Affordable Housing programme (TAHP)</b>	<p><b>Progress in 2023/24</b> - FC &amp; FHAA delivered 131 affordable units in 23/24 taking its total to 259 since the implementation of the TAHP. Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE) &amp; Open Market Transactions (OMT) targets were met. New Builds started to complete, with all other new builds on site.</p> <p><b>Priorities in 2024/25</b> - The TAHP programme is expected to complete in 26/27. Fife Council had 8 new builds handed over at Methil High Street at the beginning of the financial year with a further 158 new builds expected to complete this year.</p> <p>It is unlikely that the TAHP target of 1200 Affordable Homes will be achieved. The TAHP is on target to complete 931 affordable Homes (78% of original TAHP Target) between 2022/23 and 2026/27.</p>	

## Case Study

**Client was referred for assistance by a Health Visitor. Food insecurity had occurred due to financial strain of the family relocating from Ireland to Fife.**

A benefit check was completed, and the client disclosed that she had never been in receipt of Child Benefit for any of her 5 children as she thought that was what the Child Responsibility element of Universal Credit was all she was entitled to. In not claiming this benefit, the family was missing out on £87.60 per week.

The client has also not been claiming Scottish Child Payment. She was missing out on £25 per week per child = £125 per week.

During the conversation, the client also mentioned that she hadn't heard of the Best Start Grants or Best start foods administered by Social Security Scotland. The client could claim the Best Start Early Learning Payment for the 3-year-old child and Best Start School Payment for the 5-year-old child which was £589.40 in total. The client was also not claiming Best Start foods at £39.60 every 4 weeks.

**Total unclaimed client financial gain = £11,644.40**

## Case Study

**MTT (Maternity Income Maximisation)**

A Family Nurse Practitioner called the MTT about a client who had put £30 into her meter for electricity and bought some food shopping but had no money left to last under her next universal credit payment in 6 days. The clients only received only £292.11 per month UC standard allowance with rent of £303 per month.

. The client is 19 years old and now 37 weeks' gestation with her first child, but due to being under 25, she only receives the lower rate of Universal Credit until her child is born. Client does receive Best Start Foods of £19.80 every 4 weeks and had received Best Start Pregnancy and Baby Payment of £707.25 The client has full Council Tax Reduction in place, all household bills are up to date, and she has no debt liabilities.

To assist the client the Family Nurse Practitioner offered to assist the client with an application to the Scottish Welfare Fund. The client was awarded £110 to support her with food and utility costs until the next payment of Universal Credit was received.

**The client secured a Crisis Grant of £110, Child Responsibility Element of £244.58 per month, Child Benefit at £24 per week and Scottish child payment at £25 per week, which in total gave the client an additional £5,286.**



## BENEFIT TAKE UP CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

CAMPAIGN	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	
TAX FREE CHILDCARE	■						
HEALTH RELATED BENEFITS			■				
JOB START PAYMENT				■			
SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN				■			
FUNERAL SUPPORT PAYMENT						■	