

Shetland's Annual Child Poverty Action Report



Foreword

We are delighted to write this joint statement about the activity our respective organisations and partners have been doing together, and have planned, in order to reduce child poverty and the impacts of child poverty throughout Shetland.

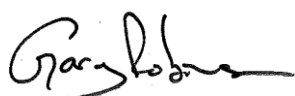
This is Shetland's first Annual Child Poverty Action Report. The purpose is to share, with a broad audience, what has been achieved and it also fulfils the duty placed on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to report annually on steps they are taking, and will take, to reduce child poverty.

In Shetland, our levels of child poverty are relatively low – 5.7% of children in Shetland lived in low income families in 2015 compared to an average for Scotland of 16.5%¹ – however, this figure has remained fairly static over the past decade while the Scottish average has fallen. We also know that we have a relatively high cost of living – the cost of living in Shetland is 20-60% higher than the UK average² – meaning that many more of our children and young people may be in financial hardship than is indicated by the national figures. Our dispersed rural communities can often make it more difficult for parents to seek support for their families³.

Despite achievements we can rightly be proud of, we have a lot more to do, and are not complacent to the challenges we face; not least, we need to increase awareness across our organisations and others in the public, private and third sector of their role in tackling the drivers of child poverty. We need to ensure that all families can access the support they need to maximise their incomes and reduce their household costs – so they have more money available to them. We will also explore the role of employers, employability services, and how we can enable families to readily access leisure and recreation (including volunteering) activities.

We are pleased that the Scottish Government highlights the importance of us all working together to reduce child poverty and recognises that Shetland, like other Scottish Islands, has specific challenges related to the nature of our communities.

We hope that this short report reaches as many people as possible. This year, it will be available on line and can be printed out. Where possible, case studies and links to other resources, are included to illustrate impact and improvement. Next year, it will be more interactive, linked with other reporting such as Shetland's Partnership Plan, and the Integrated Children and Young People's Annual Report.



Gary Robinson, Chair, NHS Shetland



George Smith, Chair, Education and Families Committee, Shetland Islands Council

¹ Scottish Government Statistics (2015) <https://statistics.gov.scot/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdata%2Fchildren-in-low-income-families>

² Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland (2016) <http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/economic-reports-and-research/archive/a-minimum-income-standard-for-remote-rural-scotland--a-policy-update.html>

This identifies what incomes different types of households required to reach a socially acceptable living standard.

³ Research into Deprivation and Social Exclusion in Shetland (2006)

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/deprivationandsocialexclusion.asp>

Poverty is Bad – Let's Fix It!! (2011) http://www.shetland.gov.uk/youth_services/documents/Shetland20Report0Final20Draft.pdf

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APPROACH

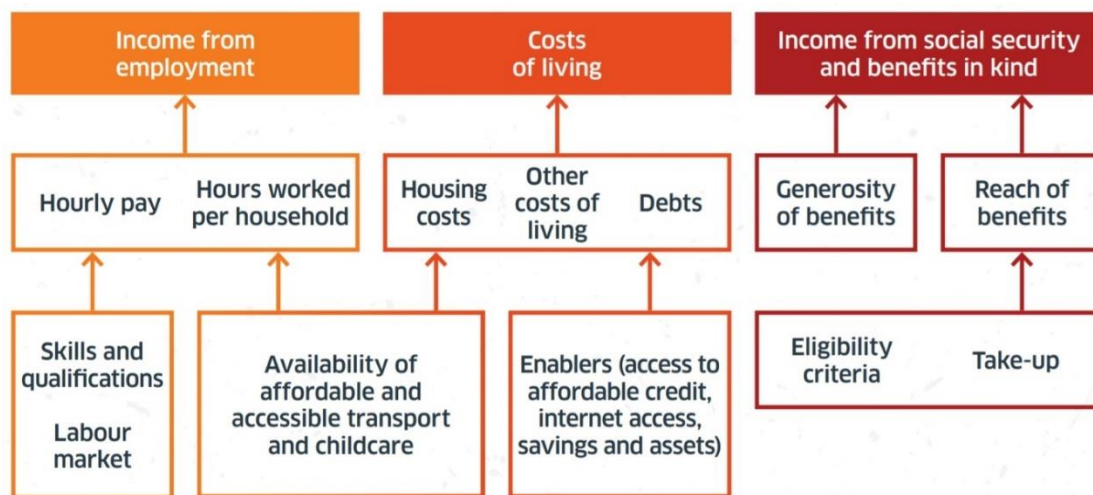
In Shetland, we recognise that there are many ways to reduce child poverty within our community.

What is important is that:

- we involve children, young people and their parents and wider families in shaping projects, products and services; and
- we monitor impact, to inform future work – for example, recognising that failing is not a failure, as long as we fail quickly and learn from our experiences.

These projects and services may be specifically targeted at children, young people and their families or may be wider, tackling the drivers of child poverty.

DRIVERS OF CHILD POVERTY



REPORTING AND PLANS

The action and impact from 2018/19, and our plans for 2019/20 are set out under the following headings:

- Understanding the issues
- Increasing Household Income
- Reducing Cost of Living
- Building and Nurturing Relationships
- Building Capacity
- Impact
- Strategic Approach
- Monitoring and Evaluation

In addition to reporting to the Scottish Government on what we are doing within Shetland to reduce Child Poverty, this document will be used by the Council, NHS Shetland and the Management and Leadership Team of the Shetland Partnership in order to ensure that actions are being effectively monitored.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

WHAT WE'VE DONE...

Over the last 15 years or so, we have deepened our understanding of the experiences of people in Shetland living in poverty and low-income households and what the drivers are for child poverty in Shetland. We have invested resources in research, peer research and participation so we are now in a better place to address the issues our families and communities face.

In 2015, the Shetland Partnership established Shetland's Commission on Tackling Inequalities. Representatives from the Council, NHS and Third Sector acted as Commissioners, and heard directly and indirectly from people in Shetland facing issues because of inequalities within our community. The Commission's findings and recommendations have informed Shetland's Partnership Plan and Delivery Plan. Their reporting has provided a robust evidence base and common understanding across the public and voluntary sector. It is informing organisations' allocation of resources. However, we recognise there is more to do to develop understanding amongst the private sector and communities.



EXTRACT FROM SHETLAND PARTNERSHIP PLAN, JUSTIFYING THE REASON AND APPROACH TO THE MONEY PRIORITY

Money' is a priority because of Shetland's high Cost of Living (CoL). The Minimum Income Standard for Remote and Rural Scotland (MIS) shows that the cost of a standard 'basket of goods' can be significantly higher for some Shetland households. For example, a couple with two small children living in a rural part of Shetland could pay up to 30% more in living costs than people in a similar household in an urban community elsewhere in the UK. What this means is that comparable households in Shetland could pay £50 a week more for their weekly shop than they would if they lived elsewhere.

The relatively high CoL in Shetland is driven by four main factors:

- Higher food costs
- Higher costs for household goods and their delivery
- Higher home energy costs
- Higher transport costs

These drivers are evident in the data collected and analysed by the Shetland Partnership when developing the Shetland Partnership Plan. Fuel Poverty (where households spend more than 10% of their income on energy bills) affects 53% of households in Shetland.

This is due to our climate; the types of housing that are most common in the Isles; and, the energy sources that are available locally. Food bank usage has also increased in Shetland, suggesting that some households are struggling with higher food costs.

Not every household in Shetland is struggling financially and our high employment rate, combined with slightly higher average earnings, does help to reduce the impacts of higher costs for many. However, for those who are affected by higher costs, it can have a knock on impact on other aspects of their lives, including their physical and mental health.

Measures of ‘poverty’ are not always useful in Shetland, as they do not take account of CoL. While around 6% of children are classed as living in poverty, nearly half of the households in Shetland do not earn enough to ‘live well’ in that their income is not sufficient to cover the higher costs identified in the MIS study. This may mean that, even in households where adults are working, financial hardship may be a risk or is already being experienced.

In-work poverty and financial hardship are a reality for some people in Shetland, as shown by research commissioned by the Shetland Partnership in 2016. As one participant in the study said: “I get paid on a Friday and it’s gone on a Friday. Literally, I pay my rent, I pay my council tax, I pay my electric and that’s it”.

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This is why we want to help people maximise their incomes and minimise their outgoings to reduce the impact of high living costs. Maximising income can be achieved through helping people to improve their employment prospects and reducing the number of people who are ‘underemployed’ (that is, people who would like to work more hours given the opportunity). It can also be done by ensuring that people claim all of the social security payments to which they are entitled.

Reducing outgoings can be delivered by supporting people to reduce their energy costs and fuel bills through, for example, energy advice and community food growing projects. Transport costs could also be reduced through innovative community-based solutions.

Shetland Partnership Delivery Plan, 2019

WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

Shetland Islands Council and Highlands & Islands Enterprise invested in the research to establish the Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland, and also jointly commissioned ‘Living Well in a High Cost Economy’ which showed that 49% of households in Shetland do not earn enough to live well. However, we do not yet know whether these higher costs lead directly to worse outcomes for people on a given income, in Shetland. The Shetland Partnership is currently exploring the feasibility and costs of commissioning work to establish this.



INCREASING HOUSEHOLD INCOME

WHAT WE'VE DONE...

The Council has secured another four years of funding from the European Social Fund, in addition to its own funding, in order to commission a Financial Health Service and Energy Advice Service. These services are targeted at low-income households, including those with children and young people. The services are delivered by Shetland Islands Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Case Study

Illustrating the impact of our Financial Health Service on reducing Child Poverty



Increasing household Income

A working age couple with children contacted the Financial Health Service at CAB as they were struggling financially. A benefit check ascertained that they were not accessing any of the benefits they were entitled to. The result was an increase in their household income through Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Tax Credit and also Working Tax Credit. One of the partners had health problems so she was also helped with a Personal Independence Payment application.

The family also received help through the Energy Advice Service, registering for SSE's Priority Service Register due to the care needs of one of the partners. Finally, they were supported to claim Warm Home Discount once they had the qualifying benefits in place.

With the increase in income and the reduction in energy bills, their children are now growing up in a household with an ongoing increase in financial resources.

Managing debt

A couple with two children under five, and another expected. The working adult recently lost their job, so they were living on a number of benefits.

The initial appointment was with the wife, who was very distressed because her husband controlled all the finances and she was in a position where she had no money to buy food for the children, or nappies. They were also in danger of losing their car, which would have isolated them further and restricted future employment opportunities. A joint debt appointment was arranged, to discuss this with them together.

During the debt appointment, the Debt Adviser worked through a budget with the couple and discussed how they could manage their money jointly, which had not happened before. The Debt Adviser also discussed ways to maximise income, and checked their

benefit entitlement. The husband had multiple debts. The Debt Adviser helped him to prioritise the debts, and put in place a plan to pay off the debts, and the Debt Adviser also negotiated with creditors and agreed affordable repayments. With the support of CAB, the couple applied for additional benefits they were entitled to.

After four months of sticking to the budget and the repayment plan, the family have paid off one of their loans, kept up the repayments on their car, and are jointly managing their finances. Better budgeting and money management has meant that the wife no longer feels isolated, their relationship has improved, and the children are less financially disadvantaged.

Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau /
Shetland Welfare Reform and Financial Resilience Group, 2018

NHS SHETLAND OUTCOMES FOCUSED WELFARE REFORM ACTION PLAN

As an employer of around 600 staff, NHS Shetland recognises its role in ensuring that staff have enough income to live well. They recognise the challenges in balancing work and childcare, for example, and there is a generous parental leave allowance of four weeks paid leave per child under the age of 13, with a further 12 weeks available per child between the ages of 0-16. This is in recognition of the cost and availability of childcare, and is designed to allow parents to spend quality time with their children. A future action is to consider the uptake of this benefit; it is potentially easier for staff on a higher income to be able to afford to take unpaid leave than staff on lower levels of income.

The organisation is also reviewing and improving the pensions advice provided to staff; this is one of the areas that often gets neglected for people on a low income as it's difficult to find time to consider issues such as that, especially for busy parents.

Others actions include:

- Continuing to promote breastfeeding as an affordable and healthier alternative to formula feeding
- Raising awareness of the NHS Credit Union
- Raising awareness of the impact of welfare reform on staff and patients and ensuring referral pathways to financial advice services are in place

NHS Shetland, 2019

CHILD HEALTH SERVICE AND LINKS WITH DELIVERING THE BEST START FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

During routine contact as a Health Visitor I ask all families about finances in a general conversation i.e. heating costs, rent, what food they like and having enough food as a family. On the whole Health Visitors have a close relationship with most families and parents answer very openly. We are then able to signpost to groups or services that can

help and advise. This is one of the main focuses of the universal service that Health Visitors provide to all families.

CAB staff did an awareness raising session with Health Visiting team, including a generic referral form which is invaluable for getting vulnerable families to the services they need. I have found that if you just say to families to get in touch with CAB, for a variety of reasons some families never do. The service that CAB offers, where we identify families and do the initial referral, gets families help and advice that does make a difference. After our initial referral CAB contacts the family to say we have been in touch and they do a home visit. With the families permission, allowing access to the child plan's in GIRFEC (if they have an active GIRFEC) helps ensure the applications are successful.

NHS Shetland

Case Study

Illustrating impact of our Childs Health Service on reducing Child Poverty



A family were receiving additional support from the Health Visitor as there were ongoing concerns. The mum had mental health issues which made managing and planning finances an additional challenge. During conversations, it was apparent that the family were struggling with heating bills and general finances, and that the mother may have been eligible for benefits. The family were in agreement for a referral to CAB to be made, to help complete a Personal Independence Payment (PIP). CAB visited and the application for additional benefits was successful. The extra money made a real difference to the family.

NHS Shetland

As a result of securing another four years of funding from the European Social Fund, for Employability Services, the Council has integrated all of its Council funded services in order to provide as flexible approach as possible. The new service, sitting within Children's Services, is able to support people with many and complex barriers to employment, working closely with the Integrated Joint Board and service provision.

WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

Shetland's redesigned employability pathway will begin to provide intensive and targeted support to parents (linked to the Government's Parent Employability Funding):

FAMILY AND INTER-GENERATIONAL LEARNING

Community Learning and Development Partners are prioritising prevention and working with individuals, families and communities to tackle generational inequalities. The new plan sets out actions designed to support young people and their families to learn together. This will enable unemployed or under-employed parents to get more involved in

their children's learning, and to move into employment or better employment through support from the employability pathway.

Community Learning and Development Partnership, 2019

SHETLAND PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY PLAN: IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The Delivery Plan for Shetland's Partnership Plan is nearing completion. Money is one of four priorities within the Plan. Within this priority area, there are three improvement projects. One of these is *Right Information, Right Time*.

The project is needed because of our high cost of living, the rise of in-work poverty (particularly for families), a traditionally low uptake of benefits, a possible lack of opportunities for entrepreneurship amongst low income households and because case studies show that services are not systematically signposting or referring those most in need to the right service, at the right time.



The aims of this project are to ensure Shetland's workforce has the knowledge, skills and confidence to routinely refer people to income maximisation and employability support services, as required AND to ensure Shetland's people can access the support they need.

The project will explore the role of technology in providing a solution, and will work closely with families and front-line staff, to produce a useful, quick, and flexible way of getting up to date information about support available in Shetland. Although it will be available to all, there will be a particular focus, in the market research, the development, and the testing, on involving families with children and the services that support them – reducing Child Poverty is a key driver for the project.

Shetland Partnership Delivery Plan, 2019

REDUCING COST OF LIVING

WHAT WE'VE DONE...

Shetland's Commission on Tackling Inequalities heard from people who were not able to access opportunities due to the cost, including the cost of bus transport within Lerwick. Prior to this, the assumption had been that people were not accessing opportunities predominantly because of a lack of transport.

Since the Commission, a number of organisations have been amending their charging policy, resulting in a significant positive impact on individuals and organisations. This has included young people and young parents.

REDUCING THE COST OF LIVING BY MONEY-PROOFING CHARGING POLICIES

TRANSPORT

A young single parent, living in a remote area of Shetland with her young child, was unemployed for nearly a year before accessing support from Shetland's employability pathway. She did not drive and had to take and collect her child to and from school. This meant that she could not use the limited bus service.

She had previously gained employment close to her home, but had not sustained any of these jobs. The benefits she was entitled to did not provide her with sufficient income to use the bus service on a regular basis, or to attend volunteering or work placements, further reducing opportunities.

As part of the Employability pathway, ZetTrans – Shetland's Transport Planning Partnership – provides free bus and ferry travel for people getting support to move into employment.



This person was able to access this, as well as support to update her CV, seek volunteering opportunities and find a job. The Transport Service also enabled her child to access the school bus service, which meant that she was able to have much more flexibility in terms of employment

opportunities.

She was able to secure permanent employment, which has now been sustained for over three years. She now pays her bus fares, and their household income has improved and is more stable.

ZetTrans

CINEMA

Shetland Arts Development Agency provide off-peak free access to films, for anyone receiving support to move into employment. A number of those who have benefitted are some of Shetland's young unemployed. They were supported to feel comfortable with the setting, and going into the cinema, through a film club, with many gaining confidence and beginning to watch films in groups or on their own. Two of these young people have gone

on to study the Film and Media NC and HNC, run by Shetland Arts on behalf of Shetland College. Another young person has moved into further education too.

Shetland Arts Development Agency

Case Study

illustrating impact of the Energy Advice Service on reducing cost of living, and therefore reducing Child Poverty



A single mother with a pre-school child, who lives alone in local authority housing, and receives a number of national benefits. She had been in debt to SSE previously but had managed to pay this off. Due to this debt SSE had installed a pre-payment meter; this was now causing her financial hardship as she was paying in almost £200 per month. She also did not understand about tariffs and was unsure as to how to use her heating system properly.

The Energy Advice Service provided information about tariffs, and how to go online to see if she was on the best tariff for her. She was also referred to Home Energy Scotland – one of the Bureau's partnership groups – for a home visit, and they helped her to understand her heating system (storage heaters) and the best way to use them. She found this visit very helpful and now feels more in control of her heating system.

She was also given information on how to change the pre-payment meter back to an ordinary one and to arrange a direct debit to be put in place. She was happy to tackle this herself, and this has now been done. She was advised to give regular readings to SSE to keep her account up to date and to monitor her usage. As a result she has made a saving of at least £50 a month, meaning her child is now living in a household that has an additional £50 each month to spend on other items.

Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau / Shetland Fuel Poverty Action Group, 2018

WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

To date, the changes we have made to reduce cost of living for households have been small scale, or focused on reducing energy bills through Fuel Poverty measures. A lot has been learnt in recent years and we plan to build on this.

SHETLAND PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY PLAN: IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The Delivery Plan for Shetland's Partnership Plan is nearing completion. Money is one of four priorities within the Plan. Within this priority area, there are three improvement projects. Two of these will have a direct impact on reducing the cost of living for families,

and will be designed and delivered, with the intention of reducing child poverty in Shetland.

In a rural community, with plenty of land and skills, **Fair Food** is seeking to explore and encourage as many ways as possible to ensuring that people throughout Shetland are able to access nutritious food. The work will be broad and will involve communities, community assets, skills and knowledge development.

The aspiration is to be a community without Food Poverty. Fair Food will build on learning from a project within Bells Brae Primary School, in Lerwick, where a growing project is being used to increase parental involvement for those who are more vulnerable and currently not engaged with the school community.



Money Proofing Policy is about making the best use of our existing resources and activity in order to reduce inequalities in Shetland associated with household income and outgoings. In the first year, this will focus on gently challenging our current approach to strategic development and delivery to ensure they all consider and make changes which can impact on people's lives. This will include the use of our existing Inequality Impact Assessment tools. For example:

- How can the Knab Site development maximize the income and minimize the outgoings for those living within this new community?
- How can the Council's car pool be used to enable low income households to access more opportunities?
- What impact is World Book Day having on our children living in poverty?
- Can alternative transport solutions, such as e-bikes, assist in reducing child poverty?

Shetland Partnership Delivery Plan, 2019

PROVISION OF LUNCHES IN THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FOR THOSE ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS

We will explore options for piloting the provision of lunches during the school holidays, for children who access Free School Meals during term-time. A 'test of change' approach is being taken, with four families involved over the summer holidays of 2019, to be piloted throughout Lerwick and the North Isles in October.



Shetland's Integrated Children's Services Plan, 2019

BUILDING AND NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

Developing relationships between people with the responsibility for making decisions about resource use, and between these people and those families experiencing child poverty, is critical. Open conversation leads to much greater understanding of the issues, and constraints faced. In recent years, there has been an increased recognition of the importance of investing time in building and nurturing relationships.

WHAT WE'VE DONE...

There are an increasing number of examples of where relationships are being built and nurtured:

VOICES FOR EQUITY: BRINGING LIVED EXPERIENCE INTO DECISION-MAKING

The Voices for Equity project is providing a means of learning directly from people in Shetland experiencing challenges as a result of Shetland's inequalities. It is providing a means for them to be more involved in community planning by sharing their knowledge directly with decision makers within Shetland's public bodies. In contrast to consultations and anonymous feedback structures, the focus is on building relationships and bridging the gap between people living within Shetland.

The project has recruited people, including parents of children and young people, who are paired in a learning relationship with people responsible for developing, approving and delivering Shetland's future. Together they meet monthly, in their one-to-one learning relationship, to discuss and share their personal stories and experiences on inequality issues in Shetland. Both participants contribute with their personal experiences, and are equally responsible for empowering and challenging each other; the aim is to broaden each other's horizons and understandings. Their personal learnings are nurtured by the exchange of these stories and experiences, and their feedback to each other.

Confidentiality is ensured and sufficient facilitation is provided to support the relationships and their learning journeys.

The participant's learnings, both on the method of participation, as well as on experiences of inequalities in Shetland, is fed into the Shetland Partnership Improvement Projects and the wider learning of partner organisations.

Shetland Partnership, 2018

INCREASING HOUSEHOLD INCOME THROUGHOUT SHETLAND'S REMOTE AND RURAL LOCATIONS

Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau's Financial Health and Energy Advice services target families throughout Shetland by providing an outreach service in nine locations: Hillswick, Brae, Walls, Bixter, Scalloway and Levenwick (in rural mainland Shetland), and the three islands of Unst, Yell and Whalsay. In each case they are located in the local health centre.



These tend to be at a transport hub accessible by public transport. Health centres are warm and friendly venues which are widely used and therefore non-stigmatised. The service deliverers are able to access the NHS WIFI network, have access to phones and Language Line if needed, and reception staff take messages and book appointments for them. Nurses and GPs refer vulnerable clients for help. Access is constrained by the traditional 9.00 am – 5.00 pm opening hours of Shetland's surgeries.

They have built their outreach up over a number of years of piecemeal funding, and have learned that consistency and regularity of provision is key to developing community confidence and usage of the service.

Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau, 2018

IMPROVEMENT METHODOLOGY

In the last year, the development of skills and understanding in two areas has been initiated: the *Improvement Methodology (through the Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills)* and *Agile Program Management*. Both were delivered to leaders, managers, and front line staff across the Partnership, with Police representatives learning alongside Council, NHS, and Third Sector staff. Both learning opportunities have significantly contributed towards the development of working relationships, and therefore trust and understanding across the partnership. This puts us in a much better position to share the use of our resources in order to improve outcomes for our children living in poverty.

Shetland Partnership, 2018

WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

We will continue to nurture relationships with communities, families and partners; the importance of this is now widely acknowledged across the partnership.

The Quality Improvement community continues to grow, developing into a peer support network across partner organisations.

BUILDING CAPACITY

WHAT WE'VE DONE...

The Partnership recognises the importance and value of building the capacity of children, their families, and communities, in order to tackle problems, such as child poverty. There are many examples of this, with one example shared here.

YOUNG MUM'S GROUP

The Young Mum's Group was set up a number of years ago, by the Council's Youth Services Team. The purpose was to bring young mums together, who might need support with their parenting development and may be isolated from others. It has become a means to share information, support the development of the health and well-being of the mums and their young children, and to move on to develop skills and to access training, qualifications and employment. The household income of most mums and children attending the group will have increased, as the local CAB attends on a regular basis to undertake benefit checks and support the development of money management skills. They will all feel more empowered and capable of making positive decisions to benefit their child(ren).



One teenage mum, who left school with no qualifications and began attending a number of years ago, was able to develop her literacy and numeracy skills, and go on to achieve qualifications. Her confidence now means that she chairs the group (which is now constituted, and run by those attending), and has obtained part-time work within Youth Services. As well as the direct impacts on her, there will also be impacts on her child, who is now growing up in a household with increased income and stability.

Youth Services, Shetland Islands Council, 2018

WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED...

OPEN PROJECT, VOLUNTARY ACTION SHETLAND AND THE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE PROJECT (EWRP)

The OPEN Project was set up in 2011 and became part of Voluntary Action Shetland's Services in 2013, following the closure of the Shetland Youth Information Service. The OPEN Project provides a range of services for young people aged 12-25 in Shetland.

A priority of the Project is:

"To focus on our vulnerable children's emotional resilience by working with them to identify the opportunities to improve their own outcomes, and dealing with the adversity they have suffered in order to become part of the fabric which creates a strong and vibrant community".

The EWRP funded OPEN to employ and support six people aged 16 to 25 to represent young people at strategic and other levels of the EWRP. They will represent young people from across Shetland giving them a voice at strategic level. They will develop and implement skills in a range of research and consultation methods, to gather the views of young people across Shetland, from a range of different social backgrounds. The findings will be used to inform the development of the EWRP.

Shetland's Integrated Children's Services Plan / OPEN Project, Voluntary Action Shetland,
2019

We want to spend time learning from what we are already doing; we need to continue to test out current approaches, for example, the projects within the Tackling Inequalities workstream of the Children's Services Integrated Plan.

IMPACT

We are becoming much better at measuring impact. Some of this is because we are developing a shared language across the Shetland Partnership, refining methodologies to become more consistent. We are also sharing evidence and knowledge between services and agencies and have developed a common understanding of the issues.

WHAT WE'VE DONE...

Schools across Shetland are learning together and from each other, on how to support more vulnerable children to improve their attainment, with an example below.

CLOSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP FOR OUR CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

Baltasound Junior High School is the most northerly school in the UK, with a school roll of 83 students, from nursery (age 3) to S4 (age 16). There are specific challenges in living in Unst:

- High rates of fuel poverty;
- Overall high cost of living; 13% greater than the Shetland average and 62% greater than UK average;
- Lower income levels, with the average annual income being 24% lower than the Shetland, and 17% lower than the Scottish, average; and
- Accessing services: it is a hundred mile, 4 hour round trip, including two ferry crossings to access the nearest dentist, supermarket, hospital and cinema - with petrol costing £1.34 per litre, the direct cost for a family of four is £40.70.

The school community spent time considering what vulnerability meant in a rural context, and which pupils were impacted upon, by these:

- Free school meals eligibility
- Interventions as part of the Child's Plan (GIRFEC)
- Low income
- Access to transport
- Geographic access to services
- Social inclusion
- Clothing/leisure
- Significant events
- Internet access



They noted that while some pupils had one or two vulnerabilities, some experienced several.

A number of interventions were implemented:

- Parents collected for Child's Plan reviews, parent evenings and community events, in order to ensure engagement, if they lacked transport or required support to attend
- Health Improvement Officer available within the school
- Take your Parent to school day
- Support for Bereaved Pupils in school
- MSP, MP, BT, and SSE were consulted with/lobbied about the poor broadband provision and its impact on education
- Whole school nurture approach
- The Pupil Equity Fund was used to design and staff a support programme over the school holidays
- School fund raising to ensure that all pupils can be included in school trips
- Staff have business insurance so that they can transport pupils when necessary.

With all these interventions, the school has succeeded in raising attainment, thereby directly impacting on improving the life chances of some of our most vulnerable children in one of our most remote communities.

Schools' Service, Shetland Islands Council, 2018

HEALTHY START UPTAKE

We have been working hard to increase uptake of Healthy Start, within Shetland. This is a national scheme that provides free vouchers every week to spend on certain food items and vitamins, such as milk, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables. The impact of this is available via national data. The uptake in Shetland is currently consistently higher than other island NHS Board areas (December 2018 to March 2019). However, it remains lower than in more urban areas, and work is ongoing to increase uptake.



NHS Shetland, 2019

ANCHOR – EARLY ACTION

Anchor has been established in order to invest in understanding how to shift the resources we have towards early intervention; thereby reducing the intervention required as a result of statutory processes.



It aims to bring about positive changes in the lives of families in Shetland who are struggling, whilst also gathering relevant information in order to change service delivery in the future, assisting other families in the longer-term.

Families and extended families, and front-line staff, are at the centre of the project. Their views and participation will be critical to ensuring an honest and transparent picture of real life challenges.

Anchor is a strength-based approach, and therefore:

- Emphasises prevention and early intervention.
- Takes a family-centred approach to individual problems.
- Identifies and builds on strengths and resources that empower families.
- Focuses on reducing risk in a way that builds on family strengths.
- Communicates a sense of hope.
- Establishes expectations for success within a person's capabilities/capacities.
- Promotes empowerment and independence.

Therefore Anchor is about:

- Empowering families to make positive changes to their lives.
- Enabling families to become less dependent and more resilient.
- Valuing and investing time in building relationships and trust.
- Involving families in shaping the support they require.
- Enabling families to become comfortable within their local communities.
- Breaking the cycle of multi-generational, entrenched dysfunction.
- Providing children and adults with opportunities that lead to better outcomes that will in turn improve their life chances, enabling and empowering them to succeed in line with their peers.
- Enabling a culture of learning, development and continuous improvement.
- Capturing experiences and data in order to demonstrate to partners the successful progress towards key outcomes for families and local communities, and thereby to inform how resources can shift towards prevention and early action, rather than crisis intervention.

At the start of 2018/19 the Shetland Partnership's Anchor Project was successful in receiving £321,000 from the Big Lottery's Early Action Systems Change Fund.

The Project Sponsor is Shetland's Area Commander for Police Scotland. One of the reasons for funding Anchor was because of the developing and maturing partnership working in Shetland. Other partners include the Council, Integrated Joint Board, NHS Shetland, Relationship Scotland – Shetland, Shetland Women's Aid and Voluntary Action Shetland.

Shetland's Integrated Children's Services Plan / Shetland Partnership, 2018

WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED...

We recognise that the rollout and embedding of Quality Improvement across our partnership will continue to develop our capacity to measure the improvement resulting from the changes we make.

REMOVING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF STIGMA

The issue of the negative impact of stigma, has been raised by a number of partnerships and highlighted in a number of strategies. This includes the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, the Integrated Children and Young Person's Services Planning Group, the Community

Justice Partnership, the Mental Health Partnership, the Community Learning and Development Partnership, the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Public Protection Committee.

We know that feelings of stigma have a direct impact on people feeling able to access services available in Shetland, which could reduce Child Poverty, and its impacts (Anchor consultation, Voices for Equity).

Shetland's Commission on Tackling Inequalities recommended the following: 'Building on one of Shetland's best assets: as individuals and as a community do all we can to reduce stigma and loneliness.'

Shetland's Community Justice Plan has identified the following outcome improvement action:

'Support development of local projects and initiatives to build community connectedness reduce feelings of loneliness and address stigma in relation to offending and substance misuse through training and resource provision.'

Parents involved in the Anchor Project have shared the following:

- They feel judged by others when they need to access additional support;
- They feel they don't fit in, with none of them accessing Mother and Toddler groups;
- Some felt a need to hide information for fear of judgement as they didn't follow the norm.

Participants involved in Voices for Equity describe how stigma exists in Shetland and what the feeling of being stigmatised does to a person; this includes single parents of young children.

"It is difficult to get away from your past here in Shetland. People know what you have done and it follows you. People should know that what they hear about people isn't always true."

"It is difficult to get away from your past here in Shetland. People know what you have done and it follows you. People should know that what they hear about people isn't always true."

For some, this creates a feeling of loneliness and contributes to isolation. The participants tell stories of feeling judged and labelled by the community and people who don't know them, and how this further leads to a sense of shame. A feeling of not having control over one's own situation seems to put additional pressure on already challenged individuals.

We are therefore beginning to explore whether there is a need for an improvement project, which can be developed across partnerships, forums and agencies.

Shetland Partnership, 2019

STRATEGIC APPROACH

(refer to diagram in Appendix 3)

WHAT WE'VE DONE...

In recent years the Scottish Government has introduced a number of different pieces of legislation which all aim to contribute to agencies working together to share resources in order to reduce inequalities, including to be able to reduce Child Poverty. These include:

- Fairer Scotland Duty
- Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and
- Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

Due to the nature of our geography – as a single authority community planning partnership – it means we are able to shape all of our activity to meet this legislation, and ultimately have a positive impact on our children and young people, including to support those living in poverty, and reduce poverty, where we can.

A tool we have available to us is Shetland's Integrated Impact Assessment. The legislation mentioned above has informed the development of this tool. When we are looking at how a service works or writing a policy, we carry out an Integrated Impact Assessment. This helps us to consider the different impacts our work has on different people in Shetland, including those children and their families, living in poverty.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

NHS Shetland and Shetland Islands Council have jointly developed a ‘Performance Management Framework’, under the principle of developing policies on a ‘Once for Shetland’ basis.

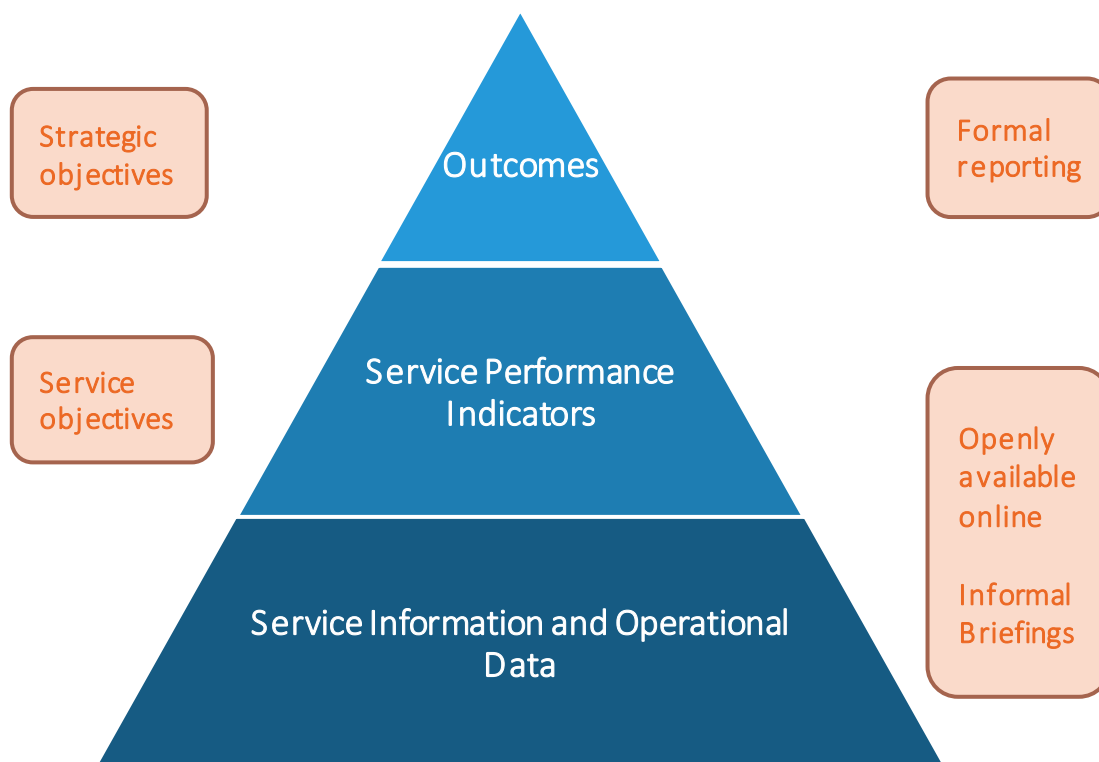
Setting out clearly how services are performing is an integral part of our contract with the population that we serve. We need to communicate clearly what we are aiming to achieve, and why.

An essential part of service review is the requirement to continually monitor results and assess local needs. This ensures that services are prioritised, designed and delivered to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families. Outcomes must be closely monitored and evaluated, and information gained from service users, stakeholders and the local community on an ongoing basis.

The Performance Management Framework is shown diagrammatically below, and is built around:

- a focus on reporting on delivering outcomes and strategic objectives;
- the large set of performance indicators being readily and openly available to all; and
- performance data encompassing a wide range of information, beyond performance indicators, in support of strategic objectives.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The requirement to produce an Annual Child Poverty Action Report (ACPAR) is set out in the [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#)⁴.

The legislation states that the report must “describe any measures taken in the area of the local authority during the reporting year...for the purpose of contributing to the meeting of the child poverty targets.” The Act also requires local authorities and NHS Boards to set out, in their local child poverty action reports, information on measures that they plan to take to contribute to the meeting of the Child Poverty reduction targets set out in the Act, with the aim of ensuring the reports provide a strategic forward look as well as an account of progress to date.

The Act sets out a **clear agenda for tackling, reporting on and measuring child poverty**. The Act:

- Sets out four statutory income targets, to be met in the financial year beginning 1 April 2030.
- Sets out four interim income targets, to be met in the financial year beginning 1 April 2023.
- Places a duty on Scottish Ministers to publish child poverty delivery plans in 2018, 2022, and 2026, and to report on those plans annually.
- Places a duty on local authorities and health boards to report annually on activity they are taking, and will take, to reduce child poverty.
- Sets out that a statutory Poverty and Inequality Commission will be established from 1 July 2019, with functions related to the child poverty reduction targets.

The Act sets out four statutory, **income-based targets (all after housing costs)**, to be achieved by 2030:

- Less than 10% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- Less than 5% of children are in persistent poverty

The Act also sets out **interim targets**, to be met in the financial year beginning on 1 April 2023 – which is the halfway point between the position at the time the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act was passed and the 2030 target date for the meeting of the targets - as below:

- Less than 18% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 14% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 8% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/6/contents/enacted>

- Less than 8% of children are in persistent poverty.

Guidance⁵ on the approach and content of the ACPAR is available. The key considerations are:

- Production of one Report for Shetland (the first covering 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019);
- The Council and NHS Shetland are required to jointly prepare and publish a report, but are encouraged to involve all partners contributing to reducing Child Poverty (through Community Planning);
- Aim to publish by 30th June each year, after local approval by the Council and NHS Shetland;
- Feedback will be provided from the Scottish Government;
- Links should be made with implementation of the:
 - Fairer Scotland Duty
 - Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
 - Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and
 - Education (Scotland) Act 2016;
- Evidence must be provided that shows consideration is being given to the different barriers that parents with different protected characteristics⁶ may face and specifically include action to help parents to maximise income, by accessing financial inclusion services;
- Evidence that shows lived experience of poverty is being brought into strategic decision-making;
- In addition, the guidance highlights the following for inclusion:
 - Sharing 'what's working' and 'lessons' learnt
 - Reference to work to tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
 - The building and nurturing of relationships across the partnership, and
 - Demonstration of partner involvement in activity to meet poverty targets.

The Scottish Government's Delivery⁷ Plan identifies a number of priority groups being targeted as particular beneficiaries of the Plan's commitments:

- Lone parents
- Families where a member of the household is disabled
- Families with 3 or more children
- Minority ethnic families
- Families where the youngest child is under 1
- Mothers aged under 25

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-action-report-guidance/>

⁶ Age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

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

Living in areas of high material deprivation and remote rural locations were also identified as additional barriers faced by families in these groups.

APPENDIX 2: 2018/19 ACTIONS AND 2019/20 PLANS

This summary table stipulates the nature of the activity and who should benefit; responsibility, timeline and resources for delivery; the intended child poverty driver that the activity will impact upon and how this is measured.

Actions taken forward during 2018/19

| Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services | Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it? | Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action | Resources allocated | Timescale for action | Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact | How impact has/will be assessed |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| Used the evidence base from Shetland's Commission on Tackling Inequalities to inform Shetland's Partnership Plan (SPP) | All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes because of inequalities, including children living in poverty | Lead: Five statutory agencies with responsibility for community planning Partners: All partners (public, private, third and community sectors) | Primarily staff time within partners agencies and volunteer time from community representatives | Shetland Partnership Plan approved and launched, September 2018 | All | Extent to which organisational and strategic partnership plans align to the outcomes agreed in the SPP |
| Secured ESF for further four years' delivery of Financial Health Service, Energy Advice Service and Employability Services | Low income households, throughout Shetland, including those with children and young people | Lead: Policy Manager / Youth Services Team Leader, Council Partners: Council, Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau, NHS Shetland | £63,650 /year of Council funding £254,600 /year from European Social Fund | Complete ready for delivery from 1 st January 2019 | Cost of Living (particularly energy usage) Income from employment (particularly hours worked and skills and qualifications) | Number of families supported Number of young people and parents obtaining sustained employment |
| Updating of Welfare Reform Outcome Focused Plan for NHS Shetland and HSCP | Those in low-paid work, including NHS employees and contracted staff who maybe in low paid | Lead: Public Health Principal Partners: all directorates within NHS and HSCP | Within existing resources | Targeted plan to be updated by March 2019, followed by implementation over the next year. | Aimed at minimising the negative impact of welfare reform. | A range of measures will be developed as part of the refreshing of the |

| Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services | Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it? | Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action | Resources allocated | Timescale for action | Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact | How impact has/will be assessed |
|---|--|--|--|----------------------|--|--|
| | and/or part-time employment and/or on fixed term contracts Children in low-income families Larger families in receipt of benefits or in low -paid employment | | | | | action plan, based on local needs and the short, middle & long-term outcomes described within the national plan. |
| Enhancement of formal income maximisation referral routes between the early years workforce and local money/welfare advice services | Pregnant women and low income families with young children | Lead: Senior health Improvement Advisor Partners: NHS Shetland Early Years workforce and Citizen’s Advice Bureau. | £2,641 allocated by Scottish Government. Regional funding also available, but not clear how this will be spent yet. | March 2019 | Maximising the income of pregnant women and low income families with young children. | Increase in referrals to money advice service. |
| Testing changes to charging policies and monitoring the impact (Test of Change) | Young people, young parents | Lead: Youth Services and Employability Team Leader, Council Partners: ZetTrans, Shetland Arts Development Agency | No additional resources required. Potential short-term loss of income, before new revenue obtained | Complete during 2018 | Affordability of transport/ affordability of access to leisure opportunities | Number of young people obtaining employment, for whom the cost of transport was a barrier Number of parents obtaining employment, for who the cost of |

| Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services | Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it? | Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action | Resources allocated | Timescale for action | Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact | How impact has/will be assessed |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | | | transport was a barrier |
| Voices for Equity | Indirect, by targeting decision-makers who may have no experience of living in poverty | Lead: Community Planning and Development, Council Partners: Shetland Partnership, Community | £60,000 funding from Scottish Government's Poverty Truth Commission Fund | May 2018 to May 2020 | All, by raising awareness amongst decision-makers | Number of community and civic participants Evaluation of learning points Strength of relationships |
| Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills and Agile Programme Management | Indirect, by developing skills to tackle complex change, and evaluate improvement | Lead: Anchor Project Board Partners: across the Shetland Partnership | SIFS delivered by existing staff / attendance as part of substantive roles. | May 2018 onwards | Development of skills to tackle poverty drivers effectively | Number of attendees Follow up required |
| Closing the Attainment Gap | Children with vulnerabilities impacting on their educational attainment | Lead: Director of Children's Services, Council | Within resources of partner organisations and communities / Pupil Equity Funding | 2018 | Low Income High Cost of Living Rural community Poor connectivity | Attainment |
| Building capacity through the Young Mums' Group | Young people, young parents | Lead: Team Leader, Youth and Employability Services Partners: across the Shetland Partnership | Within resources of partner organisations | Ongoing | Low Income High Cost of Living Skills & Qualifications | Health and Well-being of mums and children Capacity of mums |
| Anchor – Early Action | Vulnerable families | Lead: Anchor Project Board | Staff time, within substantive roles. | April 2018: Detailed delivery planning | All drivers, by taking a family-centre, holistic and flexible approach | Detailed monitoring framework |

| Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services | Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it? | Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action | Resources allocated | Timescale for action | Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact | How impact has/will be assessed |
|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| | | Partners: across the Shetland Partnership | £321,000 from Big Lottery to invest in catalyst of change | December 2018: Delivery commenced | | under-development to measure outcomes for families and for our system |

Actions planned for 2019-20

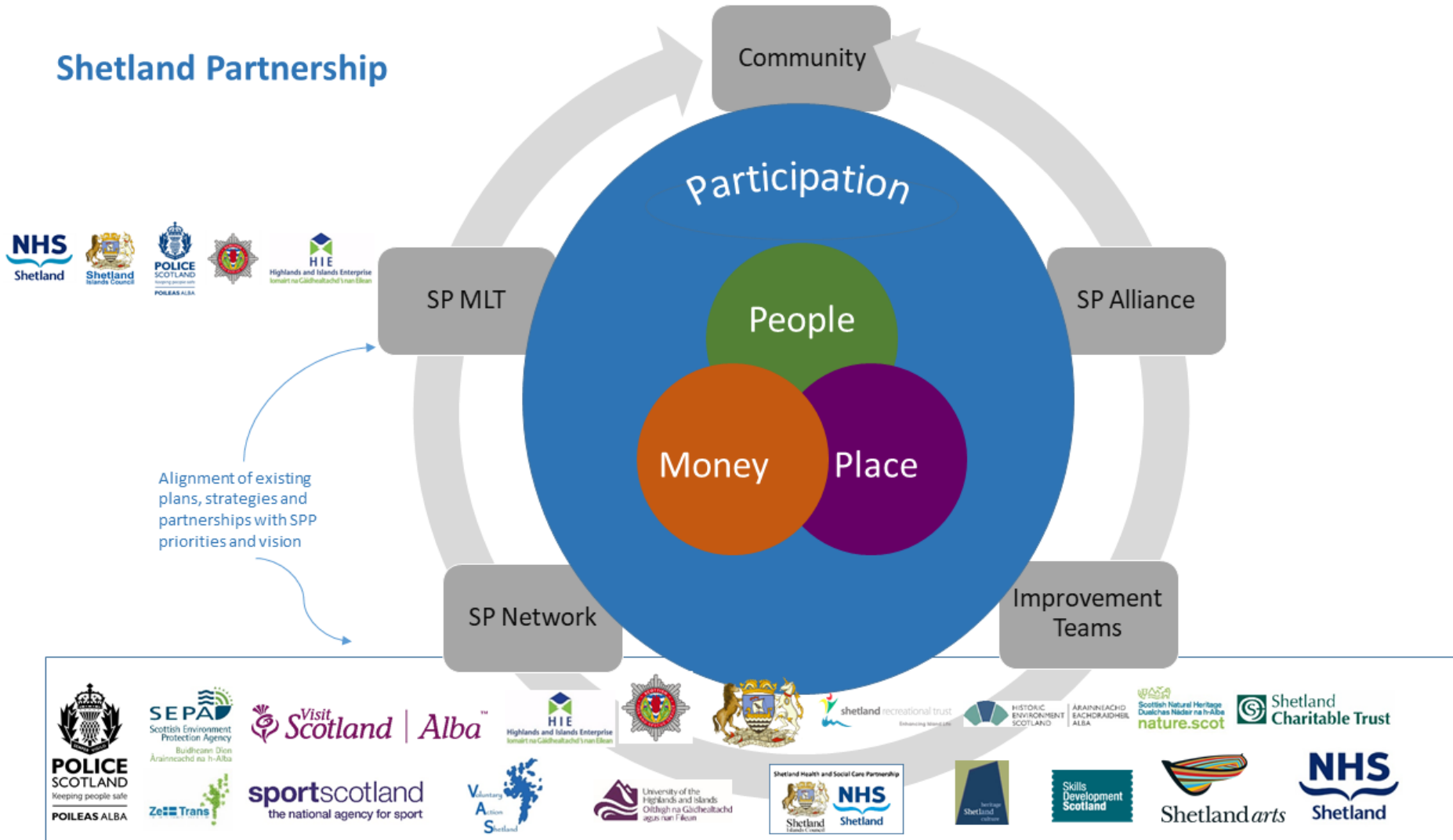
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|---|---|--|---------------------|--|---|--|
| Commission research in order to understand the relationship between our higher cost of living and poorer outcomes | All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes because of inequalities, including children living in poverty | Lead: Director of Children's Services, Council Partners: Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland, NHS Shetland, SFRS | To be identified | Commission during Summer 2019, for completion as soon as possible, | Cost of Living | Outputs of research Understanding and use of research (at local and national level) |

| Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services | Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it? | Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action | Resources allocated | Timescale for action | Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact | How impact has / will be assessed |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Enabling parents to move into employment / better employment | Unemployed, underemployed parents | Lead: Team Leader, Youth and Employability Services Partners: through CLD Partnership and Anchor Project | Existing employability funding and new funding from Scottish Government | Summer 2019 onwards | Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Skills and Qualifications | Number of unemployed parents moving into employment Number of under employed parents improving their employment |
| Right Support, Right Time: seeking to improve outcomes for families by overcoming the frustrations that people don't know what services exist to support what issues | Support staff working with families, including children in poverty Families | Lead: Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Policy Manager, Council Partners: NHS Shetland, Citizens Advice Bureau, Council | To be identified, e.g. Council Graduate | Summer: Market Research (with families) / Technological Feasibility Autumn: Draft Brief and Secure Resources Winter: Commission | Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Low Uptake of Benefits Assumed Deficit of Entrepreneurship Amongst Low Income Families | Uptake of support services Examples of case studies where people haven't received the right service, at the right time |
| Money-Proofing Policies: gently challenging our current approach to strategic development and delivery in order to | All children and their families, living in poverty / low income | Lead: Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Policy Manager, Council | Time commitment, as part of substantive roles. Each policy area to reallocate resources in order to achieve the medium and | June 2019: engagement with policy influencers August 2019- July 2020: one year's activity | Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Assumed Deficit of Entrepreneurship Amongst Low Income Families | Understanding of issues and drivers of child poverty, amongst policy leads |

| Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services | Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it? | Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action | Resources allocated | Timescale for action | Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact | How impact has / will be assessed |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| reduce Child Poverty | | Partners: Policy Influencers across the Partnership | long term outcomes. | | Silo Policy Making | Examples of changes in policy, as a result |
| Fair Food: aspiration is to eradicate Food Poverty in Shetland | All children and their families, living in poverty / low income | Lead: Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Policy Manager, Council Partners: Communities, NHS Shetland, Council | Time commitment, as part of substantive roles. Additional resources to be secured via Council Graduate Scheme. External funding on project by project basis | September 2019: detailed planning, for implementation | Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Welfare Reforms Risk of Food Bank becoming Institutionalised | Demand for Food Bank, from Families Area of land used for local food consumption |
| OPEN Project / Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Project | Vulnerable children | Lead: Director of Children's Services, Council Partners: NHS Shetland, Voluntary Action Shetland | £16,720 from Council EWRP Fund / year (2019/23) | April 2019 to March 2020: Initial Engagement Phase | Previous lack of input from young people in decisions that impact on them Adverse Childhood Experiences | Set out in project plan |
| Test out approaches, such as those within the Tackling Inequalities | Children living in low income households | Lead: Quality Improvement Officer, Council | Time commitment, as part of substantive roles. | April 2019 to March 2020: Initial Engagement Phase | Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Welfare Reforms | Model for Improvement |

| Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services | Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it? | Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action | Resources allocated | Timescale for action | Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact | How impact has / will be assessed |
|---|---|---|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| workstream of the Children's Integrated Plan | | Partners: NHS Shetland, | | | Risk of Food Bank becoming Institutionalised | |
| Tackling Stigma | All children and their families, living in poverty / low income | Lead: to be determined Partners: Communities, all Partners | To be determined | Summer 2019: exploration phase | All | To be determined |

APPENDIX 3: STRATEGIC DIAGRAM OF SHETLAND PARTNERS



Information can on request be made available in Braille, on tape, in large print and in different languages (русский, 汉语, evsjv, Polski, ภาษาไทย, Español, Magyar).

For further information please telephone Children's Services on:

01595 743967, or email education.and.social.services@shetland.gov.uk



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