

Shetland's Local Annual Child Poverty Action Report, Year 5

Reporting on 2022/23
Actions for 2023 Onwards



Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we share this report showcasing the extensive range of innovative and life-changing projects, interventions and interactions that our colleagues from across our Council, NHS and partner agencies have carried out across the last year to support children, young people and their families who live with poverty in our community. We are fully aware too, that we won't have captured all the on-going work within these pages but the report offers an excellent flavour of the work being carried out with compassion, empathy and kindness.

Ensuring people with lived experience of the challenges that poverty brings are front and centre of how our services plan and deliver this work in the community, and the actions taken are key to how we can effect appropriate, meaningful and sustainable change for some of our most vulnerable families and fellow Shetlanders. We have used this learning, interspersed throughout the report, to inform our plan for next year.

As winter approaches, we all start to think about the additional costs that living in Shetland brings; especially as the cost of living has been evidenced to be 20-65% higher than on the UK mainland. The latest figure for children living in poverty in Shetland (after housing costs are considered) was 15.44% in 2021/22 or roughly 1 in every 7 children. This is before the high cost of living is considered. Understanding our local context and data was identified as a priority to ensure our efforts were focused on the right issues and were having the desired impact. This report is data rich; it includes a comprehensive appendix outlining our evidence base for the work we do and informs our plan for the next three years.

Importantly, a focus on data is helping us to ensure we are supporting those families who make up the six priority groups; finding ways to increase their income and reduce their living costs. However, we must take care to use this quantitative data wisely and listen to what the qualitative data is telling us too.

Stigma and shame around poverty are real. People in our community live with these feelings every day. We need to change this. By ensuring our universal services are available to all, accessed without means-testing or other barriers, and through making it *'ok to ask for help'*, this change can happen. The rollout of Anchor for Families has been integral in the progress we are making in this area of our work and the learning gained is being used to inform wider practice.

The action plan contained in this report sets out our collaborative strategic actions to mitigate the impacts of poverty, some of which are replicated in the Shetland Children's Partnership Plan. The planning and delivery of actions to address structural changes required to reduce Child Poverty, are set out in the Delivery Plan for Shetland's Partnership Plan 2023-2027. This alignment of plans with services working collaboratively will ensure that reducing child poverty in Shetland is a key collective theme for all our partner services.

The creation of this report has also been a collaboration across services and we wish to thank all colleagues who have contributed to ensuring we could present such a rich and varied report. We would especially like to thank Leanne Gear from Community Planning and Development for pulling this together into such an accessible read.

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Introduction

In Shetland, in taking a multi-agency approach, we recognise that there are many ways to reduce child poverty within our community.

What is important is that:

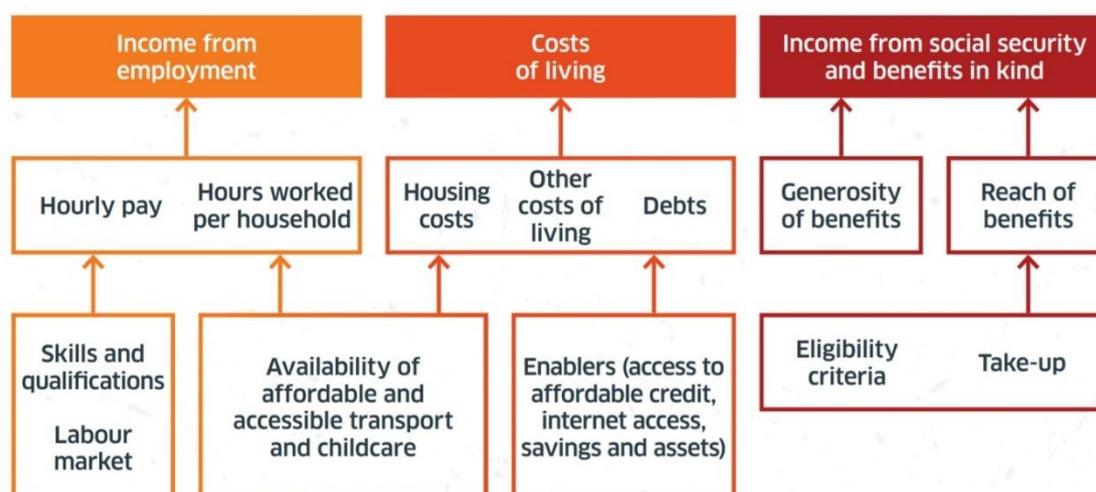
- we involve children, young people and their parents and wider families in shaping projects, products and services; and
- we monitor impact, to inform future work – for example, recognising that failing is not a failure, as long as we fail quickly and learn from our experiences, and we learn from things that have gone well, sharing the learning into other areas of our work.

Drivers of Child Poverty

Evidence tells us that the three drivers of poverty are income from employment, cost of living, and income from social security and benefits in kind ([Best Start, Bright Futures, Scottish Government 2022-2026 Child Poverty Plan](#)). The Scottish Government state that impacting these drivers will impact levels of child poverty, and a focus on them is strongly encouraged.

In this report, we have highlighted which driver each activity aims to address. As stated in the [Local Child Poverty Action Report guidance](#), supporting families means taking a holistic approach; often activities carried out by partners and communities will influence more than one driver.

The below image portrays the drivers of child poverty (Best Start, Bright Futures).



Approach on Reporting and Plans

The first section of this report looks at the most recent data on child poverty in Shetland and what we know.

The second part focusses on activity and impacts from 2022/23 from partners and communities. These are set out under five headings as a series of updates and case studies. The first of these looks at the rollout of Anchor for Families in Schools. Then, mirroring Best Start Bright Futures, we look at activity which contributes to:



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

This is followed by an update on the 2022/23 table of actions.

The final section outlines what we are planning to do from 2023 onwards.

Strategic Connections

This report has direct connections to the Shetland Partnership Plan Annual Report 2022-23¹, the new Shetland Partnership Delivery Plan², and the Shetland Children’s Partnership Plan (formerly the Integrated Children and Young People’s Services Plan).

Many of the case studies in this report are featured in the Shetland Annual Report 2022-23 as they contribute to the Partnership Priorities as well as the drivers of child poverty.

A new approach has been developed by partners, for the planning and implementation of future actions to address Child Poverty across our communities:

- The strategic actions required to primarily mitigate the impact of Child Poverty are set out in both this report and Shetland’s Children’s Services Plan, Priority Area 8 – Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Children and Families;
- The strategic actions required to support structural change to reduce Child Poverty are set out in the Shetland Partnership Delivery Plan (i.e. this delivery plan has been developed through a lens of reducing Child Poverty).



1. What we know: Child Poverty in Shetland

Poverty and Cost of Living Data

Like Scotland, child poverty in Shetland has gradually increased since the early 2010s – although levels are consistently lower than Scotland as a whole. 11.6% of children were living in low income families in Shetland in 2021/22, compared to Scotland’s 20.8% (Appendix 2 and [Shetland Partnership website](#)). While Shetland had the third lowest level of children living in low income families in Scotland in 2021/22, this is higher than pre-pandemic levels. After housing costs are considered, child poverty in Shetland was 15.44% for 2021/22 (End Child Poverty Coalition).



¹ Shetland Partnership Plan is Shetland’s Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

² The Shetland Partnership Delivery Plan 2023/26 sets out how Shetland will delivery on Shetland’s Local Outcomes Improvement Plan



These figures do not take into account the higher cost of living in remote and rural Scotland. Shetland Partnership highlighted that 47% of people did not earn enough to have an acceptable standard of living in 2021. This means their income was not sufficient to cover the high costs of living here. This may mean that, even in households where adults are working and earning a decent wage, financial hardship may be a risk or already being experienced.

“A minimum standard of living in the UK today includes, but is more than just, food, clothes and shelter. It is about having what you need in order to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society”.

It is widely known that we are facing cost pressures across the UK, caused partly by energy costs and the Ukraine war but also factors such as the cost of raw materials, supply chain issues and recruitment challenges caused by Brexit. This is likely to be exacerbated in Shetland where the cost of living is 20-65% higher than the UK mainland (Minimum Income Standard 2016).

Recent research by Hirsch (2023) highlights that due to the cost of fuel, food and other basic items rising faster than household incomes, there has been a reduction in living standards, felt by most people in the UK no matter what their income. Findings indicate that people near the middle of the income distribution are currently facing substantial risk of financial strain and material hardship. While this is not as high as people below the poverty line, it is far greater than for people towards the upper end of the income distribution. This means that those with incomes closer to the median level could be at substantial risk of financial strain, for example, the cost of living negatively impacting the ability to keep the house warm and the quality of food eaten.

In 2022-23, 10% of pupils accessed Free School Meals and 14% accessed School Clothing Grants (Shetland Islands Council). The Council’s decision to extend Free School Meals to School Clothing Grant households means that an additional 6% of our children accessed Free School Meals.

A Child Poverty Index, developed by Scottish Borders Council and replicated by Improvement Service Scotland for Shetland Islands Council (SIC) in 2023 (Appendix 4), found that Shetland had ‘mid’ levels of child poverty³. This was based on 4 indicators to get a fuller picture: ‘Children living in low income families’; ‘Free School Meals’, ‘Clothing Grant’ and ‘Educational Maintenance Allowance’ (Appendix 4). The report shows high levels of free school meal and school clothing grant uptake in some areas of Shetland. The report also highlights the different levels of child poverty experienced within Shetland and its localities – with some areas classed as ‘lower’ and others, ‘high’.



Foodbank usage continues to increase. An average of 134 food parcels were distributed per month by the Shetland Foodbank in 2022-23, an increase of 32 parcels per month on the previous year (or 31%, mirroring Scotland’s 30%).

The [Child Poverty Action Group](#) highlight that poverty rarely has a single cause and that in the past, child poverty levels in the UK have been significantly lower than they are today. A range of factors including: rising living costs, low pay, lack of work and inadequate social security benefits together, mean that some people do not have enough resources.

Lived Experience

It is difficult to illustrate specific examples of lived experience locally (there is no mechanism to collate examples and care must be taken with identifiable information, particularly in a small

³ On a scale comprising of: none, lower, low, mid, high, higher, higher +.

community). The Local Child Poverty Action Report Guidance cites the Poverty & Inequality Commission outlining the importance of ensuring people with direct experience of poverty are involved in informing action:

“We know that people with lived experience are experts because of their experience and bring knowledge and ideas that are needed to successfully tackle poverty. Scotland needs their expertise at the centre of work to reduce poverty.”

Many partners are developing services with people who have direct experience of poverty. For example, the family-support model of Anchor for Families continues to test ways of normalising family-support in order to remove any barriers to access. The concept has evolved over time based on feedback from families. For example initially the thought was that support would be needed for the whole family, but, support workers realised that the support was most desired for the parents/carers and made sure the project focussed on this instead.

“I have really appreciated having one person to go to about our issues and not needing to repeat my story over and over. [The project officer] being linked into the school made it feel joined up that she could pass on information if it was necessary.” (Parent/carer supported by Anchor for Families)

In addition, Shetland’s Community Learning and Development Plan (CLD) includes ‘Poverty and Inclusion’ as a priority. Actions were developed based on Community Conversations with members of the community, community groups, third sector organisations and staff teams, combined with ongoing professional intelligence and data. For example, feedback was provided on the best time and location for benefit check drop-ins; and there were requests from community groups for cooking on a budget lessons from the Adult Learning team.

2. What we have done

The rollout of Anchor for Families across all areas of Shetland was a significant milestone. Partners have continued to carry out improvement actions locally, informed by data and strengthened by collaborative work, with any learning used to inform future work. Activities and case studies by partners, which contribute to the drivers of child poverty are highlighted under three headings: 'Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work'; 'Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs'; and 'Supporting the next generation to thrive.' The drivers of child poverty which each case study contributes to are highlighted.

Rollout of Anchor for Families across all areas of Shetland

2022-23 saw the rollout of Anchor for Families across all areas of Shetland and the final year of the [Anchor Project](#)⁴. The learning from the Project has led to the creation of [Anchor for Families](#)⁵. The team walk alongside families who are under pressure, helping them build the strength and capacity required to achieve their goals (Appendix 3). The team also work with support services, to promote system change to earlier action. Over the past year, the Anchor team have been integral to the cost of living campaign, and continued to support families and support services. It is currently funded by the Government's Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, delivering on these requirements.



Rollout of Anchor in Schools

The Anchor for Families team has expanded and can now offer equitable support across Shetland. Prior to this, the team worked in three different settings: Sound Primary School and Anderson High School in Lerwick and Aith Junior High School and Primary Cluster. Now, every school across Shetland is linked to a worker as a point of contact, with some areas having a more enhanced level of contact, depending on need. A purpose is to normalise parental support, and is available to all. Inevitably, because of need, Priority Family Types are a high proportion of those supported. 38 families supported in the past year (79%) are Priority Family Types including: lone parents; disabled households; families with three or more children; and mothers aged under 25.

"My [child] is happier because I am more organised and relaxed. They are more settled at school and at home"

⁴ The Anchor Project began in 2018, after being awarded funding by the Communities Fund, through their Early Action Systems Change Fund. The Project was designed to give families and services the space to try new ways of working together and to assist in the shift of spend from crisis intervention to early intervention and prevention. It was designed as a facilitator of change, including gathering evidence and sharing good practice and lessons learned.

⁵ Anchor for Families works with families to help them access all the support they need to thrive, and will continue to do so as long as needed. This might be making sure families are receiving all the financial support and benefits they are entitled to; speaking with housing or other services on their behalf; helping families to communicate with the school or talking through relationship issues. They provide practical help, like food parcels and clothing, as well as a friendly ear, ready to listen and chat about anything.

Supported the Cost of Living Campaign

The Anchor for Families team were essential in delivering on the [cost of living support](#) provided during the winter. Providing front line cost of living support, the team:

- Helped to set up St Ringans Hub where people could pick up hot water bottles, blankets, flasks, food and second hand clothing; an outreach facility was also established in Brae.
- Operated the cost of living support line in partnership with community workers. The team found that having continuity was important with just a few members of staff. This meant a consistency in approach.
- Delivered Money Worries training⁶ to increase the capacity and knowledge of other staff every week.
- Helped with fuel vouchers and delivery of fuel vouchers.

Continued to Support Services



The team continued to be there to help build capacity of other support services, such as teachers and school support staff to understand whole family support; and to support the implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

“[Anchor] has eased pressure on me. Not just time pressure but sometimes parents come to you and they are desperate, aside from the time I’m not trained enough to know where to signpost them. I’m wary of what advice I am giving them and if it’s the right thing”.

“Anchor just makes us more aware and more empathetic. It has taught me to be less judgemental.”

Partnership working has the added benefit of reducing workloads for busy services like Shetland Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The Anchor team have helped reduce some of their work by ‘doing the first bit’ and ‘sharing the next bit’. Support workers can help people to find appropriate documentation or fill out forms, meaning that CAB can concentrate on advice and support.

The team work closely with Parental Employability support staff, depending on the need of families.

Continued to Support Families

Anchor for Families continued to provide early access support to all families regardless of circumstances and can support families that may ‘fall through the net’. Often the systems of support in place for people do not always link up around families. The team aim to make sure families are sure of what they are entitled to and how to access support easily, without it feeling onerous or with barriers.



⁶ Money Worries training sessions were developed for services and agencies to help them find out more about how to raise the issue of Money Worries, and about the support available for people locally. They have been run as a joint venture between Shetland CAB, the Anchor team and NHS Shetland. There is more information on this on page 21

“They made me aware I qualify for free school meals (FSM) and that many of the sports groups allow free access to families who get FSM, and they supported me to access a course at the local college.”

“Never really had this sort of support before. Someone who is there, non-judgmental, there where I needed them by message or phone that gets back to me quickly.”

The team measures impact, with both families and professionals completing questionnaires each year about the difference in their lives before and after support. The work of the team continues to be beneficial, and it varies for how quick, impactful or life changing these benefits are felt. The support is always there; and people can engage whenever they want to reach out for support. Some families may not be in touch for two or three months, and then they reach out again.

The ongoing buy in from services and families, enthusiasm from the team about the different ways of working and securing funding for expansion have all been critical in ensuring the progression of the programme. Anchor for Families is making a real contribution, bringing money into families, reducing household costs and ensuring that families have more disposable income in their pockets. Anchor for Families is constantly evolving – if something does not work, it is tweaked on the way. The support impacts on all drivers of poverty: costs of living; income from social security and benefits in kind; and income from employment.

Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work

Work offers a sustainable route out of poverty for many families and has a strong role to play in a balanced approach to tackling poverty (Best Start, Bright Futures). The Scottish Government outline that for this to be possible, a wide range of systems need to align. This includes a strong labour market with fair and flexible employment; along with availability of affordable and accessible transport and childcare; skills and qualifications; and fair hourly pay for instance. Over the past year, there have been examples of local collaborative working to support parents into employment, increase childcare availability, and support businesses and fair work in the islands' economy.

The [Shetland Employability Pathway](#) (part of the SIC's Youth and Employability Service) offers person-centred support to residents aged 15+ up to retirement, to support people to apply for jobs and access education, training and volunteering. In addition they can help people to change or progress in a career. The Pathway has recently been working more closely with an existing support group, originally set up to provide support for under 18s leaving school with a child. The purpose was to expand support to enable parents to move into work or improve their employment status, with many supported being those from the Priority Family Types. This support is funded through the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF).

Parental Employability Support

"Thank Goodness It's Thursday" (TGIT) began in 2015 and has seen many guises, however, what remains true is the continued support provided to the participants, guided by their needs, and that it is predominately peer-led. The group recently rebranded from "Young Mums Group" to TGIT to be inclusive of all genders. This change was led by the group members and was supported by the Council's Youth and Employability team.

Over the past year, outcomes achieved include: 15 jobs, 6 college places and 1 university place. The service also reported a marked increase in confidence, group work and socialisation. The group has become semi-autonomous, organising day trips out, on top of the regular weekly meeting.



One mother had struggled with a lack of confidence and low mood during the Covid-19 lockdown. Upon joining TGIT, the mother described the provision as "life-saving", such was her feeling of isolation prior to this. Barriers the mother faced included being on a low income and not having enough suitable hours at her workplace. The group gave her access to the Parental Employability Support Worker, providing assistance in her job search, application writing and interview preparation. As a result, she gained a new job with a contract that suits her needs and fits in with her childcare arrangements. TGIT runs various courses and provides access to Digital College, both of which increased the mother's confidence and were vital to gaining employment.

"Thanks so much for the encouragement, I am a very happy woman today! Feels like everything is falling into place now. Feeling like part of a team again and doing something worthwhile is such a good feeling after so long of feeling aimless and adrift."

Another mother who had built up trust within the group was assisted into fulltime work, compatible with her children's needs. Participating in training was a significant development for the mother who was nervous and unsure of her ability beforehand. Courses included topics such as communication, confidence, healthy eating on a budget and parental self-confidence and resilience. After attending one of the courses she said:

“(It has) definitely helped with communication. (I have) more self-belief in myself in respect of my parenting and talking to others.”

SIC's Youth and Employability Service has worked with many partners in relation to supporting parents into work and education over the past year such as: Shetland Women's Aid, Department of Work and Pensions, SIC Adult Learning, Local Employability Pathway, NHS Shetland, SIC Community Safety, SIC Family Centre, Anchor for Families, Ability Shetland, UHI Shetland, SIC Social work, SIC schools and Police Scotland.

Availability and affordability of accessible childcare is a key barrier to accessing income from employment and dealing with the costs of living. Developing affordable, accessible childcare is a key component in enabling families to increase their earning potential. Last year, we reported that the SIC Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) team's aim was to develop and improve access to high quality school aged childcare across Shetland, particularly for families in remote and rural communities and for families on low incomes. This remains the same.

Childcare Provision

Out of School Clubs

SIC's central Early Learning and Childcare team carried out a Childcare Consultation in 2021, which highlighted that while Shetland did well to meet the needs of families using early learning and childcare provision, there was an identified need for development in out of school childcare in Shetland, particularly in rural areas. 52% of parents and carers stated that access to school aged childcare was not sufficient to meet their family needs.



Out of School Clubs were established in 2022-23 as a response to the survey; one in Brae and one in Sandwick. These clubs are in addition to the existing services in Lerwick and Dunrossness. As a result of this development, more families can access childcare both after school and in the school holidays. Each service is offered wider than the school catchment area.

Consultation with partners, including parent councils, influenced the service delivery model of the out of school clubs. Individual consultations were carried out in Brae and Sandwick to identify service needs. Families and the local community were involved in this process.

Numbers of children attending out of school clubs are gradually increasing with the more established clubs (Lerwick and Dunrossness) reporting higher numbers. Feedback from parents and carers have highlighted the benefit that the provision has had on their families.

“The OOSC has been a great help to my family, it has helped with our work/life balance and is a huge help in the School holidays. My son loves attending the OOSC and keeps asking to go more often.”

Attendance numbers are monitored regularly and both formal and informal feedback is gathered and considered when reviewing the effectiveness of the service.

There are challenges which are recognised and remain, some of which are highlighted below.

- The cost to families to access out of school club provision remains a barrier. This cost is higher for families who have more than one child
- There are areas in Shetland where out of school childcare is very limited. Solutions are continually being considered to support this.
- When consultations are carried out, there is a need to ensure results are representative of each community – recognising that not everyone completes a survey.

Maintaining Flexible Early Years Learning and Childcare

The SIC has maintained the Scottish Government funded provision of 1140 hours a year for 3-4 year olds and for eligible 2 year olds. Anecdotal feedback has highlighted that Shetland has one of the most flexible offers in Scotland. Families can choose a set weekly pattern for their child within the opening hours of their chosen service. Careful consideration is given to the sustainability and manageability of the provision.



Lunches and snacks are provided at no cost to parents and carers, which is a significant development helping to keep costs down for families. This is partially due to Scottish Government funding, but a top up fund locally for settings has helped to ensure no family has to pay.

SIC has close working relationships with private and voluntary sector providers offering more choice for families. Effective partnership working with external agencies and organisations ensures a joined up approach with everyone working well together. A Childcare Strategic Working Group has been established to best meet the needs of each community.

The impact of early learning and childcare provision is measured in a variety of ways. It is highlighted that the needs of individual children and families should be at the centre of decision-making and therefore families are supported to use as much or as little of their entitlement as they need.

As a result of the expansion there has been an increase in employability opportunities. The early learning and childcare workforce has more than doubled with the introduction of the 1140 hours since 2020 and there are increased opportunities for staff to undertake qualifications they may not have done otherwise. This contributes to the ‘income from employment’ driver of food poverty.

The childcare provided in these settings contributes to ‘income from employment’ and ‘costs of living’ when looking at the drivers of child poverty.

Childminding Campaign

A childminding campaign was held in 2022 to support individuals who were interested in childminding. As a result of this campaign two more childminders are registered in Shetland. This support is ongoing.

Locally, SIC, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the private sector, amongst others, continue to invest in economic development activity across Shetland, in order to support resilience in communities and contribute to ensuring wage levels are able to support our higher cost of living.

Supporting Economic Development

Business Start Up Grants

SIC's Economic Development Service and HIE established the Business Start Up Grant in 2022. The grant is administered by the Business Gateway team and was set up as a two year pilot in order to incentivise new business starts; improve business engagement with Business Gateway support; diversify the local business base; and improve long term business survival rates.



Applicants are able to receive 100% of eligible costs up to the maximum grant amount, with supplements available if the applicant is a young person, or the business is related to net zero developments. Business start-up rates in Shetland have tended to be relatively low, in part due to a high local rate of employment and a lack of spare labour market (although survival rates are higher – the 5-year survival rate of businesses ‘born’ in Shetland in 2016 was 52.9%, compared to 40.7% for Scotland).

The scheme was developed through learning from Business Gateway network and partnership discussions. Feedback is used regularly to inform service delivery both nationally and locally and modifications have been made in the last 18 months to make it more attractive.

The interest in the scheme and the rate of applications has been increasing, and the scheme has been kept under review as it has progressed to ensure issues arising and lessons learned are incorporated. The pilot period comes to an end in September 2023 at which point a review process will be undertaken to assess demand and resources to continue the scheme. Outputs of the scheme can be measured in new businesses started and engaging with Business Gateway services, but longer term impacts (e.g. business survival, jobs created) will require future monitoring.

The driver of poverty this relates to is ‘income from employment’. There will hopefully be more hours worked per household and skills and qualifications in the labour market if more sustainable businesses are set up. Businesses may experience a level of growth where they can employ people too, generating more jobs.

Business Transition Fund

With funding from the Scottish Government for Covid-19 recovery, SIC's Economic Development Service set up the Business Transition Fund. The aim was to help businesses with improvements that could either reduce costs (particularly energy costs) or improve their ability to remain sustainable and competitive. There were three elements: digital improvements; energy efficiency improvements; and training. In total, just over £173k was approved towards 22 projects from a range of businesses and sectors, with grants towards energy efficiency measures being the most common assistance.



The team consulted locally on the priorities that local businesses needed support on and spoke to HIE and other councils about shaping a scheme, with a flexible approach being key. The main challenge was that many local businesses were looking at solar panels or other efficiency measures and there was a lack of supply, therefore projects took longer than anticipated.

There has been significant interest in the funding which continued after the scheme closed and enquiries through Business Gateway about energy support and energy efficiency show there is still a need there.

The driver this relates to is ‘income from employment’, and in some instances ‘cost of living’. If energy costs are less for businesses, there is greater income. If businesses are more sustainable, owners can employ staff or make better income themselves which translates into hourly pay and hours worked per household, improving the labour market. Similarly if businesses can keep their costs down they can keep prices lower; for example groceries in a shop, which is beneficial to families.

Supporting Fair Work

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) implemented Fair Work conditionally to their funding from 1st April 2022, ahead of this applying to all Scottish Government funded organisations from 1st July 2023.



Any organisation applying for grant funding from HIE must comply with their fair work conditions for financial support. HIE will work with organisations who wish to adopt and embed Fair Work practices, and support them to develop an action plan.

Fair Work conditionality includes:

- Paying employees aged 18 years or over the Real Living Wage as a minimum (currently £10.90 per hour).
- From 1st July 2023, paying employees, aged 16 years and 17 years (including apprentices), the Real Living Wage (currently £10.90) per hour as a minimum.
- Having a flexible working policy in place and a current Fair Work action plan.
- Being able to demonstrate how they support workforce development and foster employee engagement.

There are a wide range of businesses and organisations working with HIE who are embracing and promoting the Fair Work ethos.

One organisation, for example, champions staff development and in addition to providing staff training required to run their business, staff can also request training they do not fully require for their role but the organisation would see benefits from. For this type of training, 50% of the cost is covered with the employee covering the remainder.

Another example includes a local business who invests heavily in workforce development and is a member of the 5% Club. **The 5% Club** is a dynamic movement of employers committed to earn & learn as part of building and developing the workforce they need as part of a socially mobile, prosperous and cohesive nation. Members strive to achieve 5% of their workforce in ‘earn and learn’ positions (including apprentices, sponsored students and graduates on formalised training schemes).

Several businesses and organisations have undertaken to review salaries and have either increased or have plans to increase salaries of those who do not meet the minimum wage. In a high cost environment such as Shetland, this is becoming increasingly important for businesses and organisations to retain their staff in a tight labour market.

The driver of child poverty this relates to is 'income from employment'. Encouraging better hourly pay, a flexible working policy and supporting workforce development should make it easier for families to earn more through employment as well as develop skills and qualifications.

Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs

Best Start Bright Futures recognises that setting out support for parents and carers to enter and sustain employment on its own is not enough, and for some, is not a feasible option. It is recognised that families should be able to access a holistic package of support and entitlements when they need it. Locally, partners have delivered services in a way which enables enhanced support through social security, income maximisation and costs of living over the past year, using data, learning and professional intelligence to inform service delivery. Collaborative working has been particularly important to provide support to people with the cost of living crisis, as well as with a severe weather and power outage crisis in December 2022.

Cost of Living Support During Autumn-Winter 2022-23

It is well known that the cost of living in Shetland is high. The Council approved a budget from Crown Estate net revenues to support Shetland's response to the cost of living pressures during winter 2022-23. The Scottish Government also announced an allocation from an Island Cost Crisis Emergency Fund (ICCEF). The purpose was to target support to island communities and households facing additional challenges due to the current cost crisis.

The key support given during the winter (from October 2022 to March 2023) is highlighted below. The effectiveness of delivery was achieved through strong partnership working. There were many services within the Council involved, as well as Anchor for Families, NHS Shetland, Shetland Citizen's Advice Bureau and many community groups and organisations running Winter Activities.

Cost of Living Campaign (*We Shine Brighter Together*)

A [Cost of Living Campaign](#) was created and implemented, including:

- [Webpages](#) to support households, services and communities to find information and support
 - 369 leaflets were downloaded from the website
 - Visitors to the website doubled
- A [Cost of Living Leaflet](#) was sent to all households (10,500)
- Film, social media and hard copy promotional materials were created to promote different opportunities over the winter months, such as St Ringan's Hub (more information below) and Free School Meals:
 - The promotional film reach was 19,727;
 - The social media campaign reach was 9,554;
 - Adverts were printed in 11,438 copies of the Shetland Times Newspaper;
 - The radio advert was played on local radio 240 times
 - The promotional film was shown at 672 cinema screenings reaching 11,558 ticket holders.



Cost of Living Free Phone Helpline

A cost of living free phone helpline was set up and run by SIC's Community Development team, Anchor for Families and Children & Families Social Work. There were 87 calls to the helpline and additional support and follow up to services, teachers and families.

Anecdotally, officers who ran the phone line said that there were people phoning who had not necessarily sought support before, so the anonymous way of publicising a free phone number seemed to be positive. Services which support people also called when they were seeking more information so that they were better informed. Rather than suggesting that someone 'might' get support from CAB, for example, they were calling so that they knew and could directly signpost people to the support.



This has informed future work at a local level as it has been decided to maintain the phone line. Staff input is relatively low and it is a good back up for people and services.

Winter Activities Funding Scheme

A Winter Activities Funding Scheme was established and implemented, enabling community groups and services to apply to run winter activities.

- 24 applications were successful, 21 of which were from community groups.
- Activities were run from throughout Shetland. The Community Work Team delivered Community Pop-ins, in areas where funding had not been distributed. Read more on Community Pop-ins on page 24.
- Some winter activities were open to everyone, whilst others were targeted at the elderly, young people, or parents.
- Activities included: intergenerational cooking and lunches, yoga, canoeing, access to youth clubs, a warm place to read the paper and watch TV, wellness classes, art classes, playing board games, crafts, outings for the elderly, outings for young families, and free access to cinema.



Anecdotal feedback from communities and community pop in workers is that it was a really successful way of getting people out to activities who might have stopped during the pandemic, as well as getting new people attending things. Through this, cost of living support was promoted and available which also helped people access the support.



Doubled and Increased Payments

Funding was also used to double payments to recipients of Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis and increase the number of payments of Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grants (46 households were supported).

St Ringan's Hub

St Ringan's Hub was established. Here, new items, second hand clothing and fresh food were available, offering support for cost of living pressures being faced by households across Shetland. There were also heaters, blankets and hot water bottles available. An outreach facility was also established in Brae. Approximately 20 people accessed support each week.

Workers at the Hub reported the relief people felt when they came in to find those items, and how welcoming and supportive it was. Feedback from people who used the Hub included that it was a good environment and they would come back again. Word of mouth led to more people attending, which workers felt was an indicator of success. Workers also felt that families left, not only with

those resources, but feeling like they were within a community that was concerned for them and wanting to help them.

Helping Households with Costs

- SIC worked with Shetland CAB to implement a scheme to support households with energy costs, providing £400 to eligible households (105 households supported).
- Families eligible for School Clothing Grants were able to access the holiday meal payments during holidays and school closure days through December until March. 301 families and 514 children were supported.
- Fresh food was provided to households, via the Hub.
- Breakfasts for secondary school pupils were provided (up to 350 breakfasts per day). See more on page 29.

Grant to Shetland Islands Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

- A grant to Shetland CAB, to enable them to future-proof services, beyond 31st March 2023 was issued.

The winter cost of living support had a clear impact on the 'cost of living' driver of child poverty. The support also impacts 'income from social security and benefits in kind' and 'income from employment' due to the variety of support available.

Partners learned that they can act really quickly around an emergency, as already seen from the Covid-19 pandemic. The cost of living support reinforced the need to have lots of different ways people can access support, from events going on in their local community, to a free phone line. The learning from this was the need to be flexible and creative in approach; this continues to guide local work.

Furthermore, Shetland experienced a severe weather disruption in December 2022 where many communities lost power (5289 properties) and some were left without power for several days. The cost of living approach was used – workers went to the Hub to gather resources and the phone line was put out to the public for people who were concerned about relatives. The Care for People Team felt that had we not had the Hub or the phone line, then dealing with the emergency would have been even more challenging.

Money Worries

'Money Worries' is run by the NHS Shetland Health Improvement team, Shetland CAB and Anchor for Families. The focus is to deliver training and information sessions which seek to:



- highlight the relationship between poverty and health,
- encourage professionals to start conversations about money and to understand the value in using existing relationships to initiate this discussion,
- raise awareness of local support services such as CAB and Anchor and, through the use of case studies, to demonstrate the impact they can have in reducing poverty for individuals and families
- encourage attendees to refer the people they support for financial help

Sessions began during the pandemic and continued to be delivered for one hour per week online on a monthly basis until January 2023. In response to the Cost of Living crisis, the sessions were delivered on a weekly basis between November and December 2022.

The approach to managing bookings for this course has evolved and most recently has been managed by the SIC Workforce Development Team.

For April 2022 – March 2023

- 215 were booked on the course
- 155 attended the course
- Those attending included employees of SIC, Third sector, and NHS; as well as volunteers from local community organisations

Feedback showed that 97% of respondents found the session useful, and everyone found the follow up resources useful. People felt they gained confidence and knowledge around raising the issue of money with individuals, as well as appreciating the opportunity to network with other services. 41 out of 45 people felt they had better knowledge of services available to help individuals as a result of the session.

“The knowledge I have gained will help when dealing with customers directly, in supporting and training my team, as well as in my personal life”

The Cost of Living crisis raised the profile of Money Worries which was a recognised opportunity for increasing local capacity for supporting individuals and households experiencing financial pressures. This was in parallel to the launch of the Cost of Living campaign.

Evidence of the increased demand for advice is provided in Shetland CAB’s statistics for April 2022 – March 2023. Compared to the previous year, CAB had a 23% increase in the number of client contacts and a 25% increase in the number of issues it advised. The financial gain for clients, mostly through successful benefit applications, was also considerably increased. It was up by 22% on the previous year to £1,920,625.

In early 2023, the number of bookings began to drop. Along with changes in teams involved, consideration was given on how to ensure sustainability of the project. The delivery of live sessions was stopped and a plan was put in place to make recordings available on the SIC Cost of Living web pages. These will be publicly available but staff groups could be encouraged to interact with them, as part of team meetings or professional development for example.

Money Worries links to child poverty drivers ‘costs of living’ and ‘income from social security and benefits in kind’. With more awareness of local support services and greater understanding by professionals, families have been supported with increasing their income as evidenced above, as well as reducing costs of living.

Delivering 'cash first' approaches to support individuals most in need
The Community Development team have been working in partnership with Shetland CAB to support individuals to complete Benefit Check forms.

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership identified a need to deliver 'cash first approaches' to support individuals most in need, recognising that with money in your pocket, people are more able to deal with the other challenges they may face. CAB had highlighted the ongoing issue of receiving a number of incomplete benefit check forms, often due to low literacy skills and confidence in completing forms. For CAB this ultimately means staff time is diverted to going back and forth helping with form completion rather than pursuing claims. SIC's Community Development team saw an opportunity to support adults to develop their literacy skills, help relieve some of the pressure on CAB, and help individuals improve their circumstances.



There are two approaches to the Benefit Checks. Adult Learning is delivering weekly drop-in support sessions in the library and Islesburgh, and have incorporated support to complete benefit check forms into this work. The Team are also introducing benefit checks and cost of living into conversations out in the community to try and break down barriers around speaking about money and how the cost of living is impacting on people's lives.

The Team has found that not only are there lots of people picking up on the support, but that through open and honest conversations, people are more willing to seek support, in the knowledge that they are not alone. Assistance with completing benefit check forms has become a core part of what the Community Development Team do as part of their jobs, providing a friendly face and a listening ear, to help people who may find forms daunting. This has also helped people with mobility issues and access as checks can be done in people's homes, or in their community. Evidence suggests that while the dedicated sessions work well, striking up conversations in the community about costs of living seems to work particularly well when a level of trust has been established.

One Community Pop-In was attended by a grandmother who had come to ask about a fuel voucher for her grandchild. She had been helping her grandchild out regularly through giving money and the use of her car. Through a conversation with the Community Worker it was discovered that the grandmother herself could use a benefit check, and energy advice for her own home and a CAB referral was made. Through this casual face-to-face meeting this grandparent was able to access help for both her herself and her grandchild, something that would have been unlikely to happen had the lady never come along her local hall for a cup of tea. As a result of this, the family have less worries about energy costs, and may find that they are entitled to further support.



Adult Learning provided support to a single parent to complete a benefit check form. After submitting the form to CAB, the individual is now receiving an additional two benefits and a National Entitlement Card. This has enabled the family to visit relatives, attend activities at a reduced rate and feel less stressed about bills coming in.

Benefit checks links to the poverty drivers 'costs of living' and 'income from social security and benefits in kind'. Receiving support, whether when sought at the drop in sessions or through a conversation with a community worker, enables more people to complete benefit check forms. This removes any literacy barriers, and potentially increases their income from social security and

benefits as a result. This work also highlights good practice of partnership working between communities, CAB and SIC.

Community Pop Ins

In response to the impact the cost of living crisis is having on individuals, families and communities, SIC's Community Development Team applied to the Council's Winter Activities Fund to deliver a series of warm space 'Community Pop-Ins' across Shetland, targeting communities where there was little or no other local provision.

The aim was for Community Pop-Ins to be inclusive, moving away from potential stigma that the phrase 'warm space' may bring. It was about having a welcoming, safe, warm space that people could come in, get a cup of tea, and have someone to speak with.

No two pop-ins looked the same; it depended on what was going on in the community, connections made and partnerships with other organisations. Community workers hired community halls, and between 15th February and 30th March 2023, delivered 48 'pop-ins' across Shetland, which were attended by a total of 316 people.

Community Pop-Ins were designed to tackle loneliness and isolation, and support with cost of living challenges (for example, fuel bills going up). Community Workers came ready with books, magazines and games to provide a gentle way for folk to connect with each other in a non-threatening way. Benefit check forms, fuel vouchers and various items from St Ringan's Hub were also brought along.

The Community Pop-Ins were often run in conjunction with other groups. For example, in Sandwick, a pop up was run alongside Youth Work and the community centre; in Voe, the need was greatest among the older population and the pop up became a Memory Lane Café in partnership with Shetland Museum and Shetland Library; and in Mossbank, pop-ins were run alongside the Under-5s group.

Sessions have resulted in:

Increased social connections

For example, one collaborative Community Pop In was attended by local people, local care home residents, and a children's group who all saw the sessions advertised. Workers felt that the event was a success in bringing people together, with the groups keen to come to future community events. The Community Worker felt that having older and younger people come together was brilliant:

"We had older folk sitting there with bairns at the next table, interacting. This just happened by itself, it wasn't manoeuvred, it was a happy accident, it was brilliant – it's what it's all about."

Being able to speak more freely about cost of living challenges and seek support

With the approach of 'getting stuck in', making sandwiches and soup with community members whilst also having a laptop and fuel vouchers nearby, Community Workers were able to have conversations about the cost of living. The feeling was that when people saw their neighbours or someone coming to speak about benefit checks and fuel vouchers, it seemed to encourage more



people to do so. It was felt that many people who sought help may not have done so in another environment.

Feeling less lonely and isolated

Many people attending were brought along by others, but, on several occasions they met someone there who could take them back next time. There were also comments such as; “This is really great and I hope this can continue”.

Maximised household income through initiating a benefit check/fuel vouchers

Benefit checks and fuel vouchers have enabled people to both alleviate immediate financial hardship, but also look at how they could increase their household income through social security and benefits. Through connections made at these events, one Community Worker was able to signpost community groups to the Household Hardship Fund. This resulted in approximately 45 households being paid up to £200 to help over the winter.

Catalyst for new community led activity as groups recognise the need for this type of informal opportunity.

A retired individual who used to work in renewables realised how cold his local hall was during the pop ins. With a desire to do something about this, he is in touch with the Community Worker to apply for funding to insulate the hall and plans to volunteer to manage this project. By taking a lead, this will not just benefit individuals, it will also benefit the community. Some attendees have also mentioned that they plan to start their own social group as they have realised the benefits of these events.

Community Pop-Ins link to poverty drivers ‘costs of living’ and ‘income from social security and benefits in kind’. With a focus on reducing stigma, increasing social connections and helping with cost of living, there were many benefits such as increased income for families and increased social connections. Partnership working with communities and other agencies was key, and community workers reflected that the events were more successful and better attended when done in conjunction with communities and others.

Shetland Islands Council Funding to Shetland Islands CAB



From 2016 to 2021, the Council match funded European Social Funding and procured **Financial Health Advice** and **Fuel Poverty Advice Services** from Shetland CAB⁷. The need for these services had been identified by the Shetland Partnership’s Inequality Commission. The contract length assisted in providing some financial stability for the organisation, whilst also targeting resources to meet an area of increasing need in Shetland. Over the course of the contract, SICAB supported over 750 individuals to increase their disposable income through financial health support and energy advice. However, the level of paperwork required was becoming an increasing burden on both organisations.

In 2021, the Council agreed to fully fund a contract to provide the same services, from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2026. In addition to providing these important services, it released staff in both

⁷ These services included benefit checks, debt advice and energy advice.

organisations from monitoring activities, and enabled SICAB to focus on future planning and drawing in additional funding to help meet increased demand.

In 2022, the Council was awarded Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery Funding, with the purpose of supporting businesses and communities to recover from the final stages of the pandemic. The Council agreed to award SICAB funding from this, for a 2.5 year period, to support its **Generalist Advisory and Income Maximisation Service** which was under pressure as a result of the cost of living and energy crisis. This funding is for front-line generalist support, including benefit checking and support and supervision for volunteer advisers.

In 2023, the Council was awarded Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Funding, to support cost of living pressures in Scotland's islands. Some of this funding was used to grant award SICAB to enable them to **Sustain and Adapt Services**, in light of the increasing pressures on the organisation, as a result of a significant increase in demand. During 22/23, SICAB experienced a 23% increase in client contacts and a 25% increase in the number of issues advised on. This funding is being used to build resilience into the organisation, for the future.

This contributes to 'income from social security and benefits in kind' as well as 'costs of living'. Using funding to support CAB when under pressure ensures as many families as possible in Shetland who require support can continue to be helped.

NHS Patient Travel – reducing the impact of poverty

The NHS Shetland Patient Travel team work closely with families to support them to attend healthcare appointments within and outwith Shetland. There has always been provision under the Highlands and Islands Patient Travel scheme for children and young people to have a parent or guardian travel with them and have their accommodation costs reimbursed. This has recently been extended for those having to stay overnight as in-patients with implementation of the [Young Patients Family Fund](#) (YPFF) which was announced in 2021. This fund allows children and young people, up to the age of 18 who have to stay overnight in hospital, to have both parents/guardians and siblings travel to see them and stay nearby, including accommodation and some support for cost of food.



Locally, the team recognised that the model of paying and then claiming back is not possible for many parents and families due to their financial situation. Many mainland Health Services offer a processing and payment time of 2 weeks for costs incurred. During the development of the scheme the Shetland Patient Travel Manager ensured Shetland family payments would be dealt with locally rather than by the Health Service they were travelling to, to support a person-centred approach offering up-front or rapid payments where required by parents and families due to their financial situation. The team work with families to find an approach that suits them within the boundaries of the scheme.

This flexibility has decreased the stress and financial impact on many families having to travel to mainland Scotland for hospital treatment, therefore impacting on the cost of living driver. The team continue to raise the issue of inequalities experienced by Shetland families within the scheme, for example where they have to travel for outpatient appointments which are not covered within YPFF, and often leave families with challenges around costs of food, and arranging childcare for siblings who are not entitled to travel.

Citizen's Advice Bureau Support

Shetland's Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) continue to offer all the support they can. Below are some examples of advice around benefits, energy and money.



Benefits

A couple with 2 children were referred to CAB for help. One of their children is disabled and, as his condition worsens, they were struggling to meet his needs. He was in receipt of a disability benefit but it did not allow them to qualify for a Motability car. Their household income was very small and consisted of very low wages from a part-time job, Child Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Child Benefit and a minimal private pension.

The couple had submitted a renewal application for Child Disability Living Allowance and were hoping to get an increased award. The CAB Benefits Adviser explained the appeals process through which she could support them should they not feel the award reflected his disability.

The Benefits Adviser supported them to complete a benefit check which showed the family had an entitlement to Universal Credit of £1668 per month. As the mother was a carer for her son, she would be in the "no work related activity group" so would not be required to undertake work-seeking activities. The check also showed that the father was not yet claiming his State Pension. The Benefits Adviser advised the clients how to apply for Universal Credit and State Pension, and these benefits are now in place. The family's income has significantly increased.

The family have received the result of their application to renew their Child's Disability Living Allowance. The award has been increased to high rate care and standard rate mobility. The family is now being supported by CAB to appeal this decision as they feel it does not reflect their child's mobility problems. If the appeal is successful and he is awarded high rate mobility, he would meet the eligibility criteria for the Motability scheme. This would allow them to get an accessible vehicle making it possible for them to take their child out with his wheelchair.

Energy

A couple with 2 children contacted CAB as they were struggling to top up their pre-payment meter. The husband is a carer for his wife who has disabilities. One of their children also has a disability.



The Energy Adviser arranged for the client to get an emergency fuel voucher and explained how they could access further vouchers if required. She also checked if they had enough funds for food. They said that they had used the Food Bank in the past but they did not need a food parcel at this time.

CAB carried out a benefit check to see if the family were getting their full entitlement. The wife receives Personal Independence Payment because of the impact of her disabilities, and her husband gets Carer's Allowance. The family are also in receipt of Income Support, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits. They were therefore getting their full benefit entitlement. However, as they are in receipt of "legacy benefits", CAB also carried out a "better off check" to see if they would be better off switching to Universal Credit. The result of this calculation was that the family is better off staying on legacy benefits, rather than applying for Universal Credit. On Universal Credit, they would receive almost £50 less per week.

The family are still struggling financially but were pleased to get emergency support to keep their heating on. They also feel better informed about their financial situation.

Money

A man was referred to the Money Adviser by the Energy Adviser regarding issues he is having with his electricity meter and charges. The client is married and lives with his wife and two children in social rented housing. He has been off sick from work for a few months, and his wife has long term health issues and has been unable to work for several years.

The client had completed a benefit check with the Energy Adviser and this confirmed they were in receipt of all the income related benefits they were entitled to but he was advised to make applications for Adult Disability Payment for himself and his wife. These applications are now in progress.

The client had debts of over £16,000 including electricity arrears, credit cards, overdrafts and bank loans and the constant stress of phone calls and emails from creditors was having an adverse effect on his mental health. Prior to moving to Shetland, the client had contacted Stepchange Debt Charity for help, and they had advised him to contact his local Bureau for assistance with a Minimal Asset Process (MAP) bankruptcy.

The Money Adviser completed a Financial Statement with the client giving full details of their household income and expenditure. This showed that there was no free income each month to pay towards his debts and in the circumstances applying for MAP bankruptcy was the best option.

The Money Adviser prepared and submitted a bankruptcy application form and supporting evidence to the Accountant in Bankruptcy. This application was successful and bankruptcy was awarded. This means the client's debts have been written off and their household finances are now stable. The client has stated that his mental health is considerably improved.

CAB's support impacts poverty drivers 'costs of living' and 'income from social security and benefits in kind'. Families have been helped to maximise their income and be better informed about their situation thanks to the support.

Home Fire Safety Visits

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) carry out home fire safety visits locally. These visits are designed to identify any potential fire safety issues through a risk rating questionnaire and visual check of the person's property. Often, these come through referrals. Most issues are dealt with by offering advice, tips and guidance on how to maintain fire safety in the household. If, however, any social issues come to light during the visit, Community Safety Advocates (CSA) have local knowledge on organisations and services which are available.

The visit is designed to allow the CSA to build a rapport with residents, and allow a frank and non-judgemental discussion where the CSA can enquire about the person's current circumstances. These include cost of living struggles, financial issues with regards to heating the home, telecare services, and falls prevention, for example. Where required, people are either signposted to the correct service, or referred directly through locally agreed arrangements after consent is given by the person involved. If a household does not have any smoke detection in their homes, or cannot afford it, SFRS will fit this.

These visits link to the child poverty drivers 'cost of living' and 'income from social security and benefits in kind' as they can help support people, signpost people to support they are entitled to and reduce their cost of living.

Christmas Day Meals for the Community

The kitchen team at Sound Primary School were aware that there were families in the school who were struggling financially. Throughout 2022, the team wondered if there was anything more that they could do to help, and came up with the idea of providing a Christmas dinner on Christmas day for any families who needed one. Funding was secured from the Scottish Government's COVID Economic Recovery Fund in order to buy the food.



The team felt that taking away the pressure of buying and preparing food could be a big help. Meals were to be delivered to individual households, rather than in community settings, as evidence suggested that there may be some people who do not want to be seen asking for help. Initially, the three Lerwick schools and Anchor for Families Team helped identify families who may benefit and passed on information to them.

It was challenging to get people to come forward and community partnerships were crucial in identifying those who may benefit. After getting several families signed up, it became clear that there was capacity to do much more, so colleagues in SIC social care, housing, Shetland Women's Aid and Voluntary Action Shetland were asked if they had anyone who may benefit. The offer was also put out on social media where the feedback was very encouraging. After seeing the advert there were donations of a turkey and a joint of beef from two local butchers to help with the effort, as well as many offers of volunteers to help on the day. SIC colleagues in the roads department provided a 4 x 4 vehicle in case of bad weather, and a community group who provide dinners were also helpful in giving advice.

On Christmas Day, the team and volunteers arrived to cook and warm up the food and portion it up ahead of delivering. Every person who received a Christmas dinner was really appreciative and many said that they would make the food last them for a few days. The 'on the door' feedback was 'hugely humbling' and made the team appreciate everything they have a little bit more. One of the volunteers said that it was 'the most rewarding Christmas that they could remember'.

Christmas can be a hard time of year for families, and there had also been a large jump in the price of power. The team felt that if they could deliver the meals hot, it would save a lot of concerns for people in terms of buying food and heating it up, contributing to the 'cost of living' driver of child poverty.

Free High School Breakfasts



The Catering and Cleaning Team Leader at SIC had noticed that another local authority (North Ayrshire) were offering free breakfasts for school pupils in December and January and wondered if this was something that could be done locally. Speaking with colleagues, it was decided that funding from the Scottish Government's Islands Emergency Cost Crisis Fund could be used to pay for this.

Free high school breakfasts were trialled in secondary schools from January to March. Fitting in with the Scottish Government nutritional guidelines; toast, fruit, cereal, tea and coffee were available for pupils to self-serve before classes started. Throughout February, this was extended to be available in the morning break. This was due to feedback that some pupils who arrived by bus or other transport did not have time for breakfast in the morning, and would benefit if free breakfasts were also

available in the morning break. The number of pupils taking the free breakfast option increased once this was available.

Schools, and the catering and cleaning team, generally felt that this was successful, and was not too much extra work for the catering staff. The funding allowed the programme to be run until Easter. Some schools kept it going longer, with Anderson High School offering free toast for the following term using a different funding source.

This initiative contributed to cost of living, specifically the cost of the school day, ensuring access to nutritious free food.

Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants

SIC agreed to align the criteria for free school meals and clothing grant and to increase school clothing grant payments by 50% in the next financial year (2023-24) at its meeting in February 2023. Funding to cover the additional cost of this was to be drawn from the Cost of Living Fund set up by the Council in 2022 using some of the allocation of the net revenue generated by Scottish Crown Estate assets.

A parent and carer survey was also undertaken during February 2022 to gather feedback from all free school meals and clothing grant applicants during the 2021-22 school year on the application process. 116 responses were received and questions were asked on:

- How did you hear about the clothing grant and free school meals?
- Did you find the application process straightforward?
- Is the free school meal entitlement used?
- Have free school meals had a positive effect on the child(ren) and family overall?

The responses from applicants was useful in helping to make changes to the application process and how information about the services is promoted. In June 2022, when applications opened for the 2022-23 academic year, some of the high-level results from the survey were shared with current applicants, and the actions taken as a result will also be shared.

This links to 'costs of living' and 'income from social security and benefits in kind'. With more children eligible, and an increase in school clothing grant payments, this should ensure that more families are able to reduce their outgoings.

Cooking on a Budget Classes



'Cooking on a Budget' classes have been delivered by SIC's Adult Learning Team for many years now. They aim to provide opportunities for people to develop their confidence, skills and understanding of budgeting, shopping, cooking, healthy food options and how these can be combined to create healthy meals for less money. Prior to taking part in classes, many participants may have never cooked before; may struggle financially; and may feel isolated. The Team have delivered sessions with various organisations and groups such as; the Family Centre; Bridges; Eric Gray Centre; college and

university students; the Methodist Church; the Moving on Employment Project⁸; SIC schools and Food for the Way⁹ to name a few.

The class content is developed according to the needs of the particular group of learners. Generally, recipes are chosen along with participants. Ingredients may be purchased together with a group visit to the shops, with food preparation, cooking, eating, and cleaning up all done together as a group. Adult Learning Workers share advice on how to shop cheaply, and provide space for the group reflect on their learning afterwards. Children can also get involved, helping prepare the meals before sitting down to enjoy them. If there is any food left over, participants can take this home, hopefully along with increased knowledge and confidence in how to recreate the meal in the future. Sessions have resulted in:



People learning how to shop cheaper and cook more efficiently

For example, buying a supermarket's own brand products rather than more expensive ones. Going to the shops when prices are reduced. Instead of one participant's teenager buying a filled roll, bottle of coke and a mars bar from a café costing £3.50, it was suggested that they make the roll with supermarket ingredients, buy a 2 litre 17p bottle of supermarket brand coke to fill up smaller bottles, and buy a multipack of mars bars to make a substantial saving, yet, have the same lunch. Adult Learning workers find that some parents want to buy more expensive products at the supermarkets so that they do not 'look poor', for example having expensive coffee and the best sausages. At the classes, participants are given tips on where to find value products, and the Adult Learning workers do taste tests to see if people find a difference with the cheaper items.

Learning to cook with versatile ingredients

Adult Learning workers show participants the options available with different ingredients. For example, sweet and sour chicken and rice was one of the meals at a recent class. Not only are the group learning how to cook a meal, they are learning how to make a stir fry, that you can add vegetables to your rice, and make a batch of sauce to freeze. Another example is adding chutney to sausage rolls to make it taste different; how to use your leftovers; adding different ingredients to risotto; and introducing people to ingredients they may not have used before that are cheap, for example cous cous.



Improved family meal times

Some parents mentioned that it would never have occurred to them to sit and have dinner with their children, often favouring the time that the children were eating to go and do other housework. Children can also participate in classes contributing to preparation of cold food. After the class, many parents fed back that they and their children now cook together at home and sit down to eat and chat together, something that they had not done previously. Adult Learning workers have had feedback that some families now even involve other relatives from afar on video calls at mealtimes, changing the dynamic to valuable family time.

⁸ Charity supporting individuals with barriers to employment find and sustain work.

⁹ An outreach project to people affected by mental health issues, loneliness and addiction. This is a weekly lunch gathering, along with other drop in sessions.

Families trying new foods

Learning how to make tasty food and having children help with the cooking, can give them pride and pleasure when they join in. It can be difficult for parents on a limited budget to try something new, because if their children don't like it, they don't eat it. The children still need fed, but, the money has been spent. Therefore, Adult Learning providing the ingredients, getting people to cook together, share ideas and meet new people has been really important in helping to encourage diverse meals. Parents have also learned about how to add more vegetables into sauces to provide nutrition to children; and children can learn skills and responsibilities.



Increased social opportunities

Cooking and learning in a group setting can help with reducing social isolation. Adult Learning workers have found that often people tend to meet in cafes, and if people cannot afford that, they are perhaps more likely to be isolated and stay at home. Anecdotally, many parents that have met at these lessons have enjoyed cooking together and decided to get together to share ideas, meals and ingredients in the future.

Cost of living support

The informal, unstructured approach of these sessions also allows for conversations around money worries and cost of living to take place, similar to the Community Pop ins. Throughout the past year, there were parents who reported having no money at the end of the month despite working; some mentioned not wanting to apply for free school meals so that they did not look poor; and another did not apply for benefits due to not knowing enough about it. The relaxed, trusting approach of 'Cooking on a Budget' allows for conversations to lead to benefit checks. While Adult Learning do not know the outcome of the checks, they had feedback that one family were £150 better off a month as a result of this.

Cooking on a Budget links to the 'costs of living' driver of child poverty, and in some instances, 'income from employment'. Learning skills to make nutritious meals and shopping effectively will help parents reduce their housing costs, ensure children are fed well and that families are educated in cooking healthy meals. This supports our commitment to UNCRC¹⁰ article that every child has the right to the best possible health. Adult Learning workers also reported that some participants went on to get jobs in cookery and hospitality after learning more about cooking, an incidental benefit of the classes.

¹⁰ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Supporting the next generation to thrive

The Scottish Government's Best Start, Bright Futures Child Poverty Plan outlines that Scotland has a clear vision to be the best place for children and young people to grow up. Every child should grow up loved, safe and respected so they realise their full potential, which means creating an equal society which treats children and families with dignity and kindness. Locally, the Eating Well for Less programme has been ongoing; there has been work in schools on growing fruit and vegetables; opportunities for young people to socialise through 'Da Café'; continued work on Keeping the Promise; and support and signposting for pregnant people who need it, continues through NHS Shetland.

Eating Well for Less

The Healthy Families: Right from the Start Programme, also known as the HENRY Programme, has the strongest evidence-base of any national early years child obesity prevention programme in the UK. HENRY provide training for staff to become Healthy Families: Right from the Start programme facilitators and NHS Shetland coordinated this training for a group of NHS and SIC staff. Locally these trained facilitators deliver the programme on a one-to-one and group basis alongside standalone workshops. One of these is the Eat Well for Less workshop which provides parents with the opportunity to:



- Understand what it means to eat well by exploring the Eatwell Guide
- Increase knowledge about shopping habits and eating in a healthy, balanced way
- Plan meals and recognise cost effective options
- Make the most of food purchased
- Understand the cost of different cooking methods
- Increase confidence to access resources on HENRY website and other sources of information

Feedback was gathered locally in 2020 from parents about how they provide a healthy start for their families and what support would be beneficial. With Early Years Prevention funding; procurement and training in HENRY was undertaken in 2021.

In November 2022, HENRY updated the Eat Well for Less workshop in line with cost of living evidence. The workshop was promoted following expressions of interest from parents participating in HENRY groups.

Parents rate their confidence and complete a questionnaire before and after the workshop. This looks at knowledge gained and how parents plan to implement strategies learned for example. Anonymised responses are available in order to improve and develop HENRY delivery in Shetland.

So far, comments on the knowledge gained by parents include:

"You can freeze ANYTHING"

"How to reduce costs with cooking"

"What's more energy efficient in kitchen appliances"

"You can make any meal balanced"

Parents rated their confidence higher as a result of the workshop; and were also planning to use their freezer and other appliances to be more energy efficient and reduce food waste. Parents reported gaining a lot of knowledge and would recommend this to others.

This workshop was offered again earlier in the year, however, due to low uptake it was unable to go ahead. Considering the sensitive nature of the topic, and previous feedback from parents, the workshop was offered as an online session during the week. Partners plan to further explore with families the potential barriers and enablers to joining workshops, to ensure stigma is not a reason for lack of engagement.

Eating Well for Less relates to the 'cost of living' driver of child poverty as it should help ensure that more children are fed nutritious meals that are budget friendly. The programme also aligns with GIRFEC principles and values, specifically "understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community and society" and "everyone working together in local areas and across Scotland to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families."

Grow Shetland, A Fair Food Project

As reported last year, Grow Shetland (a 3 year Project from 2021-24), has been developed to support the Shetland community to grow more of its own fruit and vegetables, increase access to affordable food and encourage healthy eating. The project is funded by the SIC's Coastal Communities, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Shetland Charitable Trust, and is managed by Transition Turrieffield, an established community growing project.



2022-23 saw Grow Shetland continue to support communities and individuals with: help in sowing seeds; crop care; grant applications; training plans; lesson packs for schools; 4th year business studies trip; and taking part in climate change week. Transition Turrieffield have worked with 11 schools in this time period. In addition 16 online workshops have been run with 70 people in attendance.



Transition Turrieffield also collaborated with local schools to develop a 'Growing Food in Schools teaching resource, to help more schools grow food and support pupils' learning. This was sent to schools in summer 2023.

So far, the project has reported increased growing in most schools; increased staff interest and confidence; some produce being used in school lunches; crops being sent home with pupils; and increased parental involvement.

The project links to child poverty driver 'costs of living'. Each successful growing plot in schools, communities or an individual's garden reduces the need to import fresh produce. It provides food for the household or community and lessens the need to shop. In addition, learning about where food comes from and how to grow gives children and young people important practical skills and knowledge which should help them in the future.

Da Café

Da Café project run by the OPEN Project, has continued to provide opportunities for young people in Shetland to socialise with friends. Da Café is a weekly drop-in youth café aiming to attract Shetland's most vulnerable and hard-to-reach young people. OPEN have found that having a consistent, safe, and welcoming place to meet has been hugely successful in engaging young people, including those who are care-experienced, involved with Criminal Justice, and/or excluded from school, youth clubs, community centres, and sports facilities.



To enable this to happen, strong partnership relationships with local services and young people in the community have been paramount. Young people who attend have played an integral role in how the service is delivered and developed, with an average of 35 young people attending each session. The café owner at the Olive Tree, worked with OPEN to ensure the youth space became a reality, and that affordable food and drink is available. SIC's Catering and Cleaning Team Leader also worked with OPEN to provide soup for each Da Café session at no cost.

The café is now open over 2 nights, and OPEN have engaged with many new young people, resulting in a sharp increase in the number of volunteers. Da Café has played a critical role in the data and peer research information gathered from young people attending these sessions; particularly around changing trends and the issues they face locally. Da Café continues to provide an excellent opportunity to conduct peer research and meaningfully engage with young people on the ground.

Da Café links to the poverty drivers 'cost of living' and 'income from employment'. With a free space for young people to socialise, cost does not need to be a barrier. Engaging 'hard to reach' young people has meant that OPEN can provide a range of personal and professional development opportunities. Many young people have gained employment with the organisation itself demonstrating the development and career prospects that are achievable through volunteering and engaging with OPEN. The work also connects with *Keeping the Promise* to care experienced children. Whole family support is a priority area for 2021-24 which includes peer and community support, something this project demonstrates.

Keeping The Promise

[The Promise 21-24](#) states that the impact of poverty is felt throughout Scotland's care system, and that the ability to make significant improvements to family support, and to families' abilities to thrive, is linked to the economic health and wellbeing of Scotland's communities and families. To make change, Scotland must focus on levelling up family income, with an ongoing commitment to alleviating the impacts of poverty. In addition, those who care for children in any context must become champions for those children and do everything in their power to reject stigmatising attitudes, words and stories about poverty.

The 5 priorities of The Promise 21-24 are: 'a good childhood'; 'whole family support'; 'planning'; 'supporting the workforce'; and 'building capacity'.

Anchor for Families is delivering on a number of these priorities: to ensure support for children, families, and the workforce, and reducing stigma and support to maximise family income (see page 10).

The Shetland Children's Partnership recently facilitated a workshop which focussed on The Promise, and Who Cares Scotland Corporate Parent training. Each and Every Child was used to educate and encourage professionals to consider the language used.

Shetland's Children's Partnership Plan is using data to understand where improvements can be made. One example is investing in resources to improve the educational attainment for care experienced young people.

A trauma-informed approach is being rolled out across Children & Families Social Work.

Information, Advice and Assistance for Pregnant Women and Families with Children



NHS Shetland's Maternity Department routinely ask women and families at their Midwife appointments if they have any financial queries. Where required, Maternity signpost pregnant women to CAB, the Employability Service, Anchor for Families or other relevant services.

They also provide [Best Start Foods](#) card for parents who need help to buy healthy foods like fruit and milk.

Health Visitors also help to identify any current and developing issues with families through discussion and then support the families' access the relevant services. Health Visitors have routine contact with all families with children, until they start school.

Maternity and Health Visitor support ensures that families are signposted to the appropriate income from social security and benefits in kind, which would have an impact on the costs of living.

Young People's Bus Pass

Nearly one million children and young people between 5 and 21 living in Scotland can now benefit from free bus travel. It is part of the Scottish Government's plan to build a fairer, greener society. The Junior National Entitlement Card (Junior NEC) or Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC) can open doors to new experiences, opportunities and adventures across Scotland with free bus travel. It is operated by Transport Scotland who pay bus operators for each journey made.



Locally SIC's Youth & Employability Service has worked with colleagues in Transport Planning and Communications to promote the Scottish Government's Under 22 initiative. Promotional material and letters have been sent to all Primary and Secondary Schools throughout 2022. This was also shared with other partners including UHI Shetland, Home Link Teachers, Social Workers and colleagues in the third sector. Furthermore, with support from the Communication Team, a press release was issued from Shetland Islands Council to all elected members, staff and the local media.

The partnership approach on this project has been very positive locally, thanks to working well together with colleagues at National Entitlement Card Programme Office, Transport Scotland and the Improvement Service. Regular meetings have allowed partners to be prepared to support children, young people and their families to get access to their NEC cards.

From the start of the initiative to 31 March 2023, there have been 3146 Junior National Entitlement Cards / Young Scot National Entitlement Cards processed for Shetland, 2644 of these (84%) have been processed through our local channels.

During this period, 165,393 journeys have been taken using cards issued for Shetland. Please note - the journey may have taken place in a different local authority than the one used for proof of residency to apply for the card. This contributes to the 'costs of living' and 'income from employment' drivers of child poverty. With free bus travel, this may help many families, young people and children to save money, access workplaces and other experiences they may not otherwise be able to.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

Most schools receive Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) devolved to the head teacher of each school. The total PEF awarded to Shetland for 2022/23 was £254,575. This is allocated to schools according to the number of children and young people enrolled who receive free school meals. This year an additional Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) was released by Scottish Government to Children's Services central team to resource interventions to support closing the poverty related attainment gap. Some of this funding of £100,000 was allocated to schools that did not receive PEF to put in place targeted interventions to close the gap.

Analysis of attainment data informed this plan and next year's plan for this funding can be found within **The Ambition: Excellence and Equity for Shetland's Learners 2022 to 2026 Appendix 2**.

Data shows the overall literacy attainment gap has narrowed from 25% to 13% during academic year 2022/23 and the numeracy attainment gap has decreased from 33% to 18% across Primary 1, 4 and 7. These are the school years during which attainment data is collected nationally. The gap in secondary has been changeable over the last few years rising and falling from 35% in literacy in 2018 to the current figure of 19% and for numeracy over the same time period from 14% to 8%.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used across many of our schools, with a top-up from Strategic Equity Funding awarded to our 'non-PEF' schools, to put in place targeted interventions to support those children and young people living in poverty to achieve better outcomes.

Schools have used their PEF to support many varied learning activities that have been developed to augment classroom learning but some schools have been innovative in ensuring the learners have been fully involved in how the money should be spent. Two case studies are included as appendices to showcase firstly participatory budgeting in Bell's Brae Primary School and secondly, the use of community support and fundraising in Yell and Unst schools to provide a fully funded school trip for pupils with no cost to families. Pupil voice was front and centre of the planning for this and all pupils were included fully regardless of additional support needs or family finances. Schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings are very aware of the Cost of The School Day and have developed a number of supports as highlighted in their annual Standards and Quality Reports in September 2023. These have included provision of a 'starting school kit' including school sweatshirt and bookbag by Cullivoe Primary School, to school run club offering low cost breakfast to all in Mossbank Primary and many schools being mindful of the ask on families for fun, fundraising and charity events.

Partners in Shetland have worked to support families to be financially secure and have access to the support and services they need to thrive, as outlined in the Best Start, Bright Future offer. Rollout of Anchor for Families has been key; and with an increase in out of school clubs, continued employability support to parents; and economic development activity, partners are working to provide opportunities and support that parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work.

The Cost of Living Campaign; Money Worries training; benefit checks; community pop-ins; SIC funding to CAB and the support the organisation provides; improved NHS patient travel; home fire safety visits; Christmas meals for the community; free breakfasts in high schools for a term; aligning free school meal and clothing grant criteria; and Cooking on a Budget classes are all examples of activity carried out in collaboration between partners which aim to maximise the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs. Most of these align with 'costs of living' and 'income from social security and benefits in kind' drivers and many have been developed including voices of people with direct experience of poverty and a good understanding of local poverty.

Eating Well for Less, the Grow Shetland Project, Da Café, and promotion of the Young People's Bus Pass are examples of partners supporting the next generation to thrive. Also important to this is Keeping the Promise and ensuring pregnant people are supported accordingly and signposted where required.

However, levels of children living in low income families are higher than pre-pandemic levels and our cost of living is high. We also know that stigma and pride are significant barriers to families accessing support. That is why our priorities are:

- To normalise family support, and ensure child and family centred approaches, across all of our supports; and
- To increase the income to our families.

Reporting on 2022/23

This summary table stipulates the nature of the activity set out last year and who should benefit, responsibility, timeline and resources for delivery; the intended child poverty driver that the activity should impact upon and how it is measured. Given the cost of living pressures, the actions identified here were high-level strategic activities, with a multi-agency approach.

What Action Will Be Taken?	Which Groups Will be Targeted to Reduce Poverty?	Who Will Carry Out the Action?	What Resources Are Required?	Timescale	Poverty Driver	Impact Will Be Assessed by....	Update
Rollout of Anchor for Families across all areas of Shetland	All families in Shetland living in poverty and feeling under pressure due to the increase in cost of living	Council's Children & Families Social Work Team , in partnership with other services and communities	Pupil Equity Funding, Whole-Family Wellbeing Funding	Full Rollout by 31 st March 2023	All drivers, by taking a family-centred, holistic and flexible approach	Engagement of Families Engagement of Schools Number of Families	-Achieved -The Anchor for Families team has expanded and can now offer equitable support across Shetland. Now, every school across Shetland is linked to a worker as a point of contact, with some areas having a more enhanced level of contact, depending on need. -48 families received ongoing support during April 2022-March 2023.
Ensuring local climate change measures do not	All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes	Council's Climate Change Team , in partnership	Climate Change Team and Resources	Ongoing, throughout delivery of Climate	Cost of Living Low Income	A logic model (under development)	-Achieved for planning stage, needs to feed through to implementation.

proportionally impact on low income families	because of inequalities, including children living in poverty	with other services and communities		Change Program			-The Shetland Climate Change Strategy being worked on has a Place Based Planned approach which helps to ensure that local climate change does not disproportionately affect low income families. Alongside this, the working group ensure that equalities impact assessments are done on proposed measures.
Providing the opportunities and integrated support adults need to enter, sustain and progress in work							
Expansion of support to enable parents to move into work or improve their employment status	Low income families with children	Council's Youth & Employability Service , in partnership with other services and communities	Government's Parental Employability Fund	Ongoing	Out of Work and In Work Poverty Cost of Living	Monitored within Employability Pathway Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	<p>-Registered 18 parents, both single and partner couples. 3 of these have gained employment (does not reflect those already in part-time employment on registration - 4).</p> <p>-Funding allows work with those in work to assist progression, including working towards the fair work strategy.</p> <p>-Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) key worker hosts early intervention parenting group (TGIT). Accredited training has been held in HENRY and Mark Brown</p>

							<p>programme for confidence. These courses, in addition to the Digital College training provided to the service's entire demographic work towards the policy driver for income and employment through the skills and qualifications agenda. Therefore, the real-term number of parents supported is closer to 30 per annum.</p> <p>-All participants are offered free public transport cards to tackle cost of living and income from registration until one full month in a positive destination.</p> <p>-Within the PESF funding, there are six main target family groups: Lone parents, 3+ Children, Youngest Child aged <one, Disabled, Minority Ethnic, and Mothers aged <25. However, Shetland's Employability Pathway work with anyone with a child within the comprehensive 5-stage pathway. The service operates</p>
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							in a Community Learning and Development manner utilising the Joint decision model detailed in the Shetland Local Employability Partnership Delivery Plan.
Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs							
Communication campaign to continue to destigmatise seeking help	All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes because of inequalities, including children living in poverty	Council's Children's Services and Community Planning & Development Service , in partnership with other services and communities	Shetland's Early Action Program and Community Planning	Launched in October, with ongoing delivery for remainder of winter / ongoing	Cost of Living Low Income	Social Media and other Metrix	<p>-Achieved</p> <p>Created and implemented a Cost of Living Campaign (We Shine Brighter Together), including:</p> <p>-Webpages to support households, services and communities to find information and support (Leaflet Downloads from website: 369 / visitors to website doubled);</p> <p>-Cost of Living Leaflet sent to all households (10,500);</p> <p>-Film, social media and hard copy assets to promote different opportunities over</p>

							<p>the winter months, such as the Hub and Free School Meals (Film Reach: 19,727; Social Media Reach: 9,554; Shetland Times circulation: 11,438; Radio Advert: 240 times on local radio; Shown at Cinema Screenings: 672 (11,558 individuals).</p> <p>-173 fuel vouchers were issued between January and March 2023</p>
Supporting the next generation to thrive							
Deliver on the Scottish Attainment Challenge	Low income families with children	Children's Services in partnership with other services and school communities	Pupil Equity Funding , Strategic Equity Funding The Promise Funding	Ongoing	Cost of Living Low Income	National Improvement Framework: Excellence and Equity	<p>Poverty Related Attainment Gap</p> <p>Primary literacy attainment gap has narrowed from 25% to 13% during 2022/23.</p> <p>Primary numeracy gap has narrowed from 33% to 18% during 2022/23.</p> <p>Secondary literacy gap has narrowed from 35% in 2018 to 19% in 2022/23.</p> <p>Secondary numeracy gap has narrowed from 14% in 2018 to 8% in 2022/23.</p>

3. What we’re planning to do

Plans for 2023 Onwards

A new approach has been developed by partners, for the planning and implementation of future actions to address Child Poverty across our communities.

We have mentioned that levels of children living in low income families are higher than pre-pandemic levels and our cost of living is high. We also know that stigma and pride are significant barriers to families accessing support. This has informed our priorities, which are:

- Normalising family support, and ensuring child and family centred approaches, across all of our supports; and
- Increasing the income to our families.

This summary table sets out the collaborative strategic actions to be undertaken in Shetland, to (primarily) mitigate the impacts of Child Poverty. These actions are also set out in Shetland’s Children’s Services Partnership Plan, Priority Area 3 – Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Children and Families.

What Action Will Be Taken?	Which Groups Will be Targeted to Reduce Poverty?	Who Will Carry Out the Action?	What Resources Are Required?	Timescale	Poverty Driver	Impact Will Be Assessed by....
Support our Anchor for Families Team to walk alongside families who are feeling under pressure, to build their strengths and capacity to achieve the goals they want to achieve, develop a more positive pathway	All families in Shetland living in poverty and feeling under pressure due to	Council’s Children & Families Social Work Team , in partnership	Whole-Family Wellbeing Funding	Funding in place until March 2026	All drivers, by taking a family-centred, holistic and	Number of families supported / year Evaluation as per Anchor for Families

and halt further deterioration in their situation.	the increase in cost of living	with other services and communities			flexible approach	Logic Model
Providing the opportunities and integrated support adults need to enter, sustain and progress in work						
Develop an innovative test of change project to find financially vulnerable households, supporting them holistically, to improve their finances and employment, as a collaboration between Anchor for Families, Employability Pathway and Third Sector.	Low income families with children	Council's Youth & Employability Service , in partnership with other services and communities	Scottish Government Child Poverty Fund	Funding in place until September 2024	Out of Work and In Work Poverty Cost of Living	Monitored within Employability Pathway Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs						
Increase the capacity of frontline staff to recognise signs of poverty and ensure they are on an income maximisation pathway. This capacity will be built by, for example, our Anchor for Families Team, implementation of GIRFEC, Money Worries Training and Cost of the School Day.	All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes because of inequalities, including children living in poverty	SIC, NHS Shetland, CAB, Shetland Recreational Trust, Shetland Arts Development Agency and Others	Within Existing Staff Resources	Ongoing	Cost of Living Low Income	Attendance at Money Worries Training (number / services represented) Number of Cost of the School Day Events / Sessions Evaluation of System Change, as per Anchor for Families Logic Model Uptake of income maximisation

						<p>services (SICAB, SIC Children’s Finance, Social Security Scotland, Fuel Bank Vouchers, SIC Finance, Free Period Products, free ELC for eligible two year olds)</p> <p>Uptake of Access to Leisure (SRT, SADA, Summer Activities)</p> <p>Uptake of CLD Skills Development to complete benefit forms</p>
Support the implementation of Shetland’s response to the Cost of Living Crisis Plan, 2023/24, including an easy to use website , and dedicated phone line.	All families in Shetland living in poverty and feeling under pressure due to the increase in cost of living	Council’s Community Planning & Development Service in partnership with others services	Dependent on resources from Scottish Government (awaiting information)	Action Plan under development	Cost of Living Low Income	As per Action Plan
Support Shetland’s Community Learning and Development (CLD) Strategy to close the digital poverty gap.	All families in Shetland living in poverty and feeling under	Through the Community Learning and	Within Existing Resources	Ongoing	Cost of Living Low Income	As per CLD strategy

	pressure due to the increase in cost of living	Development Strategy				
Continue to support key Third Sector organisations: SICAB, Shetland Food Bank and Food for the Way.	All families in Shetland living in poverty and feeling under pressure due to the increase in cost of living	Funding and staff time from partner organisations	Within Council budgets	Ongoing / timebound contracts in place	Cost of Living Low Income	Contract monitoring in place
Supporting the next generation to thrive						
Use opportunities such as Anchor for Families, Employability Services and Cost of Living supports to enable children and their families to be involved in shaping local policies and measures to reduce the social and economic impact of poverty.	All families in Shetland living in poverty and feeling under pressure due to the increase in cost of living	All	Within Existing Resources	Ongoing	Cost of Living Low Income	Number of examples of changes to local policies and services as a result of involving children and families under pressure

The planning and delivery of actions in order to address structural changes required to reduce Child Poverty, are set out in the [Delivery Plan for Shetland's Partnership Plan, 2023/2027](#).

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](#)¹¹.

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

¹¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/6/contents/enacted>

[Guidance](#)¹² 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 characteristics¹³ 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 Delivery](#)¹⁴ 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

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

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-action-report-guidance/>

¹³ Age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/>

Appendix 2: Our Evidence Base

This document provides data and evidence available on: low income families and child poverty; low income households; work and earning; cost of living; fuel poverty; financial resilience; priority groups; and positive destinations. Where useful, there is description and analysis for some of the indicators.

Low Income Families and Child Poverty

Here, a range of data is presented in relation to low income families and child poverty. The data comes from the [UK Government Children in Low Income Families Local Area Statistics](#) issued by the DWP and HMRC. Locality data is provided by [Improvement Service Scotland](#).

Definition: The percentage of children living in relative low income families before housing costs (BHC). Relative low income is defined as a family in low income before housing costs in the reference year. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits, or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics. Gross income measure is Before Housing Costs (BHC) and includes contributions from earnings, state support and pensions. The statistics are calibrated to the regional Households Below Average Income (HBAI) statistics. HBAI considers households to be living in poverty if they earn less than 60% of the UK median household income.

Percentage of Children in Low Income Families in Shetland, 2015-21 (Before Housing Costs)

The chart below shows the proportions of children under 16 living in families either in receipt of out-of-work (means-tested) benefits or in receipt of tax credits, where their reported income is less than 60 per cent of UK median income.

Figure 1: Percentage of children living in low income families over time

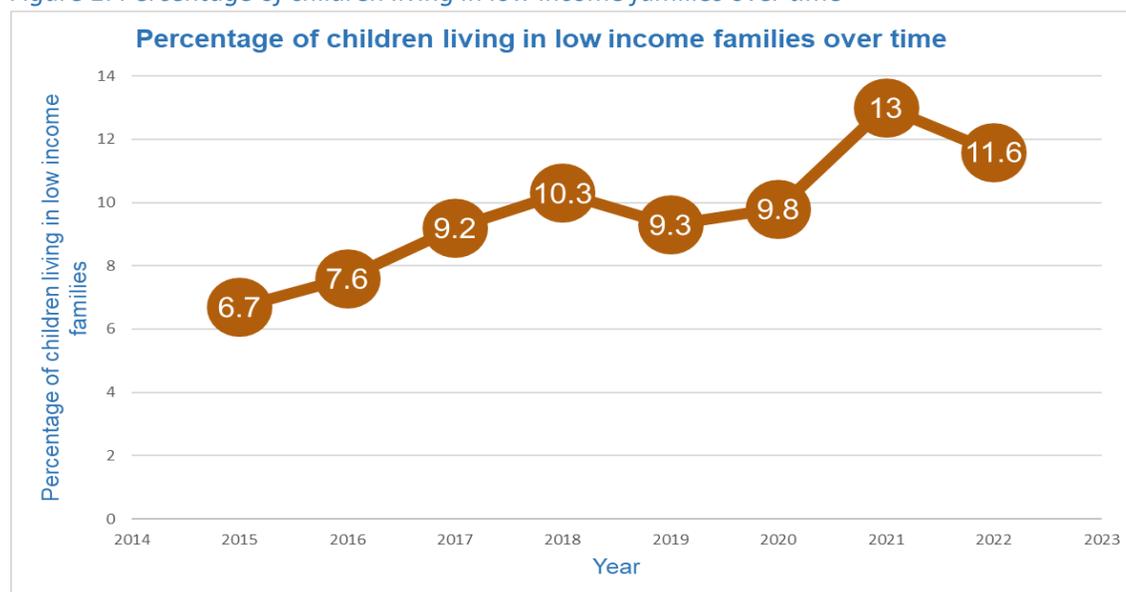


Table 1: Number & Percentage of Children in Low Income Families in Shetland, 2015-21

Number & % of children	Number & % of children	Number & % of children FYE 2016	Number & % of children FYE 2017	Number & % of children FYE 2018	Number & % of children FYE 2019	Number & % of children FYE 2020	Number & % of children FYE 2021	Number & % of children FYE 2022

	FYE 152015							
Shetland	287	323	388	436	391	413	541	478
	6.7%	7.6%	9.2%	10.3%	9.3%	9.8%	13.0%	11.6%

Source: [Children in Low Income Families, Local Area Statistics, UK Government 2023](#). Line graph from [Shetland Partnership website](#).

Figure 1 and Table 1 above, show that the percentage of children living in low income families in Shetland increased from 6.7% in 2015 every year until 2018, to 10.3%. There was then a decrease in 2019 to 9.3% before rising again in 2020 to 9.8% and in 2021 to 13.0%. 2022 saw a decrease to 11.6%.

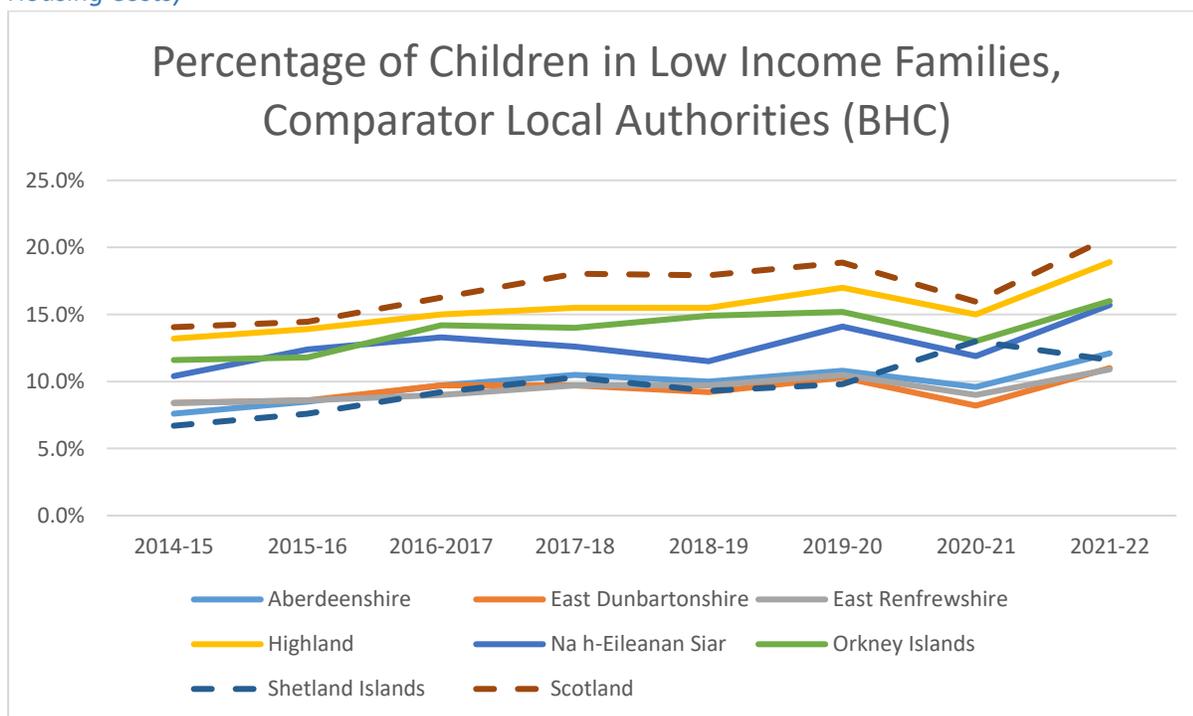
Children living in low income families had been increasing for Shetland and Scotland, since 2014/15 until 2020/21. In 2020/21, however, the percentage in Scotland decreased, whilst Shetland's increased. Conversely, in 2021/22, the percentage of children living in low income families in Scotland increased for all local authorities except Shetland, with Shetland's decreasing. 11.6% of children were living in low income families in Shetland in 2021-22. This was a reduction compared to the previous year's 13%, but is still higher than pre-pandemic levels.



Percentage of Children in Low Income Families, some Comparator Local Authorities

The figure below shows the percentage of children in low income families, compared to similar local authorities.

Figure 2: Percentage of Children in Low Income Families, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2015-22 (Before Housing Costs)



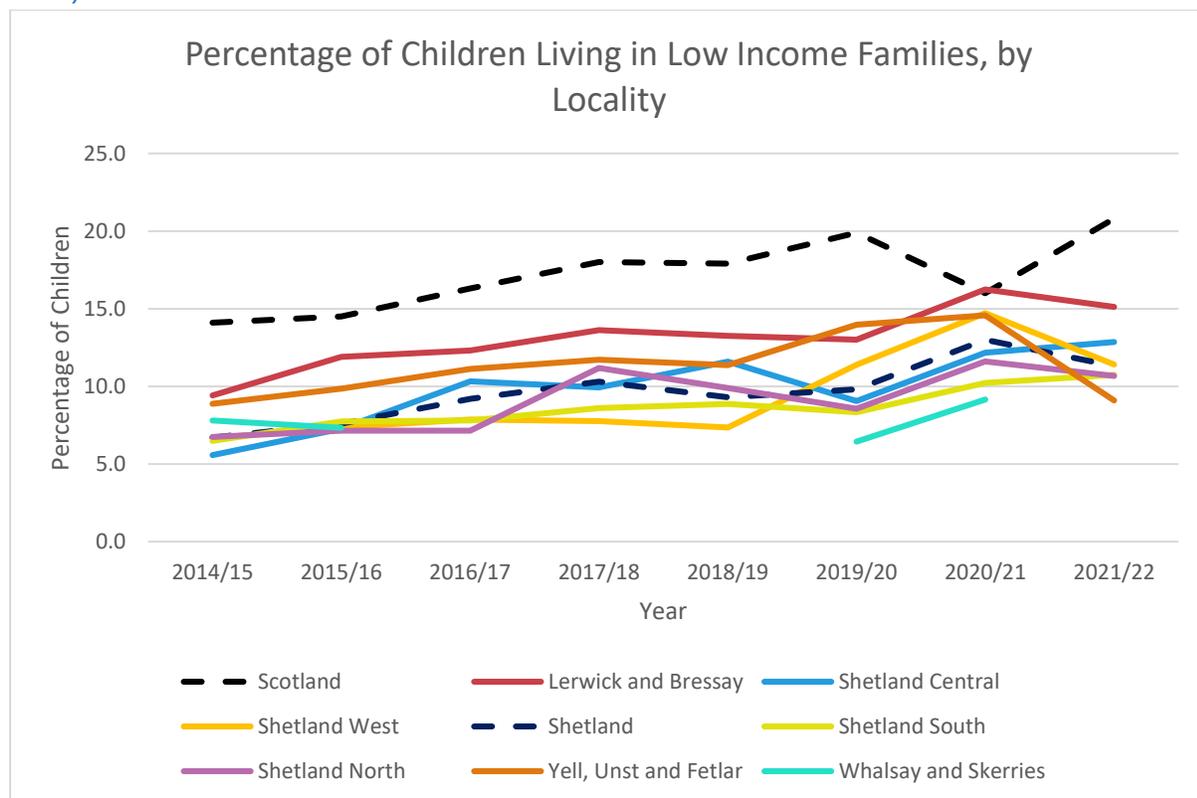
¹⁵ Financial Year End (1st April to 31st March)

Shetland had the third lowest rate of children in low income families compared to comparator local authorities with 11.6% in 2021/22, behind East Renfrewshire with 10.9% and East Dunbartonshire with 11.0%. Aberdeenshire, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney and Highland all had higher levels of children living in low income families in 2021-22. As outlined above, between 2019-20 and 2021-22, Shetland’s trend has been the opposite of all other local authorities and Scotland as a whole. Shetland’s rate increased in 2020-21 compared to all others decreasing, with the reversal happening in 2021-22.

Source: [Children in Low Income Families, Local Area Statistics, UK Government 2023](#).

Percentage of Children in Low Income Families in Shetland, by Locality (Before Housing Costs)

Figure 3: Percentage of Children in Low Income Families in Shetland, by Locality, 2015-22 (Before Housing Costs)



*Please note that data for Whalsay & Skerries was not available for 2016/17, 2018/19 and 2021/22, therefore these values have been left blank.

Source: [Improvement Service Scotland 2023](#)

Figure 3 shows that the locality with the highest percentage of children living in low income families in 2021/22 was Lerwick & Bressay with 15.1%. In 2020/21, Lerwick & Bressay’s rate had been higher than Scotland’s, at 16.2%, compared to 16%, but by 2021/22 it had reduced while Scotland’s increased (to 20.8%). The second highest levels of children living in low income families are in Shetland Central with 12.9%, with both of these areas being higher than the Shetland average of 11.6%. Shetland West had 11.4%, Shetland South and Shetland North both had 10.7% and Yell, Unst & Fetlar had the lowest rate at 9.1%. There is no value for Whalsay & Skerries for that year, but, for context, Whalsay & Skerries had the lowest rates in 2020/21 at 9.2%.

Number of Children in Low Income Families in Shetland, by Ward

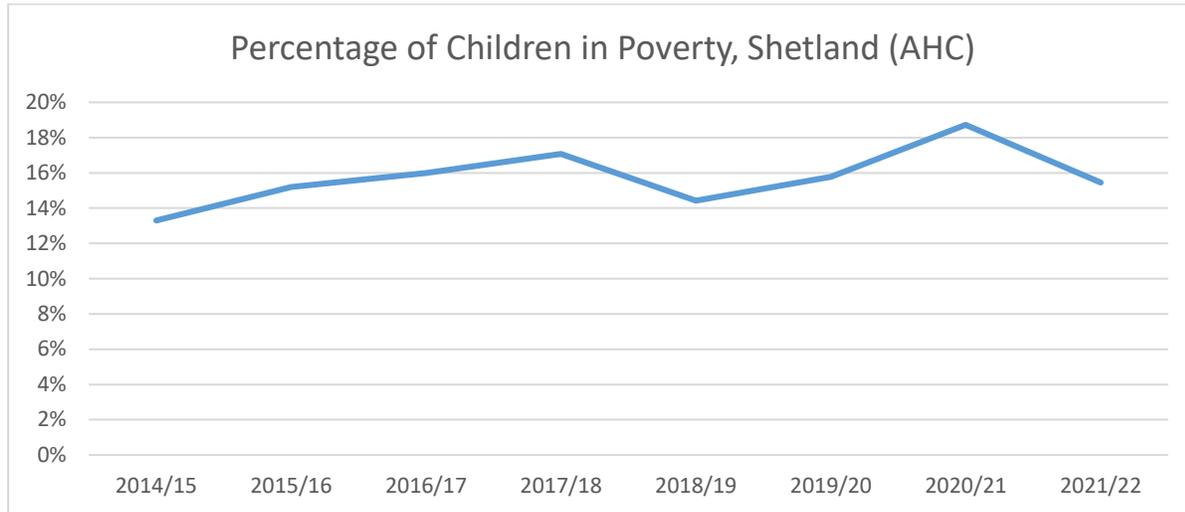
Table 2: Number of Children in Low Income Families in Shetland, by Ward, 2015-22

	Number & % of children FYE 2015	Number & % of children FYE 2016	Number & % of children FYE 2017	Number & % of children FYE 2018	Number & % of children FYE 2019	Number & % of children FYE 2020	Number & % of children FYE 2021	Number & % of children FYE 2022
Lerwick North	43	55	50	52	47	39	60	54
	14.6%	20.5%	17.4%	18.4%	18.1%	15.4%	22.9%	19.9%
Lerwick South	73	65	92	102	99	111	119	107
	6.3%	5.7%	8.2%	9.3%	9.1%	10.3%	11.6%	10.9%
North Isles	39	37	46	42	41	50	49	35
	7.7%	7.4%	9.2%	8.4%	8.5%	10.2%	10.3%	7.8%
Shetland Central	28	46	64	68	63	58	84	92
	6.0%	9.5%	13.0%	13.8%	12.7%	11.2%	16.5%	17.5%
Shetland North	30	35	41	62	57	46	73	65
	5.3%	6.3%	7.3%	10.6%	9.6%	7.7%	11.8%	10.5%
Shetland South	39	54	54	69	51	59	78	69
	5.7%	8.2%	8.3%	10.5%	7.6%	8.9%	11.6%	10.4%
Shetland West	30	25	38	50	45	54	78	45
	4.7%	3.9%	6.2%	8.1%	7.2%	9.0%	13.1%	7.6%

Source: [Children in Low Income Families, Local Area Statistics, UK Government 2023](#)

Percentage of Children in Poverty After Housing Costs (AHC)

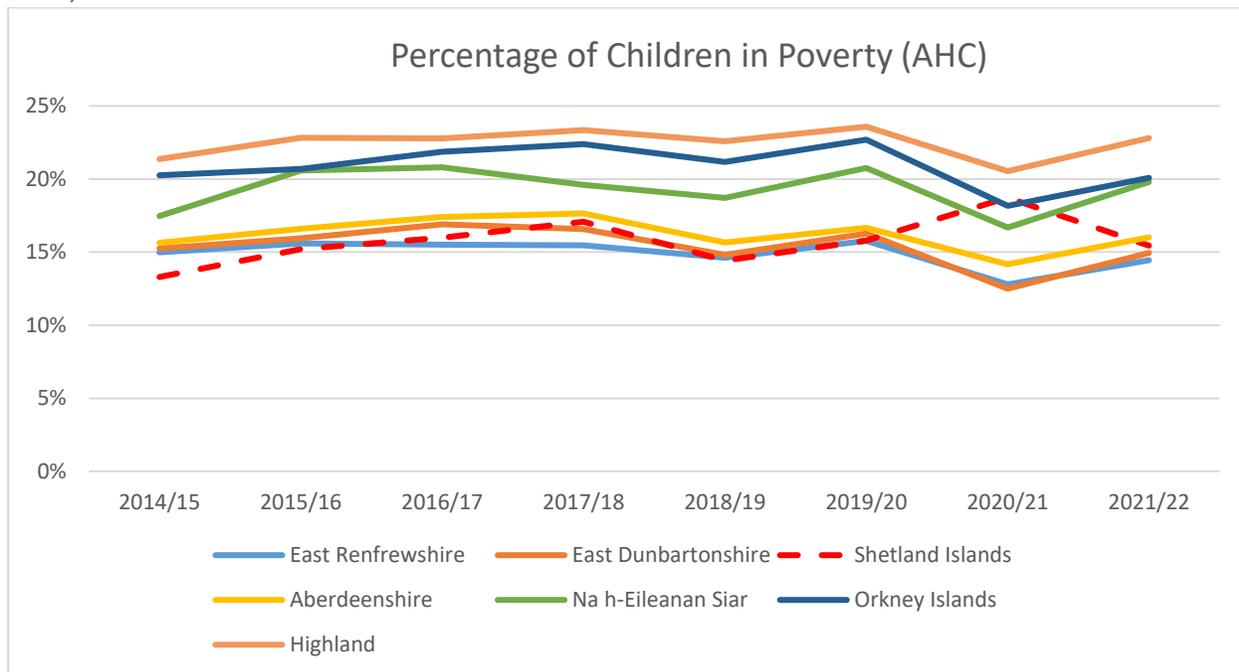
Figure 4: Percentage of Children in Poverty, below 60% median income, 2014/15-2021/22 (After Housing Costs)



Source: End Poverty Coalition 2023

After housing costs are considered, child poverty in Shetland was 15.44% for 2021/22, a decrease on the previous year.

Figure 5: Percentage of Children in Poverty, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2014/15-20/21 (After Housing Costs)



Source: End Poverty Coalition 2023

After housing costs are considered, Shetland has the 3rd lowest level of child poverty compared to comparator local authorities. East Renfrewshire had lower levels with 14.4%; similar to East Dunbartonshire with 14.9%. With greater levels of child poverty, Aberdeenshire had 16%, Na h-Eileanan Siar had 19.8%, Orkney had 20.1% and Highland had 22.8% of children living in poverty after housing costs.

Free School Meals / School Clothing Grant

In 2022-23, 10% of pupils accessed Free School Meals and 14% accessed School Clothing Grants. The Council's decision to extend Free School Meals to School Clothing Grant households means that an additional 6% accessed Free School Meals.

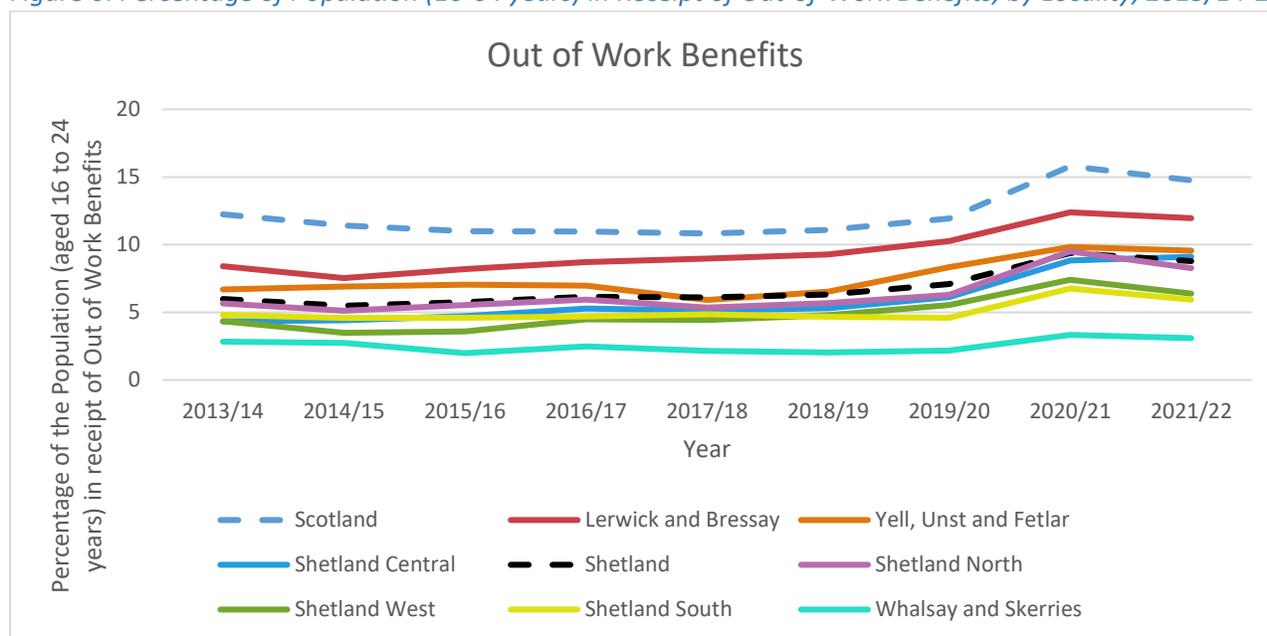
Source: Shetland Islands Council 2023

Households

Data presented here relates to all households, not just families.

Out of Work Benefits

Figure 6: Percentage of Population (16-64 years) in Receipt of Out-of-Work Benefits, by Locality, 2013/14-21/22



Source: [Improvement Service Scotland 2023](#)

Shetland, and all its localities consistently had a lower percentage of the population in receipt of out-of-work benefits¹⁶, than Scotland. The trend over the last eight years followed a similar trajectory to Scotland. This was stable between 2013/14 and 2018/19 before a considerable increase in 2019/20 and 2020/21 for both Shetland and Scotland as a whole. This uptick is likely to be related to the Covid-19 pandemic, with most areas reducing in 2021/22.

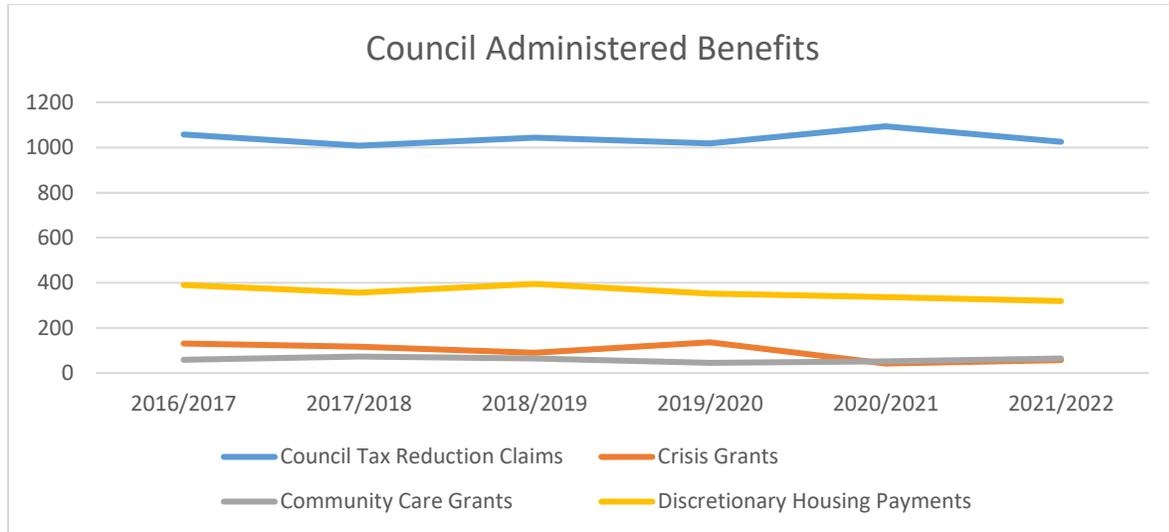
Three localities had a higher percentage of out-of-work poverty than the Shetland average, in 2021/22. The highest percentage of the population (aged 16-24) in receipt of out-of-work benefits is in Lerwick & Bressay, with 12%; followed by Yell, Unst & Fetlar with 9.6%, and Shetland Central with 9.1%. Below the Shetland average were: Shetland North with 8.3%; Shetland West with 6.4%; Shetland South with 5.9% and Whalsay & Skerries with 3.1%.

¹⁶ Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA); Employment and Support Allowance (ESA); Incapacity Benefit (IB); Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA); Income Support (IS) where Carer's Allowance (CA) not also in payment; Pension Credit (PC) where Carer's Allowance (CA) not also in payment; Universal Credit Out of Work (UC OOW) where conditionality regime is one of Searching for Work, Preparing for Work or Planning for Work; Universal Credit No Work Requirements (UC NWR) where conditionality regime is No Work Requirements

Lerwick & Bressay has had the highest rate of people in receipt of out-of-work benefits since 2013/14. Whalsay & Skerries have had the lowest percentage in the same time period.

Council Administered Benefits

Figure 7: Council Administered Benefits, 2016/17-21/22

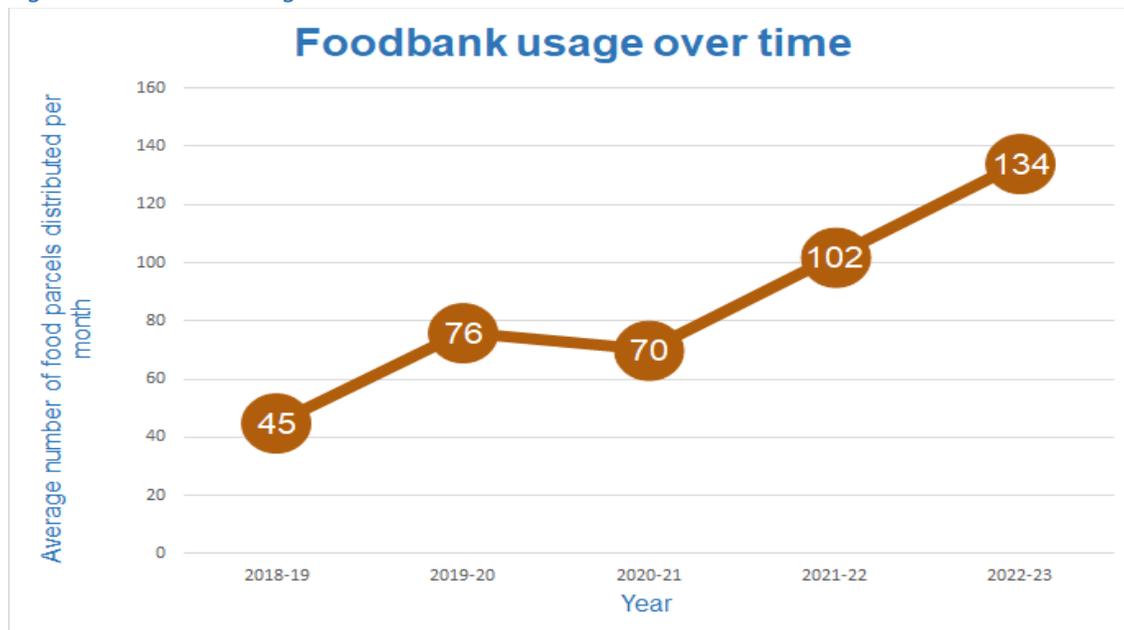


Source: Shetland Islands Council, 2022

The graph shows that Council Tax Reduction Claims continues to be the benefit claimed by the most people compared to Community Care Grants, Crisis Grants and Discretionary Housing Payments. Discretionary Housing Payments were the second most likely grant to be administered. Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants are the less administered grants of the four, and fluctuate between which one is claimed most and least.

Food Bank

Figure 8: Foodbank usage over time in Shetland



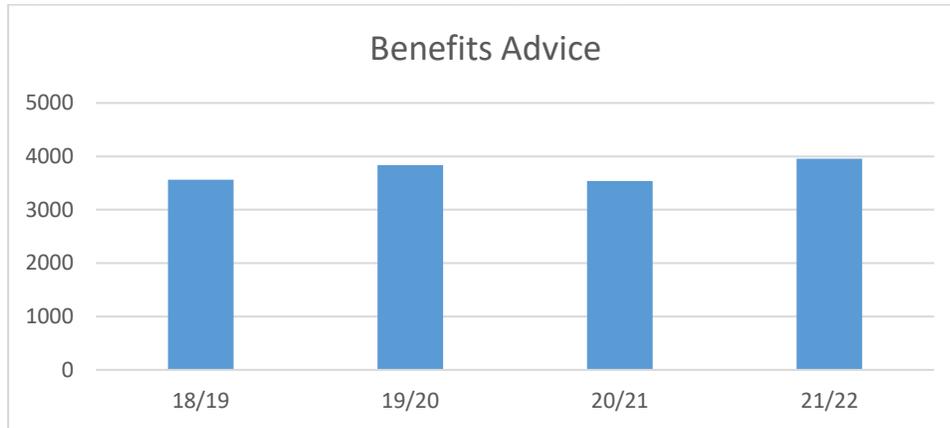
Source: Shetland Foodbank 2023. Graph from [Shetland Partnership website](#).

The average number of food parcels distributed per month in Shetland has risen each year, though, there was a decrease in 2020-21. However, this indicator only captured a fraction of the activity undertaken locally by various organisations during the pandemic, for example Community Anchor Organisations, other foodbanks and groups were set up to help communities ([Shetland Partnership 2020-21 Annual Report](#)). It is likely that more were distributed that year than the figure suggests.

In 2018-2019, an average of 45 parcels per month was distributed in Shetland, rising to 76 in 2019-20; 69 per month in 2020-21; 102 per month in 2021-22 and 134 per month in 2022-23. In Scotland, 2022-23 saw the highest levels of need ever, representing a 30% increase from the same period the year before. Mirroring this, Shetland saw a 31% increase from the same period last year, based on the monthly average of food parcels distributed by Shetland Foodbank.

Benefits Advice Issues Provided, CAB

Figure 9: Benefits Advice Issues Provided, by Year, by Shetland Islands Citizen’s Advice Bureau

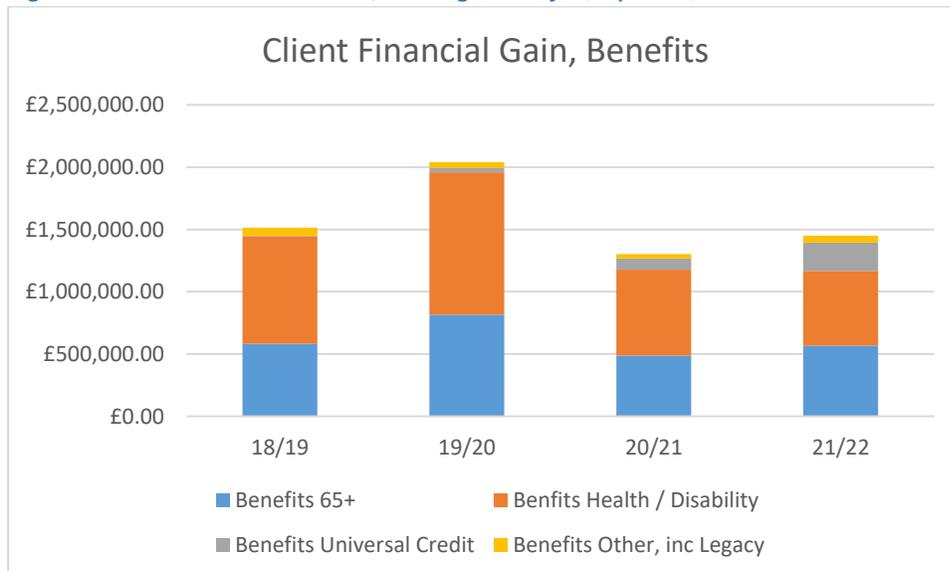


Source: Shetland Citizen’s Advice Bureau 2022

The graph shows that there were almost 4000 instances of benefits advice provided in the year 21/22, an increase on 2020/21.

Client Financial Gain, through benefits, by year by CAB

Figure 10: Client Financial Gain, Through Benefits, by Year, Shetland Islands Citizen’s Advice Bureau



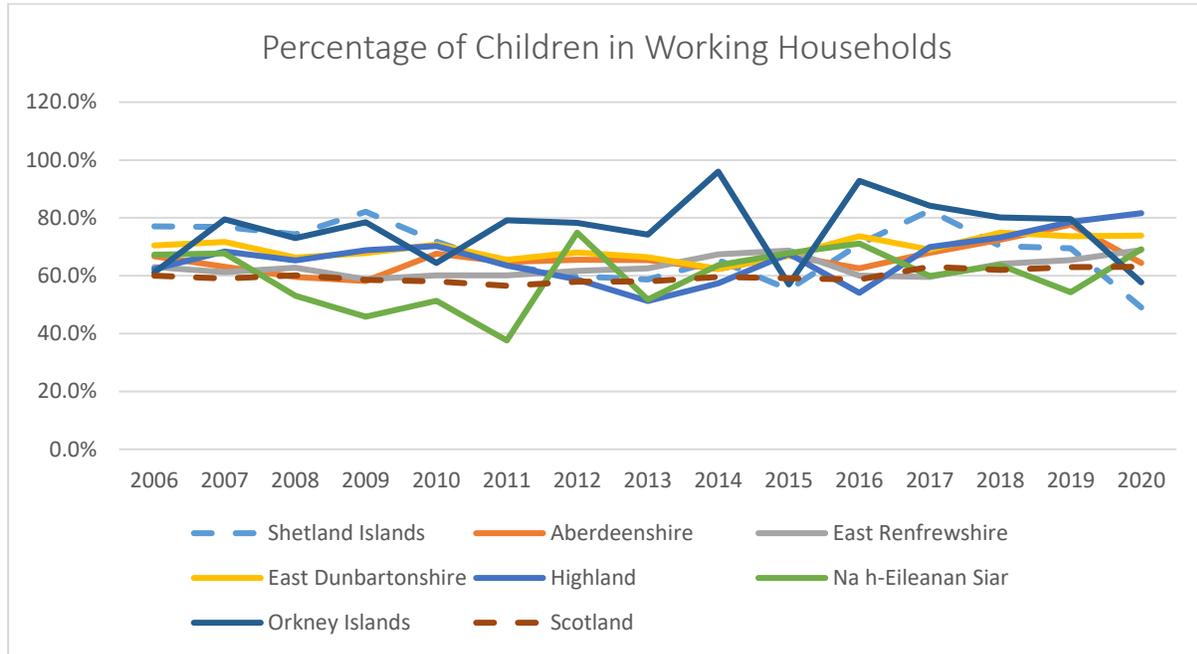
Source: Shetland Citizen’s Advice Bureau 2022

The graph shows that in 2021/22, benefits relating to over 65 year olds; and health and disability made up the majority of financial gain by clients. Universal credit and other benefits made up a smaller ratio of the client financial gain. Almost £1,500,000.00 was gained by clients.

Work and Earnings

Percentage of Children in Working Households, Comparator Local Authorities

Figure 11: Percentage of Children in Working Households, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2006-2020



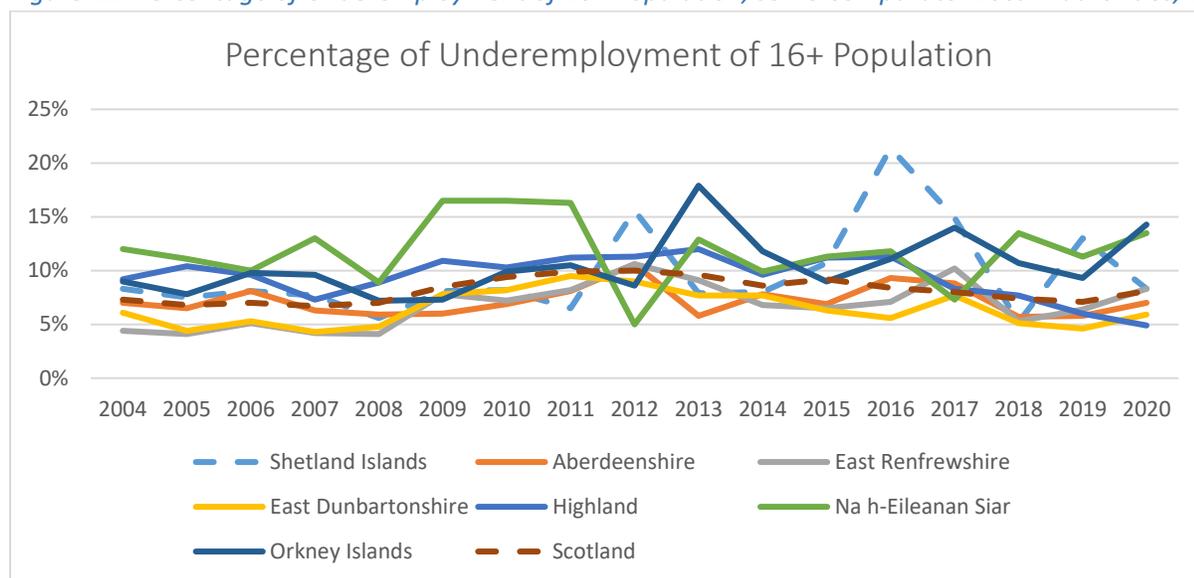
Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, household economic activity status as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

Proportions of all children under 16 who live in households that contain at least one person aged 16 to 64, where all individuals aged 16 and over are in employment. These statistics are taken from the Annual Population Survey (APS) and cover calendar years.

The lack of employment and therefore of income from employment, increases the risk of poverty. This indicator looks at % of children in 'working' households as sample sizes for 'workless' households are too small in many local authorities.

Underemployment

Figure 12: Percentage of Underemployment of 16+ Population, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2004-2020



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard, Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

Underemployment estimates cover those looking for i) additional hours in their existing role (at the same rate of pay), ii) an additional job (to supplement their existing job), iii) a different job with more hours. These figures are from survey data and due to small sample sizes data are missing in a number of LAs making the time series for this indicator less meaningful.

Figures are volatile due to small sample sizes, therefore year-on-year variation may not reflect real changes; broader longer-term trends should be looked at.

This indicator looks at those that are in employment but would like to work more, given the opportunity. Employment is not all the same. It is about the right 'quantity' and 'quality' of jobs in order to guarantee the appropriate level of income.

Employment in 'lower paid' occupations

Table 3: Employment in 'lower paid' occupations, as a percentage of all in employment, year to June 2021

Shetland Islands	Aberdeen shire	East Dunbarton shire	East Renfrew shire	Highland	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Orkney Islands	Scotland
28%	25%	25%	17%	27%	28%	19%	27%

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, year to Jun 2021, as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard, Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

Employment in 'lower paid' occupations is defined here as employment in the following occupational groups (SOC 2010): 6. Caring, Leisure and other service, 7. Sales and Customer Service, 9. Elementary occupations including cleaners, kitchen and catering assistants. These figures are presented as a percentage of all in employment. These figures are from the Annual Population Survey data.

This indicator is provided as additional local context for labour market and economic opportunities.

Median Full-Time Gross Weekly Earnings

Table 4: Median Full Time Gross Weekly Earnings 2022

The table below shows 'Weekly pay – Gross – For all employee jobs' in 2022.

Shetland Islands	Aberdeen shire	East Dunbarton shire	East Renfrew shire	Highland	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Orkney Islands	Scotland
£550.70	£528.60	£639.60	£661.80	£507.70	£521.80	£474.40	£528.60

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2022 data

Table 5: Median Full-Time Gross Weekly Earnings 2021

Shetland Islands	Aberdeen shire	East Dunbarton shire	East Renfrew shire	Highland	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Orkney Islands	Scotland	
£677.90	£639.00	£754.70	£809.40	£611.40	£670.10	£565.20	£622.00	Resident analysis (based on where they live)
£688.10	£584.60	£544.70	£626.50	£596.40	£669.90	£540.90	£622.40	Workplace analysis (based on where they work)

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2021 as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

Median full-time gross weekly earnings estimates are from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). ASHE is based on a 1% sample of employee jobs taken from HMRC and Customs PAYE records. Both residential based and workplace based estimates are provided here.

Job Density 2021

Table 6: Job Density Across Comparator Local Authorities

Shetland Islands	Aberdeen shire	East Dunbarton shire	East Renfrew shire	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Highland	Orkney Islands	Scotland
1.12	0.74	0.46	0.41	0.93	0.89	1.03	0.81

Jobs density represents the number of jobs in an area divided by the resident population aged 16-64 in that area. For example, a job density of 1.0 would mean that there is one job for every resident aged 16-64. This indicator is provided as additional local context in terms of economic opportunities.

Source: [ONS NOMIS, 2023](#)

Cost of Living

The Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland (2013)¹⁷ considered living costs in remote rural Scotland in the context of the fragility and sustainability of local communities, and the ability of pensioners, working-age adults and families with children, on a range of incomes, to live satisfactory lives there.

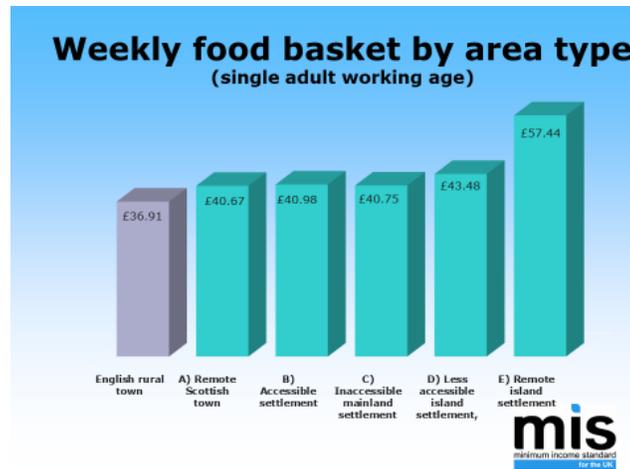


Figure 13: Weekly food basket by area type

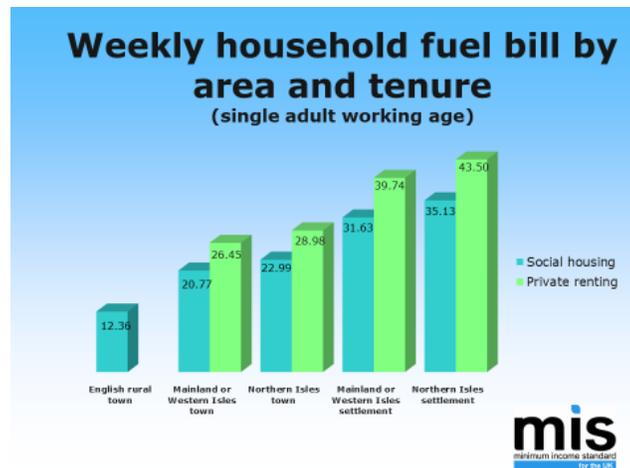


Figure 14: Weekly household fuel bill by area and tenure

¹⁷ This report calculates how much it costs for people to live at a minimum acceptable standard in remote rural Scotland. It builds on research elsewhere in the UK on the Minimum Income Standard (MIS), which is based on the minimum budgets required by various types of household. The research involves detailed discussions with members of the public about what should go into a minimum household 'basket' of goods and services, supported where relevant by expert knowledge, for example on nutritional and heating standards.

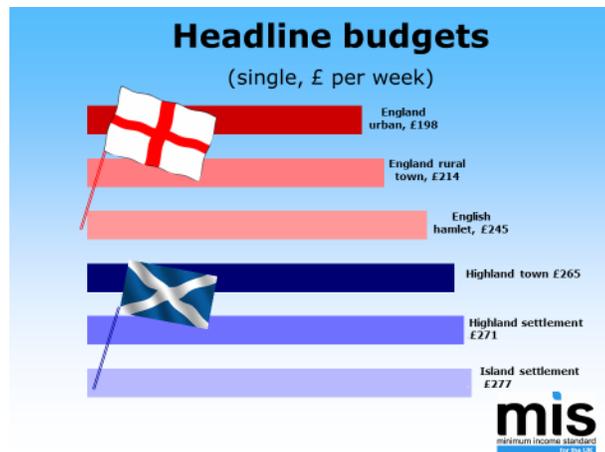


Figure 15: Headline budgets

The minimum income that households require for an acceptable standard of living in Shetland is well above what is needed in the rest of the UK. In many cases it is also higher than in other parts of remote rural Scotland, although this can vary considerably according to family type and the accessibility of different communities within Shetland. In general, costs in Shetland are only slightly higher than those of comparable areas in other Scottish island groups, with small additions due to the impact of a more severe climate on heating fuels, in some cases additional delivery charges for household goods and higher fares paid on occasional ferry trips to the Scottish mainland.

The minimum living costs of a household living in Lerwick are estimated to be one-third above those of a household in a city for a working age household and one quarter above for a pensioner. The working age household has similar costs to one in a remote town on the Scottish mainland, but pensioner costs are about 12% higher.

Factors driving additional costs for households in Shetland compared to the rest of the UK include:

- Higher prices in supermarkets and other stores than those charged in urban areas
- Longer commuting distances, compounded by higher petrol prices
- Higher heating costs, driven by lack of access to mains gas and the severe climate.
- The additional cost of occasional trips to the mainland
- Delivering charges for goods ordered from elsewhere
- For pensioners, additional costs of buying clothes and other goods through catalogues (the calculations assumed that pensioners do not necessarily have the internet giving access to online deals).

Remote small settlements in Shetland can have additional costs associated, for example, with:

- Additional ferry costs for inter-island travel
- The additional cost of buying groceries in more expensive local stores
- Higher heating bills associated in some cases with older housing. For a household without children, who maybe able to live more cheaply in a flat in a town, the lack of this option in a small settlement adds to living costs.

In areas of Shetland within about two hours of Lerwick, where residents might be expected to a monthly shop at a supermarket with local top-ups, the overall cost of living is 15-20 per cent more than in Lerwick for working age households. In the most remote parts of the North, households depending entirely on local shopping can expect to spend 25-30 per cent more overall than in Lerwick.

For pensioners living in remote island areas, the additional cost of local shopping can be partly offset by very limited travel. The study found that in such remote communities, life can centre around whatever local activities and services are available, which cuts travel costs. On an island off the Mainland, this can make a

minimum pensioner budget very similar to that of Lerwick. *This is an illustration of how additional remoteness does not always result in higher costs: sometimes the cost is borne in more limited opportunities and isolation*

Table 7: Weekly Household Budget Requirements

Examples of minimum weekly household budget requirement, excluding rent and childcare (2013):

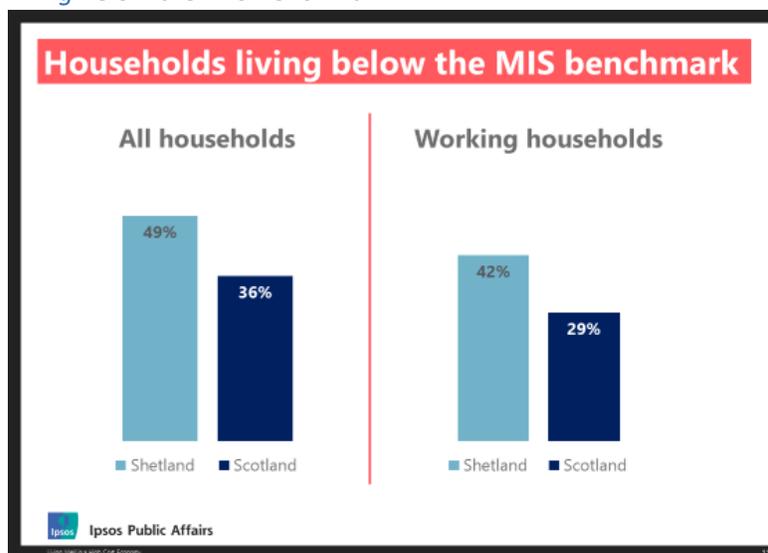
	UK Urban	Lerwick	Most remote part of Shetland (eg Unst)
Single person	£198	£264	£345
Couple with two children	£463	£597	£769
Pensioner couple	£238	£300	£334

Table 8: Examples of minimum weekly household budget requirement, excluding rent and childcare (2016):

	UK Urban	Lerwick	Most remote part of Shetland (eg Unst)
Single person	£205	£260	£336
Couple with two children	£473	£600	£759
Pensioner couple	£245	£294	£330

The reduction in costs for Shetland households is due to a decrease in cost of fuel.

Figure 16: Households Living Below the MIS Benchmark



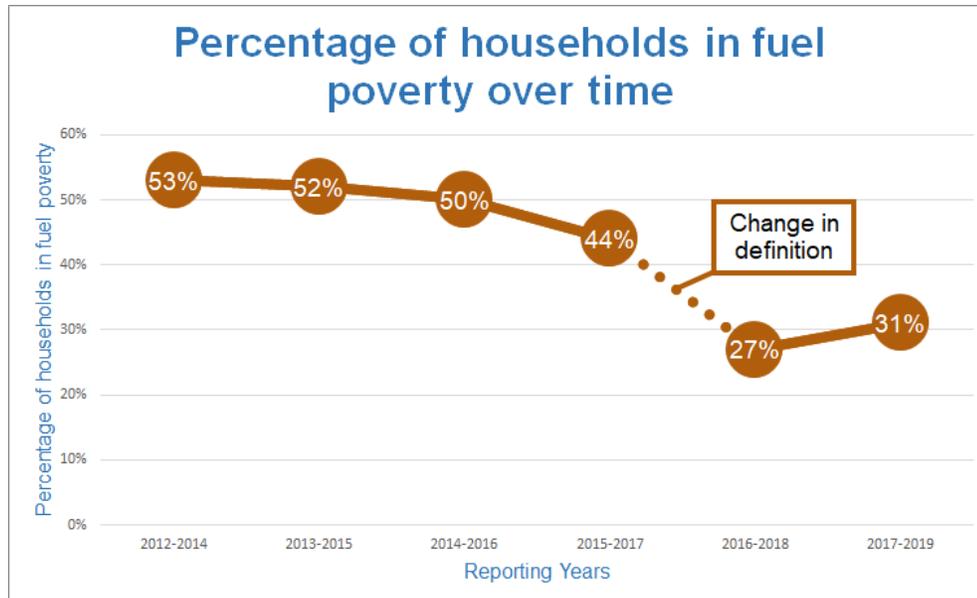
The MIS benchmarks provide a picture of how the cost of living in Shetland affects household’s ability to maintain a decent standard of living: when comparing UK median incomes both relative and in-work poverty appear less problematic in Shetland because of a combination of higher median incomes and lower housing costs. However, when higher living costs are incorporated through the minimum income standard the position is reversed and Shetland has a higher proportion of both households in general and working households facing difficulty maintaining a decent standard of living.

Single adult households and households with families are more likely to be experiencing difficulties maintaining a decent standard of living.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel Poverty in Households

Figure 17: Fuel Poverty, Percentage of Households in Shetland, 2012-2014 – 2017-2019

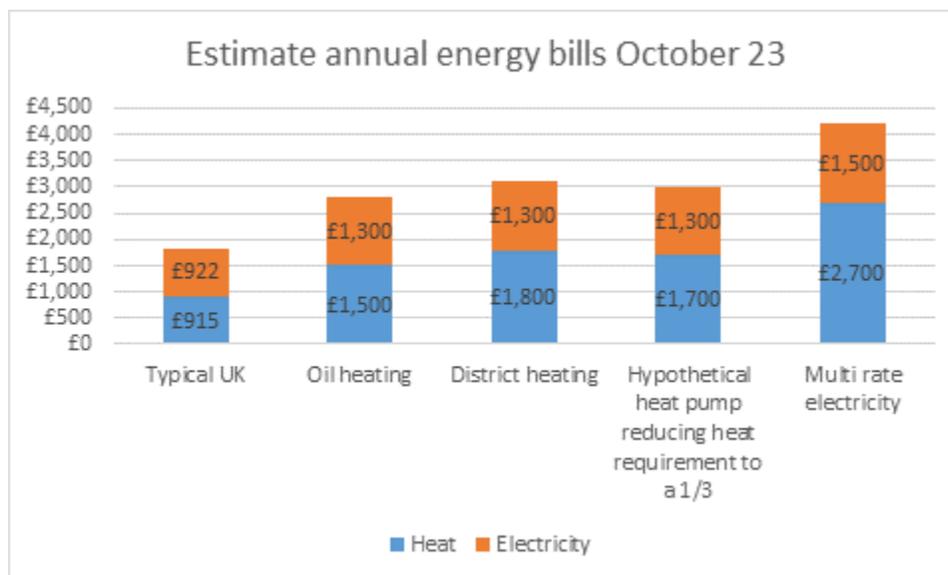


Source: Graph from [Shetland Partnership website 2023](#), original source: Scottish House Condition Survey

Due to current data no longer being comparable to previous years it is difficult to look at trends. We know that nationally fuel poverty is rising dramatically, with the added challenge for Shetland of the cost of living being 20-65% higher than the UK average (Minimum Income Standard, HIE 2016).

Average Annual Energy Bill, Shetland 2023

Figure 18, Estimated Annual Fuel Bill for Shetland and the UK



Source: Shetland Islands Council 2023

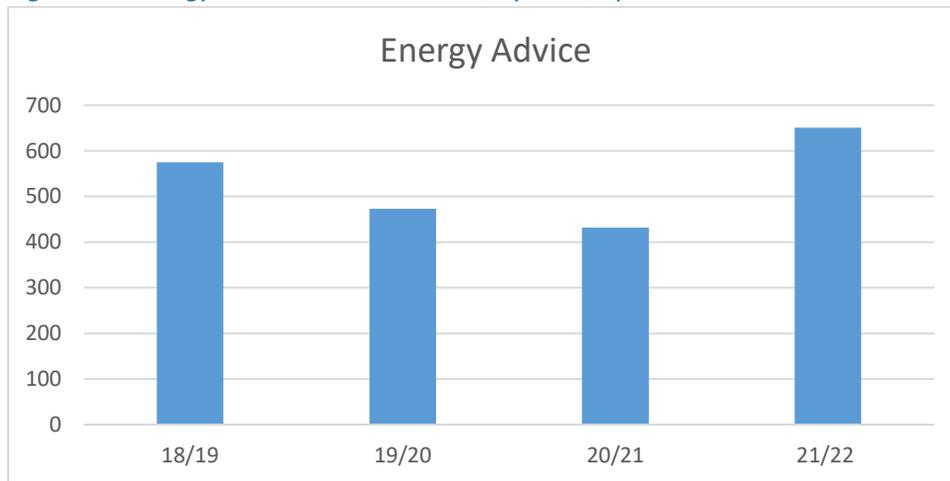
The above graph shows estimates of what households in Shetland are potentially spending on energy in October 2023, across a range of fuel types.

In terms of fuel prices Ofgem estimate that a typical household energy bill is £1,834 and that they use 11,500kWh gas and 2,700kWh electricity. Whereas, the most up to date data suggests an average Shetland customer consumes around 21,000kWh across both heat and electricity. The combination of using more and no access to the gas grid leads to average energy bills of more than double that of a typical UK energy bill.

Shetland Islands Council estimate that fuel poverty is currently around 63%, with an extreme fuel poverty figure of 29% of households in Shetland. This was based on households spending more than 10% and 20% of household income on fuel, no account for housing costs and nothing to try and balance low incomes using less energy than high incomes

Energy Advice by CAB

Figure 19: Energy Advice Issues Provided, by Year, by Shetland Islands Citizen’s Advice Bureau



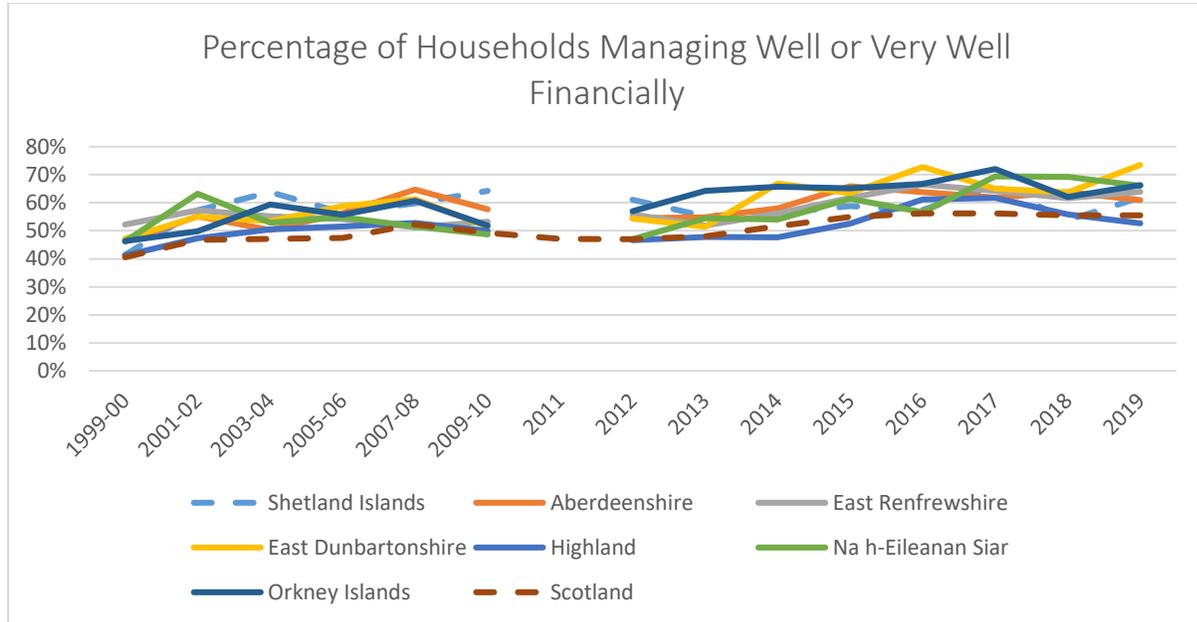
Source: Shetland Citizen’s Advice Bureau 2022

The graph shows that 2021/22 saw more energy advice provided than the three years prior, with 651 instances.

Financial Resilience

Percentage of Households Managing Well or Very Well Financially, some Comparator Local Authorities

Figure 20: Percentage of Households Managing Well or Very Well Financially, some Comparator Local Authorities, 1999/00-2019

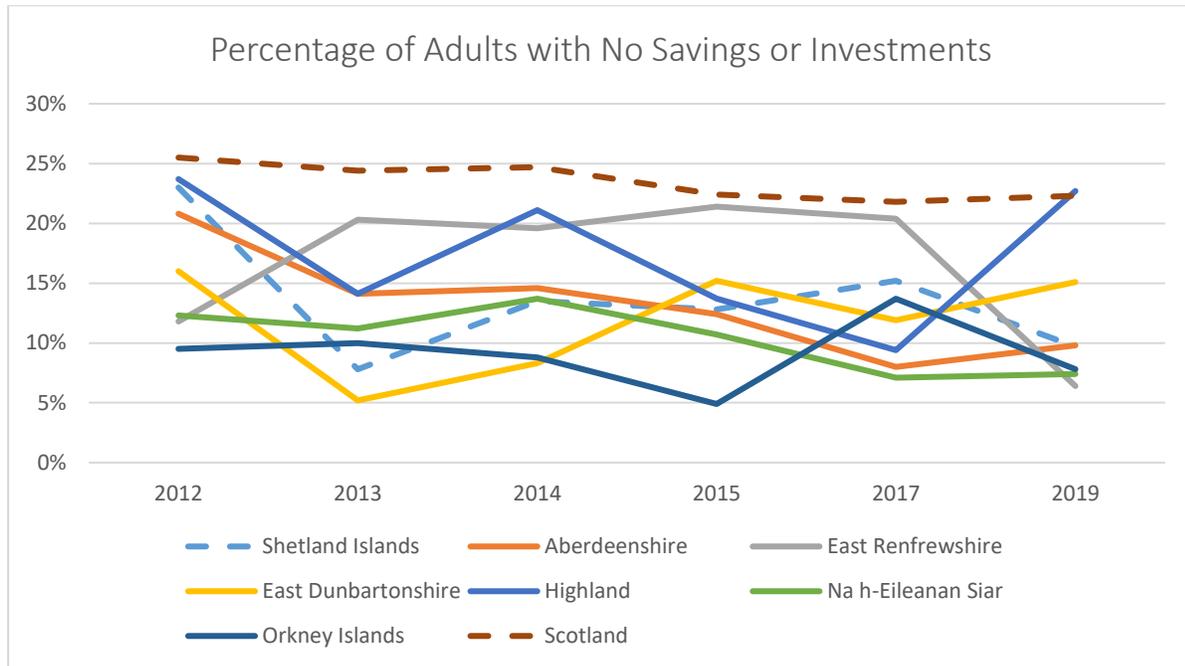


Source: Original data source: Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey - Adults dataset (NB: some data not available) as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

This can be used as a proxy of financial resilience of households.

Percentage of Adults with No Savings or Investments, some Comparator Local Authorities

Figure 21: Percentage of Adults with No Savings or Investments, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2012-2019



Source: Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey - Adults dataset, as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

Asked every two years from 2015 onwards.

Savings protect against problem debt and material deprivation. They act as a buffer against unexpected costs and fluctuations in income.

Debt Advice, by Year, Shetland Islands Citizen’s Advice Bureau

Figure 22: Debt Advice 18/19 to 21/22

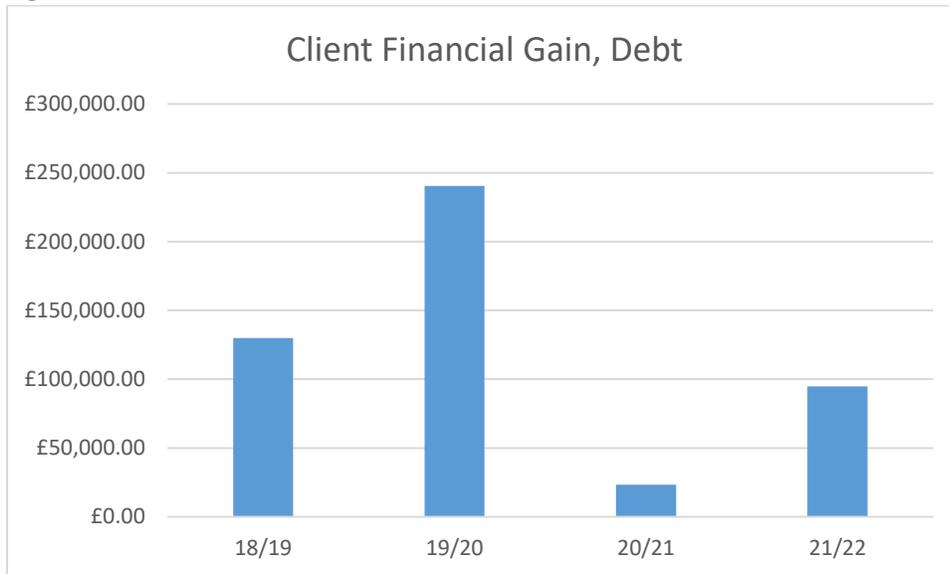


Source: Shetland Islands Citizen’s Advice Bureau

The graph shows that debt advice given has decreased every year since 2018/19 to 2021/22.

Client Financial Gain, Through Debt Write-Off, by Year, Shetland Islands Citizen’s Advice Bureau

Figure 23: Client Financial Gain, Debt



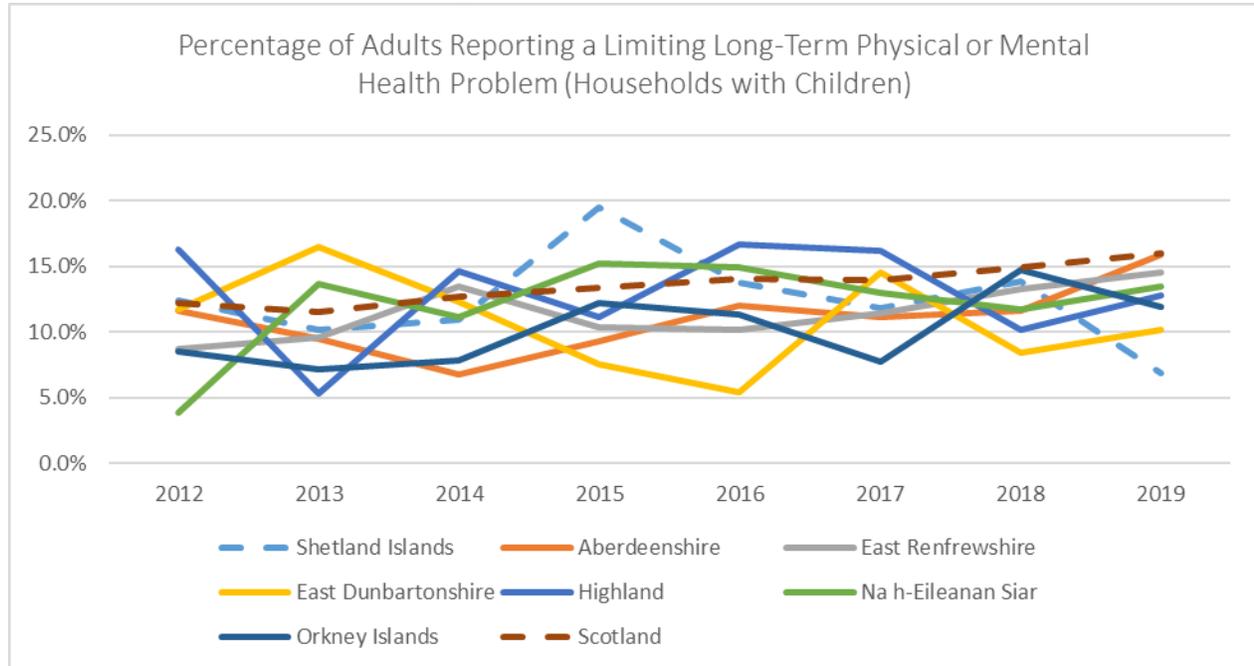
Source: Shetland Islands Citizen’s Advice Bureau

The graph shows that Shetland Citizen’s Advice bureau has helped clients with financial gain relating to debt which has fluctuated from approximately £23,000 in 2020/21 to £240,000 in 2019/20. In 2021/22 approximately £94,000 was gained by clients in relation to debt.

Priority Groups

Percentage of Adults Reporting a Limiting Long-Term Physical or Mental Health Problem (Households with Children), some Comparator Local Authorities, 2012-2019

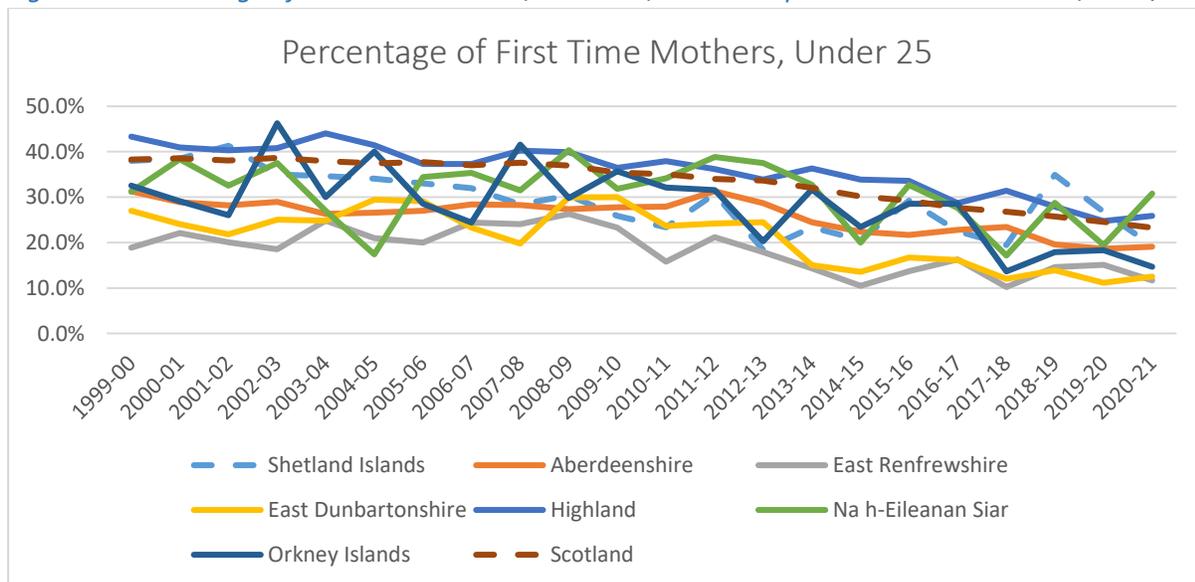
Figure 24: Percentage of Adults Reporting a Limiting Long-Term Physical or Mental Health Problem (Households with Children), some Comparator Local Authorities, 2012-2019



Source: Scottish Government Household Surveys, Scottish Surveys Core Questions, as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022](#), Scottish Government

Percentage of First Time Mothers, Under 25, some Comparator Local Authorities, 1999/00-2020/21

Figure 25: Percentage of First Time Mothers, Under 25, some Comparator Local Authorities, 1999/00-2020/21

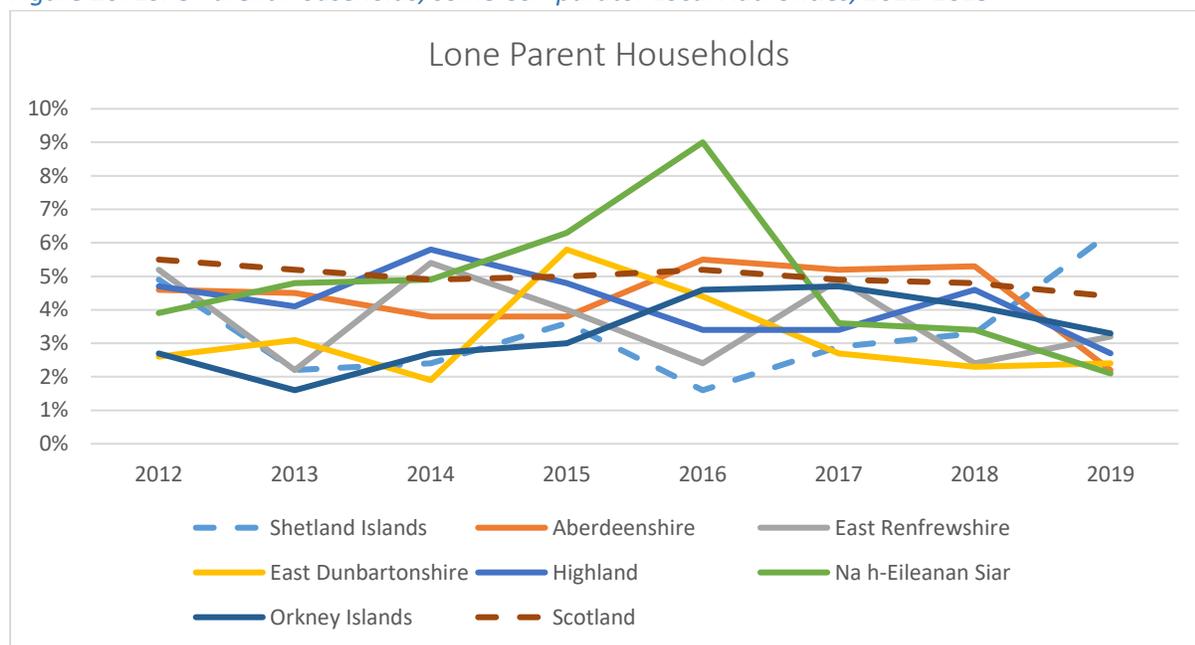


Source: ISD Parity Dataset as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

Proportion of first time mothers who are aged 25 and under. The 3 year aggregate shown is for financial year ending 31 March and refers to the year of discharge from hospital.
Contextual information on priority group.

Lone Parent Households, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2012-2019

Figure 26: Lone Parent Households, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2012-2019



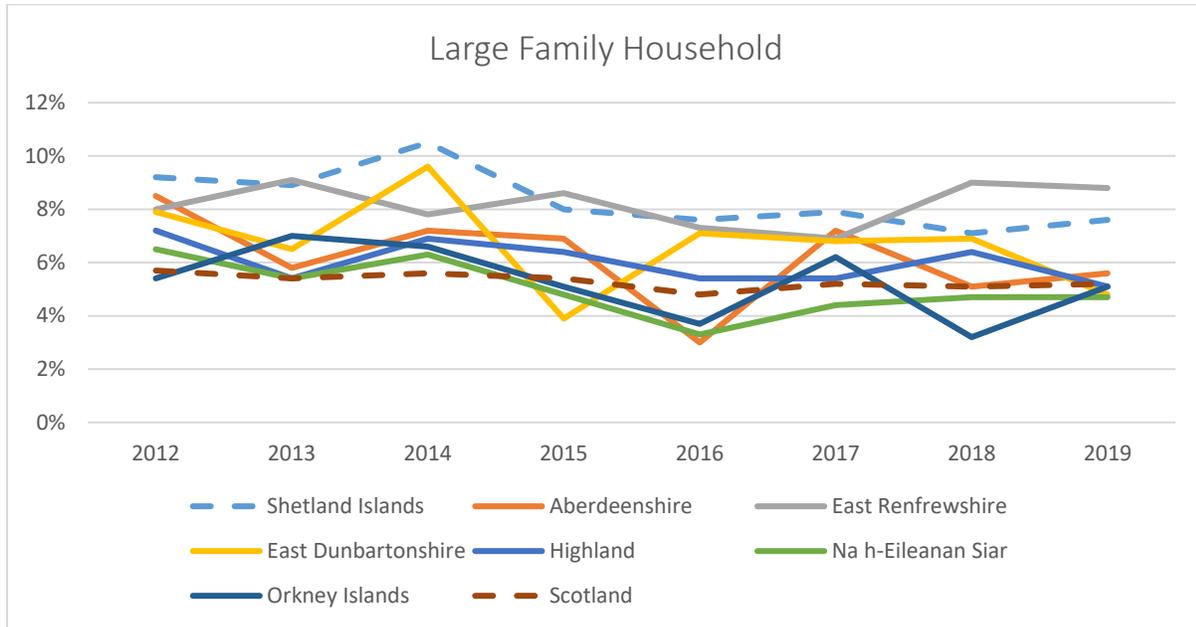
Source: Scottish Household Survey as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

A single parent household is defined as a household which contains one adult of any age and one or more children.

Contextual information on priority group.

Large Family Household, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2012-2019

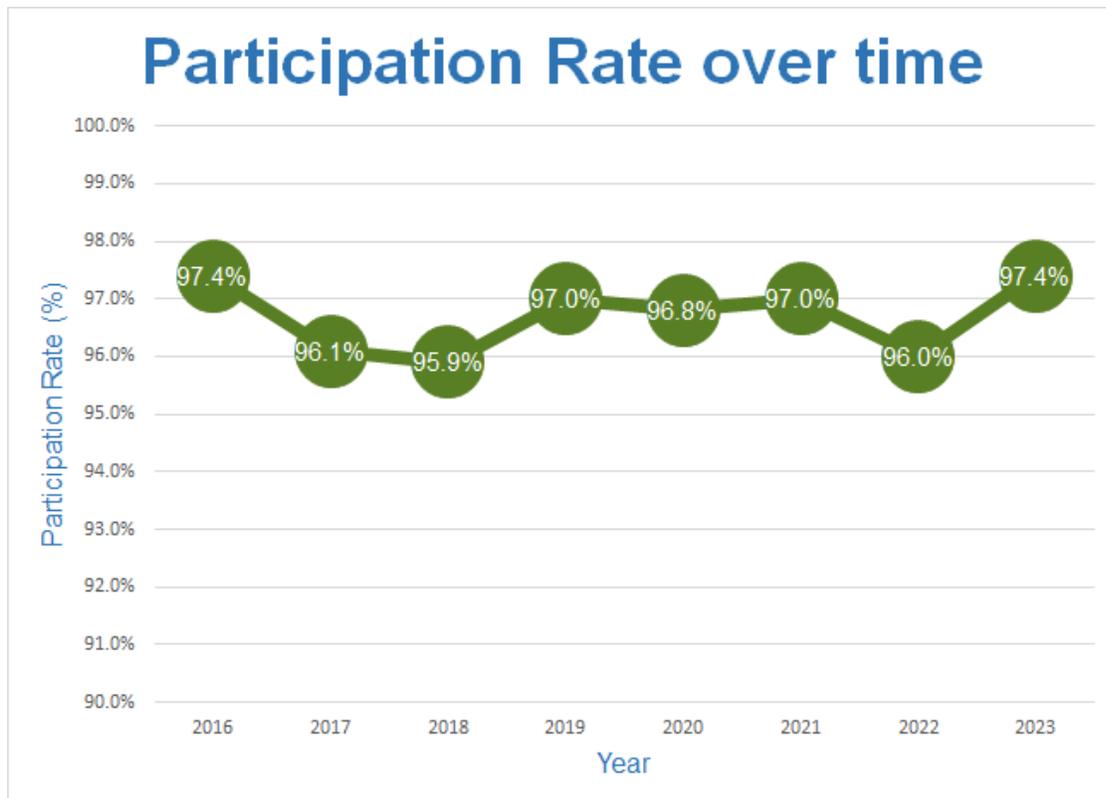
Figure 27: Large Family Household, some Comparator Local Authorities, 2012-2019



Source: Scottish Household Survey as cited in [Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#), [Local Child Poverty Statistics: January 2022 Scottish Government](#)

Contextual information on priority group.

Figure 28: Participation Rate over Time



Source: Graph from [Shetland Partnership website](#), original source: [Skills Development Scotland's Annual Participation Measure 2023](#)

The Annual Participation Measure published by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) looks at the percentage of young adults (16-19 year olds) who are participating in education, training or employment. This is based on the longest held status of the individual over the previous 12 months.

In 2023, 97.4% of 16-19 year olds were in education, employment, training and personal development. This was the fourth highest participation rate in Scotland.

Appendix 3: Anchor for Families Theory of Change

why act



Families under pressure can end up on a pathway to crisis.

These families rarely have the energy and knowledge required to find support in a complex and siloed system of services.

Barriers to support are often only overcome when a family reaches crisis.



If you wait until a crisis occurs, it becomes more costly for everyone because achieving the desired results becomes harder and less likely.

For families, a crisis can often have long-term consequences for the adults and children.

For services, waiting until a crisis occurs to provide intensive and time consuming support doesn't make sense when services are often under-resourced.

We all know it makes sense to move towards more early intervention and prevention, but that doesn't make it easy.

anchor for families theory of change

what we do

Anchor for Families walks alongside families who are under pressure.

We help families build the strength and capacity required to achieve the goals they want to achieve.

We support families to halt further deterioration in their situation and develop a more positive pathway.



principles of delivery

- ♣ We work with the whole family to understand challenges and plan action so that any family-led change can last.
- ♣ Our support is easy to access, through schools and the Family Centre. Individuals can also approach us directly.
- ♣ We are flexible, tailoring our strengths-based approach to suit a family's needs.
- ♣ We promote community engagement and help families find and access other services they may need.

expected outcomes

family outcomes

Individuals become more confident in their ability to make positive changes.

Individuals take steps which improve the pathway for them and their family.

Adults and children in the family experience improved wellbeing and better outcomes.



societal outcomes

Fewer families experience crisis, which improves outcomes for individuals and reduces demand for statutory crisis support services.

Schools experience less disruption, which creates a better environment and frees up staff time to focus on other priorities.

In our communities, it becomes more normal and accepted to seek support, regardless of its source.

Community cohesion is strengthened.

Appendix 4: Improvement Service Child Poverty Index

Child Poverty Index Purpose and Scoring

The purpose of the Child Poverty Index (CPI) is to provide additional insight into Child Poverty in Shetland Islands council. The CPI was developed by Scottish Borders council and is replicated here in response to actions from the Rural Child Poverty Data and Intelligence Sprint held in 2022. The CPI is a tool to help inform the Local Child Poverty Action Plan which is a requirement of the Child Poverty Act (Scotland) 2017. It was also created to work alongside the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. SIMD provides a way of looking at deprivation in an area, covering the whole population and does not specifically reflect child poverty.

The CPI is a summary of four components which are:

- Children in Low Income Families (CiLIF) - Source is [DWP/HMRC](#). Relative low-income is defined as a family whose equivalised income is below 60 per cent of contemporary median income. Gross income measure is Before Housing Costs (BHC) and includes contributions from earnings, state support and pensions. The CPI uses the most recent available year's data from 2021/22.
- Free School Meals (FSM) - Source is Shetland Islands council, provided in February 2023. The proportion of pupils recorded as in receipt of Free School Meals as a proportion of all children aged 10 to 18 in the council.¹
- Clothing Grant (CG) - Source is Shetland Islands, provided in February 2023. The proportion of pupils recorded as in receipt of a Clothing Grant as a proportion of all children aged 5 to 15 in the council.²
- Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) - Source is Shetland Islands, provided in February 2023. The proportion of pupils recorded as in receipt of Educational Maintenance as a proportion of all children aged 16-18 in the council.³

The table below shows the values of each component for Shetland Islands council.

Table 1: Child Poverty Index Component Values for Shetland Islands council

Child Poverty Index Components	Component Scores
Children in Low Income Families - CiLIF	11.6%
Free School Meals - FSM	13.3%
Clothing Grant - CG	16.4%
Educational Maintenance Allowance - EMA	8.2%

¹Population figures are used as the number of pupils in the eligible age categories was not available. Population figures are sourced from [NRS](#)

²See footnote 1

³See footnote 1

The table below shows the score that an area will receive based on the result for each component. The CPI allows for an area to have a score ranging from 0 to 20, where 0 indicates no element of child poverty and 20 the highest levels of child poverty.

Table 2: Scores allocated to each component

Children in Low Income Families	Free School Meals	Clothing Grant	Educational Maintenance Allowance
0: None	0: None	0: None	0: None
1: Under 10%	1: Under 5%	1: Under 5%	0.5: Under 5%
2: 10% to Under 20%	2: 5% to Under 10%	2: 5% to Under 10%	1.0: 5% to Under 10%
3: 20% to Under 30%	3: 10% to Under 15%	3: 10% to Under 15%	1.5: 10% to Under 15%
4: 30% to Under 40%	4: 15% to Under 20%	4: 15% to Under 20%	2.0: 15% to Under 20%
5: 40% or More	5: 20% to Under 30%	5: 20% to Under 30%	2.5: 20% to Under 30%
	6: 30% or More	6: 30% or More	3.0: 30% or More

Note that EMA scores are half the other components reflecting the population size.

Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index Components

The tables and graph below shows the allocation of data zones in Shetland Islands council for each of the components.

It is interesting to note that for each component, except for Clothing Grant, there is at least 1 data zone that does not have that specific component.

- For the Children in Low Income Families component, the largest percentage (46.7%) of data zones fall into the **Low** band.
- For the Free School Meals component, the largest percentage (23.3%) of data zones fall into the **High or Higher** band.
- For the Clothing Grant component, the largest percentage (23.3%) of data zones fall into the **Low or Higher** band.
- And for the Educational Maintenance Allowance component, the largest percentage (33.3%) of data zones fall into the **Lower** band.

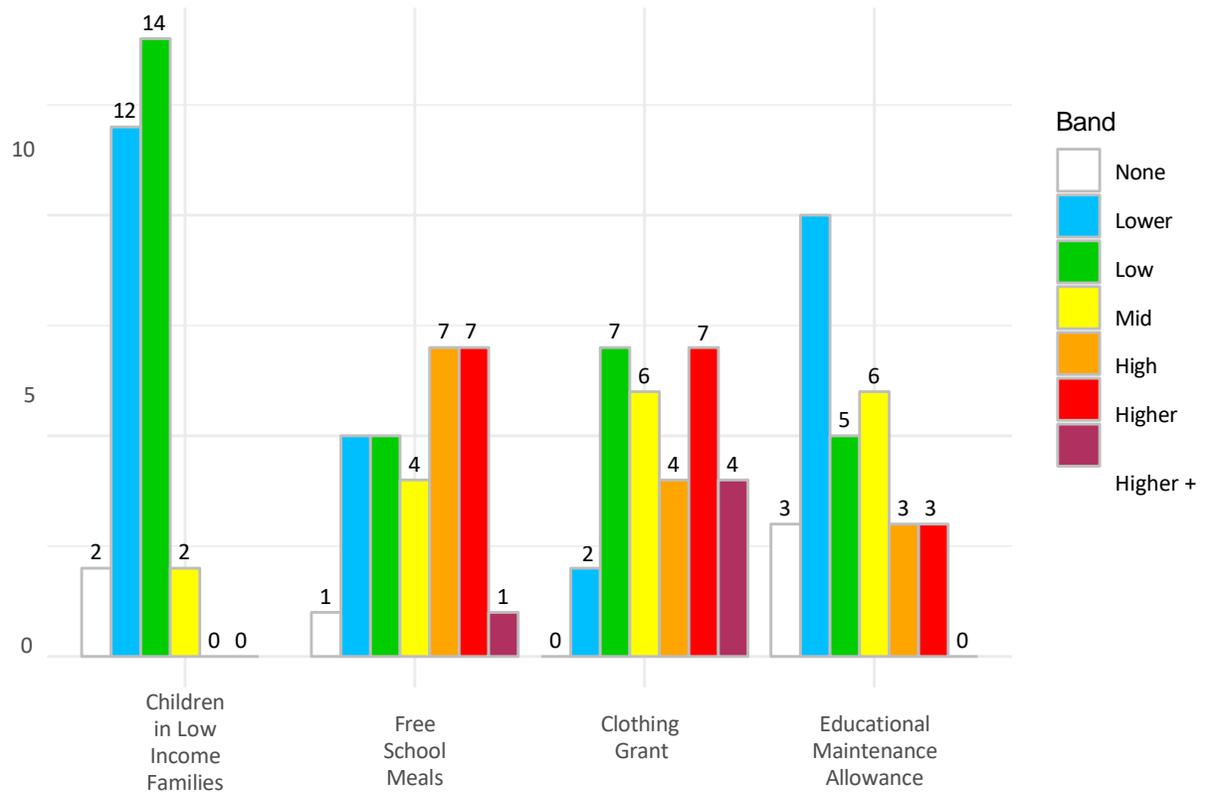
Table 3: Count of Shetland Islands Data Zones by CPI score for each component

CPI Scores by DZ	Children in Low Income Families	Free School Meals	Clothing Grant	Educational Maintenance Allowance
None	2	1	0	3
Lower	12	5	2	10
Low	14	5	7	5
Mid	2	4	6	6
High	0	7	4	3
Higher	0	7	7	3
Higher +		1	4	0
DZ	30	30	30	30

Table 4: Percent of Shetland Islands Data Zones by CPI score for each component

CPI Scores by DZ	Children in Low Income Families	Free School Meals	Clothing Grant	Educational Maintenance Allowance
None	6.7%	3.3%	0.0%	10.0%
Lower	40.0%	16.7%	6.7%	33.3%
Low	46.7%	16.7%	23.3%	16.7%
Mid	6.7%	13.3%	20.0%	20.0%
High	0.0%	23.3%	13.3%	10.0%
Higher	0.0%	23.3%	23.3%	10.0%
Higher +		3.3%	13.3%	0.0%
DZ	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

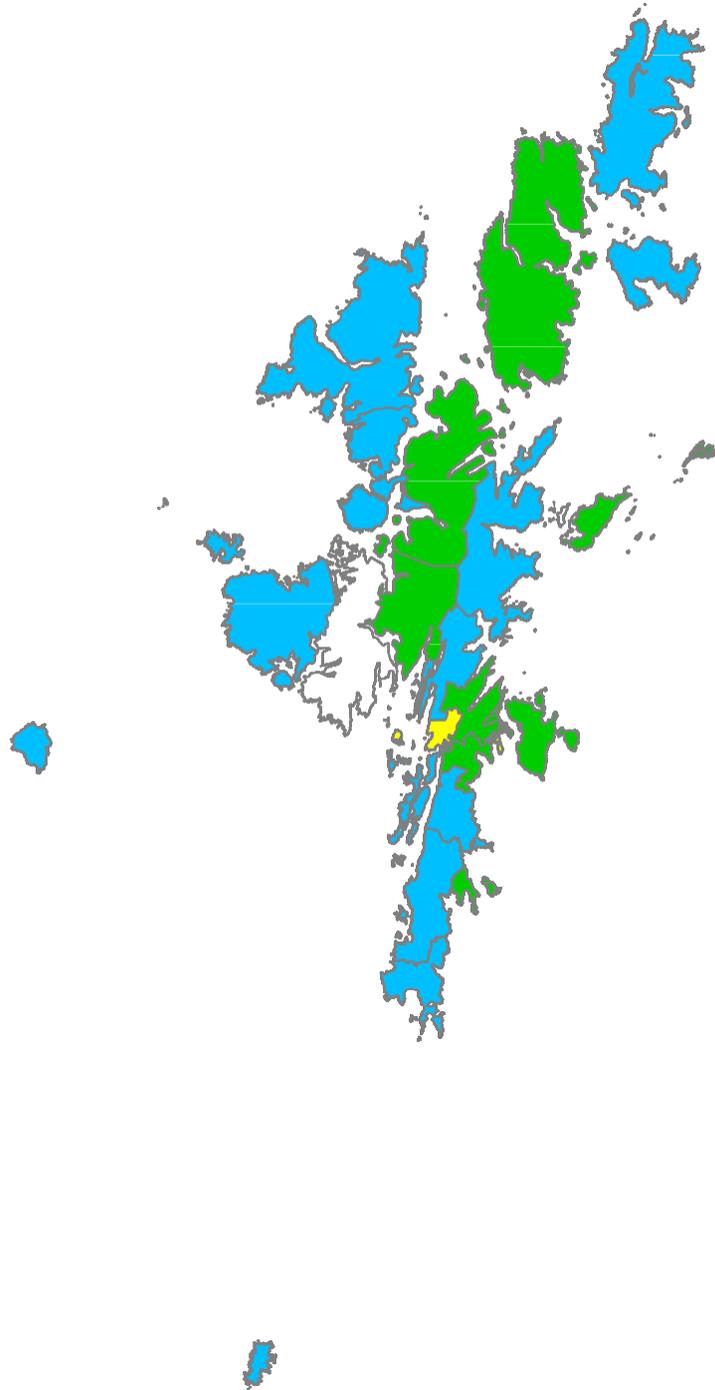
Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index Components, Data Zone Count by Points



Below are the maps for each component, showing the results for each of the 30 data zones in Shetland Islands council.

Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index Children in Low Income Families

Data Source: DWP/NRS

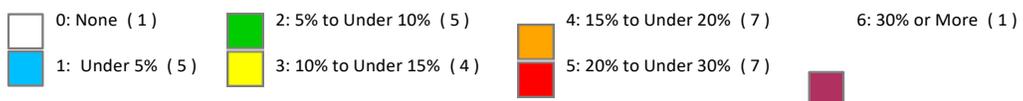
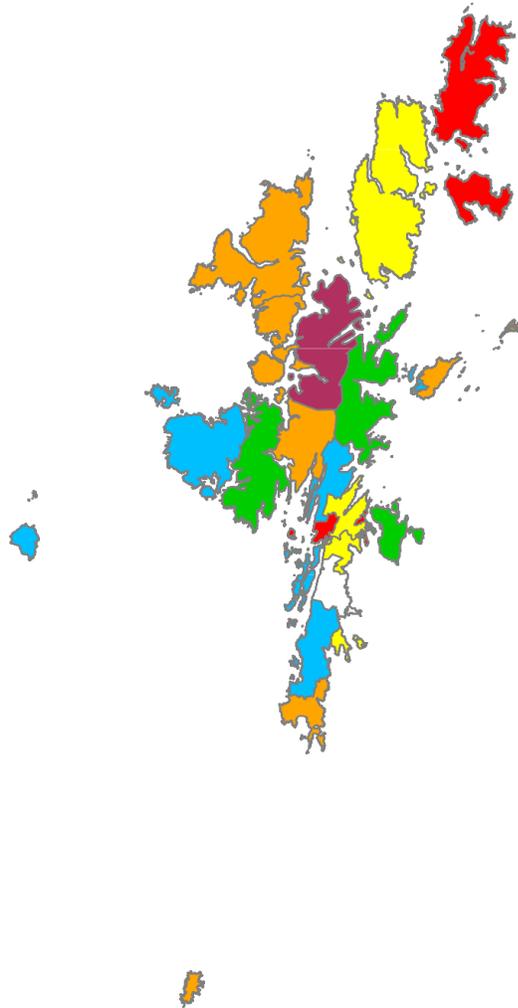


0: None (2) 1: Under 10% (12) 2: 10% to Under 20% (14) 3: 20% to Under 30% (2) () = number of Data Zones in Shetland Islands in that category.

Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index

% Pupils with Free School Meals

Data Source: Shetland Islands council

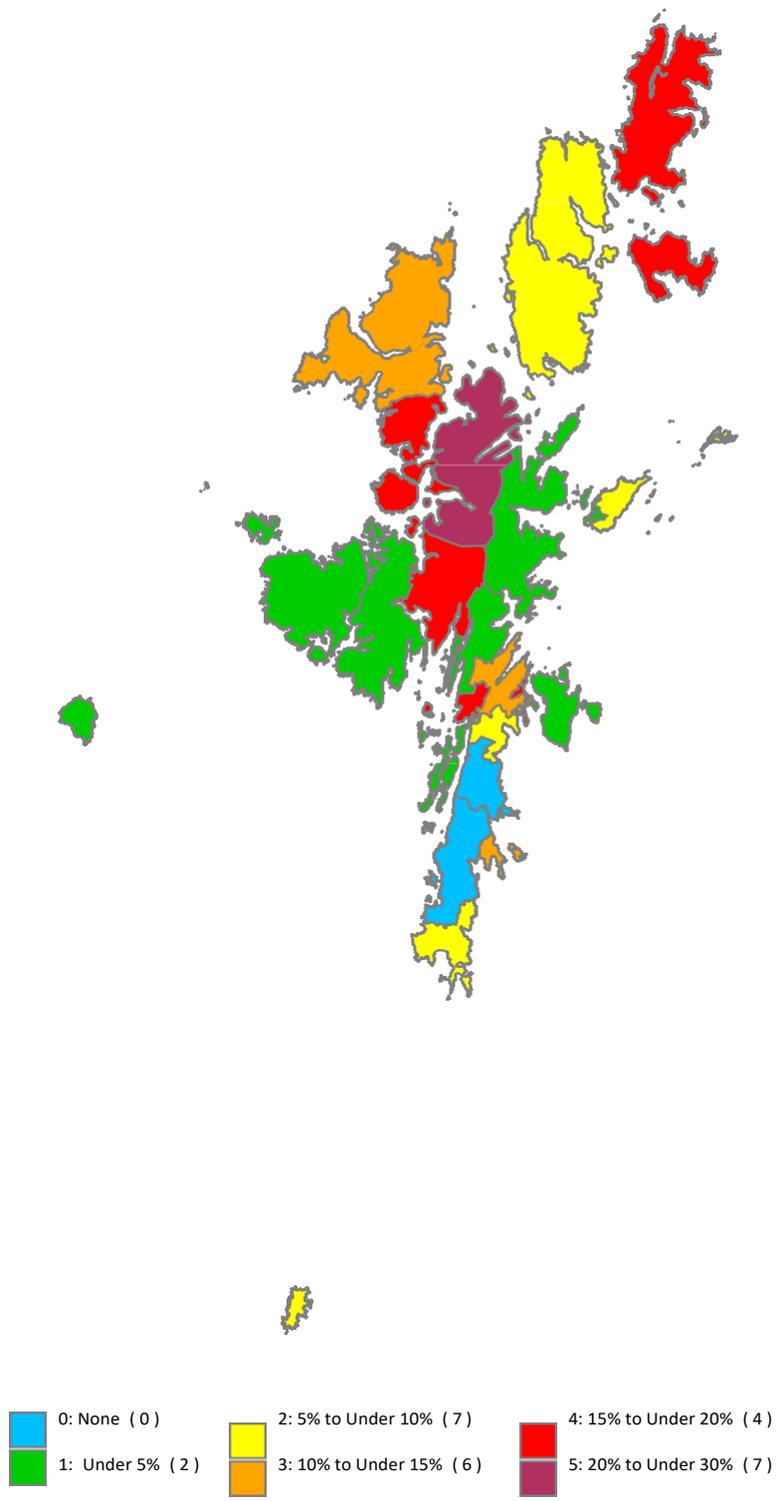


() = number of Data Zones in Shetland Islands in that category.

Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index

% Pupils with Clothing Grant

Data Source: Shetland Islands council

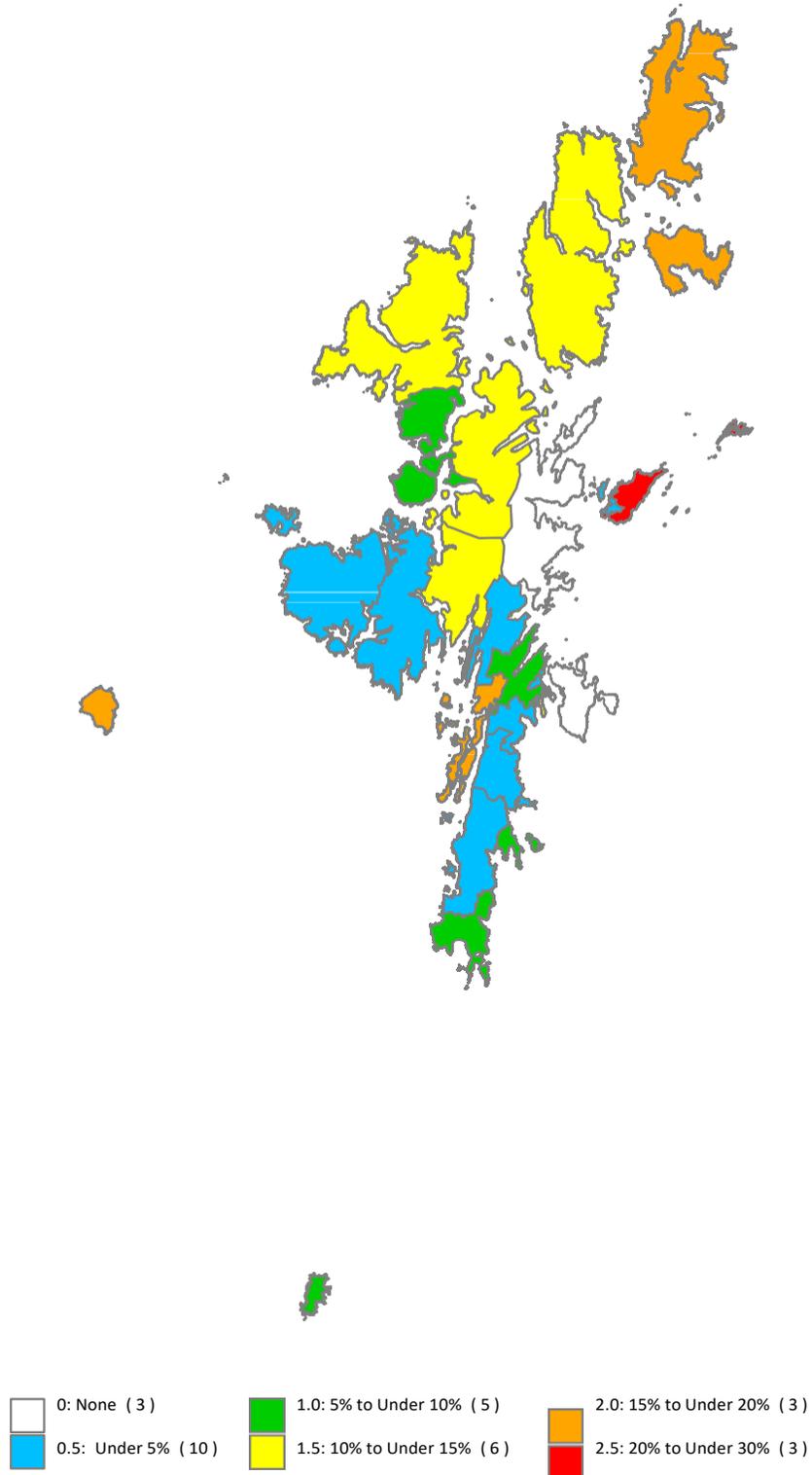


() = number of Data Zones in Shetland Islands in that category.

Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index

% Educational Maintenance Allowance Pupils Aged 16+

Data Source: Shetland Islands council



() = number of Data Zones in Shetland Islands in that category.

Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index Scores

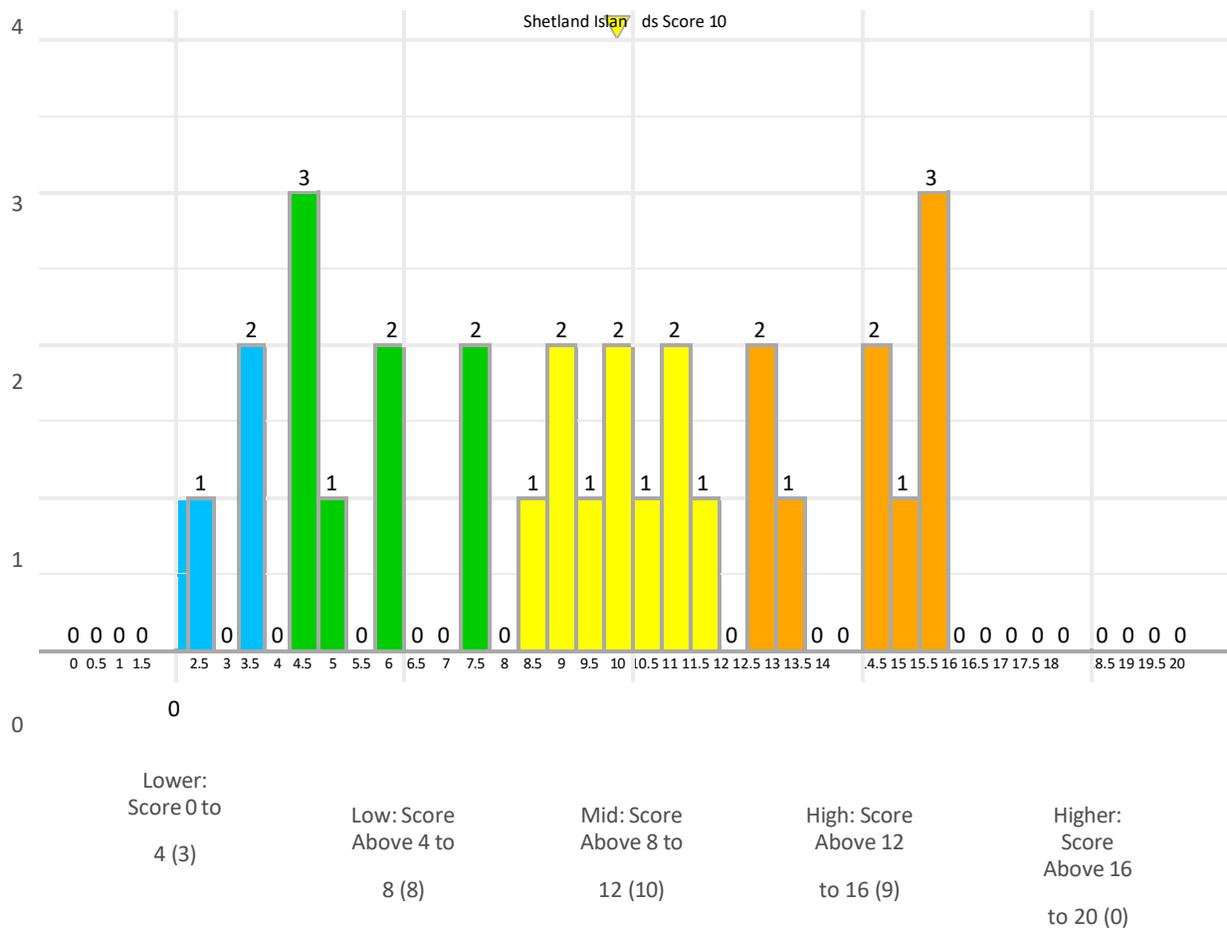
The graph and map below shows Shetland Islands data zones based on the CPI score, grouped into levels of Child Poverty.

Every data zone in Shetland Islands council has some element of child poverty.

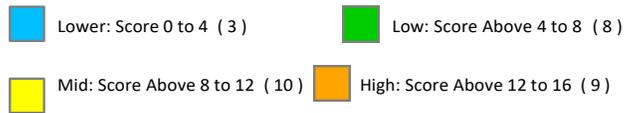
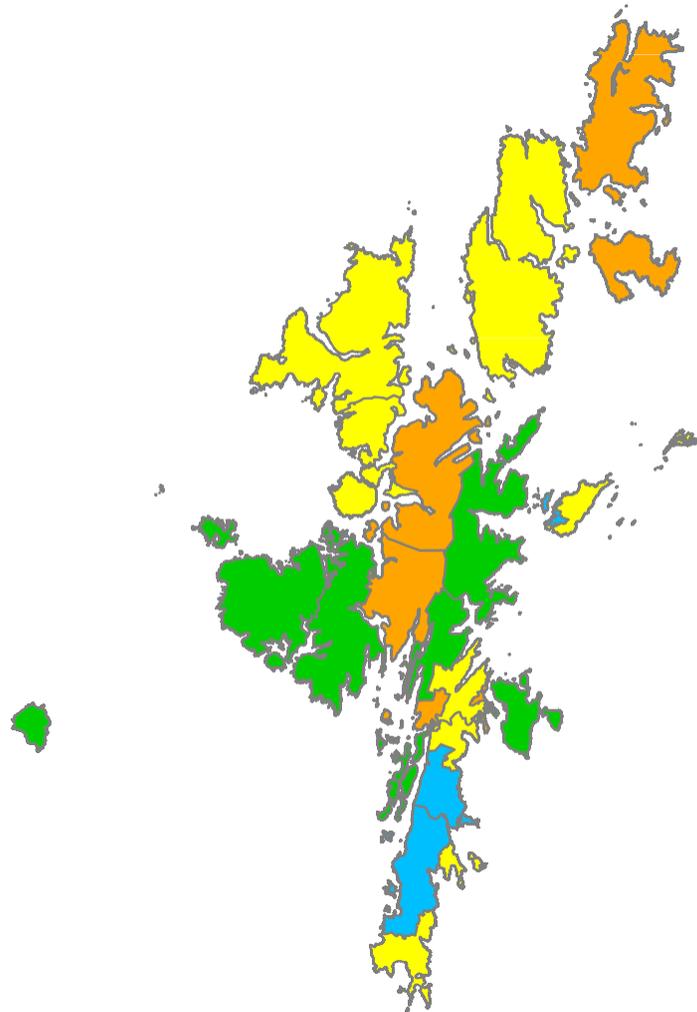
- Higher level (0 data zones) have a score of above 16 to 20;
- High level (9 data zones) have a score of above 12 to 16;
- Mid level (10 data zones) have a score of above 8 to 12;
- Low level (8 data zones) have a score of above 4 to 8;
- and Lower level (3 data zones) have a score of 0 to 4.

The CPI score for Shetland Islands council as a whole was 10, in the Mid level.

Shetland Islands Data Zones by Child Poverty Index and Score



Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index Overall Index Score



() = number of Data Zones in Shetland Islands in that category.

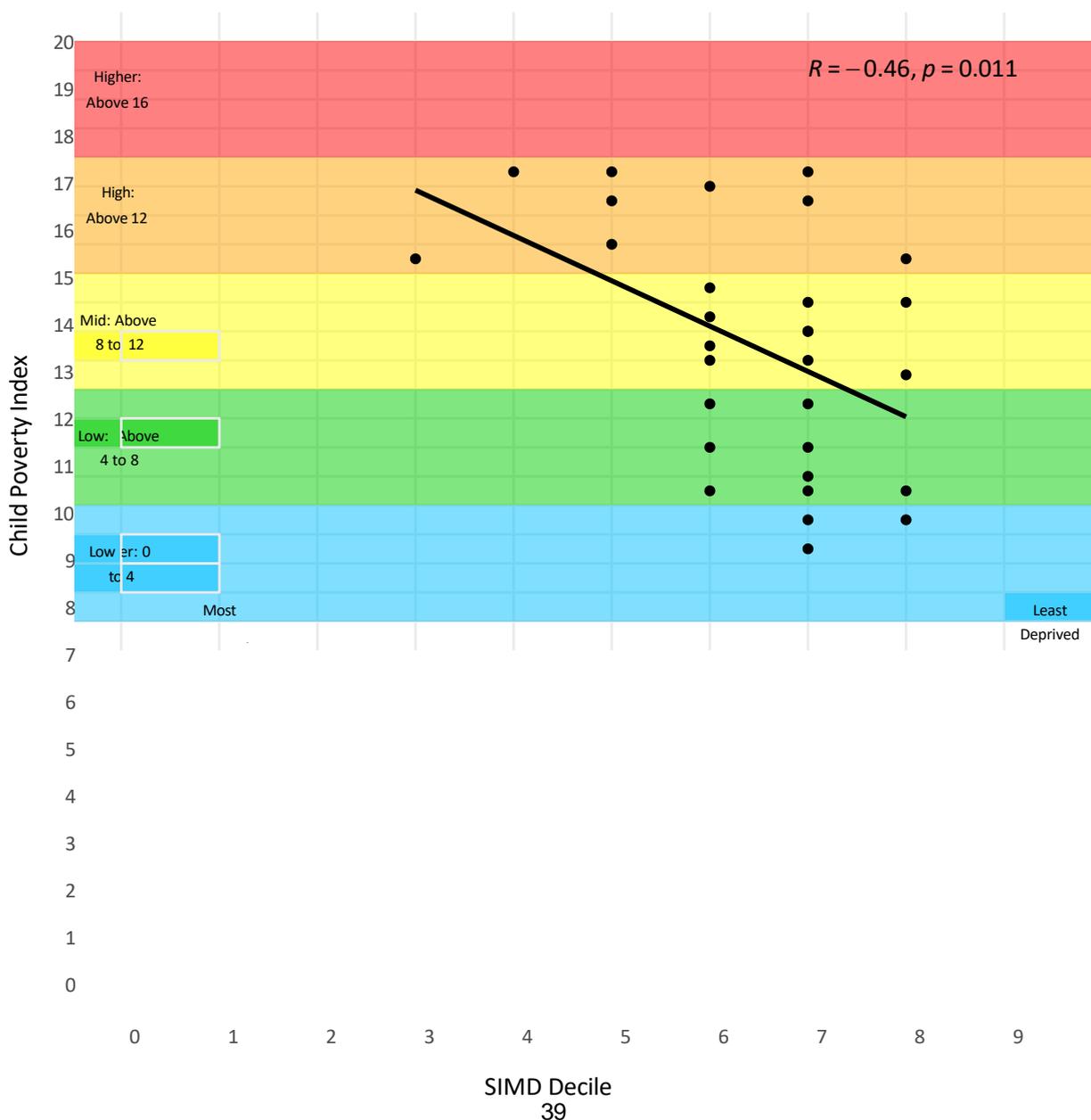
Comparing Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index to SIMD 2020

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a good tool for identifying overall deprivation, however, it is not poverty specific or child focused. The CPI is a tactile index created to enable better insight into child poverty within Shetland Islands council. The following shows a basic comparison between SIMD 2020 Decile and Shetland Islands council CPI score.

The graph below shows the 30 data zones in Shetland Islands council by CPI score and SIMD 2020 decile. There is a moderate relationship between deprivation and child poverty, as represented by the data zones with most deprivation having a higher level of child poverty. However, there are several areas in Shetland Islands where the level of child poverty is higher than expected when looking at SIMD decile. Again, it is important to remember that SIMD looks at the whole population and deprivation (not poverty only) and the CPI specifically focuses on children and poverty.

The graph below shows that data zones with a High level of child poverty can have an SIMD 2020 decile of 8.

Shetland Islands Child Poverty Index by SIMD



Appendix 5: Fully Funded School Trip, Baltasound Junior High School

<p>Your work and its Aims Describe the service(s), projects, activities and ways of working you would like to focus on - and the aim of any improvement, change or development work</p>	<p>Our aim is to provide a no-cost to parents, off Shetland, residential opportunity for all Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils who stay in the North Isles (Unst, Yell and Fetlar).</p> <p>To allow this to happen, we will engage with local community groups, transport operators, organisations, companies and the wider community to raise funds to support this.</p>
<p>Participation How have you involved your target audience in designing the idea / project / service? What other services and organisations have you worked with? How do / did you know what you're doing is what people want?</p>	<p>Pupils and parents are involved in selecting activities and experiences that will be undertaken whilst on the trip. Pupils will research the area we will be based in and highlight possible opportunities.</p> <p>We work with Unst Community Council, North Yell Development Council, Sandisons Trust, Cooke Aquaculture, RG Jamieson & Sons, Parent Councils and Pupil Councils of all schools within the cluster.</p> <p>Feedback from pupils and parents highlighted this is something that had been missing from our curriculum since the COVID pandemic. We successfully ran these trips previously although when we went to resume them we were conscious that certain year groups had been missed and finances would not support a large parental contribution (due to the cost of living crisis). Parents had asked the school to resume these opportunities and to explore what could be offered to the year groups who missed out.</p>
<p>Impact What's the [anticipated] impact, and how have you/will you measure this? How do you know this will help / has helped your target audience?</p>	<p>The impact on the pupils was evident – all pupils were involved the residential trip and those pupils with Additional Support Needs were supported by their school in order to ensure their attendance. We would always aim to take 100% of the pupils in this age range.</p> <p>Feedback from pupils on the trip and on their return highlighted the impact this had. This was noticeable in their confidence and self-esteem as well allowing pupils to achieve personal goals.</p>
<p>Case Study Note a real-life example that shows your project, idea or initiative working,</p>	<p>The North Isles cluster (Burravoe Primary School, Cullivoe Primary School, Mid Yell Junior High School and Baltasound Junior High School) have organised a P6/7 school trip outwith Shetland for many years. This allows our pupils to experience a wide range of activities that would not be available within Shetland and it also allows all of</p>

<p>including quotes, where appropriate</p>	<p>our pupils an opportunity to develop their skills in team working, independence, problem solving and leadership whilst staying away from home.</p> <p>As our schools are remote within Shetland, many of our pupils will be leaving Shetland for the first time and most will be away from their parents for the first time. Observing how pupils interact, communicate, delegate and work together are all life skills that it can be hard to replicate in a classroom environment. These trips also help pupils with their self-esteem and confidence as well as providing an opportunity for cultural awareness and appreciation of the wider, natural world.</p> <p>Parent and Pupils Councils had asked for us to resume these trips and to ensure the year groups who did not go (due to COVID) also had a similar experience. Funding opportunities were explored and the schools approached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooke Aquaculture – a major local employer, who also employ many parents • North Yell Development Council • Unst Community Council • Sandisons Trust • Viking Energy Community Benefit Fund <p>Total costs for all pupils in P6, P7 as well as those in S1 and S2 across the whole North Isles came to approximately £40,000. The majority of this funding was secured although additional fundraising was required which involved the pupils going on the trip to organise Famers Markets, Car Washes and Family Social Nights. Parents did not need to make any payment for their child’s attendance.</p> <p>This allowed us to take P6 and P7 to a residential centre in Loch Insh as well as S1 and S2 to Glasgow. Both trips took place in May and June 2023 and were hugely successful.</p>
<p>Reflections What went well?</p> <p>What might you do differently next time?</p>	<p>Both trips were a huge success and all the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience.</p> <p>On reflection, there were only minor tweaks that would be required for any subsequent trips.</p>

Participatory Budgeting!



What Participatory budgeting is

- Participatory budgeting is a way for people to have a direct say on how public money is spent, but in our school, we used it for Pupil Equity Funding.
- We had £250 each in both p6 classes.
- PB is a powerful tool for involving pupils in the school in making decisions on how we spend some of our Pupil Equity Funding.





Why are we doing Participatory Budgeting?

1. The reason our P.B./Participatory budgeting groups are doing this is so we can improve our reading, learn new words, make a peaceful reading corner and have more ownership.
2. We want to make our class better to brighten it up a little bit more so it would be better for us and more comfortable to read in.



Skills being developed

- When we were doing PB, we developed a lot of skills, These included:
- Co-operation
- Compromising
- Budgeting
- Listening
- Confidence
- Communication
- Leadership





The Process

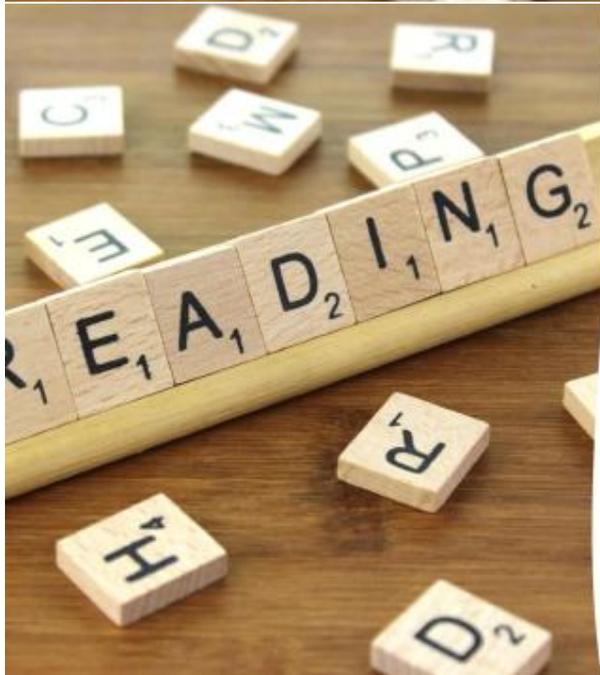
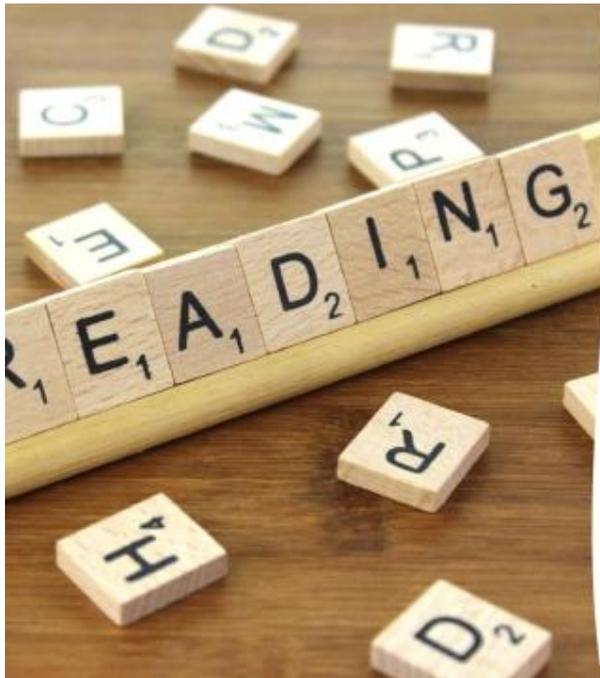
- 1) We were told about Participatory Budgeting
- 2) We got into groups and started planning. We had to consider what we were going to do and how we were going to measure its impact
- 3) During the planning process, some groups created a Microsoft Form to find out what kinds of books our class wanted us to purchase
- 4) After we finished planning, we presented our idea to our classes
- 5) Then we had a class vote to decide which idea we wanted in our classes.
- 6) We made a spreadsheet on Excel and put in the links to what we were buying.
- 7) Now, we are currently waiting for our things to arrive



Skills being developed

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- Co-operation
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- Listening
- Confidence
- Communication
- Leadership





Impact and next steps

- Before we can move onto the next steps, we must measure our reading nooks impact.
- Hopefully if this project has enough impact, it will encourage people to read more.
- The impact should be having a way comfier space to read and relax with a book so people will read more
- Our next steps are to not only encourage our school but other schools to do PB.



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- Our next steps are to not only encourage our school but other schools to do PB.





Goodbye!

See you next time!
Thank you for listening
Questions





**Shetland
Islands
Council**

Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

Stage 1: Screening: Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty, Human Rights and Children's Rights

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) enables you to assess what you're proposing against the following statutory duties on the Council:

- [Equalities](#)
- [Fairer Scotland Duty](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [Children Rights and Wellbeing](#)

The Screening (Stage 1) will determine if your proposal requires a Full Impact Assessment (Stage 2). Stage 2 will enable you to analyse and clarify the details of your proposals, the impact and any mitigations to be in place. The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is a collective term that refers to both Stages.

The term 'policy' is used throughout this assessment and accompanying guidance, and applies to policies, strategies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices, budget savings and activities, including the delivery of services.

Everything we do as a Council has the potential to impact on people. Therefore a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) should not be restricted to a review of formal 'policy' documents or written action plans.

A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) should be undertaken as early as possible as this will inform the development of the policy or service review.

A revised process is being developed to include completed Impact Assessment's (IA) within Committee Reports as an appendix. This is version 1, which is currently being tested.

1.1 Details of Proposal	
Title* Name of piece of work, for example policy, strategy or proposal (including budget proposals)	Shetland's Local Annual Child Poverty Action Report, Year 5: Reporting on 2022/23, Actions for 2023 Onwards
Report No. or other reference, if applicable	TBC
Committee name and date, if applicable	SIC Policy and Resources Committee (4 th December) and SIC Education and Families Committee (20 th November) NHS Shetland Board (12 th September)
Service area (which service area and section this relates to)	Children's Services; Community Planning and Development;
Lead officer (name and job title)	Lesley Simpson, Executive Manager for Inclusion, Children's Services, SIC
Other Officers/Partners involved (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Leanne Gear, Partnership Officer, Community Planning and Development, SIC Lucy Flaws, Planning, Performance and Projects Officer, Public Health, NHS Shetland and Shetland Health and Social Care Partnership Emma Perring, Community Planning Team Leader, Community Planning and Development, SIC
Is this a new or existing policy/ proposal? (include any information on previous relevant work)	The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, requires that Local Authorities and Health Boards jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year. This is Year 5 of these reports, with a new action plan for 2023 onwards.

<p>Brief description of policy / proposal (including purpose, intended outcomes, aims, objectives and/or legislation)</p>	<p>A new approach has been developed by partners, for the planning and implementation of future actions to address Child Poverty across Shetland's communities.</p> <p>Evidence shows that levels of children living in low income families are higher than pre-pandemic levels and Shetland's cost of living is high. Stigma and pride are significant barriers to families accessing support. This has informed partners' priorities, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normalising family support, and ensuring child and family centred approaches, across all of our supports; and - Increasing the income to our families. <p>The Action Plan for 2023 onwards sets out the collaborative strategic actions to be undertaken in Shetland, to (primarily) mitigate the impacts of Child Poverty. These actions are also set out in Shetland's Children's Services Partnership Plan, Priority Area 3 – Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Children and Families.</p> <p>The planning and delivery of actions in order to address structural changes required to reduce Child Poverty, are set out in the Delivery Plan for Shetland's Partnership Plan 2023-2027.</p> <p>This impact assessment screening is for the Action Plan for 2023 Onwards. Some of the actions in the plan will have their own impact assessments.</p>

1.2 Impact Assessment Categories

Inclusive of Equalities, including socio-economic inequalities, Human Rights and Children and Young People's Rights

Please consider the impact this proposal could have on these groups by answering yes or no to the following questions.

Will your proposal have a negative effect on those who fall into the following categories:

Equalities – Protected Characteristics

Age	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender Reassignment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and Civil partnership	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion or Belief	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sex	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Fairer Scotland Duty - Socio-economic Inequalities

Will your proposal have a negative impact on low income households?

Yes please explain:

No

Human Rights of People

Will your proposal have a negative impact on fundamental rights and freedom of people?

Yes please explain:

No

Rights of Children and Young People

Will your proposal have a negative impact on the rights and best interests of children?

Yes please explain:

No

Does this proposal contribute to the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)?

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does this proposal contribute to the Council's Equalities Outcomes 21-25?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> please explain:	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.3 Evidence Base

What evidence sources have you considered when making the above selections?

Internal or existing data Please detail your sources	<p>“Developing A Local Child Poverty Action Report: Guidance” and associated links on Priority Families LCPAR+guidance+refresh+-+c+For+publication.pdf (www.gov.scot)</p> <p>“What we have done” section of the Child Poverty Action Report and associated references; as this has informed the Action Plan 2023. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK</p>
Consultations with officers or partner organisations Please list your sources	Shetland Children's Partnership
Other: Please list your sources	

1.4 Decision Rationale

Please note for any high negative (H) or medium negative (M) impacts identified (red or amber), a Full Impact Assessment (FIA) will be required (Stage 2).

Will a FIA be required for:		
Equalities	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public Sector Duty	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>If you have ticked 'No' to any of the above, use this section to evidence why a FIA is not required:</p> <p>The Annual Child Poverty Action Report does not have any negative impacts on any groups with protected characteristics, nor on the fundamental rights and freedom of humans or on the rights and best interests of children. It has a positive impact on those from low-income households.</p> <p>A number of actions in the plan, ensure that universal provision and normalising seeking help is the best way to reach those needing support, in an inclusive way, therefore we expect these to have a direct positive impact on priority families and protected characteristics.</p>		
1.5 Stage 1: Authorisation and Sign-off		
Signed by Lead Officer	Name: Lesley Simpson Job title: Executive Manager - Inclusion Date: 03.11.2023	
Authorised and approved by Director or Chief Officer	Name: Helen Budge Job title: Director, Children's Services Date: 03.11.2023	

If a Full Impact Assessment (FIA) is not required, this is the end of the process.

Please include a detailed summary of the decision rationale in any Council reports and include a copy of the Stage 1 IA as an Appendix.

Appendix 8 Island Communities Impact Assessment

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS	Responses
<p>Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.</p>	<p>A new approach has been developed by partners, for the planning and implementation of future actions to address Child Poverty across Shetland's communities in the Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR).</p> <p>The "Plans for 2023 Onwards" section in the Child Poverty report sets out the collaborative strategic actions to be undertaken in Shetland, to (primarily) mitigate the impacts of Child Poverty. These actions are also set out in Shetland's Children's Services Partnership Plan, Priority Area 3 – Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Children and Families.</p> <p>The planning and delivery of actions in order to address structural changes required to reduce Child Poverty, are set out in the Delivery Plan for Shetland's Partnership Plan 2023-2027.</p>
STEP 1 - Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Responses
<p>What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?</p>	<p>To reduce child poverty in Shetland.</p> <p>Evidence shows that levels of children living in low income families are higher than pre-pandemic levels and that Shetland's cost of living is high. Stigma and pride are significant barriers to families accessing support. This has informed partners' priorities for 2023 onwards, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normalising family support, and ensuring child and family centred approaches, across all of our supports; and - Increasing the income to our families.
<p>Do you need to consult?</p>	<p>Families remain central to the input and design of activity. We continue to adapt how we deliver supports, by listening to feedback from families. This is in line with guidance: LCPARs should be developed with the involvement of people with direct experience of poverty. Priority family groups have varying experiences of poverty and it is important to consult with multiple priority groups in designing local approaches to tackling poverty.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place with the Shetland Children's Partnership to inform the collaborative strategic actions to be undertaken in Shetland to (primarily) mitigate the impacts of Child Poverty. These actions are also set out in Shetland's Children's Services Partnership Plan, Priority Area 3 – Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Children and Families.</p>
<p>How are islands identified for the purpose</p>	<p>There is no distinction made for islands. The Action Plan will apply regardless of geographic location. However, activities,</p>

of the policy, strategy or service?	such as Anchor for Families, adapt to local circumstances, whether that be specific islands, or communities within our islands.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	<p>-Increased number of families supported by Anchor for Families: this support for families is tailored to the needs of individuals schools and families, so will meet local need, whether on an island or Mainland community.</p> <p>- Test of Change to support financially vulnerable households: eligible families across Shetland will be able to access support</p> <p>-Increased attendance of services at Money Worries Training: island communities will be targeted</p> <p>-Increased Cost of the School Day events/sessions: these are carried out across all schools</p> <p>-Uptake of income maximisation services (SICAB, SIC, Children’s Finance Social Security Scotland, Fuel Bank Vouchers, SIC Finance, Free Period Products, free ELC for eligible two year olds): island communities will be targeted, via Money Worries Training</p> <p>-Uptake of Access to Leisure (SRT, SADA, summer activities) SRT cannot be accessed in all islands, however, provision is in place to enable children to access facilities on the larger islands.</p> <p>-Uptake of CLD Skills Development to complete benefit forms: across Shetland, but targeted at island communities.</p> <p>-Cost of Living Support and communication: universally promoted around Shetland</p> <p>-Closing digital poverty gap as per CLD strategy CLD ICIA here: community-learning-and-development-plan-island-communities-impact-assessment (shetland.gov.uk)</p>
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	<p>The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, requires that Local Authorities and Health Boards jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year.</p> <p>This is Year 5 of these reports, with a new action plan for 2023 onwards.</p>
STEP 2 - Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Responses
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	<p>Shetland Partnership has data for 44 indicators at locality level in Shetland, gathered in 2023. There are seven localities. Two of these localities are island groups: “Yell, Unst and Fetlar” and “Whalsay and Skerries”. There is data for the groups of combined islands 64: average annual income; cost of living; out of work benefits; children living in low income families;</p>

	<p>percentage of pupils claiming free school meals; percentage of pupils claiming clothing grant and; food insecurity.</p> <p>Shetland Partnership's Locality Plan – Shetland's Islands with Small Populations, contains data on Fair Isle, Foula, Papa Stour, Fetlar and Skerries. There is data on: median income; cost of living; population; number of school children; challenges faced; and priorities for the future.</p> <p>There is more data available for the groups of Yell, Unst & Fetlar; and Whalsay & Skerries, than there is for the Islands with Small Populations (IWSP- Fair Isle, Foula, Papa Stour, Fetlar, Skerries) as well as Bressay. More data is needed, however, there are difficulties with this.</p> <p>Approximately 12.3% of children in Shetland reside on islands. The strategy, therefore, would impact approximately 506 children and young people, and 12.3% of children in Shetland.</p>
Do you need to consult?	Not directly for the Report, but involving the views of local people, particularly families, will be ongoing throughout delivery (co-production).
How does any existing data differ between islands?	<p>Some worse economic outcomes appear to be more prevalent in the island localities with the evidence available, but it is acknowledged that the data is not comprehensive across all islands.</p> <p>It is clear, however, that most, if not all islands experience a higher cost of living compared to the Shetland mainland, and significantly higher than the UK mainland. In addition, the island groups of "Yell, Unst & Fetlar", "Whalsay & Skerries" and "IWSP" all collectively have lower median incomes than the rest of Shetland. There is also some evidence that levels of poverty may be higher in Yell, Unst & Fetlar than in many other parts of Shetland when looking at free school meal and clothing grant uptake; however this is not the case when looking at 'percentage of children living in low income families' as they had the lowest levels.</p> <p>Children living in low income families was higher in other localities than the island groups (though some of these incorporate islands); and free school meal and school clothing grant take up was above the Shetland average in areas of Shetland that are not islands as well.</p> <p>Therefore, there does not appear to be a significant difference, other than the cost of living being higher and median incomes being lower, for some islands. Some islands may have higher uptake of free school meals and school clothing grant, but, so do other areas of Shetland; and some islands have lower levels. As a whole child poverty does not appear to be significantly different to other areas and islands in Shetland.</p>
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	Co-production for all objectives and activity. Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan.

STEP 3 - Consultation	Responses
Who do you need to consult with?	Anchor for Families, Money Worries Training, Cost of Living implementers, CAB
How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	Conversations with relevant services.
What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	<p>How does Anchor for Families link up with the islands, if there is a need?</p> <p>Are money worries sessions carried out with professionals in island communities? For example community nurses, GPs, teachers?</p> <p>Are COSD sessions carried out in islands?</p> <p>Are benefit checks/best start grants etc. offered routinely in islands?</p> <p>How does Cost of Living Delivery ensure islands are involved?</p>
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	Issues raised through the Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan include communications between agencies and islands, speed at which services respond to issues and involvement in redesigning services.
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	Yes
STEP 4 - Assessment	Responses
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	No
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	No
How will you address these?	N/A
<p>You must now determine whether in your opinion your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community, which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).</p> <p>If your answer is NO to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and <u>you can proceed to Step SIX.</u></p> <p>If the answer is YES, an ICIA must be prepared and <u>you should proceed to Step FIVE.</u></p> <p>To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:</p>	

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

STEP 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Responses
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In Step Five, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service:	
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Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.	
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Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	
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Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
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Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
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STEP 6 - Making adjustments to your work	Responses
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Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	
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Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	
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Have island circumstances been	57
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factored into the evaluation process?	
Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	
How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	
STEP 7 - Publishing your ICIA	Responses
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	Yes
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	SIC website
Who will sign-off your final ICIA and why?	

ICIA completed by:	Leanne Gear and Emma Perring
Position:	Partnership Officer and Community Planning Team Leader
Signature:	Leanne Gear, Emma Perring
Date complete:	25/10/23

ICIA approved by:	Lesley Simpson
Position:	Executive Manager for Inclusion, Children's Services
Signature:	LA Simpson
Date approved:	03/11/2023