

<b>Meeting:</b>	Shetland NHS Board
<b>Date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
<b>Report Title:</b>	Annual Child Poverty Action Report
<b>Reference Number:</b>	Board Paper 2020/21/54
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**Decisions / Action required:**

- 1.1 That NHS Shetland Board APPROVE Shetland's second Annual Child Poverty Action Report (ACPAR) at Appendix 1, for publication.

**High Level Summary:**

- 2.1 NHS Shetland and Shetland Islands Council have a statutory duty under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, to report annually on activity being undertaken and that it will undertake, to reduce child poverty.
- 2.2 This is Shetland's second ACPAR, for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. These Action Reports are due to be published by 30th June each year. However, due to the pandemic, the Scottish Government have allowed for publication at any time this year.
- 2.3 This year the ACPAR will be available online, and can be readily printed out. There is an aspiration to make it more interactive, in the future.
- 2.4 A separate report will be presented on the Annual Report, 2019/20, of Shetland's Integrated Children and Young People's Services (ICYPS) Plan. There is sharing of data and case studies, across the two reports. The aspiration continues to be towards dovetail reporting of the ACPAR and the ICYPS Report, as time allows.

**Corporate Priorities and Strategic Aims:**

- 3.1 The Council and NHS Shetland have a statutory duty to jointly prepare and publish the ACPAR. To this end, Council officers and NHS Shetland colleagues have been working together, to jointly draft and prepare for the publication of the ACPAR. This Report will also be presented to the Integrated Joint Board for note due to the wide reaching nature of the improvement work involved.

- 3.2 Due to the cross-cutting nature of Child Poverty, many partners have a responsibility for and make a contribution to reducing Child Poverty. This is reflected in the ACPAR. Community planning mechanisms and process are seen as key to working towards the targets set in the national legislation.
- 3.3 The Shetland Children's Partnership (formerly ICYPS Group) has a particular interest in Child Poverty, and can influence work to reduce the negative impacts of child poverty. Delivery of the Money Priority of the Shetland Partnership Plan will make a direct and positive contribution by tackling some of the larger, macro issues contributing to reducing child poverty.

#### **Key Issues:**

- 4.1 Part of the statutory reporting requirements are that the Annual Child Poverty Action Report (ACPAR) 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'.
- 4.2 In addition, this year the Scottish Government asked that the Reports provide information on the challenges and opportunities provided by the pandemic.
- 4.3 Up until this time, levels of child poverty in Shetland were relatively low, although static. It was also known that our high cost of living means that many more of our children and young people may be in financial hardship than is indicated by the national figures. All that data available suggests that levels of poverty and hardship will only increase, as a result of lock down, and the consequences.
- 4.4 The ACPAR is structured as follows:
- Understanding the Issues
  - Increasing Household Income
  - Reducing Cost of Living
  - Building and Nurturing Relationships
  - Building Capacity
  - Impact
  - Strategic Approach
  - Monitoring and Evaluation
- Each sections includes examples of what's been done over the last year, and what's planned in the coming year, with case studies, where appropriate.
- 4.5 The ACPAR illustrates a number of examples of achievements, from individual children living within a household, through to strategic planning across organisations; however there is a lot more to do in order to increase awareness and focus on tackling the drivers of child poverty.
- 4.6 A lot of lessons have been learnt about increasing uptake of Free School Meals, and other benefits, through the Anchor Project's involvement in Sound School. A multi-pronged approach is required, which raises awareness with school staff, as well as parents. The result was a 20-30% increase in uptake of Free School Meals; benefiting the families, but also potentially increasing funding available to the school to raise attainment, through the Pupil Equity Fund. This approach is

now being built on, through the Money Worries training, which focuses on encouraging staff to feel comfortable having conversations about money, with people they support. This is being delivered, online, to front-line staff, by Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau, NHS Shetland and the Anchor Project.

- 4.7 The Council took the decision to make direct payment of Free School Meals to eligible households as soon as the schools shut, before the UK lockdown. Shortly after, the Scottish Government announced funding to support this, which enabled the Council to increase the amount per day per child, in recognition of Shetland's higher cost of living.
- 4.8 Many families have been supported, since lockdown, with emergency food parcels. These may have been through a combination of Third Sector providers, including the Shetland Food Bank, Food for the Way, Transition Turriemfield and Community Anchor Organisations. The concept of a Food Larder, where families can pick up food from the school, is being tested as a way of reaching more families in need. The food is hugely welcomed by the families, however, the long-term aim must be to support families to access and grow their own food (reference DV-20-20-F, Fair Food Policy, recently approved by Council).
- 4.9 The childcare hubs, set up during lock-down, were able to support a number of vulnerable families, needing extra support for their children or needed access to childcare to continue their essential yet low paid jobs. The positive impact of having accessible and affordable (in this case free) childcare has been seen on the children and their parents. The model, established in such a short period of time, was so successful that funding will be sought to set up a pilot project in the North Mainland.
- 4.10 Young people, supported through the OPEN Project have become involved in the work of Shetland's Public Protection Committee, including shaping its vision for public protection in Shetland. This included the young people designing and running a workshop at the Committee's Development Day.
- 4.11 The Voices for Equity Project has concluded. This enabled some parents to have direct conversations with decision-makers about living on a low income and the impacts of this on their children. The experience continues to influence those involved. A recurring theme running through the conversations as the impact of stigma, or perceived stigma, on families. This is preventing those who may need services the most, from accessing them. More activity, with managers, staff and communities, is planned.
- 4.12 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is awarded by Scottish Government directly to schools and is linked to the number of pupils receiving Free School Meals (FSM). Head Teachers and School Leaders draw on their array of collected data and their knowledge of their pupils to utilise this funding to close the poverty related attainment gap. Appendix 5 of the annual report outlines work in Sound Primary School to address some of the barriers to learning experienced by pupils, and how strategies and provision to overcome these, have had a direct impact on the attendance, engagement and attainment of this group of pupils with more wide ranging positive impact identified across the whole school too. Pupil voice in this example is also worthy of note.

<b>Implications</b> : <i>Identify any issues or aspects of the report that have implications under the following headings</i>	
<b>Service Users, Patients and Communities:</b>	Shetland's Annual Child Poverty Action Report provides examples of activity and planned activity which involves individuals, households and communities.
<b>Human Resources and Organisational Development:</b>	There are no specific Human Resources issues to highlight.
<b>Equality, Diversity and Human Rights:</b>	There are no specific issues to highlight.
<b>Partnership Working</b>	The work to decrease child poverty in Shetland relies on strong partnership working, which is described in the report, and is a key strand of the Shetland Partnership Plan.
<b>Legal:</b>	Under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, the NHS Shetland has a statutory duty to report annually on activity being undertaken and will take, to reduce child poverty within the local area. NHS Shetland is required to jointly prepare and publish a report with the Council.
<b>Finance:</b>	The implementation of this Plan will be delivered where possible within existing budgets using existing resources / reprioritising resources. External funding will however be accessed where appropriate and possible to supplement local resources.
<b>Assets and Property:</b>	The Plan does not identify any issues with regard to Assets and Property.
<b>Environmental:</b>	There are no specific environmental implications to highlight.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	There are no specific risks to address.

<b>Policy and Delegated Authority:</b>							
<b>Previously considered by:</b>	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Education and Families Committee</b></td> <td><b>16 November 2020</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Policy and Resources Committee</b></td> <td><b>23 November 2020</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Integration Joint Board</b></td> <td><b>10 December 2020</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Education and Families Committee</b>	<b>16 November 2020</b>	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>23 November 2020</b>	<b>Integration Joint Board</b>	<b>10 December 2020</b>
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<b>"Exempt / private" item</b>	There are no issues concerning exempt or confidential information in this report.
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**Report Finalised:** 06 November 2020

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Shetland's Annual Child Poverty Action Report (ACPAR)

**Background Documents:**

Scottish Government Guidance:

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

*The main report is to be attached together with a list of the appendices and references to any background documents or material e.g. include web links.*

# Shetland's Annual Child Poverty Action Report





## Foreword

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


This year has seen the weaving together of a number of strands through improved partnership working. While there is still a great deal of work to be done, sharing of positive and successful work, and developing the direction of work based on rigorous evaluation, has helped partners across the system to recognise their role and influence in relation to child poverty. Projects such as Voices for Equity, the sharing of experiences from the Anchor project, and involvement of members in workshops around Money Proofing Policies has allowed sharing of data and information, helping people to connect with the challenges we face, and helping to drive a motivation for change to a wider audience.

On the back of these positive pieces of work and local progress, came the global challenge of COVID-19, which has very much been felt locally. With a number of other economic crises coinciding, the Shetland community is facing very difficult times ahead; while there have been positives from the response to the pandemic there are significant concerns about the impact to come over the coming months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed publication of this report, with resources, work and attention diverted to the day-to-day management of caring for the people of Shetland, as the number of families struggling has been thrown into stark light. There has been incredible community and agency effort across Shetland to keep families and children safe through this very difficult time; we must work to find ways to continue this work through an anticipated rise in child poverty through the autumn and winter months.

However we must not lose sight of the need to tackle the underlying causes of poverty; it has been vital to re-engage all areas of work to tackle child poverty. We must continue to look at prevention – tackling causes and institutional issues – looking beyond the essential work of crisis management. Poverty and inequality are not new to us, but have been magnified and highlighted by the pandemic.

While the pandemic came towards the end of this reporting year, it seemed pertinent to include reference to the challenges and opportunities it has. These are referenced throughout. Staff are still dealing with pandemic, often diverting them to other essential work. This uncertainty about delivery will remain, for some time to come. However, we will continue to set our sights on robust improvement across the system.



Gary Robison, Chair, NHS Shetland



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



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## APPROACH

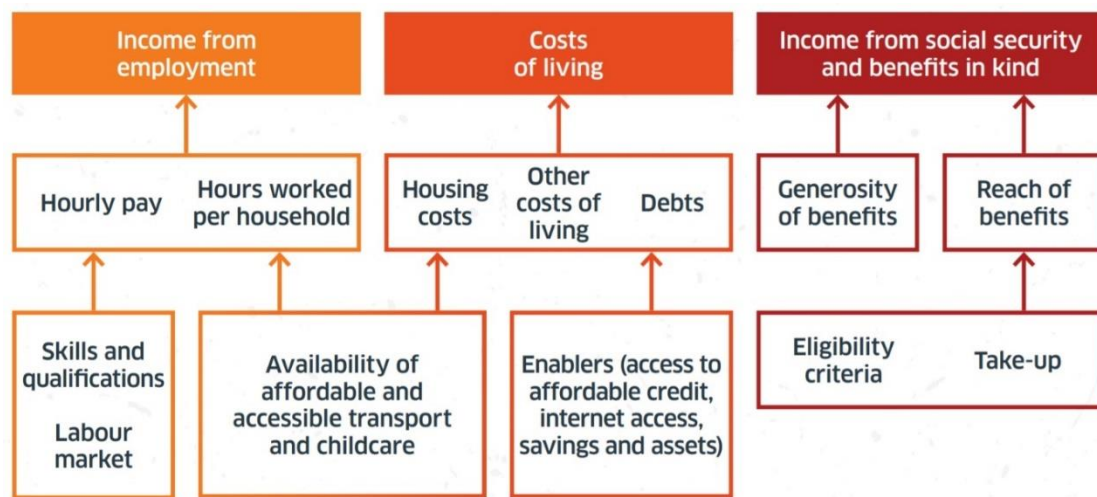
In Shetland, we recognise that there are many ways to reduce child poverty within our community.

What is important is that:

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

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

### DRIVERS OF CHILD POVERTY



### REPORTING AND PLANS

The action and impact from 2019/20, and our plans for 2020/21 are set out under the following headings, making reference to the impact of COVID-19, where relevant:

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

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

## UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

Last year, as part of the Shetland Partnership, we continued to improve our understanding of inequalities in Shetland, particularly in the context of our high cost economy. Using funding from the Northern Alliance, we commissioned research in order to understand whether these higher costs lead directly to worse outcomes for families in Shetland compared to families on the same income, elsewhere. Publication has been held up, due to the pandemic.

The Voices for Equity Project concluded. The aim was to reduce inequalities in Shetland through participation. This project developed and tested a new methodology for participation, bringing together civic and community participants to share their experiences of inequalities in Shetland. It acknowledged the need to learn directly from those who are experiencing disparities and disadvantaged outcomes in order to tackle inequalities.

#### VOICES FOR EQUITY AND VOICES FOR CHANGE: HOW BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS COMMUNITIES EXPANDS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD POVERTY

The Voices for Equity project matched 30 community and civic participants in 15 different learning relationships, to share experiences and perspectives on poverty and inequality. From their learning partner, civic participants learnt how life is when you need to start planning for Christmas in January, how it feels to go to the foodbank for help to feed your children and how stressful it is to constantly look for ways to reduce your expenses. They learnt how living in poverty affected their learning partners' aspirations and choices in life and how they felt this had a direct impact on their children. For example, the mismatch between advice on how to give your children a healthy lifestyle, and the means and opportunities you have to follow these guidelines when on a low income, and how this affects you as a parent, was an issue raised by many. How parents and families experienced geographical barriers, and how the stigma of living in poverty affects people, was another important perspective raised by participants.

The free set-up gave participants the time and freedom they needed to develop close and trusting relationships with their learning partners, and it allowed participants to speak about things important to them. This meant that conversations were led by the community participants, giving them the opportunity to discuss matters that were relevant to them.

The project was closely monitored and evaluated. Evidence shows that participants increased their knowledge and understanding of inequalities: civic participants who have lived in Shetland for many years said they gained new knowledge and insight into how it is to live in Shetland on a low income.

It is difficult to establish a direct causal link between discussions and specific actions, particularly as a change in actions can take time. However, civic participants all reported using their newfound insight and knowledge in their workplace and amongst other departments and policy influencers. The Voices for Equity method produced new types of evidence by involving people personally through new relationships across communities in Shetland. The outcome is for the increased knowledge and understanding gained through the relationships and conversations to lead to a change in approach, service delivery and priorities.

*"When you are working with and for and in a community you need to fully understand the context of the many lives that make it up. By understanding and witnessing different points of view you build insight and understanding and are able to do a better job."*

- Civic participant, Voices for Equity

The Voices for Change project will use the same methodology. It draws on the strong positive feedback from the Voices for Equity project, aiming to facilitate participation and explore how it can inform and shape renewal and development for Shetland in the wake of COVID-19. To ensure that the focus stays on the future of Shetland, the project will prioritise bringing forward young peoples' voices and perspectives on matters important to them.

Shetland Partnership, 2020

#### SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION DURING COVID-19

Our good relationships, across partners and communities, led to excellent sharing of intelligence about the situation facing families and communities during the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020: from the start, a week earlier than the rest of Scotland, and throughout the full lockdown. In particular, relationships have built up between staff living and working within communities and the Community Anchor Organisations (CAOs) who are delivering support direct to families. This sharing of information is ongoing, as we plan for future changes, such as the re-opening of schools, and economic changes, so that we can react quickly to need, as required.

Community Resilience Forum, 2020

#### WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

We will share, understand and use the research, when available.

In addition to running the Voices for Change Project, we will support people living in Shetland to be involved in the Scottish Government's new Social Renewal Advisory Panel.

## INCREASING HOUSEHOLD INCOME

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

We had intended to scope out a brief to develop a technological solution to ensure low income families were able to access the right information at the right time, in order to increase their household income, through access to benefits, for example. However, when we asked families, this wasn't their preference, and the activity of the Anchor Project demonstrated the need for face-to-face contact, in order to build up trusting relationships, and to encourage and support families to apply for benefits. Therefore, our approach developed to be one about building in conversations about money and finance, as part of the role of key workers.

### UPTAKE OF BENEFITS, INCLUDING FREE SCHOOL MEALS, WITHIN A SCHOOL CONTEXT

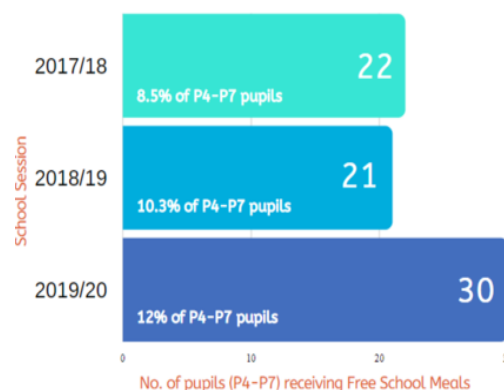
The ethos of the Anchor Project is to help any family that may be struggling, with factors in everyday life to find the appropriate support and be a listening ear to which the family has no obligation. Sound Primary School was our pilot school. After a few weeks of promoting Anchor within the school, we realised that many families were asking for advice and help with benefits. Free School Meals (FSM) seemed like a natural place to start, as we knew that there were families in the school community who were entitled to FSM but had never applied. We were also aware that FSM uptake had a direct influence on the amount of money a school received in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), which in turn was spent on narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap for pupils in the school. At Sound Primary, they have used their PEF funding to pay for a Learning Support Worker who runs the early morning breakfast club.

To promote FSM, we used the school's Facebook page; we spoke to teachers and support staff as well as parents to raise awareness and debunk myths. We arranged for Citizen Advice Bureau advisers to come in to the school to meet with parents. We spoke to the team at Hayfield that administers FSM and asked how we could make FSM more accessible to families who need it – could we make correspondence clearer and less stuffy, for example? Could we include more info on the FSM letters around other benefits? E.g. Best Start Grants and Warm Home Discount. The team were keen to try something different and agreed to change the letters.

This year, there has been a notable increase of FSM uptake at Sound Primary. Ann-Marie Angus, Head Teacher feels that Anchor has played a big part in this.

To date, Anchor has worked with seven families at Sound Primary and of those:

- 4 have claimed FSM
- 3 families have been supported with food parcels
- 2 families have had support to sign on for Universal Credit
- 1 family has had support reinstating their Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- 1 family has been eligible to claim Best Start Grants
- Several families and teachers wanted advice on where to access these grants and links were sent to them via email/Facebook.



Families say there is a stigma attached in claiming FSM and the process of applying can be clunky.

"School staff are not sure where to find appropriate support and we don't have time to invest in finding out more for families. If Anchor had not existed we would have less FSM uptake and have less PEF money to spend on narrowing the attainment gap" **Sound School Teacher**

"We were looking for somebody to plug a gap, before what were our options? – duty social work, mental health, and outreach for behaviour - Anchor has been empowering for school community."

**Sound School Teacher**

"I wouldn't have bothered with Universal Credit, it's overwhelming claiming benefits. [Anchor] helped with FSM, clothing grants, electricity and talked about places I could go to speak to people." **Anchor Parent**

**Anchor Parent**

[How has Anchor helped parents?] "Someone that will stick up for them and fight for them. Like when I came to you about the FSM you spoke to the SIC on behalf of me, something I couldn't have done myself." **Anchor Parent**

In the months ahead, Anchor hopes to expand this work into all schools, Shetland-wide promoting FSM, Best Start Grants and other benefits, continuing to support families across the Isles.

*Anchor Project, 2020*

We have continued to build up understanding of roles and responsibilities, within the system, and develop relationships across services: for example, there are now active referrals between the Business Gateway, Employability Pathway and Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau.

Shetland Island Council Youth and Employability team are tackling poverty and supporting working and unemployed parents into employment. The Scottish Government has provided funding which enable intensive employability support for parents both in and out of work. The funding will support.

- Lone parent
- Disabled parent / parent with disabled children
- Parent with 3 or more children
- Parent from an ethnic minority
- Parent with youngest child under 1 years old
- Parent aged under 25.

Support given to parents:

- identify and work towards an employment goal
- learn new skills to enhance your employment prospects
- understand how to maximise your income and your benefits
- search for jobs and prepare for interviews
- link with employers looking for your skills and experience
- increase your income from employment.

Building skills, resilience and experience in parents, and other young people, can help to break the cycle of poverty, increasing confidence and self-efficacy within individuals and families.

## Case Study



### Support from Youth and Employability Services regarding securing household income

A 16 year old male with barriers to participation in education and employment including low confidence and self-esteem, diagnosis of global developmental delay and dyspraxia, and difficulties with literacy and numeracy, was referred to the Bridges Project by his school in 2018, having received support from the school youth worker as part of Club Achieve.

The Bridges Project supported him to undertake a work placement through Developing the Young Workforce and COPE Ltd. He undertook this while being a full time student with the Bridges Project where he attended various classes designed to build his confidence, group work skills, and ability to ask for support. He had the opportunity to gain experience and new skills through volunteering locally, attending a creative make-up class, and completing certificates as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme.

He worked with a maths tutor who supported him to build skills and confidence around managing money, which helped him be more independent in his day-to-day life.

A further year of work with the Bridges Project focussed mainly on his work experience placement based at Royal Mail. Following his two years with the Bridges Project, he was referred to the Employability Pathway where he will continue to focus on his work placement, furthering his work related training, and seeking paid employment.

This ability of services to manage transition between projects, maintaining support, with a clear process identifying barriers, setting goals and gaining feedback on progress allows service users to feel supported as they build skills and independence, with a clear progression towards their desired outcome and secure household income. Work placements have the further benefit of improving local workplaces as positive employers, giving them opportunities to build their skills as teams and employers, making the most of the valuable potential workforce within our community.

Youth and Employability Service, 2020

Although the lockdown meant opportunities to develop a face-to-face approach to supporting families to access benefits was reduced, we were able to embed the concept of developing trusting relationships into the Coronavirus Support Hub, set up and run by the Council in order to support Shielded and other Vulnerable Groups. Although the primary aim of the Hub was to support households with food and prescriptions, it was used locally to ask broader questions around finances and wellbeing. Referrals were made to the local CAB, and other support services, for families who otherwise might have remained under the radar.

### CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT HUB



The Shetland Coronavirus Support Hub (SCSH) was set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially designed to provide support to people who were shielding, the scope quickly expanded to include helping anyone who was vulnerable or facing hardship as a result of the virus and associated lockdown. The SCSH was based on a freephone helpline and provided support in the following areas:

- Food (access and cost)
- Medicines
- Essential items (access and cost)
- Financial hardship
- Emergency Care

- Lockdown advice and reassurance.

The SCSH was delivered by SIC with support from a range of public, third and private sector partners.

Approaches to call-handling and solutions to issues were constantly tweaked to reflect feedback from callers and colleagues. For example, shielding households with particular dietary needs had their food parcels adjusted to reflect this thanks to close partnership working and communication with Shetland Freezer Foods.

Shielding households also received follow-up phonecalls and some were visited by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service officers to check they were managing ok and getting everything they needed.

As of the end of July 2020, there had been over 350 calls in to the SCSH. More than 100 households were registered for food parcels or received help with accessing supermarket delivery slots. There were 18 referrals to Shetland Citizens Advice Bureau. Many of these households included children.

The SCSH continues to operate, even beyond shielding being paused. It is anticipated that a lot of the learning from the SCSH will be helpful for the development of Community Led Support in Shetland.

Care for People Team, Shetland's Emergency Planning Response, 2020

## Case Study



### Support from CAB regarding family increasing household income

Client is a single parent of 2 children. Her youngest child has health problems and disabilities.

This child had previously been awarded the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), but following a review, this had been reduced to standard rate by the DWP. The client felt that her child's difficulties with mobility had increased rather than decreased. She did not feel this was a correct decision. As well as the financial loss to the family, the decision meant that she had to give back their Motability car.

The Benefits Adviser gathered information from the client and submitted a 'mandatory reconsideration' to the DWP. This was unsuccessful, so the Benefits Adviser completed a full appeal of the award, culminating in a Benefits Tribunal. Following this tribunal, the DWP decision was over-turned and enhanced rate mobility component was reinstated for the child.

The family received a backdated payment of £1,082.20 and the child's weekly DLA mobility component payment has more than doubled from £23.60 to £62.25.

The client was also able to get the car back from the Motability scheme. This has had a huge positive impact on their family life, as without the car, they were quite socially isolated and the client had started to become depressed.

Shetland Islands Citizens' Advice Bureau, 2020



## WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

We will join up access to benefits available through the Council to make it easier for families and to increase the uptake of Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants.

We continue to plan and adjust, to provide support to families, at this time. With the expectation of further increases in unemployment through the winter October, our intentions are to:

- Distribute a leaflet to all households, in the autumn, sharing information on access to food, support to access benefits, and employment.
- Deliver training to various frontline NHS staff to allow them to support their patients to access CAB services, where they may be helpful, in order to develop a workforce who are confident to facilitate more vulnerable patients to access services. A development within the NHS remote appointment service (Near Me) will mean CAB will soon have access to this system, creating a consistent, less daunting, approach for those citizens who are new to technology.
- Employability Services, with COVID-19: making the most of the commitment by the Scottish Government to investing £100 million for employability support, this financial year. The focus of the investment is on the Youth Guarantee. This funding will support employability pathway provision, employer recruitment incentives, job creation programmes and local training initiatives.

The restrictions on face-to-face meeting, and the advancement in mobile technology through the pandemic means we are considering returning to the original intention of developing a technological solution to enable low income families to access the right support at the right time.

## REDUCING COST OF LIVING

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

The Shetland Partnership hosted a Money Proofing Event, bringing together policy influencers from across the Shetland Partnership Network. The purpose was to develop understanding of Money Proofing – assessing an organisation's policies and service delivery to determine any changes that can be made in order to reduce inequalities in Shetland. This could range from charging policies to land use planning. The event led to at least two organisations committing to potentially extensive change in policy, both relating to a review of their charging policy to access their provision. One is currently on hold due to COVID-19, whilst the other has been delayed but is now progressing.

In addition to these impacts, the pandemic has led to increased costs for essential items. At the moment, much of the evidence of increased food and household energy costs is anecdotal. These will be closely monitored in the months ahead, as the transition period for the UK leaving the EU ends. In a community which already experiences higher than average costs for essential items, the impacts will be keenly felt.

#### FREE SCHOOL MEALS : UPLIFT WITH COVID-19



At the initial stage of lockdown, with school closures, we recognised an immediate need to support families who would normally receive free school meals to be able to safely support their families at home. In recognition of Shetland's increased living costs, the Council decided to add an uplift, using the Scottish Government Food Fund. All families with school children normally in receipt of Free School Meals and/or Clothing Grants received a direct payment of £3 per child per day.

The decision to issue payments instead of food was because of the impossible logistics of providing food safely across the Isles, whilst also acting on a previous test of change<sup>1</sup> that found direct payments to families offers more choice, dignity and cost-effectiveness when planning meals at home. These payments were continued throughout lockdown school holidays.

The system remained responsive to need, by gathering feedback from catering teams, teachers and the Anchor project and families. This feedback has shown a lot of previous un-met need, from families who were unwilling to access foodbank services. This highlights the need for other, less stigmatised options for accessing food. This has led to the development of the Food Larders, utilising FairShare Food stocks.

Food bags are made up using FairShare food. These are available to pick up from a school or nursery site. The intention is that this is for the whole community, not specifically families, but is more accessible and visible to families as it's available in a familiar environment. No referral or assessment of need is required – food is accessed through school or support staff. The Community Justice Team are now helping with support packing and delivery.

The project will continue to collect feedback from families, staff and helpers, to inform its development. Key to the model is enabling conversations with families, about how they're getting on, and ensuring they're able to access any additional support they may need.

Care for People Team, Shetland's Emergency Planning Response, 2020

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 4 for holiday provision pilot project as background

## ACCESS TO ASN HUB AND CHILDCARE PROVISION FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN DURING LOCKDOWN

It was clear early in lockdown from good communication between services, that some vulnerable families needed extra support for their children, or they needed to access free childcare, to continue to work in essential yet low paid jobs while schools and nurseries were closed. School transport contracts were re-purposed to allow free transport for vulnerable children, to access the ASN and childcare hubs, where the children were able to enjoy many learning and social activities and receive a free hot meal.



Families who used this service could choose the times and days of the week they preferred, or needed support, allowing them to access work or to help provide some routine in their lives during this time. Children using the service were consulted about the type of activities they would like to have available and had input into the menus served.

A survey was carried out to gather views of parents and children using the service. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. One parent said, "Without this, I would not have been able to work at all through the pandemic. It has been a complete saviour to me and most definitely my children. Child A had not attended childcare before and since attending has come on leaps and bounds with his speech and social skills. Routine has been incredibly important to us and with being able to maintain some form of normality has been amazing!"

Without the free provision, many parents in low paid jobs would not have been able to continue to work. By providing day care for children of all ages during this time, and the transport to help parents access this outwith their own immediate community, parents were able to continue providing for their families. Learning from this model can be used to inform planning for after school care in some of the more remote geographical areas of Shetland where the present model of out of school care is not sustainable. This will allow parents access to further employment opportunities.

As a result, funding is to be sought to set up a pilot project in the North Mainland which would link into other initiatives planned to help tackle inequalities through poverty.

ASN Hubs and Critical Childcare Provision, 2020

## Case Study

### Illustrating the impact of the Debt Service on improving health, and reducing Child Poverty



Client is a single parent of two teenagers and lives in Council rented property. She first came to the Bureau three years ago with multiple debts, but due to her poor mental health didn't feel able to engage at the time. During these 3 years, she had been in touch periodically with CAB but it wasn't until 2019, when things had escalated to court papers being received, that the client felt she had to deal with her money problems.

When the client returned to the Bureau, she explained that she had reduced her working hours from full-time to part-time but even this had been too much for her and she was now off sick. She had resorted to taking out payday loans to make ends meet.

The Money Adviser checked the client's benefit entitlement, and helped her to complete a financial statement giving details of her income and expenditure.

The Money Adviser worked slowly and carefully with the client, helping her to find details of all the debts she had. This involved working through credit reports and creditor letters that the client hadn't felt able to open. The client was shocked to find out that she owed just shy of £40,000 to over 20 creditors. Once all

the information was gathered, the Money Adviser went through the options available. The client decided that bankruptcy was the only real option at the time; it would give her the fresh start that she needed, despite the consequences of being bankrupt.

The Money Adviser helped the client through the bankruptcy application process and assisted her to provide the supporting evidence required. The client was awarded bankruptcy and all her debts were written off.

The client's mental health has improved considerably and she is back at work. She is feeling much more in control and managing her money well.

Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau, 2020

#### WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

The Money Proofing Event resulted in ZetTrans agreeing to review the fare structure of public transport within Shetland, in order to ensure it supports the need to reduce inequalities in Shetland. External funding has been secured, and the brief is being finalised. This project will need to take account of the different needs and behaviours resulting from the pandemic. ZetTrans is also at the early stages of exploring the concept of Transport Hubs, making available different forms of sustainable transport to householders in order to improve access to opportunities and reduce household costs.

Affordable Credit is an option for households who are struggling to afford certain items, and for whom other support, such as the Scottish Welfare Fund and SSE White Goods Scheme, has been exhausted. At the moment, there is no locally known mechanism for households to do this, in order to provide an alternative option to them, other than payday loans. We are beginning to explore options to achieve this, with the Carnegie Trust.

#### FAIR FOOD

Shetland's Fair Food Policy sets out how Shetland will move to become a food equitable community. There are three key strands: delivery, including transfer of skills to grow and cook; access to land; and embedding the outcomes in all policy.



Families living on a low income have been involved in developing the delivery phase, as we wanted to be sure that the project was designed in such a way as to ensure low income households could get involved in growing their own food.

Progress was put on hold, due to COVID-19. However, the pandemic lockdown also led to positives – more households started growing food for the first time, and there's an appetite, amongst community groups, to stimulate more growing, within their communities. During lock-down, one Community Anchor Organisation decided to distribute three packets of easy to grow seeds, along with a voucher for pots and compost available through local shops, to all households. Feedback indicates that these packs were a real boost, and used by many. A local plant swap also started, through local shops.

The policy will ensure that households with children living in poverty, are able to benefit. Delivery will commence in the winter, in preparation for the outdoor growing season of 2021.

Shetland Partnership Plan, 2020

## BUILDING AND NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

Building and nurturing relationships between staff and families is essential. However, we're also learning about the importance of building and nurturing relationships between staff, across services and agencies.

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

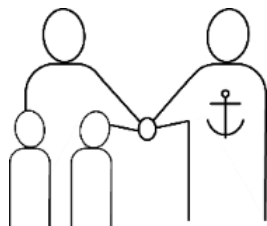
The Anchor project continues: the Year One Evaluation Report has been published, providing detailed information on impact, and clarifying the approach to supporting families who are struggling (see below). In addition to supporting families, the project has invested in the Project Board, and their leadership role in translating the learning from Anchor into system change towards a more family-led approach across Shetland.

The Project Board established a clear vision to have in place strong working relationships: respect each other; trust each other; learn from each other; value each other equally, recognising everyone has something to bring to the project; openness and honesty.

The successful development of the Project Board in the first phase of Anchor implementation has undoubtedly helped the project to thrive and to make progress against its objectives. Furthermore, it has strengthened the relationship between the partners in support of progress in other strategic areas.

Observed benefits of the working relationship within the Project Board include:

- Board members are more willing to share information with partners when they are experiencing difficulties;
- The relationship built between Board Members is acting as a stimulus for conversations on other substantive strategic issues;
- Space has been created to think and improve understanding across the Board;
- Helped develop the new Shetland Children's Partnership (formerly the Shetland Integrated Children and Young People's Services Forum and Planning Group); and
- One comment made by a Board member was "I'm really optimistic about the whole partnership (Anchor team and Project Board): relationships, enthusiasm, and optimism from key people."



## ANCHOR: EXTRACT FROM YEAR ONE EVALUATION REPORT

The aim of Anchor is to facilitate learning and action that demonstrates the value of family-led problem solving and early intervention. The expectation is the learning will lead to system change that puts families at the centre of decision-making, and directs resources towards early action, rather than crisis management.

In its first year, Anchor has established effective processes and practices for working with families. The 'Anchor approach' has been thoroughly welcomed by families and the schools involved. The approach adopted by Anchor has generated positive outcomes and impacts for the supported families. The number of families supported has been relatively small, eight in total, but each engagement has generated a wealth of information that can support Anchor to achieve its overall goal of system change.

A common feature observed by the Anchor officers is that when an individual engages with Anchor they feel that their situation is out of control and/or overwhelming. Stress, worry, lack of trust, family conflict and financial difficulties are commonly reported characteristics encountered by the Anchor officers.

Anchor has implemented effective monitoring practices that operate alongside its family support that helps it to understand the difference the support has made. After working with Anchor, the supported individual reports and displays improved confidence as well as a new perspective on their challenges. Importantly, Anchor supported the individual on a journey from feeling overwhelmed to a position of understanding and learning and finally to a position where they take action.

The impact of the action taken by supported individuals includes new or improved relationships with support services, reduction in stress and mental health issues, improved family relationships and wellbeing, and improved financial stability.

Supported individuals were asked to what extent they might have achieved the positive benefit from the engagement with Anchor in a different way. The findings suggest that for all six families the benefits experienced through engaging with Anchor are extremely unlikely to have occurred without Anchor.

Although only in its first year of direct delivery, Anchor has also made progress in influencing system change. Observed impacts include stakeholder organisations prioritising the development of softer skills in order to better support families, stakeholder organisations displaying a willingness to move towards more family-led approaches, and shifts in attitude towards more open partnership working.

In summary, the critical features of Anchor that support success with families are:

- The skills and experience of the Project Officers, including their listening, enquiry and conversational skills, and their knowledge of the support system that enables them to guide families towards appropriate services.
- Placing the supported individuals at the centre of the problem-solving process. This is the core ethos of Anchor. This helps to build the individual's confidence, as they receive reassurance that their issues are important, and helps them to gain a new perspective and a sense of control over the issue.
- The individual is supported along a pathway that begins with the development of a trusted relationship and moves on to disentangling the issues, awareness raising, identifying potential action and finally taking action intended to improve conditions for them and their family.
- Individuals commonly reported that the characteristics of Anchor that supported success are: the project officers are approachable, supportive i.e. 'on my side', independent and non-judgmental. The lack of a time-constraint is also viewed very positively.

For a more detailed summary, and the full Year One Evaluation Report:

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

Anchor Project Board, 2020

## MONEY WORRIES : REMOTE DELIVERY



In recognition of the lack of knowledge and confidence in discussing money worries, and the stigma attached to these conversations, NHS Health Improvement, Shetland Islands CAB and the ANCHOR project have designed a short training workshop intended to introduce professionals to CAB services, highlight the wider effects of being in financial difficulty for individuals and families, and explore their role in having these conversations and facilitating access to support services.

Attendance at the training is largely based on geographic locality of work, so that staff can build a network of like minded workers, and create stronger links between valuable services. The aim is for the workforce to have increased knowledge and confidence in discussing money worries with others, and consequently increasing the number of referrals to CAB services, through a non-stigmatising introduction to services by a trusted contact or professional.

This training has been designed following feedback from individuals and families involved in the ANCHOR Project: welcoming open discussions about money to introduce them to what is available. It also builds on previous work by maternity services around the positive attitudes of patients to being asked about money contradicted by the belief of health professionals that these discussions would be intrusive. The wider aim is that making discussions about money more commonplace will contribute to a culture of decreased stigma around seeking support, and a normalisation of discussing finances and concerns at the earliest opportunity.

We are gathering feedback on sessions as we progress, and reviewing referrals to CAB from participating services.

These small group workshop sessions will continue into next year. NHS Health Improvement will develop this strand by working with service leads and managers to incorporate these discussions as a routine part of encounters for their frontline staff, so we can be confident staff who have attended the training feel able and supported to use their new skills within their usual role. This part of the project will make use of an Inequalities Self-Assessment tool, to encourage services to reflect on their sensitivity to inequalities, and identify areas for improvement based on this.

**“It was an excellent opportunity to build new professional relationships with different individuals. I really think it would be massively beneficial to hold these types of workshops in all areas of Shetland so everyone is aware of the services”**

Money Priority, Shetland Partnership Plan, 2020

### SHETLAND BEFRIENDING SCHEME : CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Shetland Befriending Scheme Children and Young People Project provides one-to-one support to vulnerable young people aged between 7 and 15 years who have been referred to the scheme by a key agency who is involved in the young person's life, e.g. teacher, social worker, health professional. Referral to the scheme is made in discussion with the young person and their family, and support is initially offered over a 6-month period with meetings between a young person and volunteer occurring weekly or fortnightly for a few hours at a time. This 6-month period can be extended depending on need of the young person, and capacity of the volunteer.

Service users are encouraged and supported to engage in their own community and have equal access to what they want to get involved in, such that they will feel included, integrated and part of their own community. The service is provided free of charge, and cost of activities is covered by the Befriending Scheme. Service users work with their volunteer to build on their personal skills to be able to sustain this engagement themselves once a match comes to an end. Through contact with parents/carers and referring services, families can be signposted and facilitated to access other support services where needed.

Goals are set by the young person at the beginning of their match, and feedback is collected throughout the match to ascertain whether they are progressing towards their goal, and getting what they need from the programme. As well as reflective feedback from the young person, feedback is collected from the volunteer, parents or carers, and the referrer. Each match and set of meetings is person-centred, based on the needs and choices of the young person, feedback is used to develop this, and is also used to contribute to service improvement for future participants.

The Children and Young People's service supported 15 matches in 2019/20 – five matches went on pause due to COVID-19 before they had reached their formal 6-month review, the following data refers to the other 10 matches:



**100%** of young people felt they had increased self-esteem, confidence and feelings of achievement



**100%** of young people felt they had increased access to a range of new and different activities



**80%** of young people felt they were developing positive relationships with others



**70%** of young people felt they were developing and learning new skills and felt they were encouraged to have positive aspirations for their future

The Children and Young People's scheme will continue to offer this service to people throughout Shetland, experience over the course of COVID-19 will inform service changes and improvements in the coming year.

Voluntary Action Shetland, 2020



## WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

Anchor worked with a small number of families over 12 months. This engagement evidenced that, through providing families with one-to-one consistent support with no limit on frequency or duration of visits, that families felt supported and empowered to implement changes in their lives. The schools attached to this project also felt staff had somewhere to turn when issues exceeded what they could offer; working in partnership to share relevant information and encourage families to engage without fear of judgement.



This has now developed further with the implementation of the Early Help Team: staff from existing services will be utilised to provide this same support on a much wider scale, across all Shetland schools. This small staffing team will work in the same manner and link in directly with specific schools, allowing for a strong connection between the services. Schools will make referrals direct to the Early Help Team; the reasons for the referrals can cover any issue that is causing the family concern.

Given the added uncertainty of the full impact of COVID-19, the team will be ensuring families have access to appropriate benefits, food banks and any additional supports needed given a change in their circumstances. Some families may face unemployment for the first time or have extended family members become more dependent on them for fear of contracting the virus. Parents and children may be experiencing anxiety over the uncertainty and need some extra support, a supportive listening ear and helping them put their concerns into perspective whilst limiting the impact on the entire family.

The Early Help Team will be flexible in their approach as we fully discover what issues families are facing after six months of being home full-time. The ongoing assessment of the needs of families will assist us to shape service delivery over the months to come.

The Money Worries workshop project will add a further dimension to this. By upskilling existing staff, we will continue to influence culture around discussing poverty, and empower families, where possible, to access the support they need themselves following routine conversations with universal services. By raising the issue and signposting support at an earlier stage we hope to prevent the need to access specialist or support services, and prevent families reaching a crisis point; maintaining their independence and building their self-efficacy. Resources and evidence from national Cost of the School Day work will be used to make information relevant and accessible in an education setting, supporting staff to explore how their current role and practice can be influential in tackling child poverty.

## BUILDING CAPACITY

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

There are numerous examples of how the capacity of children, their families, and communities, has been built, in order to tackle problems, such as child poverty. A few examples are shared here.

#### PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SHETLAND'S PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Shetland's Public Protection Committee has an ambition to include children, young people and adults in the work of the committee and in shaping its vision for public protection in Shetland. Excellent work in this area is being undertaken by the OPEN Project, the Who Cares Advocacy Worker and Shetland Youth Work Services Young Ambassadors. This enabled links with a group of young people to be made, which culminated in them running the morning session at the Shetland Public Protection Development Day on 2 March 2020, which was very well received by all participants. The work was undertaken in line with the Youth Participation Pathway, which was adopted last year.

The day opened with an interactive session organised by a group of young people consisting of volunteers from the OPEN Project, in partnership with Who Cares? Shetland and the #shetlandcrew, and Shetland Islands Council Youth Services Young Ambassadors. The Young People's Participation Group (YPPG) created workshops based on their learning from the two participation planning workshops, using the themes 'Safe' and 'Participation'. The workshops were run by the group of 12 young people who attended.

As an example, one workshop asked adult groups and young people groups the following question:

#### 'What are the 3 biggest challenges in keeping children and young people safe in Shetland?'

It is interesting to see the very different answers provided by the adult groups and the young people groups – below are the top three priorities for each of the groups.

Adult Groups	Young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Drugs and Alcohol misuse in parents and children and young people</li> <li>○ Social media, internet use and potential exploitation</li> <li>○ Poverty, deprivation and isolation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No place for young people to hang out</li> <li>○ Not enough love and care, supporting life skills and structuring your day</li> <li>○ The meeting of criteria to fit into services – the group did not know the SPPC existed – need to raise awareness of the services</li> </ul>

Shetland's Integrated Children's Services Plan / OPEN Project, Voluntary Action Shetland, 2020

#### COMMUNITY ANCHOR ORGANISATIONS

Volunteers throughout Shetland had already mobilised to support their communities when the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government announced on 18<sup>th</sup> March an investment of £350 million to support local communities and households through the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure resources reached the places and people where it was most needed, an initial Supporting Communities Fund of £10 million was earmarked for key community anchor organisations that would have the ability to deliver and distribute support at grass-roots level throughout Scotland.

Using local intelligence to shape the support packages and funding approvals was vital in order to help ensure people at risk were supported, recognising that different communities presented varying

challenges due to their location and demographics. In Shetland, a small team of cross agency officers from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Shetland Islands Council (SIC) and Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) identified and approached potential Community Anchor Organisations (CAOs) throughout Shetland to discuss the fund and areas for support. A network of 21 CAOs was subsequently established including community development companies, development trusts and community councils. Funding, administered by HIE, enabled CAOs to deliver initial responses, in their communities, to the COVID-19 emergency.

The activities delivered by the CAOs have been wide ranging but in the context of supporting families living in poverty, activities have included putting in place targeted short-term emergency support schemes and the targeted provision of digital and non-digital solutions to support the wellbeing of young people. CAOs have been able to collaborate and issue support to community organisations – such as the Shetland Foodbank, Mind Your Head and Women's Aid – to support them with additional Shetland-wide demand as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as put in place tailored solutions and support packages for their own communities.

Working in partnership with many of Shetland's rural shops (and with local schools to help identify those in need), many CAOs have established targeted short-term food support schemes, thus facilitating the ability of families in need to buy locally when they've been unable to access more affordable supermarkets in Lerwick. In many areas, CAOs have provided targeted help for families facing increased electricity costs. One CAO supported the additional costs of travel experienced by low paid key workers during the pandemic.

As Shetland communities emerge out of the initial phase, and with lockdown measures easing, it will be imperative that the agencies gather learning from the CAOs and understand the impacts of this emergency community funding to:

- a) better plan for any future potential lockdowns; and
- b) better understand where ongoing support is possibly required, including for families living in poverty and ensuring they are able to access the income maximisation support they are entitled to.

CAOs throughout Shetland have risen to the challenge in supporting their communities and have played a vital role in the distribution of emergency funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is a sense of nervousness that the economic consequences of the pandemic are yet to hit and as a result, there could be more families in Shetland about to face significantly changed and challenging financial circumstances. Gathering and feeding this intelligence to the Scottish Government is vital and agencies, working with CAO contacts, will work together to plan any future activity and possible support mechanisms.

Community Resilience Forum, 2020

#### ANCHOR – FAMILIES

From the beginning, Anchor has involved families and, with their permission, have been collecting data on the barriers that they have met within the existing systems and how this has been overcome; if indeed it has. We have been in contact with the Anchor families regularly and have offered support during the COVID-19 lockdown. We have made new connections with families through word of mouth; staff from the school encouraging parents to speak to us and have had one mother introducing her friend to us after having a positive experience. We have carried out questionnaires with families and school staff to hear directly from them if Anchor has made an impact.

Anchor Project Board, 2019

**WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....**

While the value of asset-based approaches was already recognised across Shetland's system, the activity resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how well this can work in action. Having an immediate and obvious 'common cause' overriding other work streams has brought a new focus to many areas of work, allowing more purposeful and effective cross-system working. The intention is to build on this experience, and the opportunities that the concept of Community Anchor Organisations have brought, in particular how they have exposed needs within communities and begun to normalise everyday conversations about needs within the community. We hope that the spotlight thrown on these issues by the COVID-19 pandemic, will go some way to changing attitudes and reducing stigma.

With United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child becoming enshrined in Scots law, we recognise the need to ensure all our work as public bodies must take notice of this and the duties within. This duty falls to all services and to all departments not just those primarily concerned with children and young people. With this in mind, we intend to develop and expand our current methods of engaging with young people and ensure these are meaningful, robust and inclusive allowing young people to be involved in co-production of policy, plans and the development of public services.

The NHS Child Health team has employed one trainee health visitor who will be undertaking her MSc in Advancing Nursing Practice (Health Visiting) with the Robert Gordon University in order to gain her registration as a Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (HV). This training will take two years. Her post will become substantive upon qualifying. This is funded by the Scottish Government to increase the number of health visitors across Scotland, supporting delivery of the Universal Health Visiting Pathway in Scotland (2015) designed to reduce inequalities.

## IMPACT

We are improving our working practices, so that involving children and their parents in the development of services and measuring the impact of what we're doing is becoming the norm.

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

While we have long understood the need for evidence to inform change, and the impact of changes to be key in steering the direction of future work, it has been difficult to implement this practically across a system with varying ways of working. Aligning around our common goal of reducing child poverty, and instilling a practice of quality improvement across the system – through improved partnership working, and joint training such as the Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills programme – has helped us build stronger networks with easier channels for sharing impactful work, and potential for interagency efforts to make change happen. Having digestible local data, as presented in the Shetland Partnership Plan and the SICAB annual report, and sharing impactful work in a more interactive way, for example Anchor project 'next-steps' workshops, has given professionals the opportunity to see improvement work in action, connect with the issues in a more meaningful way, and explore their role in influencing change within the system.

#### **SHETLAND ISLANDS CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU: COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA**

To make sure that we have an accurate record of our clients' details, issues and the advice we have given them, we record all our cases on an electronic case management system. This means clients don't need to keep explaining their situation and that any adviser they speak to has a full record of their case. As well as case information, we record a range of statistics which we can report to give an overall picture of need in Shetland and how we have responded to it. Since the case management system is shared by all bureaux in Scotland, we are also able to use it to anonymously report social policy issues. These are situations where clients have been treated unfairly. These issues are collated centrally so that any trends can be identified and acted on.



We seek permission from clients to record their details. We are required to keep full and accurate case records so that we can check the accuracy and quality of the advice we are giving. If clients don't want us to keep their full details, we can record their case as 'anonymous' but in these situations we can only give general advice to the client. We actively seek input from our clients through our annual client satisfaction survey and use this to make improvements to our service.

In 2019/20, over 1800 local people from communities across the isles used our service. This gives us a good indication that the service we are providing is one that people want. We also encourage feedback from clients on the service they have received and we act on this feedback to make improvements.

Use of the case recording system helps to ensure that clients can access advice easily, and that the advice they get is of good quality. By recording statistics, we are able to report on the issues which people are needing help with. For example, in 2019/20, 60% of our enquiries were about benefits; 13% about debt and money issues; and 8% about energy. We are able to share information with the Shetland Partnership on the particular issues facing local people, for example the impact of fuel poverty. As well as the statistical information, we produce anonymous case studies of real client situations. These help to show the complexity of the problems faced by families, and are useful training aids which we use to raise awareness of the ways in which CAB can help. This helps to encourage other agencies and organisations to refer people to CAB.

Our case recording system allows us to record the impact which our advice has on clients. We know that in 2019/20, we helped local people gain over £2.1 million, mostly through benefit applications and appeals. We can break the statistics down to show the advice we provided to different client groups such as families. In 2019/20, we provided the following advice to maximise family incomes and thereby reduce the number of children living in poverty:

Child benefit x 44	Child tax credits x 46	Young Carer Grant x 5	Education x 13
Parental and Carers rights in Employment x 5		Maternity Allowance/ Best Start Grant x 22	
Divorce x 70	Domestic Abuse x 7	Child Maintenance x 42	Children x 31

In 2020/21 we will continue to record client cases and key statistics in our case management system and to produce case studies. This gives us a year on year picture of need in Shetland and it will be particularly important at this time, to see how advice needs change as the impact of the pandemic is felt.

We had to postpone our 2020/21 client satisfaction survey due to COVID-19 but we are planning to carry out the survey remotely. We will use this as an opportunity to find out what our clients think about the way we have been delivering the service since lockdown. We are keen to find out if there are ways we could improve remote delivery as it looks likely that delivery of advice by phone, email and video call will remain a key part of our service.

Shetland Islands Citizens' Advice Bureau, 2020

#### WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

Our greatest challenge is going to be that, no matter what we do, and how we do it, levels of Child Poverty have increased. A recent publication from the End Child Poverty coalition shows that 1 in 7 children in Shetland are living in households in poverty, after housing costs are removed. Levels will inevitably increase further in the coming months and potentially years. This is particularly acute in the North Mainland of Shetland, which was already experiencing a loss of jobs as a result of changes in the provision of oil and gas.

However, having made steps forward in making the measuring of impact and collaborative service design the norm, we are in a positive place to take on this challenge. Coupled with the response of the Shetland community throughout the pandemic, we believe these challenges have been brought to the fore, and there is a renewed energy to work well together to see improvements.

#### IMPACT OF PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING<sup>2</sup>

All schools in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) developed a rationale and plan for their allocation taking full account of national and local guidance within their School Improvement Plans for 2019/20, and reporting on the impact of these plans in the following annual cycle. Plans initially focussed on Literacy,

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 5 for an example, from Sound Primary School

Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing, however all schools have since taken a flexible approach to PEF interventions during the pandemic.

Many interventions, that were planned and underway, were put on hold and monies were reallocated to help support those pupils and their families in different and more reactive ways during lockdown; supporting children in learning from home. With face-to-face learning taking place once more, reassessment of needs and new gaps in learning are emerging that are being addressed through refreshed planning. Focussed work will be required in 2020/21 to understand any as yet unknown but expected emerging gaps at local authority and school level.

With support from our Attainment Adviser, more collaborative approaches to use of PEF are developing. For example, two schools have combined their funding to employ a full-time Family Support Worker to understand the wider picture for pupils with a poverty related attainment gap and address barriers to success. Targeted support from the Attainment Adviser is evidencing an increased focus on using data effectively at all levels in the service.

There are strong partnerships with wider Children's Services departments to support children, young people and families who experience socio-economic and digital barriers to learning. Investment in digital inclusion and interventions to address the digital divide will be a key element of a new Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Shetland. This work has already commenced.

Children's Services, Shetland Islands Council, 2019/20

To make any significant, meaningful and lasting change we need to explore with people who have lived experience, what they believe would make a difference to their lives and the stigma they have expressed. We understand that poverty stigma is multi factorial and operates on a number of levels: institutional or organisational stigma where policies, laws and practices discriminate against or disadvantage those living in poverty; social stigma, including public attitudes, which can relate to media portrayals and common perceptions, and can stop people discussing their situation and may make staff less willing or able to discuss financial concerns appropriately; personal stigma, where individuals internalise this stigma which can worsen problems and may stop people seeking help. While public attitudes towards tackling child poverty are overwhelmingly positive, this is not necessarily true when considering support for adults in poverty<sup>3</sup>.

We are actively looking to tackle stigma through a number of our work strands:

- Sharing of local evidence (including Minimum Income Standard research, Voices for Equity project results, local poverty data) and inclusion of poverty as a theme in organisational communication strategies, to help people feel connected to issues in their community, recognise the prevalence of poverty, and normalise the need for support.
- Workshops around Money-Proofing Policies looking to tackle organisational stigma: by making this and related projects priorities across the system we are cultivating a common thread of child poverty across workstreams.
- Upskilling staff (Money Worries Training, Cost of the School Day resources, Inequalities Impact Assessments) to encourage greater confidence in discussing issues, but also self-reflection, and reflection on their own service provision.

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<sup>3</sup> Public Attitudes to Poverty, Inequality and Welfare in Scotland and Britain. Scottish Government. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00473561.pdf>

## STRATEGIC APPROACH (SEE DIAGRAM IN APPENDIX 3)

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

In the last year we invested time and resources in holding three workshops involving members of the Integrated Children and Young Person's Planning Group. The purpose was to share understanding, streamline processes, and set a clear direction for activity and reporting. As a result, Shetland's Children's Partnership was established, with more rigorous reporting and improved relationships across services.

### WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

The lockdown has exposed different forms of a digital divide in Shetland. This was known to be an issue for some people, but has been brought into sharp focus. Key to pupils' engagement in learning and teaching being delivered during lockdown, was their and their parent's access to appropriate devices for learning, skills and knowledge required to download and use the preferred software – for example Glow and Microsoft Teams – overall connectivity in their home area, and finally the available finance to purchase electricity and data. This exposed our digital divide as being much more complicated than we may have previously thought. As part of the work of the Shetland Children's Partnership Tackling Inequalities theme for 2020/21, we need to understand the overall picture across Shetland with our partners in Community Development and find solutions for each of the aspects of this very pertinent inequality that, if not tackled, could lead to an ever-widening poverty related attainment gap. Some very simple solutions were found to some of these issues during lockdown such as the purchase of Data Bolt Ons. Every family in Lerwick who was entitled to free school meals, and/or clothing grants got a one off payment to spend on additional data at home. This was funded through Youth Scotland.

Due to COVID-19, schools were not required to submit attainment data in the Broad General Education this session but all schools continue to track this within their establishment and use this data to plan, target and monitor improvements in attainment. As a result, there continues to be a rigorous and relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap, particularly following the impact of COVID-19 on our schools and communities.

### CHILDCARE : EXPLORING A NEW MORE INCLUSIVE MODEL

We aspire to test a new model of out-of-school care, initially within the North Mainland of Shetland. It will be a mixed inclusive model, involving childminders, holiday activities, childcare hub, youth club, linked, where possible, to transport provision and job opportunities, co-ordinated to meet the needs of individual families.

The desire to link out of school options, with other important services, has been an aspiration since the publication of 'Living Well in a High Cost Economy' which explored in-work poverty in Shetland. One of the main barriers to finding better employment was finding affordable childcare that fitted with working hours and available transport, effectively trapping parents in low-paid roles. This will be a test in how we can join up and coordinate many aspects of provision, with jobs and transport, around the needs of individual families building on our experiences during lockdown.

The creation of Additional Support Needs Hub and Emergency Childcare Provision as a result of COVID-19 led to engagement with a wider group of families, and in particular those families most in need of out of school support. Accessible provision, before and after school hours, also had a positive impact on families. We wish to build on the learning achieved throughout lockdown and the positive feedback we have had



from parents, staff and children attending this provision, which has been more inclusive and more sustainable, pooling the resources of both Local Authority and Ability Shetland, a third sector partner.

Part of the success of the North Mainland Hub came from the close working of Hub staff with colleagues in social work and the schools in the area, helping to identify children and families who would benefit from attending and then organising transport to allow the children to attend, regardless on the rurality of their homes. The removal of barriers meant the service was accessible to those who needed it most. The service was also able to coordinate hot meals for all attending, and the delivery of resources to families in need.

This test of change, if we can access funding, would create some job opportunities in an area that has been badly affected by around 200 job losses from the nearby Sullom Voe Oil terminal and airport closure, and a further 47 job losses from the loss of a hotel serving these. We are currently exploring various avenues of funding.

Children's Services, Shetland Islands Council, 2020

#### EMPLOYABILITY PARTNERSHIP: RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Employability Partnership has been developing a local action plan to implement the Scottish Government priorities locally. Locally we will develop and implement an action plan to deal with the challenge of the economic crisis here in Shetland. This will focus on employability support, skills development and individual and family support, based on the strengths and needs of those involved.

Given the significant and far reaching nature of the problems, this must be a collaborative piece of work and will involve partners from Shetland Island Council Economic Development, Skills Development Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Coordinator, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Shetland College and Shetland Islands Council Youth and Employability Service.

We are currently exploring how to develop services locally. Our frontline staff have an extensive knowledge and understanding of lived experience of our services, and the challenges faced, from gathering ongoing feedback; this will inform our planning process to align and enhance provision. We will work with employers, services and individuals to design a programme that will be suitable for Shetland and those who are in need of support.

Through this programme we hope to reduce the number of households who will experience unemployment and a reduction in income. Measurement frameworks are in place through the Scottish Government fund. These measurements will demonstrate impact with relation to equalities, child poverty, employment status and sustainability. We will develop an action plan for this programme, delivering these impacts, over 2020/21.

Shetland Islands Council Youth and Employability Service, 2020

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We are continuing our work on developing a shared language across the Shetland Partnership, in order to measure and share impact.

### WHAT WE'VE DONE....

The roll out of Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills (SIFS) training across the system has given partners in various services access to high quality training in improvement methodology and practical skills, while giving them the opportunity to work in a multi-agency cohort on a clearly defined project relating to their service area.

One example of where this has been used, in relation to children and families, is in developing the universal and targeted Children's Occupational Therapy Service. The systematic, evidence based approach has allowed this provision to develop with clear objectives, and rigorous monitoring to show benefit to children and families, both through direct contact with the service, and through the Occupational Therapy team upskilling education staff. The training has also highlighted the need for collaborative work and co-design of services with service users. This has shaped the approach for a further project looking to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people with Autism and Neurodevelopmental Differences.

### OPEN PEER EDUCATION PROJECT: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Two members of OPEN staff completed Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills (SIFS) training, and have progressed to the 'Life QI' programme in 2020. Unfortunately this programme was paused due to COVID-19 as the trainers were redeployed, however existing Quality Improvement (QI) skills meant staff have continued to gather data and look at potential improvements in day-to-day work. While the OPEN Project doesn't gather data to monitor levels of poverty or deprivation within the work we do with young people, we work with some of the most vulnerable young adults in Shetland who we know will be vulnerable to inequalities.

It was a relief to discover the methodology of quality improvement and have the opportunity to access training. We have always had rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes in place, but the QI training pulled it all together and gave us the ability to share our findings and work with others in a far more systematic way. I have benefited from the range of tools that are available, and been able to use them in my every day work with young people and staff.

In 2019, three members of OPEN staff completed the Professional Certificate in Coordinating a Mentoring Project, Evaluation Unit, SCQF level 9 through the Scottish Mentoring Network and Napier University. Monitoring and evaluation has always been at the centre of our work and this qualification strengthened our good working practise.

The learning that came from QI training has had a major impact on the way we run the OPEN Project. The QI tools are now part of our planning systems and problem solving to improve the running of the project. We use the tools in our work with young people, running PDSA's (Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles) to run small tests of change in volunteers' meetings and improve participation. The cause and effect tool is really useful in working with small groups to identify issues and find ways to address them.

The OPEN Project is funded by the Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience (EW&R) Project to employ and support six young people as Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Workers. The EW&R team have been

learning to use the model of improvement and this has played a central role in the way that the team operates, researching and consulting with more young people and presenting their findings to strategic groups and other levels, improving participation and collaborative service change. For example, it enabled them to run PDSA cycles and test out their survey and make improvements before it was distributed to all young people.

The purpose of the Evaluation and Monitoring Data Collection Plan is to ensure that we collectively gather data, using the Model of Improvement. Collecting this data will enable the Coordinator to constantly analyse information, monitor the project, identify issues and develop solutions. Producing evaluation reports, monthly, quarterly and annually, to inform improvement work within the project.

Various methods of feedback are recognized as being valuable in their own right, and are collected routinely.

**Verbal, qualitative feedback:** The coordinator will be responsible for having regular one-to-one appraisals with young people. Communication is key to gaining knowledge and understanding about how participants are feeling about their progression, support and training throughout the Project. Peer Educators and Peer mentors will have quarterly support meetings, to discuss issues and develop solutions, share ideas and reflect on progress of their participation.

Verbal feedback will enable the coordinator to monitor their progress, make changes to meet the identified needs of participants and ensure that the project is working effectively. Producing monthly, quarterly and annual evaluation reports will ensure this happens in a systematic fashion, and that improvements are not restricted to individual cases but can be benefitted from across the service.

**Data collection and analysis, quantitative:** Systems to collect data designed to monitor the project in all aspects with young people, staff and partner organisations. Using appraisals including scoring systems, recording and reporting systems, questionnaires and case studies.

**Observation, qualitative:** The coordinator will produce case studies based on observations and data collected throughout the project to provide an overview of participant's personal development and progress through the programme.

We gather data to analyse the personal development of young people involved in our project, using a SHANARRI web tool, verbal and written feedback through one-to-one appraisals and carry out case studies.

OPEN, 2020

#### WHAT MORE WE HAVE PLANNED....

The next steps in Quality Improvement across the Partnership will look at linking regular data collection, with supported quality improvement, and continuous evaluation. This will contribute to a culture of improvement and accountability with clearer links between planning and prioritisation processes, and frontline staff. The 'shared language' of improvement will help to inform change across the system, bringing staff and teams together for the better of the Shetland Community.

This more systematic use of data to inform quality and service improvement will include work around income maximisations pathways from NHS services, particularly Maternity and Health Visiting services. This will build on distribution of the Public Health Scotland leaflet 'Talking About Money Worries' among Child Health staff, and will see more bespoke Money Worries training sessions, looking particularly at the role of these universal services.

## 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](#)<sup>4</sup>.

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.

[Guidance](#)<sup>5</sup> on the approach and content of the ACPAR is available. The key considerations are:

- Production of one Report for Shetland (the first covering 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> 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);

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

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

- Aim to publish by 30<sup>th</sup> 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 characteristics<sup>6</sup> 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](#)<sup>7</sup> 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.

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

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

## APPENDIX 2: 2019/20 ACTIONS AND 2020/21 PLANS

This summary table stipulates the nature of the activity and who should benefit; responsibility, timeline and resources for delivery; the intended child poverty driver that the activity will impact upon and how this is measured. The table also refers to the impact of COVID-19 on delivery and plans.

### Actions taken forward during 2019/20

Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
Commission research in order to understand the relationship between our higher cost of living and poorer outcomes	All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes because of inequalities, including children living in poverty	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland, NHS Shetland, SFRS	Northern Alliance	Completed, March 2020	Cost of Living	Outputs of research Understanding and use of research (at local and national level)
Enabling parents to move into employment / better employment	Unemployed, underemployed parents	<b>Lead:</b> Team Leader, Youth and Employability Services <b>Partners:</b> through CLD Partnership and Anchor Project	Existing employability funding and new funding from Scottish Government	Summer 2019 onwards	Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Skills and Qualifications	Number of unemployed parents moving into employment Number of under employed parents improving their employment
Right Support, Right Time: making connections between services in order to signpost and refer /	Support staff working with families, including children in poverty Families	<b>Lead:</b> Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Policy Manager, Council	Tested approach using resources available through the Anchor Project	Testing and development from April 2019 to February 2020	Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty	Uptake of Free School Meals and other benefits

supporting families to access benefits using powerful conversations / seizing opportunities brought by COVID-19		<b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Citizens Advice Bureau, Council		March 2020	Reach of Benefits Information Low Uptake of Benefits Assumed Deficit of Entrepreneurship Amongst Low Income Families	
Money-Proofing Policies: gently challenging our current approach to strategic development and delivery in order to reduce Child Poverty	All children and their families, living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Policy Manager, Council <b>Partners:</b> Policy Influencers across the Partnership	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles. Each policy area to reallocate resources in order to achieve the medium and long term outcomes.	June 2019: engagement with policy influencers August 2019 to July 2020: one year's activity	Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Assumed Deficit of Entrepreneurship Amongst Low Income Families Silo Policy Making	Understanding of issues and drivers of child poverty, amongst policy leads Examples of changes in policy, as a result
Fair Food: aspiration is to eradicate Food Poverty in Shetland	All children and their families, living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Policy Manager, Council <b>Partners:</b> Communities, NHS Shetland, Council	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles. Additional resources to be secured using external funding.	September 2019: detailed planning, for implementation	Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Welfare Reforms Risk of Food Bank becoming Institutionalised	Demand for Food Bank, from Families Area of land used for local food consumption
Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Project delivery of the National Trauma Training Plan	Vulnerable children	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Voluntary Action Shetland, Police	Project staff funded from Shetland Islands Council Spend to Save budget	June 2020 to June 2023	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Trauma informed and trauma responsive services Number of service improvement projects to support trauma responsive services

Test out approaches, such as those within the Tackling Inequalities workstream of the Children's Integrated Plan	Children living in low income households	<b>Lead:</b> Quality Improvement Officer, Council <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles	April 2019 to March 2020: Initial Engagement Phase	Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Welfare Reforms Risk of Food Bank becoming Institutionalised	Model for Improvement Evaluation through feedback from young people and/or from families depending on the individual project
Voices for Equity	Indirect, by targeting decision-makers who may have no experience of living in poverty	<b>Lead:</b> Community Planning and Development, Council <b>Partners:</b> Shetland Partnership, Community	£60,000 funding from Scottish Government's Poverty Truth Commission Fund	May 2018 to May 2020	All, by raising awareness amongst decision-makers	Number of community and civic participants Evaluation of learning points Strength of relationships
Updating of <a href="#">Welfare Reform Outcome Focused Plan</a> for NHS Shetland and HSCP	Those in low-paid work, including NHS employees and contracted staff who maybe in low paid and/or part-time employment and/or on fixed term contracts Children in low-income families Larger families in receipt of benefits or in low -paid employment	<b>Lead:</b> Public Health Principal <b>Partners:</b> all directorates within NHS and HSCP	Within existing resources	March 2019 onwards – to progress in 2020/21.	Aimed at minimising the negative impact of welfare reform.	A range of measures will be developed as part of the refreshing of the action plan, based on local needs and the short, middle & long-term outcomes described within the national plan.
Enhancement of formal income maximisation referral	Pregnant women and low income	<b>Lead:</b> Senior health Improvement Advisor	£2,535 allocated by Scottish Government	March 2019 to March 2020	Maximising the income of pregnant women and low	Increase in referrals to money advice service.



routes between the early years workforce and local money/welfare advice services	families with young children	<b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland Early Years workforce and Citizens Advice Bureau.	Regional funding also available, but not clear how this will be spent yet		income families with young children.	Increase in number of referrals with a named professional to facilitate engagement.  Engagement of Maternity and Health Visiting staff with Money Worries training.
Scottish Improvement Foundation Skills (SIFS) and Agile Programme Management	Indirect, by developing skills to tackle complex change, and evaluate improvement	<b>Lead:</b> Anchor Project Board  <b>Partners:</b> across the Shetland Partnership	SIFS delivered by existing staff / attendance as part of substantive roles	May 2018 onwards	Development of skills to tackle poverty drivers effectively	Number of attendees  Follow up required
Closing the Attainment Gap	Children with vulnerabilities impacting on their educational attainment	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council	Within resources of partner organisations and communities / Pupil Equity Funding	Annual linked to School Improvement Planning cycle	Low Income High Cost of Living Rural community Poor connectivity	Increased attainment Reduction in poverty related attainment gap. Increased attendance Engagement and participation Inclusion
Anchor – Early Action	Vulnerable families	<b>Lead:</b> Anchor Project Board  <b>Partners:</b> across the Shetland Partnership	Staff time, within substantive roles  £321,000 from Big Lottery to invest in catalyst of change	April 2018: Detailed delivery planning  December 2018: Delivery commenced	All drivers, by taking a family-centre, holistic and flexible approach	Detailed monitoring framework under-development to measure outcomes for families and for our system

## Actions planned for 2020/21

Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
Promote Living on a Low Income in Scotland's Islands Research	All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes because of inequalities, including children living in poverty	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland, NHS Shetland, SFRS, Northern Alliance	Staff time, within substantive roles	September 2020: Presentation on the Findings Follow up actions dependent on discussion	Cost of Living	Understanding and use of research (at local and national level)
Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) Mapping Holiday Provision (food and activities)	Children and families, particularly those on low incomes	<b>Lead:</b> Catering and Cleaning Team Leader, Council <b>Partners:</b> Council, Third Sector	SPIRU to do & local staff time, within substantive roles, to support	August to November 2020	Cost of Living Low Income Rurality	Production of comprehensive mapping of holiday provision (activities and food), to inform decision-making
Voices for Change established and implemented, in parallel with the Government's Social Advisory Panel	Young people and families, particularly those at important transition points / newly vulnerable as a result of COVID-19	<b>Lead:</b> Policy Manager, Council <b>Partners:</b> Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland, NHS Shetland, SFRS, Third Sector	Re-purposed budget from within Community Planning and Development, Council	July 2020: recruitment of participants October 2020: conclusions	Hours Worked Per Household Skills and Training Labour Market	Number of learning matches Evaluation report based on project outcomes

Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
Close monitoring, analysis and sharing of information in light of COVID-19: e.g. Free School Meals direct payments / economic changes / knowledge of Community Anchor Organisations	All those people in Shetland facing poor outcomes because COVID-19 including children living in poverty	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland, NHS Shetland, SFRS, Third Sector	Staff time, within substantive roles	Ongoing	All drivers	Allocation of resources to those already vulnerable and those newly vulnerable  Inform any future national funding sources, such as Supporting Communities Fund
Right Support, Right Time: building capacity and understanding of staff and volunteers, within local communities (Money Worries online training, and using front-line staff to support assessment, linked to Cost of the School Day and role of Community Anchor Organisations)	Support staff working with families, including children in poverty  Families	<b>Lead:</b> Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Citizens Advice Bureau (SICAB), Council, SIC Children's Services	Staff time within SICAB, NHS Shetland  SIC Children's Services staff repositioned as Early Help Team	Testing and development from April 2020 to February 2021	Cost of Living Rise of Out of Work and In Work Poverty Reach of Benefits Information Low Uptake of Benefits	Uptake of Free School Meals and other benefits (data held within SIC and SICAB)
Right Support, Right Time: target school systems						Involvement of Teachers, School Support Staff and

Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
						Parents in Money Worries / Cost of the School Day
Enhancement of formal income maximisation referral routes between the early years workforce and local money/welfare advice services	Pregnant women and low income families with young children	<b>Lead:</b> Senior health Improvement Advisor <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland Early Years workforce and Citizens Advice Bureau	£2,535 allocated by Scottish Government Regional funding also available, but not clear how this will be spent yet	July 2020- ongoing	Maximising the income of pregnant women and low income families with young children.	Increase in referrals to money advice service. Increase in number of referrals with a named professional to facilitate engagement. Engagement of Maternity and Health Visiting staff with Money Worries training. Increased local uptake of Healthy Start scheme.
Right Support, Right Time: one application to access all Council administered benefits	Low income families with children	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council	Staff time, within substantive roles	March 2021	Reach of Benefits Information Low Uptake of Benefits	One system to access Free School Meals / School Clothing Grants / Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit

Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
Right Support, Right Time: awareness of affordable credit	Low income families with children	<b>Lead:</b> Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Council	Staff time, within substantive roles	October 2020	Cost of Living Rise of Out of Work and In Work Poverty	Community awareness of ethical loan opportunities
Proactive support to those impacted upon by economic downturn, including developing access to employment opportunities through national employment schemes e.g Kickstart and Youth Employment Guarantee.	All children and their families, living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Development Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, College, Council and Developing the young workforce.	Employability Team and time commitment from partners as part of substantive roles	June 2020: Employability Partnership established	Rise in Unemployment and Underemployment as a result of COVID-19	Number of people supported into employment
Money-Proofing Policies: review of Public Transport Fares and developing concept of Transport Hubs	All children and their families, living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Lead Officer, ZetTrans <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Council	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles	Autumn: commission research into fares, to report by March 2021 July onwards: scope up concept of transport hubs, linked to schools and childcare	Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Silo Policy Making	Understanding of issues and drivers of child poverty, amongst policy leads Examples of changes in policy, as a result

Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
Fair Food: continue to respond to emergency food needs, linking with financial health and energy advice support. E.g. trial of Food Larders in schools / Direct Payment of FSM	All children and their families, living in poverty / low income, impacted up on by COVID-19	<b>Lead:</b> Chief Social Work Officer, Council <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Council, Third Sector	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles	Ongoing, as part of Emergency Planning response	Cost of Living Rise of Out of Work and In Work Poverty	No known food needs Referrals to Citizens Advice Bureau
Fair Food: aspiration is to eradicate Food Poverty in Shetland	All children and their families, living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Policy Manager, Council <b>Partners:</b> Communities, NHS Shetland, Council	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles. Additional resources to be secured using external funding.	August 2020: reset project, in light of COVID-19 October 2020: Council approval of Food Growing Strategy	Cost of Living Rise of In Work Poverty Welfare Reforms Risk of Food Bank becoming Institutionalised	Demand for Food Bank, from Families Area of land used for local food consumption
Anchor – Early Action / Early Help Team (links with Money Worries / Cost of the School Day) and seek to inform the Government’s approach to Family Support	Vulnerable families	<b>Lead:</b> Anchor Project Board <b>Partners:</b> across the Shetland Partnership	Staff time, within substantive roles. £321,000 from Big Lottery to invest in catalyst of change	May 2020: reset project in light of COVID-19 August 2020: establishment of Early Help Team	All drivers, by taking a family-centred, holistic and flexible approach	Detailed monitoring framework under-development to measure outcomes for families and for our system

Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
Evaluation of impact of Pupil Equity Fund	Children living in poverty Vulnerable families	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council	Staff time, within substantive roles.	June 2021	All drivers, by taking a family-centred, holistic and flexible approach	Monitoring of impact of PEF spend through: -attainment -participation -engagement -attendance -inclusion
GIRFEC Shetland Practice Framework	Vulnerable families	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council  <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Police Scotland, Third Sector	Staff time, within substantive roles.	April 2021	All drivers, by taking a family-centre, holistic and flexible approach	Through the Quality Assurance Framework
Digital Divide Access to digital devices and software Equity of access to current broadband	All children and their families, particularly those who are vulnerable / living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council  <b>Partners:</b> Northern Alliance	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles.  Additional resources to be secured using external funding	October 2020: Access to digital devices and software  April 2021: Equity of access to current broadband	Cost of Living Rise of Unemployment and In Work Poverty Low Income Rurality	Number of children and young people engaging in digital learning activities regularly  Monitoring of online learning and engagement
Test flexible childcare model	All children and their families in the North Mainland of Shetland	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles.	July 2020: Seeking external funding	Cost of Living	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to developed as part

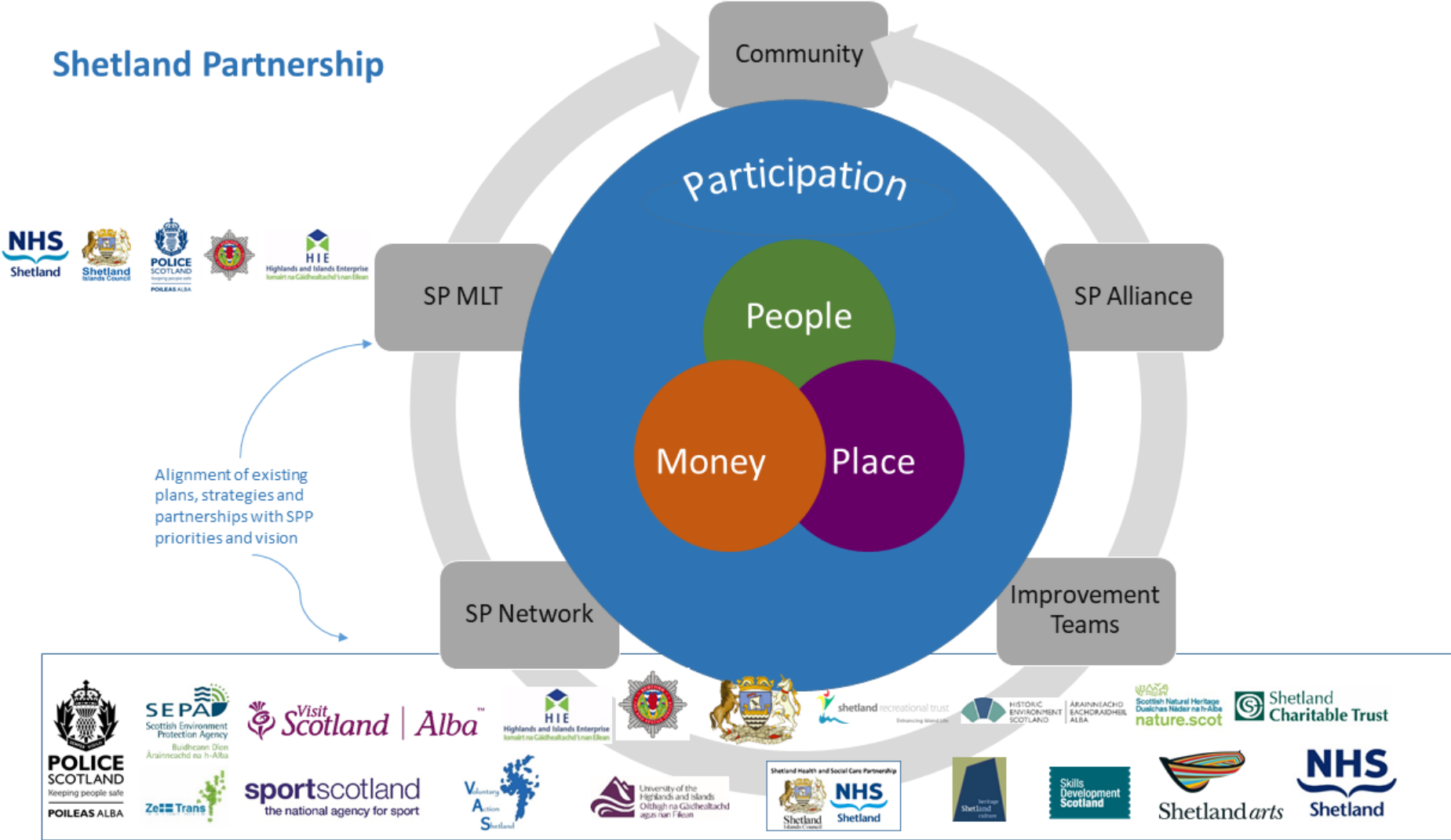
Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
		<b>Partners:</b> Third Sector, ZetTrans, Council	Additional resources to be secured using external funding.		Rise of Unemployment and In Work Poverty	of project development
Embed Shetland's Children's Partnership	All children and their families, particularly those who are vulnerable / living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Police Scotland, Third Sector, Council	Time commitment, as part of substantive roles.	Quarterly meetings established from April 2020	All drivers, by taking a family-centred, holistic and flexible approach	Attendance at meetings Impact of activity
Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Project delivery of the National Trauma Training Plan	Vulnerable children	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> NHS Shetland, Voluntary Action Shetland, Police	Project staff funded from Shetland Islands Council Spend to Save budget	June 2020 to June 2023	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Trauma informed and trauma responsive services Number of service improvement projects to support trauma responsive services
Stigma: upskilling staff (links with Money Worries training)	All children and their families, particularly those who are vulnerable / living in poverty / low income	<b>Lead:</b> Director of Children's Services, Council <b>Partners:</b> all	Staff time, within substantive roles.	August 2020 to March 2021: continuation of Money Worries Training, including discussion with service leads around inclusion in standard practice (HI)	Cost of Living Rise of Unemployment and In Work Poverty Low Income Rurality	Staff engaging with workshops. Follow up with participants re: changes in practice. Referrals from services to CAB.



Action e.g. new services offered, increasing flexibility of existing services	Group (s) the action is intended to reduce poverty amongst e.g. who is service targeted at and who is using it?	Who action is carried out by e.g. list of all partners involved in action	Resources allocated	Timescale for action	Poverty driver (s) the action is intended to impact	How impact has / will be assessed
				January - March 2021: pilot use of inequalities self-assessment within NHS services		Review outcomes of self-assessment tool chosen when pilot underway.
Stigma: community awareness				Child Poverty is common theme (sharing data, reports, national campaigns in accessible formats) in external organisational Communications by end March 2021		Annual Population Survey Instances of public communications discussing Child Poverty
Stigma: organisational (for example, delivering the vision from the 2020 Anchor Workshops / Money Proofing / Cost of the School Day / Voices for Equity)				Ongoing: to inform training and encourage engagement of service leads, placing tackling poverty and inequalities at centre of improvement work.		Engagement with workshops and data shared, evidenced changes in practice through case studies and experience reports of staff and service users

# APPENDIX 3: STRATEGIC DIAGRAM OF SHETLAND PARTNERS

## Shetland Partnership



## APPENDIX 4: FREE SCHOOL MEALS HOLIDAY PROVISION TEST OF CHANGE

Evidence has shown how providing free school meals to children has wide ranging benefits, including:

### Improving children's health

School meals meet high nutritional standards, ensuring that children get a healthy meal while at school.



### Improving Attainment

Research<sup>8</sup> shows that education and health are closely linked so promoting the health and wellbeing of pupils within schools has the potential to improve their educational outcomes and their health and wellbeing outcomes.

### Reducing health inequalities and helping low income families

Families which may be entitled to free school meals may not claim them and low incomes families may be unable to afford to pay for regular healthy meals.

### Removing the poverty trap that prevents parents moving into employment

Loss of entitlement to free school meals may represent a significant disincentive for parents to move into employment, particularly in families with several children.

### Supporting the rural economy and promoting sustainable food

Free school meals could help promote local, sustainable food production.

In the National Improvement Framework Plan for Shetland, there is a programme of work focused on closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children. Whilst the data is limited, information on Free School Meals can be used as a proxy, in some cases, to check and compare the attainment of our more vulnerable children.

A project to trial Free School Meals during school holidays was developed to build evidence to assess what impact, if any, providing funding for meals outwith the school term would have on pupil outcomes.

The pilot project was designed to explore the impact of providing a lunch during the school holidays for eligible children in two trial areas of Shetland – Lerwick, the main centre of population, and the North Isles, a more rural area. The arrangements needed to be tested to make sure they would subsequently work at scale, if proven to be successful.

Initially a small number of families (4) were involved in a 'test of change' during the summer holidays in 2019. The method for paying for meals was limited to a voucher system, using one local supermarket, to the value equivalent to £2.20 per day per child, in line with cost of term time school meals.

From the feedback from the initial 'test of change', the project team learned that:

- Choice of Provider – families would prefer to have the choice of where to shop
- Ease of use – families had no issues in cashing the vouchers in against their shopping
- Health Choices - families were able to buy better quality, healthy food
- Financial Impact - One family had money available to put some fuel in the car to go out for activities
- Administration - purchasing processes for dealing with the provider were labour and time intensive, and unsustainable for larger numbers.

In October 2019, the trial became a formal pilot, involving 82 families (140 children, across Lerwick and North Isles schools). Families of eligible/entitled children in Lerwick and North Isles schools were provided with £25 supermarket vouchers per child, to cover the October holiday (and in-service) period, with a choice of using either supermarkets or local shops.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/370686/HT\\_briefing\\_layoutvFINALvii.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/370686/HT_briefing_layoutvFINALvii.pdf)

The project was planned and delivered using the Service Improvement Foundation Skills (SIFS) approach and the team found that they were able to use the data and evidence gathered – including direct conversations with those involved in the pilot project – to quickly respond when the original concept ideas did not exactly meet the identified project objectives.

Due to the success of the pilot project, the scheme was extended to the Christmas 2019 holiday period.

The pilot was subject to evaluation, to measure the difference which the initiative had made to the participating families, using a set of open-ended questions:

- What difference, if any, did the voucher(s) make to the food items you were able to buy, compared to a "usual" holiday shop?
- What kind of things, if any, were you able to do as a family during the holiday period, as a result of receiving the vouchers? (e.g. fuel in the car/trip to cinema/go to a cafe)
- How could we improve the scheme?
- Any other comments?

The quotes below provide examples of some of the feedback received.

"I just want to thank you so much for this opportunity, as I've found it's really helped me to get by when we've been struggling. I'd be too embarrassed to apply to food banks but this prevents me from having to do that yet. So thanks so much for this service. It is a real big help to us!"

"The gift card means there is no shame or embarrassment that can come with government / benefit issued vouchers or cards, for example the cards used at the high school for free school meals. No other children have a prepaid card as cash is only used so it's obvious they're different when paying in front of people, but everyone uses ... gift cards so there's no self consciousness or stigma when paying."

"It meant being able to relax & enjoy family time and not be anxious about making it through financially over the holidays. Meant I could put enough on the meters for electric & heating without having to think about topping them up either."

"My money I paid for food did not increase as much as I thought it would. The voucher was definitely helpful in offsetting the costs of lunches. The voucher made a huge difference as it helped to factor in the difference in quantity of food eaten at home."

"Usually at this time of this year full home cooked meals with fresh ingredients & meat are often replaced with cheap frozen meals which is bulked out with cheap biscuits for snacks in between instead of the cheeses and dips & fruit for example."

"I was really short on money during the Christmas holidays, and was worried about how we were going to manage to get in our food essentials due to such my low budget with having lots of other bills and things to pay for, such as extra heating in the house. This voucher really saved my skin, as we were able to get the essential items we needed. It also helped me buy more fruit and veg that I would like to buy, but usually can't afford to as I don't have the spare money."

Feedback from participating families, January 2020

“In the Broad General Education to S3 and considering two years of data available, schools in Shetland have raised attainment overall and narrowed the gap in Primary Literacy, Primary Numeracy and Secondary Numeracy. There is a very slight fall in attainment and widening of the gap in Secondary Literacy. This is a very positive indication of the impact of work to ‘close the gap’. Arriving at this conclusion, the performance of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) has been compared with the performance of all other children, using the Broad General Education Benchmarking Toolkit. The tool is a piece of software used to analyse the data provided on achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) for children and young people.

It is early days, but I am confident that the data is telling us we are starting to make a difference to these pupil’s lives from this type of innovative project – and that is certainly what our schools are telling us on the ground. I have been really impressed by how quickly our business support functions came alongside this project and helped to find creative solutions to meet the families’ needs. The project was a real team effort and I am delighted with the success that the families reported back and seeing the difference in the pupil’s attainment results and overall progress.”

Robin Calder, Executive Manager Schools, July 2020

The Scottish Government’s response to COVID-19 introduced a national approach to the provision of free school meals during school holidays, whereby local authorities and schools provided lunch, or means to purchase lunch, for children and young people eligible for free school meals during the 2020 summer school holidays. This could be provided using a range of methods including:

- cash payments to families of eligible children;
- supermarket vouchers;
- home deliveries; or
- through attendance at educational hub.

As these arrangements evolve through 2020, and beyond, work will continue to establish the basis upon which the provision of Free School Meals during school holiday periods may be able to continue on a sustainable basis.

# APPENDIX 5: Use of PEF Funding: Sound Primary School



School and Local Authority: Sound Primary School

<b>Priority Focus</b>	<b>Intervention Description</b> To provide targeted support in order to ensure inclusion as well as improving engagement, attainment and health and wellbeing.	<b>Cost</b>
Health and Wellbeing		£24000 PEF Funded

**Rationale**

Data showed an increasing trend of lateness for learners from families who were facing challenges or where parental support was limited. These learners were often disengaged and often displayed distressed behaviour. This resulted in disruption in classes and impacted negatively on their own and their peers learning. Due to these barriers, the identified learners were experiencing a negative impact on their social and emotional wellbeing, attainment in literacy and attainment in numeracy.

- Intended Outcomes**
- Learners will feel safe, happy, nurtured, included and achieving.
  - Raise attainment and demonstrate progression for targeted learners who are at risk of underachieving due to social, emotional and behavioural needs.
  - To increase learner confidence and social skills for targeted individuals
  - To improve outcomes through continued positive partnerships with parents/ carers and other agencies.
  - Reduce lateness and increase engagement in learning.



When there's stuff going on in your life, you can talk to someone and get help. I feel ready to learn when I go back to class. (P6 pupil)

I feel valued, it gives me a boost!  
(P5 pupil)

If I tell people my feelings it helps. I am accepted in it (soft start) .  
(P5 Pupil)

Soft Start gives me time to be with my friends. It's changed my life, I can make better choices and get along with my friends.  
(P4 Pupil)

Less pressure and less questions. I want to be in class and I can concentrate better in class. My behaviour is 10/10  
(Learner A—P5)

**Impact**

Lateness reduced for target group. Example: Learner A attendance time prior to soft start average 10.20– 11 am, reduced to no later than 9.20am post intervention.

**Impact**

Learner engagement shows positive improvements across the school. Leuven Scales of Engagement increased from 2 to 4 (or more) for learners attending Soft Start across session 19/20.

**Impact**

All demonstrating progress within and across levels, resulting in increased attainment in numeracy and literacy—both for target group and across the school.

**NIF Priority**

Improvement in children's wellbeing

**NIF Drivers**

School Improvement, School Leadership, Parental Engagement

**HGIOS 4**

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion  
3.3. Increasing creativity

### Local Context

Current school roll is 239 P1-7 and 42 in Nursery. The school serves one of the most deprived areas in Shetland. The catchment is a mix of private and social housing. 9 FSM session 19/20 and 18 FSM session 20/21. PEF allocation in session 19/20 was £23,443 and in session 20/21 it is £24,000.

### How did you identify your gap?

Data on FSM, attainment, attendance, engagement and wider achievement is used both by class teachers and by the management team. This data is used to inform planning for support, PEF and whole school improvement planning. Key themes emerging from this data were the need to look at attendance and also attainment for key groups of learners. Learner voice consultations showed that wellbeing, feeling safe in school and in supporting the learning of some of our most vulnerable learners were key themes for improvement.

### Description of approach

- A whole school nurture approach was implemented and embedded through training and modelling of nurture principals for all staff. Soft Start was introduced for a target group providing a safe social space within which to get organised and be ready to learn.
- Daily 'Emotional Check In' established in all classes. Staff use this to be responsive to needs arising.
- In discussion with identified families, agreement was made for these learners to arrive at school between 9am and 9.30am. This reduced pressure and anxiety around getting to school for 9am.
- Targeted interventions with a focus on targeted numeracy and literacy interventions for identified learners. This included one to one and small group support for identified gaps informed by assessments, supporting home learning through homework clubs and also digital skills groups.
- Bespoke support delivered remotely through Microsoft Teams by Learning Support Worker for individuals.
- Working closely with agencies including Anchor to improve outcomes for families
- Learners are able to access a safe and supported space throughout the school day
- Learning Support Worker supports individual with social skills at break times

### Tracking and measurement

#### How did we track?

- Leuven Scales of engagement, attainment data, wellbeing indicators.
- SMT data collected twice a year, FSM data reviewed regularly, tracking and monitoring meetings termly covering Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.
- Teacher Evidence.
- Annual 'Closing the Gap' questionnaire completed by teachers—evaluated impact of PEF interventions and identifies priorities for closing the gap in class and across the school.
- Ongoing regular pupil voice.
- Attendance and timekeeping.

### Progress:

For the target groups, data shows increasing levels of attainment, engagement, access to wider achievements and growth in confidence. Their ability to engage with learning and with their peers has improved. Lateness has decreased significantly.

Across the school, attainment has increased and our children report to feeling safer in class and school. Calmer atmosphere within school and playground, creating a more conducive learning environment. Reduction in exclusions – none in 19/20. There are less referrals to Social Work and less concerns arising associated with attendance and lateness.

The school continues to target support in response to individuals and group need across Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

### Key Messages

- Take the time to listen and be responsive.
- Be solution focussed—utilise existing resources to improve outcomes for learners and their families.
- Small changes can make a big difference.

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

For further information please telephone Children’s Services on:

01595 743967, or email [education.and.social.services@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:education.and.social.services@shetland.gov.uk)



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