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COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD THURSDAY, 6TH JUNE, 2024

A MEETING of the COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD will be held in COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS and VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 6TH JUNE, 2024 at 2.00 PM.

All attendees, including members of the public, should note that the public business in this meeting will be livestreamed and video recorded and that recording will be available thereafter for public view for 180 days.

N. MCKINLAY,
Director Corporate Governance,

28 May 2024

BUSINESS		
1.	Welcome & Apologies	2 mins
2.	Order of Business.	
3.	Declarations of Interest.	
4.	Minute & Action Tracker (Pages 5 - 10) (a) Consider Minute of 7 March 2024. (Copy attached.) (b) Consider Action Tracker. (Copy attached.)	2 mins
5.	Matters arising not on the agenda	2 mins
6.	Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2023/24 (Pages 11 - 48) Presented by Janice Robertson. (Copy attached.)	25 mins
7.	2023/24 Local Child Poverty Annual Progress Report and 2024/25 Report and Action Plan (Pages 49 - 154) Presented by Janice Robertson. (Copies attached.)	25 mins
8.	Review of Locality Plans Presented by Jenni Craig and Clare Malster.	25 mins
9.	Community Plan Delivery Groups update Presented by Theme Leads.	10 mins
10.	Quarterly Update: Theme 2: Learning, Skills & Economy (Pages 155 -	5 mins

	158) Presented by Sam Smith and Ally Scott. (Copy attached.)	
11.	Change of Community Planning Strategic Board to become an unincorporated association. (Pages 159 - 166) Feedback from Council meeting on 30 May 24 presented by Jenni Craig and Clare Malster. (Copy attached.)	5 mins
12.	Forward Planner for future meetings (Pages 167 - 168) Copy attached.	2 mins
13.	Any Other Business	5 mins
14.	Future Meeting Dates 2pm, 05/09/24 2pm, 14/11/24 2pm, 06/03/25 2pm, 05/06/25	

NOTES

1. **Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.**
2. **Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.**

Membership of Board:

Councillor Caroline Cochrane, Selkirkshire Ward (Chair)

Councillor John Greenwell

Councillor Scott Hamilton

Councillor Euan Jardine

Councillor Elaine Thornton-Nicol

Stuart Fletcher, Police Scotland

Ms Karen Hamilton, NHS Borders

Stephen Gourlay, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Russel Griggs, South of Scotland Enterprise

Ray McCowan, Borders College

Colin Easton, Borders Community Action

Colin McGrath, Scottish Borders Community Council Network

Hilary Sangster, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

* Any 3 from 5 Councillors

Copies also sent for information to:-

Ms Anna Griffin – SEPA

Mr Crispin Hill – Nature Scotland

Ms Alison Irvine – Scottish Government

Mr David Gordon – Waverley Housing

Ms Shona Mitchell – Skills Development Scotland

Mr Bill White – Live Borders

Please direct any enquiries to Lynne Cuerden Tel: 01835 826527
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SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD

- Date:** 7 March 2024, 2.00 pm.
- Location:** Via Microsoft Teams
- Attendees:** Cllr C. Cochrane (Chair), Councillors S. Hamilton and E. Thornton-Nicol, Ms K. Hamilton (NHS Borders), S. Fletcher (Police Scotland), S. Bosworth (Scottish Fire & Rescue), C. Easton (BCA), Prof. R. Griggs (SOSE), C. Fancy (Eildon Housing Association), S. Mitchell (SDS)
- Apologies:** Councillors J.Greenwell, E. Jardine, C. Myers (NHS Borders), J. Mulloy (SBHA), R. Cowan, P. Smith (Borders College)
- Also in attendance:** Director Resilient Communities, Director Corporate Governance, Participation Officer, Community Co-ordinators (G. Jardine, K. Harrow), VAW & Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator (A. Beavon), Democratic Services Officer (L. Cuerden), (all SBC), J. Amaral (BCA), , M. Meldrum (BHA), K. Kiln (NHS Borders), R. Roberts (NHS Borders)

MINUTE AND ACTION POINTS

1. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received and noted accordingly.
2. **MINUTE & ACTION TRACKER**
 - 2.1 Copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 16 November 2023 had been circulated. Cathie Fancie had been in attendance.

DECISION
AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.
 - 2.2 Copies of an updated Action Tracker had also been circulated. Clare Malster, Participation Officer provided an update to the Action Tracker.

DECISION
NOTED the update.
3. **VOLUNTEERING ACTION PLAN**
 - 3.1 Juliana Amaral shared a presentation with attendees which provided the background to Borders Community Action, its mission and its four key values: 'Bold', 'Trust', 'Wise' and

'Inclusive'. A summary of the four strategic objectives was shared which currently focussed on Community Place Planning. BCA also contributed to both National and Regional Shared Outcomes which included leadership in the decision-making structure of the Scottish Borders Integration Joint Board (IJB) as part of the HSPC (Health & Social Care Partnership) and advocated for the third sector on the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership. Ms Amaral went on to outline the ABCD approach – Asset Based Community Development – which was built upon an ageing population with a wealth of wisdom and experience; the creation of opportunities for skills development and employability; and finding assets and linking community activism to causes with the caveat that volunteering was not a replacement for what should be paid employment. Details on a new accreditation award were shared; the Volunteer Friendly Award was a user-friendly quality standard to support, recognise and reward groups that were good at involving volunteers. There had been 16 expressions of interest. The Saltire Awards continued to see a steady growth in numbers with 229 young people registered since April 2023. There had been a pilot of the Volunteer Match-Making project whereby a dedicated BCA team members matched volunteers to a volunteering opportunity. To date there had been 27 new volunteer registrations and 32 informal volunteers. There had been 32 new volunteering opportunities registered and 120 ongoing across the Borders. Volunteers and organisations were able to register a profile and volunteering opportunities were listed on the BCA website and Volunteer Scotland. The Corporate Volunteering pilot was also underway with stakeholder employees (anchor organisations, private sector and community groups) able to participate in community action days, improving groups, organisations and community spaces for local communities to enjoy. A team-building service was also offered. A training programme had operated from April 2023 to March 2024 which offered workshops on the Saltire Awards scheme, managing and supporting workers, support for charity Treasurers, supporting young volunteers and The Volunteer Friendly Award scheme. Attendees welcomed the considerable progress so far.

- 3.2 There followed a brief discussion during which attendees expressed the need for recognition for the voluntary efforts of all, but with particular emphasis on the older population in the Borders who were often the 'backbone' of communities. Ms Amaral confirmed that the BCA were to continue to work closely with schools in relation to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards with school volunteer fairs to be planned for the first term after summer holidays. Scout and Guide groups were also to be considered as a target for the Saltire Awards. Publicity for the corporate volunteering programme was to be planned with SBC and SOSE. Work was ongoing in Selkirk to recognise the work of local volunteers and input from BCA was to be welcomed.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

4. REACHING DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVORS IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

- 4.1 Andrea Beavon, Violence Against Women Co-ordinator/DAAS Service Manager, SBC gave a presentation on 'Outcome 4: Fewer people experience domestic abuse in Scottish Borders' which sat within Theme 4: 'A good place to grow up, live in and enjoy a full life'. The presentation outlined the key messages which Police Scotland and VAW Partnership Coordinator had agreed: to encourage survivors and communities to 'reach in' to enable more survivors in the area to know about specialist services at an earlier stage and publicise wider prevention messages; to remove the well evidenced barriers to disclosure of domestic abuse; and dispel myths. A summary of Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy, launched in 2016 and refreshed in 2023, was shared and there had been circulated a copy of the Equally Safe Logic Model at agenda Item 5 which detailed the framework of vision, outcomes and actions. In tandem with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the CPP was critical for the alignment of local resource and the coalescing of local public services and the communities to address the deep-rooted causes of inequalities and to use preventative approaches to manage future demands on crisis intervention services. A summary of statistics on domestic abuse was provided: in 2021/22 there had been 1200 reported incidents of domestic abuse in the Scottish

Borders and 64,807 across Scotland for the same period. Data evidenced that the average time before disclosing abuse was four years, with survivors in rural locations for nearly two years longer. Half of survivors were unaware of what support was available and only one third accessed a specialist domestic abuse service. Many believed incorrectly that a police report was needed to access a service. A list of next steps was shared which focussed around the consideration of the target audience, the key messaging, signposting, the level and extent of information (local/national), budget implications and the role of CPP stakeholders.

- 4.2 There followed a brief discussion during which there was a suggestion for something similar to the 'Ask for Angela' scheme to signpost referrals in places and services that women were more likely to frequent. The Cedar process and its impact was highlighted and welcomed. Members had asked what more SBC and its partners could do to support the work further; Ms Beavon emphasised consistency of key messaging by all Community Planning Partners around validation, support systems and a commitment to speak to the communities they influence, employ, serve and represent. Also recognised was the number of cases of domestic violence reported was the tip of the iceberg and while reported cases were on the increase there was to be an impact on available resources. There was a suggestion to reach out to business community as well as strategic partners; training of taxi drivers to recognise and report domestic abuse and coercive control was suggested. The need for additional resource to effectively address issues was emphasised. Stuart Fletcher, Police Scotland welcomed the effective partnership approach taken and was to continue work closely with Ms Beavon.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

5. **EQUALLY SAFE: SCOTLAND'S STRATEGY FOR PREVENTING AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

There had been circulated copies of CoSLA's Equally Safe Strategy document for noting. Further discussions on the role of the CPP were to be scheduled once guidance had been issued.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

6. **THEME 4 – A GOOD PLACE TO GROW UP, LIVE IN & ENJOY A FULL LIFE**

There had been circulated copies of Theme 4 progress report.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

7. **CPP IMPROVEMENT PLAN: CHANGE OF CPSB TO BECOME AN UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATION**

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of two reports from Director Resilient Communities which contributed to the final part of the CPP improvement plan. The first report provided a set of recommendations regarding the change of the CPSB to become an unincorporated association along with a copy of the operating framework used by Dumfries and Galloway CPP. Ms Craig presented the risks and benefits of the change followed by a brief discussion. The role of the working partnership between organisations was highlighted as key to its success with meaningful engagement seen as fundamental.

DECISION

APPROVED the recommendations as follows:

- a) **the Community Planning Strategic Board is removed as a formal committee of Council;**
- b) **the Community Planning Strategic Board becomes an unincorporated association;**

- c) **Integrated Impact Assessments continue to be undertaken for all reports submitted to the Strategic Board; and**
- d) **that an Operating Framework for the CPP is put in place.**

7.2 The second report presented the recommendations for change to the CPP current governance arrangements. There had been two workshops to review the current position, identify potential changes and what was needed to deliver the new Community Plan. Director Resilient Communities presented key highlights of the report and a timetable of actions was shared with an updated position to be brought to the Strategic Board in June 2024. In-person meetings would incur extra costs to some representatives for travel and accommodation and a hybrid option was requested. Some representatives also worked over a large geographical area with multiple meetings in a day which would impact on their ability to attend. A possible compromise of at least one meeting a year be in-person with a hybrid option if needed was to be given further consideration. Generally there was support for in-person meetings where possible.

DECISION

APPROVED the recommendations as follows:

- a) **the Joint Programme Board is renamed the Delivery Board;**
- b) **meetings revert back to being in person utilising a theme-based workshop format for part of each meeting;**
- c) **a Delivery Team is established for each theme set out in the Community Plan, Page 121 Community Planning Strategic Board – 7 March 2024;**
- d) **THIS Borders (Tackling Health Inequalities in the Scottish Borders) takes on role of Theme 3 Delivery Team;**
- e) **the Local Employability Partnership takes on role of Theme 2 Delivery Team; and**
- f) **written reports from Theme Teams and key partnerships to be submitted on a quarterly basis.**

8. WORK PLAN PROGRESS REPORTS (FOR NOTING)

There had been circulated, for noting, copies of work plan progress reports which related to Themes 1, 2 and 3.

DECISION

NOTED the reports.

9. FORWARD PLANNER FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

There had been circulated copies of the Forward Planner which Members noted.

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS FOR NOTING

The next meeting of the Community Planning Strategic Board was scheduled for 6 June 2024, 2pm. Other dates were noted.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 p.m.

ACTION SHEET




COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD

Notes:-

Items for which no actions are required are not included

NO.	MINUTE PARAGRAPH NUMBER, TITLE AND DECISION REQUIRING ACTION	ORGANISATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	OUTCOME
7 March 2024				
1. Volunteering Action Plan	Para 3.2 – BCA to liaise with Selkirk Councillors re. volunteer recognition	SBC/BCA	Juliana Amaral	
2. Volunteering Action Plan	Para 3.2 – Discussion to be had on a Borders-wide recognition of older volunteers	SBC/BCA	Jenni Craig / Juliana Amaral	
3. CPP Improvement Plan	Para 7.1 – An operating framework to be developed and put in place	SBC	Clare Malster	
4. CPP Improvement Plan	Para 7.2 - In relation to the Future Governance arrangements, further consideration was to be given to a compromise of hybrid/in-person meetings .	SBC	Jenni Craig	
5. Reaching Domestic Abuse Survivors in the Scottish Borders	Para 4.2 – Further work to be done on consistency of messaging and reaching out to business community around recognising and reporting DV and coercive control.	SBC/Police Scotland	Andrea Beavon / Stuart Fletcher	

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KEY:	
No symbol	Deadline not reached
	Overdue
	<1 week to deadline
	Complete – items removed from tracker once noted as complete at meeting.

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CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PLAN 2023-26 Annual Progress Report 2023/24

Report by Director – Education and Children's Services

COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD

6 June 2024

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the Children & Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 Annual Progress Report for 2023-24 for endorsement before submission to Scottish Government.**
- 1.2 Part 3 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires that each Local Authority, Local Health Board and Partners prepare a Children's Services Plan and subsequently prepare and publish a report on how they have delivered on its plan as soon as practicable after the end of each one-year period (April to March).
- 1.3 This requirement is the responsibility of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) who have delegated the task to the Children and Young People's Planning Partnership (CYPPP).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Community Planning Strategic Board endorse the Children & Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 Annual Progress Report 2023-24 before submission to Scottish Government.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An integrated approach to service planning by partners is a requirement under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This is delivered through the Scottish Borders Children & Young People's Services Plan, which is the responsibility of the Community Planning Partnership, delegated to the Children & Young People's Planning Partnership (CYPPP), previously the Children & Young People's Leadership Group (CYPLG).
- 3.2 The CYPPP leads on the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Children's Services Plan and considers the Promise, the national 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) wellbeing framework, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and corporate parenting responsibilities as policy drivers in their work in the Scottish Borders. The Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#)'s vision for children and young people: "we grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential" is also taken into account.
- 3.3 There is also a duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report. The report should set out progress on:
- Children's services in a one-year period (April to March) provided in accordance with the Integrated Plan
 - What that provision has achieved
 - Aims of Children's Services planning
 - Outcomes focused on the wellbeing of children and young people in the area.
- 3.4 The 2023-24 Progress Report of the Children's Services Plan 2023-26 reflects progress made in relation to the delivery of shared partnership priorities as set out in the [2023-26 Plan](#). The report also sets out progress made on local delivery of work relating to the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.

4 CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2023/24

- 4.1 The Children's Services Plan Annual Progress Report 2023-24 is set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The main policy driver for children and young people's services in the Scottish Borders is the Promise. We see its relevance and application extending to all children and young people, not just those who are care experienced, therefore the Promise sits at the heart of our plans.
- 4.3 The Children & Young People's Planning Partnership (CYPPP) have worked hard over 2023/24 to deliver meaningful and sustainable improvements to the lives of all our children and young people. Progress is reported on priorities contained within each of the following networks as set out below.



- 4.4 **A Good Childhood** highlights include increases in attendance of primary aged care experienced children and positive destinations. Targeted early intervention and prevention work is underway with the Youth Justice Team and education services to deliver the 'No Knives Better Lives' programme to S1 and S2 pupils, and ongoing funding for a Children and Young People's Independent Advocacy Service has been secured.
- 4.5 **Whole Family Support** focuses on ensuring there is a co-ordinated approach to prevention and early intervention support for children, young people and families from pre-birth, as well as supporting school holiday provision and asylum seeking, refugee and gypsy/traveller children and young people living in the Scottish Borders. In 2023/24 funding was made available for a comprehensive partnership programme of school holiday activity for targeted children and young people.
- 4.6 **Planning and Building Capacity** highlights work done around the development of a Youth Participation and Engagement strategy which is co-produced with children and young people and the preparation of a joint strategic needs assessment to assess the current health and wellbeing needs of our children and families. The network has also facilitated a response to Scottish Government's consultation on statutory guidance for the incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law in 2024.
- 4.7 **Supporting the Workforce** has focused on learning and development for our children and young people's workforce, including core training on attachment, trauma, child development and child poverty.
- 4.8 **Whole Family Wellbeing Funding**
Appendix 1A reports progress on Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF). This is a specific Scottish Government template and enables the integration of progress reporting on all aspects of the WFWF to take place within the statutory annual Children's Services Plans reporting cycle. Activities undertaken in 2023/24 include increasing staffing capacity to implement the WFWF plan and the Promise as well as the development of a new Whole Family Support team.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- a) Risks associated with this report relate to the non-delivery of actions set out within the priorities of the Children & Young People's Services Plan 2023-26, and the potential impact this may have on children, young people and families.
- b) Appendix 1 outlines progress made against priorities in the 2023-24 Annual Progress Report, which demonstrate a commitment to the delivery of actions to support children, young people and families.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated impact assessment has been carried out in relation to this report and is attached as Appendices 2 and 3. The Plan and Report are fully inclusive of all, therefore there are no specific implications.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

In considering each of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the following may be considered to make a difference:

- a) **Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms** – Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and Partners prepare a Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan and an Anti-Poverty Strategy is in place. Progress against poverty is reported in these, demonstrating a commitment to end poverty in all its forms.
- b) **Goal 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture** – local action is taken in various forms through the multi-agency approach to service delivery in this plan. Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and Partners have prepared a Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan for 2023/24 which outlines actions in relation to food security.
- c) **Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages** – local action is taken in various forms through the multi-agency approach to working with partners outlined in this report.
- d) **Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all** – vulnerable children and young people are offered support and given opportunities in this report. The Promise is at the heart of service design and delivery for improved outcomes for all children and young people and their families.
- e) **Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls** – our engagement with children, young people and families is inclusive of all, ensuring that everyone has a voice. Our co-production work on the Youth Participation and engagement strategy is designed to ensure children and young people with quieter voices are at the heart of decision making in the Scottish Borders.

- f) **Goal 10 – Reduce inequalities** – This report demonstrates the work undertaken towards closing the gap between our most deprived and least deprived families and communities and targets resources to support our most vulnerable children and young people.

5.5 Climate Change

There is no impact on climate change as a result of this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

There are no rural proofing implications contained within this report.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation as a result of this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Director (Finance & Procurement), the Director (Corporate Governance), Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Lesley Munro

Director Education and Children’s Services

Signed

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Janice Robertson	Strategic Planning & Policy Manager, 01835 824000

Background Papers: n/a

Previous Minute Reference: Community Planning Strategic Board 08.06.23

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Janice Robertson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Janice Robertson, Council HQ, Newtown St.Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, 01835 824000, jrobertson@scotborders.gov.uk

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Children's Services Plan Annual Progress Report 2023/24

DRAFT

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Progress Report of our Children & Young People's Services Plan for the Scottish Borders. This report reflects progress made in relation to the delivery of shared partnership priorities as set out in the [2023-2026 plan](#) and is the first annual report, as well as the first progress report prepared by the new Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPPP).

The CYPPP is a new multi-agency strategic decision-making forum for Children and Young People's services in the Scottish Borders and carries out this work on behalf of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The CYPPP (previously the Children and Young People's Leadership Group) brings together partners from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Police Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), and the Third Sector.

Under the Children & Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 3 - Children's Services Planning) there is a duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report.

The report should set out progress on:

- Children's services in a one-year period (April to March) provided in accordance with the Integrated Plan
- What that provision has achieved
- Aims of Children's Services planning
- Outcomes focused on the wellbeing of children and young people in the area.

The Partnership leads on the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Children's Services Plan and considers the Promise, the national 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) wellbeing framework, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and corporate parenting responsibilities as policy drivers in their work in the Scottish Borders. The Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#)'s vision for children and young people: "we grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential" is also taken into account.

The priorities of the 2023-26 Children and Young People's Services Plan are set out within four identified networks. The networks reflect the priority areas of the Promise, and the following pages of this Annual Report outline good progress made within each of these:

1. A good childhood
2. Whole family support
3. Planning and building capacity
4. Supporting the workforce

As well as reporting progress on our 2023-2026 Children & Young People's Services Plan, this report also shows progress made on local delivery of work relating to the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF). This enables the communication of data and evidence to demonstrate accountability for use of local resources by Community Planning Partners as well as providing an evaluation of the WFWF. Full progress is shown in Appendix A.

The CYPPP wishes to thank all partners for their collaborative hard work in improving outcomes for all children, young people and their families in the Scottish Borders.

Keeping The Promise in Scottish Borders

In the Scottish Borders, the Promise is considered an umbrella policy driver for children and young people's services, as we see its relevance and application extending to *all* children and young people, not just those who are care experienced.

This commitment is a fundamental shift which places the Promise at the heart of our plans, and this progress report focuses on strengthening the foundations to deliver the Promise in the Scottish Borders. A dedicated Promise Team has been created to support the work of the CYPPP and implementation of the Promise locally.

Some high-level examples of the Promise work are outlined below.

- A 'Brothers and Sisters' working group have developed local guidance around this area of work with siblings and a case study shown in Appendix B outlines the success of this important element of the Promise.
- Progress in planning and implementing activities using the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund is ongoing and this is reported in Appendix A. The CYPPP have highlighted the need to improve and better coordinate the delivery of early intervention support services to children, young people and their families who are in need to additional support. Recommendations were made to the CYPPP following a review of other models of practice and these are set out in Appendix A.
- The Scottish Borders Champions Board continues to support young people aged between 14 and 21 years old in foster care, residential care, or supported/independent living. This is a structured forum focused on participation work but also builds relationships and supports individual needs.

A plethora of work has been undertaken to keep the Promise in the Scottish Borders; however, promoting awareness of the Promise across the multi-agency partnership requires improvement. A robust communications strategy is now needed to ensure all staff and the wider community are aware of the work being undertaken and what they can do/how they can get involved to #KeepThePromise.

Commissioning

To ensure that we have the right services, the 2023-2026 Children's Services Plan makes a commitment to developing a commissioning strategy which takes into account the needs of children, young people, carers and families who require additional support and the right to access advocacy.

Current commissions are under review and Scottish Borders Council's Commissioning Framework will be used to undertake this work. It is envisaged that a new Commissioning Strategy will be in place for April 2025.

We will agree priority areas based on national funding requirements and assessed need. We will make best use of statutory, independent and third sector provision, and appoint appropriate commissioned services to deliver:

- Positive emotional & mental health wellbeing of children and young people
- Availability, access, and support for young carers
- Consistency of access to quality youth work services
- Supporting choices
- Equality & inclusion
- Positive life choices
- Availability and access of advocacy services
- Support to children and families who are affected by parental substance use

A Good Childhood

The 'A Good Childhood' Network has a bi-monthly focus on corporate parenting. The outcomes within the Network action plan are:

1. To increase school attendance, qualifications and post-school positive and sustained destinations of care experienced children and young people in line with education.
2. To develop multi-agency early and effective intervention approaches for children and young people in conflict with the law.
3. To reduce the number of children and young people in out of authority placements
4. To promote and share the learning from the sector-leading work of Wheatlands Children's House locally and nationally.
5. To ensure children and young people living in the Scottish Borders will have access to independent advocacy up to the age of 26.
6. To ensure that the community mental health improvement plan and the CAMHS improvement plan reflect the needs of children and young people.

Progress towards these outcomes so far:

- Baseline data in relation to part-time and build up timetables is being collated. A new school attendance policy will be launching in August 2024, which will require schools to register all build-up timetable details centrally.
- Attendance of primary aged care experienced children has increased from 88% in 2022/23 to 89.7% as of May 1st 2024.
- There has been a 2% increase in care experienced school leavers in a positive post-school destination at the initial review stage in the last academic year
- Targeted early intervention and prevention work is being undertaken, which aims to reduce the number of referrals sent to SCRA. This includes the Youth Justice team working with education colleagues to ensure the 'No Knives Better Lives' programme is being shared with all S1 and S2 pupils across the Borders.
- The Youth Justice team are in the early stages of developing preventative work which focuses on 10- and 11-year-olds who are at risk of coming into conflict with the law.
- A council project has been set up to reduce the number of children and young people being placed in Out of Authority placements. To date, the Project team has undertaken a mapping exercise and gap analysis of services and completed a review of approaches developed in other children's strategic planning partnership areas. Additionally, a survey has been undertaken to identify parental need and gaps in service provision.
- Ongoing funding for a Children and Young People's Independent Advocacy Service has been secured, an initial consultation exercise with parents and carers has been undertaken, and a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) is underway.
- A small working group has started to meet to establish STRETCH aims in relation to the CAMHS and community mental health improvement plan.

Whole Family Support

The Whole Family Support Network has a focus on:

1. Ensuring there is a co-ordinated approach to prevention and early intervention support for children, young people, and families from pre-birth.
2. Supporting a coordinated approach to school holiday provision carried out by the Holiday Funding group and Child Poverty group.
3. Improving joined up approaches to supporting asylum seeking, refugee and gypsy/traveller children and young people living in the Scottish Borders.
4. Ensuring that the revised Scottish Government GIRFEC guidance is interwoven through policy and practice across the children and young people's workforce in Scottish Borders.

Progress towards those outcomes so far:

- Since November 2021, Scottish Borders Council has accommodated Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children (UASC). Placement types range from foster care to supported accommodation. Service developments include:
 - New roots – access to participation opportunities
 - Enrolment in Scottish Borders schools
 - Health assessments
 - Welcome packs and orientation programmes
- School holiday funding was made available in 2023/24 and the partnership worked with various organisations to provide activities for targeted children and young people
- Activity around the need to improve and better coordinate the delivery of early intervention support services to children, young people and their families who are in need to additional support is reported in Appendix A.
- The GIRFEC approach continues to be embedded across all networks and partners of the CYPPP and a new action plan is being created to further upskill staff.

Planning and Building Capacity

This Network is working to deliver four broad outcomes which are:

1. Developing a Youth Participation and Engagement strategy which is co-produced with children and young people.
2. Developing a multi-agency performance outcomes framework for children and young people which can be used across the partnership.
3. Developing a multi-agency communications strategy for the CYPPP.
4. Ensuring organisations working with children and young people in Scottish Borders are ready for the UNCRC being incorporated into Scots Law.

Progress towards those outcomes so far:

- A consultation questionnaire for young people went live in March 2024 and has attracted over 700 responses to date. The survey has been promoted to those with quieter voices and 16–25-year-olds out-with education
- Preparation of the Participation and Engagement strategy itself and making plans for a launch in Autumn 2024
- A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to assess the current health and wellbeing needs of Scottish Borders children, young people and families is underway. Key performance indicators will be developed thereafter.
- A Communications strategy is under development and the first newsletter has been published. This work will continue to ensure that the work of the CYPPP is understood by children and young people, as well as practitioners and CYPPP Partners.
- A response to Scottish Government's consultation on statutory guidance for the incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law has been submitted on behalf of the CYPPP.
- CRWIA (Children's Rights Wellbeing Impact Assessment) work is progressing and will be adopted across the partnership.
- Rights Respecting Schools work is progressing in Scottish Borders Schools.

Supporting the Workforce

This Network is tasked with ensuring that we support our workforce to develop nurturing, patient, kind, compassionate, trusting and respectful relationships with children, young people and their families so that children in the Scottish Borders grow up feeling loved, safe and respected.

The Network is working to deliver five broad outcomes which are:

1. The CYPPP and its members have a comprehensive understanding of who constitutes the workforce, their shared value and learning and development framework.
2. The workforce will receive the multi-agency learning and development opportunities they need to be able support children, young people, and their families to flourish.
3. Develop a participation and engagement plan for the network that aligns with other networks and the work of the CYPPP.
4. The workforce and the organisations for which they work will be able to demonstrate that they are embedding trauma informed practice across their work and within their workforce.
5. Young people entering the workforce in Scottish Borders will have their individual needs understood and supported by employers.

Progress towards those outcomes so far:

- We have developed a comprehensive workforce mapping document which considers the workforce in its broadest sense as outlined in the Promise – anyone who spends time with or has responsibility towards children, young people, and families.
- We are working on gathering information for a multi-agency workforce learning and development mapping tool to establish what training is currently available and identify where the gaps are. Borders College are an important partner and provide qualifications which are essential to embark and progress in careers within the children and young people workforce, including Early Years and childcare.
- We have started to develop a shared training expectation and a clear tiered L&D framework for our children and young people's workforce. This will include some core training expectations such as attachment, trauma, child development, and child poverty.
- The Integrated Psychological Trauma Steering Group which feeds into this Network around the embedding of trauma informed practice is currently progressing well with a trauma informed practice training plan and piloting of Trauma Needs Assessments which include consideration of supporting supervision, organisation policies and procedures, leadership, and training.

Conclusion

The Children and Young People's Planning Partnership are proud of the work done in 2023/2024 under the Children and Young People's Services Plan for 2023-2026

The Partnership itself is developing well, as are the four networks as outlined above. Year two of the Partnership and Plan will build on the foundations of what has been achieved to date. We look forward to working with partners to continue to deliver the priorities contained in the Plan.

The partnership will continue to work towards enhancing the lives of our children, young people and their families and contribute to the priorities and outcomes of the CPP.

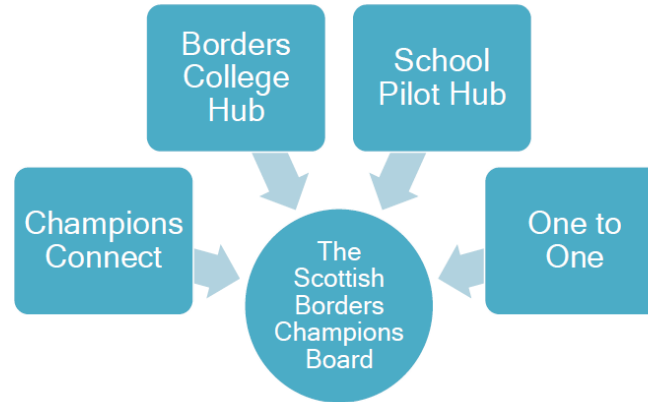
We will ensure that listening to and making sense of what is heard is embedded into all practices and processes that engage with children and families, avoid duplication and make a difference to the lives of children, young people and their families in the Scottish Borders.

Appendix A - Whole Family Wellbeing Funding – Reporting progress as part of annual Children’s Services Plans (CSP) Reports (March 2024)

SECTION 1: Activities, WFWF Logic Model Outcomes, and Budget Allocated

Question 1: Activity title and description	Question 2: During this year, how has this activity contributed (or is expected to contribute) toward one or more short-term, intermediate, or long-term WFWF Logic Model outcome(s) identified in your WFWF Initial Plan template? Please describe this using evidence and citing sources.	Question 3: Estimate of % of WFWF funding spent on this activity to date and estimate of % of this activity out of total WFWF budget.
Activity 1: Building staffing capacity within the CSPP	<p>The outcome was to increase staffing capacity to implement the WFWF plan and implementation of the Promise in Scottish Borders. Building on the Promise Implementation Officer role becoming a permanent post and the creation of a three-year Promise Project Worker post in 2022-23, 2 additional posts were advertised in 2023-24. These posts are a Participation and Engagement Officer who works collaboratively to support, advise and promote participation activity across statutory and third sector Children’s Services; and The Promise Quality & Improvement Officer will work alongside partners at both an operational and senior management level to develop and deliver an action plan based on the five foundations of the Promise. The posts were advertised and appointed to in March 2024, and the successful candidates do not start in their new posts until April / May 2024.</p>	<p>This activity represents 6.1% of total WFWF budget for this year.</p>
Activity 2: Analysis and evaluation of existing family support	<p>As part of the development of a new Whole Family Support Team and, in an associated project looking at reducing the number of care experienced young people being looked after out with the Scottish Borders, a mapping exercise and gap analysis of services was undertaken. This resulted in a clear gap in provision for holistic family and parenting support. This was accompanied by a survey of presenting parental needs with holistic support, parenting, mental health and poverty being prevalent. These findings have informed the development of the partnership Whole Family Support Team (see Activity 5) and broader planning around enhancing prevention and early intervention services.</p>	<p>Estimate that 0% of WFWF funding spent on this activity as of 01/04/2024 and estimate that this activity represents 0% of total WFWF budget for this year. This is misleading however as again it is difficult to accurately represent the role played by The Promise Lead Officer has played a lead role in this area.</p>
Activity 3: Engagement with children and families	<p>The Champions Board continues to be the primary approach to participation work with care experienced children and young people in the Scottish Borders. The Statement of Purpose for the Champions Board is “To provide a platform for care-experienced young people to raise and discuss key issues that have affected them whilst being a looked after young person in the</p>	<p>This is difficult to extrapolate as elements of both the Promise Lead Officer post and Promise Project Worker post are involved in engaging with children and families. The</p>

Scottish Borders, and to develop strong relationships with their corporate parents to ensure that together we can improve the care system by tackling and overcoming the issues discussed". The approach is managed through the Promise Team and the young people who are involved. As in the previous reporting period, the approach has continued to be develop a schools' Champions Board pilot setting up Champs Hubs in high schools.



Champions Board Hubs began in Jedburgh Grammar Campus and Berwickshire High School in early 2023 and have expanded to Peebles High School, with a plan to establish a Hub at Galashiels Academy in the next couple of months.

A New Roots group is a Champions Board project for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people in Scottish Borders. It helps provide a support infrastructure for this group of young people and aims to:

1. Offer a safe space for peer support and a welcome to new arrivals to the Scottish Borders.
2. Provide a platform for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people living in the Scottish Borders to have a voice and influence change.
3. Support the creation of new links within the community, ensuring young people know who their corporate parents are and the range of support services and opportunities available to them in Scottish Borders.
4. Learn and share information about other cultures (including both the young people's cultures and Scottish cultures).

The group runs fortnightly and began in January 2024.

The Champions' Board approach to participation is planning to develop for those young people who are looked after in out of authority placements – Champions Connect is a project which will be established later in 2024.

combined posts represent 6.1% of total WFWF budget for this year. This is complimented by other specific partnership and engagement posts within Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders.

	<p>Additionally, the Youth Engagement Listen to Learn (YELL) Group is a team of young people from across the Borders, aged 12 - 25 who are co-producing a Youth Participation Strategy for the Children and Young People's Planning Partnership to guide better engagement and consultation with young people. Focus of participation and engagement work in 2024-25 will be increasing consistency in approaches across the partnership and using the new Participation and Engagement Officer post- increasing participation and engagement with families.</p>	
Activity 4: self-assessment of readiness to change	<p>As part of the development of a new Whole Family Support Team, a mapping exercise and gap analysis of services was undertaken. This resulted in a clear gap in provision for holistic family and parenting support. Additionally, work was undertaken to focus on parental need and gaps in service provision.</p> <p>Within the Planning and Building Capacity Network of the CYPPP, work is ongoing to complete a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a self-assessment of readiness to change using the Supporting Families National Self-Assessment Toolkit for Change. These will further inform partnership work and develop a multi-agency Performance Outcomes Framework for children and young people.</p>	N/A
Activity 5: Scale-up of transformative and effective whole family support services	<p>The Scottish Borders CYPPP Board agreed the following in relation to the scale-up of transformative and effective whole family support services in October 2023. Based on similar national and local examples, a Whole Family Support team, which covers the whole of the Scottish Borders is to be developed. The team will deliver holistic support to address a whole range of individual and family issues, including parenting, housing issues, health and wellbeing issues, offending behaviour, school related difficulties, employability, income maximisation, drug and alcohol issues, etc. The governance, management and staffing of the team will sit in SBC's Resilient Communities but will have a multi-agency component at both managerial and operational levels. The service builds on an existing Intensive Family Support Service which operates locally. The development of the team has been delayed but should be up and running during July 2024. Outcomes for families involved in the existing Intensive Family Support Service have been impressive in terms of parenting support, income maximisation and employability and it is hoped that this will be replicated in the new service.</p> <p>The WFWF has also been used to fund Children 1st delivery of a Family Group Decision Making service and fund Summer Activities for children, young people and families across the Scottish Borders. Although temporary funding, the outcomes of both have been significant.</p>	<p>It is difficult to calculate the % of WFWF spent on the development of the service. Once it is up and running however it will represent a significant amount of the WFWF spend at around 61% of the total funding.</p> <p>Family Group Decision Making - £120,000 Summer Activities for disadvantaged children, young people and families - £150,000 The above temporary funding arrangements made up 39.2% of WFWF for 2023-24.</p>

SECTION 2: Progress Narrative for your overall WFWF plans

Questions	Responses
<p>Question 4: Overview description of what has been achieved to date and how this compares to intended plans, including specific partners who have been involved, particularly third sector organisations.</p>	<p>The development of a new multi-agency children’s services partnership governance structure in 2022-23 was significant and this structure has been embedded and developed in 2023-24 resulting a comprehensive partnership approach to service governance and development. Developments in participation and engagement and implementation and embedding UNCRC have been significant and led by WFWF resources. The WFWF posts are partnership posts working across both statutory and third sector organisations in the Scottish Borders. Organisations such as Youth Borders, Children 1st, Borders Additional Needs Group and local youth groups have been directly involved in the governance of Children’s Services and the use of the WFWF and, in developments relating to participation and engagement and, the scale-up of transformative and effective whole family support services. The Chief Executive of Youth Borders is the Vice-Chair of the CYPPP Board in the Scottish Borders and the local Service Manager of Children 1st chairs one of the supporting network groups.</p>
<p>Question 5: Main successes to delivery and factors enabling these successes.</p>	<p>See above (question 4). The funding of the Promise Lead Officer and the Promise Support Worker posts through the WFWF has continued to enable specific resource to be dedicated to both the new children’s services governance structure and transforming services in line with the principles and requirements of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. Despite delays in key activities and developments, short term funding for Children 1st delivery of a Family Group Decision Making service and Summer Activities for children, young people and families across the Scottish Borders has been significant in terms of impact and outcomes. The new WFWF Participation and Engagement and The Promise Quality & Improvement Officer posts will enable improved capacity for service development across the Children and Young People’s Planning Partnership in to 2024-25.</p>
<p>Question 6: Main challenges to delivery, and how these have been or plan to be mitigated. Please include any details on any activities which have not progressed as expected.</p>	<p>The main challenge to delivering progress on the WFWF has been the time it has taken to develop the new early intervention Whole Family Support Service. We are confident that the teams are nearly ready for deployment and should be fully operational in July 2024. This will significantly improve early intervention support capacity for children and their families in the Scottish Borders.</p>
<p>Question 7: How have the activities and outcomes in Section 1 been informed by different stakeholders? (especially third sector partners and children and families)</p>	<p>All major stakeholders have been involved in the use of WFWF. Decisions regarding the use of the funding and associated developments are all agreed by the multi-agency CYPPP board. Direct feedback has been received from service users of the current Intensive Family Support service in development of the Whole Family Support Team and family feedback is integral to the success of the Family Group Conferencing model. Increasingly proposals will be discussed by the Champions Boards and other children and young participation forums in line with the co-produced children and young People’s participation and Engagement Strategy.</p>
<p>Any other comments, innovative work, relevant learning, or unexpected changes identified during this year?</p>	<p>Scottish Borders have taken time to plan for transformational change in line with the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund over the past 2 years, and we are now in a position where we have an effective multi-agency governance and decision-making structure, a staff team dedicated to developing services across the Partnership and, a plan to significantly enhance early intervention support over 2024-25.</p>

Appendix B - Brothers and Sisters

In August 2021 Scottish Borders Council and Children 1st made a joint application to the Promise Partnership for two years funding.

We were successful in our application and became one of three local authority areas chosen to pilot a Brothers and Sisters Project. Getting it Right for Brothers and Sisters was an investment allocated to help organisations understand more about local needs and gather evidence on what works to ensure relationships between brothers and sisters are cherished and protected.

Our hope was to achieve the development of holistic, child-centred, and recovery focused support for Brothers and Sisters whose family circumstances and past experiences have impacted on sibling relationships. We recognised that though not always straightforward, supporting Brothers and Sisters relationships can give those with care experience some emotional and physical safety, continuity, and familiarity, and support positive child development, promote reparative care and provide lifelong benefits to care experienced children and young people.

We started our project by recruiting a Children 1st Team Leader and Project Worker and setting up a Project Board and Operational Group for Governance which are both made up of Children 1st and SBC representatives. We produced an initial baseline data report using data from the social work database which gave us some sense of care experienced children and their brothers and sister relationships. The analysis of the data included a breakdown by age, placement type, legal order, relationship type, distance lived from their sibling/s.

Early in the project we did some engagement sessions with social workers and initially identified six families to support work through a test, learn and develop approach. Children 1st offered individual and joint therapeutic sessions, support around family time and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM).

Over the two years, Children 1st has worked with 17 families including 62 children and 35 adults (parents, foster carers, and kinship carers) to offer therapeutic support and there are increasing requests for FGDM from social workers to consider sibling relationships as part of the support for the family. There have also been an unforeseen number of requests for support through FGDM where a parent has died, and the brother or sister is to be considered as the main carer for their younger siblings. Children 1st have also supported social work colleagues with sibling tracing – approaching siblings or family members as part of permanency or exploring Kinship options.

There has been a significant shift in practice around considerations for placing Brothers and Sisters and their ongoing relationship when they are separated. Scottish Borders Council's Children and Families Social Work developed and implemented Brothers and Sisters - Policy, Guidance and Practice Standards in December 2021. The document included an assessment template and guidance. A comprehensive Brothers and Sisters assessment should always be undertaken and completed in the following circumstances:

- Where there are significant differences in planning for or placement of siblings at any stage in their care journey, including separation.
- In the permanence planning process where siblings are involved.

- When a decision is made that a comprehensive sibling assessment would aid in the planning process for children.

Specific training on Brothers and Sisters Assessment was commissioned and delivered by the Association of Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Scotland (AFKA) to social workers in 2023 and confidence around the completion of assessments is starting to build with further practice development planned.

Scottish Borders Council and Children 1st have worked collaboratively to input into social work sibling assessments and joint reflective practice space for colleagues involved in complex sibling arrangements. Social workers are now supporting some sibling groups to have family time independent of social work involvement with older siblings taking younger siblings out for lunch or activities themselves.

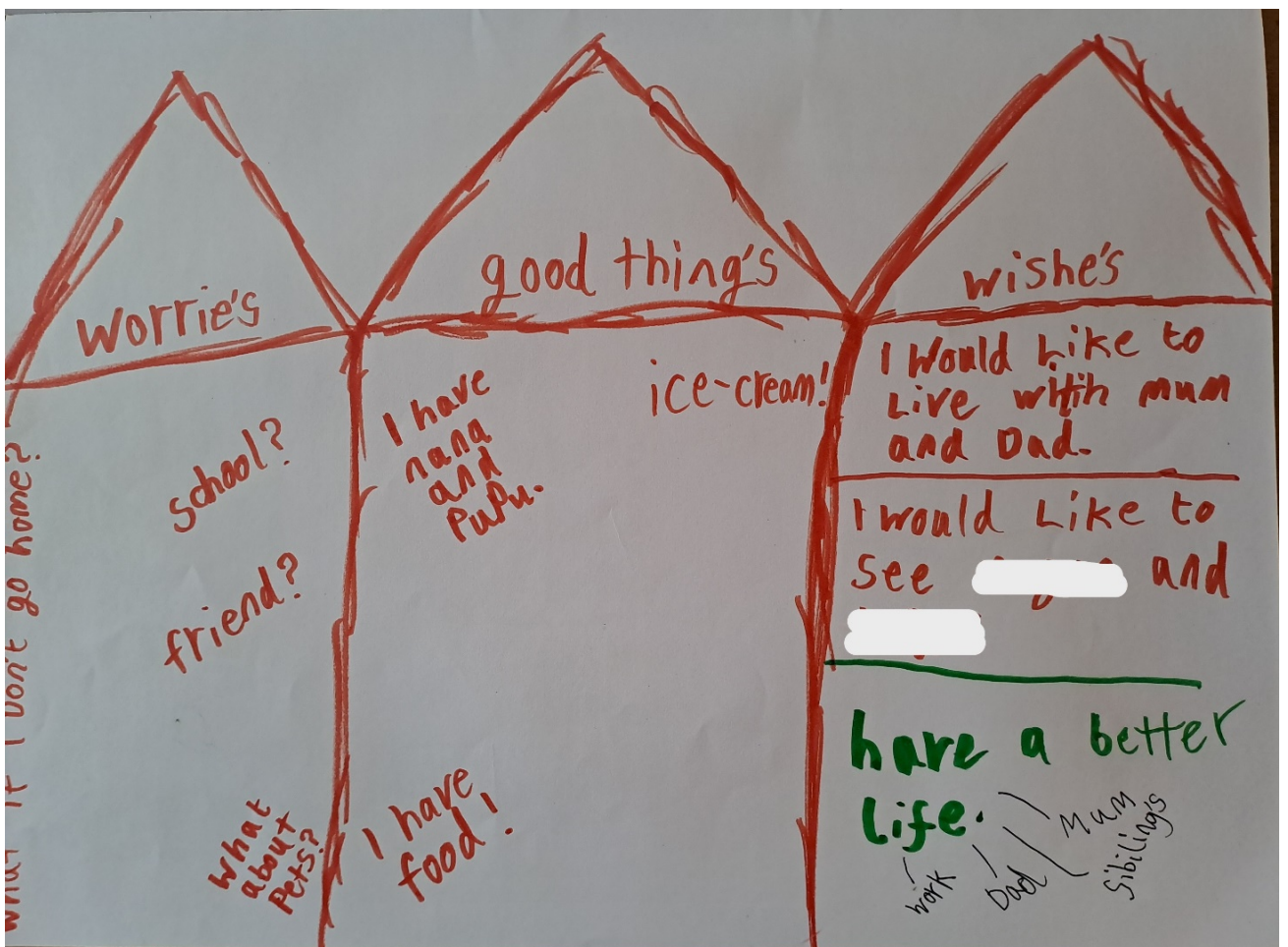
Brothers and Sisters relationships are evident in Child's Plans and prominent in discussions within children's review meetings – information from these processes is providing fuller data around Brothers and Sisters relationships and practice change. We have also moved towards a narrative approach to recording and documenting therapeutic work, family time, and significant events for Brothers and Sisters so that recording about them tells their story in a way that is individual and meaningful to each child through the duration of working together and later in life.

Where relationships for Brothers and Sisters are most complex, we have observed high levels of distress, trauma-based behaviour, and coping responses which then means children need more time to build therapeutic working relationships with the professionals trying to support them. Some of the themes of work for the children directly supported within the project have been loss, rejection, nurture, sense of self and relationships with others and struggles to build trust and form narratives around their lives. One of the key things we have recognised is the need for therapeutic support to be paced and bespoke to the circumstances of the family.

We have developed more insight into the factors and system pressures that contribute to levels of distress and impact on Brothers and Sisters relationships and are actively working to develop improved practice around these areas. These include:

- How to reduce uncertainty over long term placements, returning to the family home, permanence processes and outcomes of Children's Hearings.
- Working with the children who have remained living with their parent whilst their sibling is looked after, what this means moving forward to each child in the family when the looked after child is returning home.
- Levels of distress and trauma-based behaviour impacting on school and learning.
- Planning for family time in a way that is positive, reducing patterns of distressed behaviour between children, and looking objectively at sibling time to keep each child's need central and prioritise quality time over quantity.

We have also learnt new ways to maintain connections for Brothers and Sisters who are separated through cards, letters, photos, gifts, facetime, etc. There is more thought around planning for reconnecting, making this manageable and paced and considering how this will be maintained and made sustainable by carers/family.



Appendix C - BANG/UNCRC Case Study 2023

Borders Additional Needs Group (BANG) is a charity for families of children with additional support needs that regularly provides dedicated Additional Support Needs (ASN), youth programmes, social activities, parent carer walks, summer respite camps, sensory film screenings, and a wide variety of family days out. It has a directory of information accessible to all its members containing information on benefits, funding, holidays, and information specific to various conditions. BANG have strong links with local and national stakeholders, representing the needs of this sector.

Scottish Borders Youth Voice (SBYV) is the name we give to activities for young people (aged 12 to 25 years) to get actively involved in decision-making and youth-led campaigns in the Scottish Borders. Based on Article 12 of the UNCRC, which states that 'a child or young person has the right to be heard in all decision-making processes that affect them', SBYV offers a range of ways to engage and be listened to.

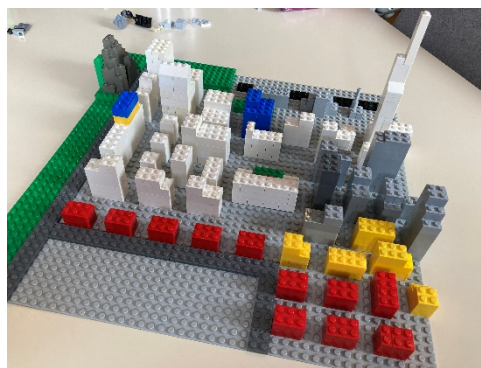
Through a number of discussions between staff members at Scottish Borders Council (SBC) working within participation, we identified that we needed to engage the voice of young people with additional needs better and in more depth than we had done previously. Through another project entitled 'Article 12 @ the heart', we engaged with BANG and developed further links in orders to develop this project, as they also wished to gain a better understanding of the UNCRC for their young people.

In January 2023, we came together to discuss how we could work with the young people to increase their knowledge of Children's Rights and the UNCRC.

It was decided that SBYV and The Promise team would deliver a 6-week project across 2hrs each Friday with a small group of young people to assess their knowledge and develop their understanding of how this translated into their day to day lives in the community.

How did we do this?

Through the medium of building blocks (LEGO), we worked with a group of 4 young men to have discussions on their rights and build island communities out of LEGO that represented what they felt should be the rights available to young people in those communities. We discussed the rights they felt they had available to them and if those rights were easily accessible to them in their daily lives.



There was a great deal of knowledge amongst the group of young people around their rights, some misunderstandings, but also an awareness that despite having those rights, they were not often upheld in their lives.

As part of these sessions, a few members also engaged in a UNCRC discussion on the BANG podcast with the Youth Engagement worker from SBYV and staff from BANG.

Out of these sessions came an understanding that more needed to be done around this subject, ensuring that young people with additional support needs know about their rights and get them upheld in their communities.

Further discussions took place with BANG and Alchemy Arts about the creation of a short film to put this into a more understandable format that would be created by the young people themselves.

Appendix D – Glossary

AFKA	Association of Fostering, Kinship and Adoption
ASN	Additional Support Needs
BANG	Borders Additional Needs Group
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CRWIA	Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
CYPPP	Children & Young People’s Planning Partnership
FGDM	Family Group Decision Making
GIRFEC	Getting it right for every child
L&D	Learning and Development
SBYV	Scottish Borders Youth Voice
SCRA	Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the rights of the child
WFWF	Whole family wellbeing fund

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Stage 1 Scoping and Assessing for Relevance

Section 1 Details of the Proposal

A. Title of Proposal:	Annual Progress Report for 2023-24 of the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26
B. What is it?	A new Policy/Strategy/Practice/Project <input type="checkbox"/> A revised Policy/Strategy/Practice X
C. Description of the proposal: (Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the proposal being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes, including the context within which it will operate))	An integrated approach to service planning by partners is a requirement under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This work is facilitated through the work of the Children & Young People's Planning Partnership which focuses on shared priorities to deliver meaningful and sustainable improvements to the lives of all our children and young people to ensure that <i>everyone</i> can reach their full potential. This annual report for 2023-24 sets out progress made against priorities within the 2023-26 plan.
D. Service Area:	SBC, NHS and Community Planning Partners
E. Lead Officer: (Name and job title)	Janice Robertson Strategic Planning and Policy Manager
F. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)	Multiple – this is a cross-partnership Report incorporating partners from Scottish Borders Council,

	NHS Borders, Police Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the third sector. Names available on request
G. Date(s) IIA completed:	April 2024 May 2024

Section 2 Will there be any impacts as a result of the relationship between this proposal and other policies?

Yes
<p>If yes, - please state here:</p> <p>Scottish Borders Council Anti-Poverty Strategy Local Child Poverty Report 2024/25 and Progress Report 2023/24 Council Plan 2024 Community Plan Community Learning and Development Plan Children's Rights Report 2023-26</p>

Section 3 Legislative Requirements

3.1 Relevance to the Equality Duty:
<p>Do you believe your proposal has any relevance under the Equality Act 2010? <i>(If you believe that your proposal may have some relevance – however small please indicate yes. If there is no effect, please enter “No” and go to Section 3.2.)</i></p> <p>YES</p>

Equality Duty	Reasoning:
A. Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment. <i>(Will the proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)</i>	There is potential to impact on the whole child population and their families in the Scottish Borders. The child is at the centre of an approach which sees the Partnership intervene as early as possible and focus on prevention and change. The Annual Progress Report helps to eliminate discrimination as they are inclusive to all children, young people and their families.
B. Promotion of equality of opportunity? <i>(Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)</i>	The development of action plans arising from the identified priorities will help the Planning Partnership to identify and promote equality of opportunity. The newly formed networks in the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 will work with equality of opportunity in mind.
C. Foster good relations? <i>(Will your proposal help to foster or encourage good relations between those who have different equality characteristics?)</i>	The Planning Partnership has a key role in linking the work and plans of our Partners to achieve the best outcomes we can for our children and young people regardless of different equality characteristics.

3.2 Which groups of people do you think will be or potentially could be, impacted by the implementation of this proposal? (You should consider employees, clients, customers / service users, and any other relevant groups)				
Please tick below as appropriate, outlining any potential impacts on the undernoted equality groups this proposal may have and how you know this.				
	Impact			Please explain the potential impacts and how you know this
	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	
Age Older or younger people or a specific age grouping		X		The Annual Progress Report 2023-24 is inclusive to all children, young people and their families. The report outlines actions taken to meet the needs of individuals across a range of universal services as well as specialist services regardless of age.

Disability A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This may be visible or invisible, progressive or recurring.		X		There are current commissioned services set out in the report which deliver positive emotional and mental health wellbeing of children and young people. A case study is included in the report around the work of the Scottish Borders Youth Voice and the Promise Team with Borders Additional Needs Group (BANG)
Gender Reassignment anybody who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.		X		This Annual Progress Report 2023-24 is inclusive to all children, young people and their families irrespective of gender reassignment/gender identity.
Marriage or Civil Partnership people who are married or in a civil partnership	X			This is not applicable within this report
Pregnancy and Maternity (refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth),		X		The whole family support network focuses on a co-ordinated approach to prevention and early intervention support for children, young people and their families from pre-birth. The creation of a family group decision making service will support families.
Race: including colour, nationality, ethnic origins, including minorities (e.g. gypsy travellers, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers)		X		The Report applies fairly to people of all racial groups. Translations, alternative formats and interpreters are provided upon request as per current Council and NHS Policy.
Religion or Belief: different religious or philosophical beliefs, customs (including atheists and those with no aligned belief) e.g. Christianity, Islam, Hindu, pacifism, vegetarianism, gender critical.		X		The Report is fully inclusive to all religions and beliefs (including non-belief).
Sex women and men (girls and boys)		X		The Report is fully inclusive to all genders.

Sexual Orientation , e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual		X	The Report is fully inclusive to all irrespective of their sexual orientation.	
<p>3.3 Fairer Scotland Duty</p> <p>This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making <u>strategic</u> decisions.</p> <p>The duty is set at a strategic level - these are the key, high level decisions that SBC will take. This would normally include strategy documents, decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources and commissioning services.</p>				
<p>Is the proposal strategic? Yes</p>				
<p>If yes, please indicate any potential impact on the undernoted groups this proposal may have and how you know this:</p>				
	Impact			State here how you know this
	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	
<p>Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.</p>		x		<p>The Community Planning Partnership aim to reduce inequalities, specifically Child Poverty. The Children & Young People’s Planning Partnership contributes to Child Poverty Planning and is included as a priority within their plans and reports.</p>
<p>Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies</p>		x		<p>The Partnership plans and deliver services in ways which promote equity and where possible challenge the root causes of poverty and deprivation.</p>

Area Deprivation – where you live (e.g. rural areas), where you work (e.g. accessibility of transport), see rural proofing guidance		x		The Partnership plans and deliver services in ways which promote equity and where possible challenge the root causes of poverty and deprivation.
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents’ education, employment and income		x		The Report recognises children in low-income families and lower median gross weekly pay in the Scottish Borders. The CYPPP has supported holiday provision activities across the Scottish Borders where many children, young people and families have benefitted free of charge.
Care experienced people		x		The CYPPP carries out the role of Corporate Parent. The Promise is a main policy driver and this commitment is reflected in the report. An out of area placement project is reported within the good childhood network.
Carers paid and unpaid including family members		x		The Carers (Scotland) Act 2018 applies to both adult and young carers and aims to support carers’ health and wellbeing and help make caring more sustainable.
Homelessness		x		The whole family support approach includes homelessness
Addictions and substance use		x		The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy 2020-23 has been included as a key local Plan in the Children & Young People’s Services Plan 2023-26.
Those involved within the criminal justice system		x		A good childhood network includes work in relation to criminal justice for children and young people. The Youth Justice team have been working on the ‘no knives, better lives’ project with education colleagues.

3.4 Armed Forces Covenant Duty (*Education and Housing/ Homelessness proposals only*)

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to the three matters listed below in Education and Housing/ Homelessness matters.

This relates to current and former armed forces personnel (regular or reserve) and their families.

Is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty applicable?

No

If “Yes”, please complete below

Covenant Duty	How this has been considered and any specific provision made:
<p>The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;</p> <p>The <u>MOD Statutory Guidance</u> gives the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger • Geographical Mobility • Separation from Family • Service Law • Unfamiliarity with Civilian Life • Hours of Work • Stress 	
<p>The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces;</p>	
<p>The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.</p>	

Section 4 Full Integrated Impact Assessment Required

Select No if you have answered “No” to all of Sections 3.1 – 3.3.

Yes

If yes, please proceed to Stage 2 and complete a full Integrated Impact Assessment

If a full impact assessment is not required briefly explain why there are no effects and provide justification for the decision.

--

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Signed by Lead Officer:	Janice Robertson	
Designation:	Strategic Planning and Policy Manager	
Date:	May 2024	
Counter Signature Director:	Lesley Munro Director Education and Children’s Services	
Date:	June 2024	

Stage 2 Evidence Gathering and Consultation

A. Title of Proposal:	Annual Progress Report for 2023-24 of the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26
B. Service Area: Department:	SBC, NHS and Community Planning Partners
C. Lead Officer: (Name and job title)	Janice Robertson Strategic Planning and Policy Manager
D. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)	Multiple – this is a cross-partnership Report incorporating partners from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Police Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the third sector. Names available on request
E. Date(s) IIA completed:	April 2024 May 2024

Section 1 Data and Information

A. What evidence has been used to inform this proposal?

(Information can include, for example, surveys, databases, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints made, user feedback, academic publications and consultants' reports).

Multi-Agency meetings were held to inform the Children & Young People's Services Plan 2023-26 Annual Progress Report for 2023/24

Information from Agencies and Partners

National Statistics

Local data and Statistics

Publications

Plans and Progress Reports

Strategic Priorities

Engagement with Children and Young People

Surveys

B. Describe any gaps in the available evidence, then record this within the improvement plan together with all of the actions you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis, and when this is planned)

Various strategies, frameworks and assessments are now in the process of being prepared. Progress is reported on these in the report. They are still classed as gaps as they are not complete. Once complete they will provide valuable information to the networks.

Participation and engagement strategy
Performance Framework
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Workforce Strategy

Section 2 Consultation and Involvement

A. Which groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement

Children, Young People and Families
Young People are involved in the Children & Young People's Planning Partnership
Carers
Multi-agency partners

B. Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the process

The 4 networks of the CYPPP are making progress with their priorities. Many of these include the groups involved above. The CYPPP are responsible for the inclusion of children, young people and families and are actively working to do that.

C. Describe the results of any involvement and how you have taken this into account.

All involvement is recorded and detailed in the Plan and Report in accordance with the 4 priorities of The Promise.

D. Describe any events held and views obtained (if applicable). Add or remove as needed.

Not applicable

Stage 3 Summary and Next Steps

Section 1 Summary

Summarise what you have learned then develop this further.

(Describe the conclusion(s) you have reached from the evidence, and state where the information can be found.)

Please consider the following:

What have you learned from the evidence you have and the involvement undertaken? Does the initial assessment remain valid?

What new (if any) impacts have become evident?

Is the proposal not to proceed because of a disproportionate impact on equality or Fairer Scotland characteristics?

The initial assessment remains valid. Children’s Services Planning and Reporting is a legal requirement and the multi-agency collaborative approach is key to the effective delivery of The Promise priorities identified. The Report demonstrates a positive impact on equality and the Fairer Scotland characteristics.

A. Please indicate if the proposal will proceed

- Yes, please see below section 3 for next steps
 No, the proposal will not proceed based on disproportionate impact on equality or Fairer Scotland characteristics

Section 2 Sign Off

Signed by Lead Officer:	Janice Robertson
Designation:	Strategic Planning and Policy Manager
Date:	June 2024
Counter Signature Director:	Lesley Munro Director Education and Children’s Services
Date:	June 2024

Section 3 Monitoring and Review (complete if relevant, remove if not)

B. State how the implementation and impact of the proposal will be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?

The Children & Young People's Planning Partnership is a multi-agency strategic decision making group which will deliver the 2023-26 Plan and report on progress annually. This group meets monthly to consider the delivery of each priority as aligned to the Promise.

C. What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example who will put this in place? When will it start?

Monthly meetings by the Children & Young People's Planning Partnership

D. When is the proposal due for review?

Year end (submit to Scottish Government as soon as practicable)

E. Who is responsible for ensuring that this happens?

Children & Young People's Planning Partnership and the Community Planning Partnership

F. Please indicate if you have developed an Action Plan to take forward any remaining actions

- Yes, please see attached on final page
 No, no further actions required



SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 AND ACTION PLAN 2024/25

Report by Director – Resilient Communities

COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD

6 June 2024

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

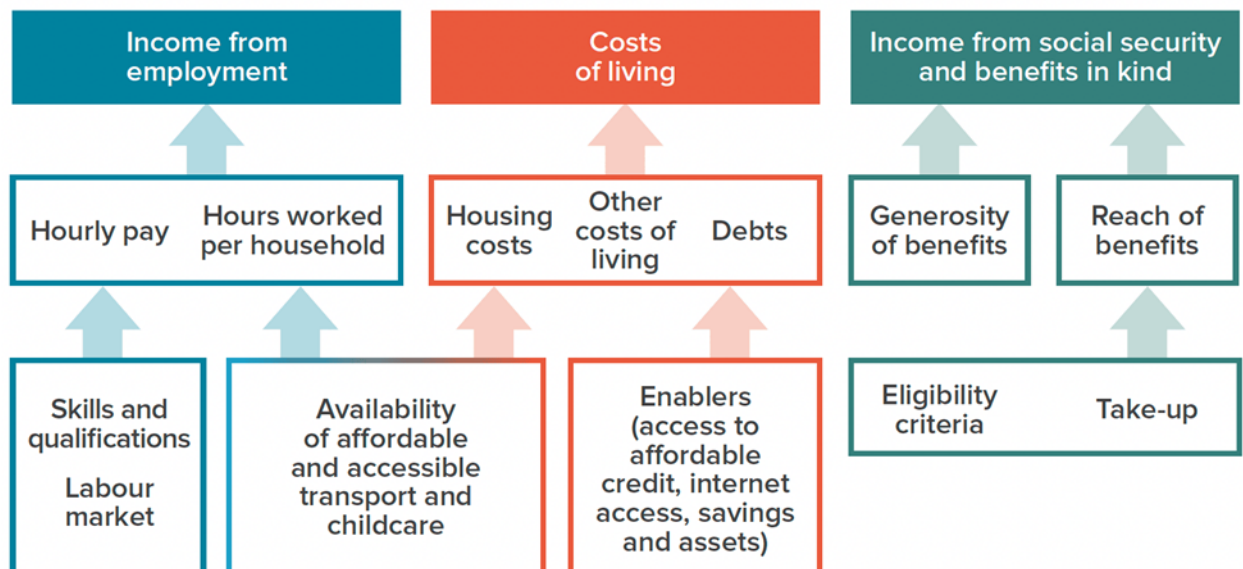
- 1.1 This report presents the Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Annual Progress Report for 2023/24 and Action Plan for 2024/25 (Appendix 1) for endorsement before submission to Scottish Government.**
- 1.2 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report and an Annual Progress Report.
- 1.3 This report provides the Community Planning Partnership and Scottish Government with an update on progress made in the Scottish Borders against activities within the Action Plan for 2023/24 and sets out planned actions for 2024/25.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Community Planning Strategic Board endorse the Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Report for 2023/24 and Action Plan for 2024/25 before submission to Scottish Government.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out the Scottish Government’s statement of intent to eradicate child poverty in Scotland by 2030. Local Authorities and Health Boards are required to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Report (including an Action Plan) and subsequently an annual progress report each year. The annual progress report should describe activities undertaken and planned locally to contribute towards tackling child poverty.
- 3.2 Scottish Government’s tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026, [Best Start, Bright Futures](#) sets out how we will work together to deliver on Scotland’s national mission to tackle child poverty. It focuses on: action to support families; sustained action to create the integrated support that families need to move into work; changing the system to provide the support parents need; and investing long term in both children’s outcomes and economic transformation that will create a fairer, more equal Scotland. This Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan aligns with that approach.
- 3.3 The direct drivers of poverty fall in to three main categories – income from employment, costs of living and income from social security. We remain focused on actions around these themes, as summarised below:



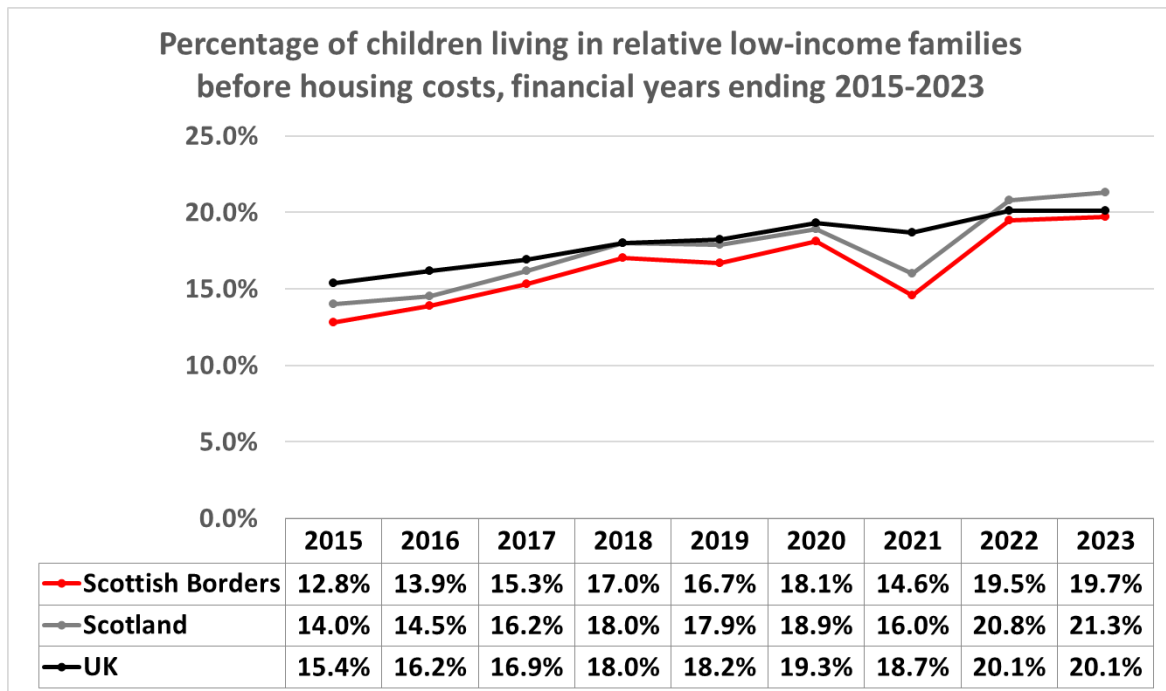
Source: [Best Start, Bright Futures](#)

- 3.4 The national delivery plan continues to focus on supporting families at greatest risk of poverty. Almost 90% of all children in poverty in Scotland live within these six priority family types:
1. Lone parents
 2. Families with a disabled child or parent
 3. Families with 3+ children
 4. Minority ethnic families
 5. Families where the youngest child is under 1
 6. Mothers aged under 25

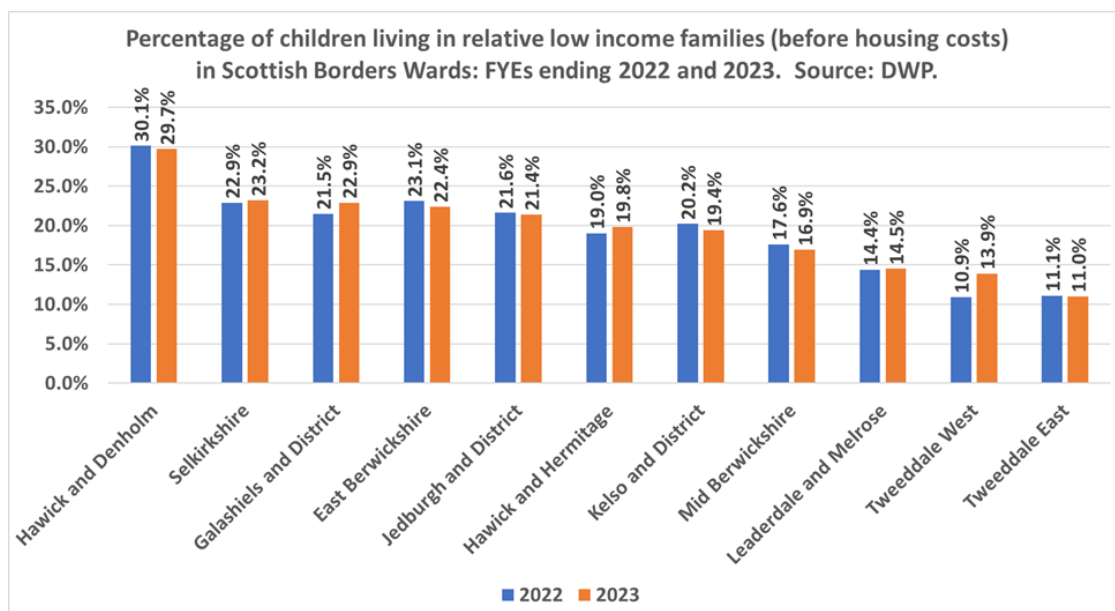
4 WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD POVERTY IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

4.1 Appendix 1A shows a selection of data at local authority level which helps us to monitor child poverty, including data relating to the nationally identified high priority family groups. Significant highlights outlined below indicate the challenge we face in tackling child poverty in the Scottish Borders.

4.2 Our children in low income families (before housing costs) has risen from **19.5%** in 2021/22 to **19.7%** in 2022/23. Whilst the figure is below the average for Scotland (21.3%), it is still concerning that 1 in 5 of our children are living this way.



4.3 Percentages of children in low income families (before housing costs) in Scottish Borders Wards ranges from 11% in Tweeddale East to 29.7% in Hawick and Denholm.



4.4 In 2023, the **median gross weekly pay** for full time workers working in the Scottish Borders (workplace based) was £652, which is £51 less than the £703 for full-time workers working elsewhere in Scotland. This is 93% **of the Scottish figure**.

4.5 The table below shows the number and proportion of households in the Scottish Borders receiving Universal Credit compared to Scotland. Overall, the Scottish Borders has a lower proportion of households receiving UC (13.8%) compared to 17.1% for Scotland. In the Scottish Borders there were 3,233 households claiming the 'Child Entitlement' or 5.8% compared to 6.9% for Scotland.

Universal Credit Households November 2023 (provisional figures)	Scottish Borders No of Households	% of All Occupied Households	
		Scottish Borders	Scotland
All Occupied Households	55,858	100	100
All Universal Credit Households (UCH)	7,709	13.8	17.1
UCH with Children	3,427	6.1	4.6
UCH claiming Child Entitlement	3,233	5.8	6.9
UCH Lone Parent	2,390	4.3	5.5
UCH with 3+ Children	686	1.2	1.4
UCH with Child Under Age 1	263	0.5	0.5
UCH with Children - Child Disability Entitlement	348	0.6	0.9
UCH with Children - Adult limited capacity for work entitlement	566	1.0	1.3
UCH with children - adult carer entitlement	505	0.9	1.2
UCH with children with a UC entitlement due to disability or incapacity of a family member	1419	2.5	3.4

Source: DWP/NRS

5 WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT CHILD POVERTY IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

5.1 Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan

Appendix 1 sets out the Scottish Borders Local Child Report and Action Plan for 2024/25 and an update on the range of activities and actions being carried out across the Scottish Borders to alleviate child poverty by Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and key partners in 2023/24 (Appendix 1B). Some examples are highlighted below:

5.2 Your Family Your Voice

A whole systems approach has been developed over 2023/24 which will strengthen links between partners, identify key policy and practices improvements, create a shared understanding of the causes and solutions of child poverty and improve referral pathways between services. Parental and practitioner engagement work is underway to inform actions and these have been very positive. From these conversations, parents and young people told us about services they think could best support their needs:

- Help with fuel debt
- Provide childcare so they can attend training
- Cost of travel options for families
- Benefits advice delivered locally

5.3 Positive Destinations

Data shows an improving trend in the percentage of school leavers from quintile 1 (the most deprived areas) entering positive destinations after leaving school in the Scottish Borders. In 2018/19, **87.18%** of quintile 1 school leavers entered a positive destination. This figure has steadily increased each year, reaching an impressive **97.65%** in 2022/23.

Several initiatives have contributed to this success, including targeted support for young people, close collaboration with partners such as Skills Development Scotland, employability services, Developing the Young Workforce, and Borders College. We have also focused on enhancing the curriculum to expand opportunities for students, including more work-based learning and courses. The established 14+ partnership, where schools and partners work together to plan supports for young people transitioning from school to their chosen destinations, has been instrumental in this progress. Furthermore, setting ambitious local stretch aims as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge has driven positive change.

5.4 Warm Welcome Spaces across the Borders

Funding of £40,000 was awarded from the National Lottery Community Fund and Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership to Borders Community Action who created a joint approach to support local communities, and the idea of Warm, Welcome Spaces emerged. The grant benefitted a wide range of community groups and organisations across the Scottish Borders with a varied spread across the 5 localities. It is estimated that a total of **3,900** people benefitted from activities, such as arts and crafts, food, cafes, games and youth activities.

5.5 Financial Inclusion

Work undertaken over 2023/24 by the joint SBC Referral System and NHS Pathway Initiative resulted in over £1million in financial gains for families in the Scottish Borders. Case studies shown in Appendix 1 show some of the support provided to families and the positive outcomes they have provided.

5.6 Key areas of work in 2023/24 (Appendix 1B)

Good progress has been made against actions set out, and are shown in alignment to the national delivery plan [Best Start, Bright Futures](#).

5.7 2024/25 Actions

Priorities for 2024/25 are set out in four key themes. These themes have been identified by the Child Poverty Group partners and demonstrate a commitment to working together to deliver differently to tackle child poverty going forward. These will be developed into a Partnership Action Plan.

- a) Understanding local need
- b) Using policy levers and resources
- c) Understanding our progress
- d) Ways of working

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Significant funding is attributed to tackling child poverty within the national delivery plan, and our children and families will benefit as a result. Local budgets and funding are detailed in Appendix 1.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

- a) Risks associated with this report relate to the level of child poverty across the Scottish Borders and the difficulties caused by the cost of living crisis.
- b) Appendix 1B outlines the progress made to alleviate child poverty in the Scottish Borders, and actions set out for 2024/25 show the response being made by the Local Authority, Health Board and other partners to address issues going forward.

6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated impact assessment has been carried out for this report and is shown in Appendices 2 and 3. There are no specific implications.

6.4 Sustainable Development Goals

In considering each of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the following may be considered to make a difference:

- a) **Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms** – local action is reported in both the 2023/24 Annual Report and the 2024/25 Action Plan which contribute to this goal.
- b) **Goal 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture** – local action is reported in both the 2023/24 Annual Report and the 2024/25 Action Plan which contribute to this goal. The Cyrenians Group continue to provide food larders and cook clubs across the Scottish Borders, and there are examples of food support in the Report.
- c) **Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages** – activities are outlined which contribute to healthy lives e.g. Summer holiday programmes provided by a range of partners such as 'Get into Summer' with Live Borders. These programmes offer a variety of different activities including sports, culture, arts, cooking lessons, and often supply food to families to take home. Youth Borders member organisations also contribute to this goal.
- d) **Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all** – positive destinations data shows an improving picture.

- e) **Goal 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all** – housing tenants are supported with energy debt, given money advice and budgeting tips. Collaborative working continues with CABx, Changeworks & Home Energy Scotland to identify fuel poverty, co-ordinating referrals, advice and support.
- f) **Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all** – the Parental employability scheme provides opportunities for parents to train for roles as well as gain employment. The intensive family support service targets specific families to support them into employment. Scottish Borders Council is committed to encouraging the wider adoption of the real Living Wage by partners, local employers and suppliers.
- g) **Goal 10 – Reduce inequalities** – local action is reported in both the 2023/24 Annual Report and the 2024/25 Action Plan which contribute to this goal. Actions aim to identify and tackle poverty and exclusion. The Scottish Borders Anti-Poverty Strategy sets out ways in which the Council and its partners will aim to work together to help reduce poverty across the region and recognises that Child Poverty is included in this aim.

6.5 Climate Change

There is no impact on climate change as a result of this report.

6.6 Rural Proofing

There are no rural proofing implications contained in this report.

6.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

6.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation as a result of this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Director (Finance & Procurement), the Director (Corporate Governance), Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig

Director Resilient Communities

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Janice Robertson	Strategic Planning & Policy Manager, 01835 824000

Background Papers: n/a

Previous Minute Reference: Community Planning Strategic Board 08.06.23

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Janice Robertson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Janice Robertson, Scottish Borders Council, Council HQ, Newtown St.Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, 01835 824000, jrobertson@scotborders.gov.uk



SCOTTISH BORDERS

LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT 2024/25

AND INCLUDING

PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE 23/24 PLAN



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Foreword and Introduction

This report covers progress made in tackling child poverty in the Scottish Borders in 2023/24 and sets out planned actions for 2024/25.

Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Community Planning Partners, and the partnership Child Poverty Group recognise the importance of tackling child poverty, and are determined to make a difference to children, young people, and families in the Scottish Borders.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out the Scottish Government's statement of intent to eradicate child poverty in Scotland by 2030.

The Act requires that Local Authorities and Health Boards jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report and an Annual Progress Report. The reports should describe measures taken to contribute to meeting child poverty targets and proposed measures for the purpose of contributing to meeting the targets. It should also describe any income maximisation measures taken to provide pregnant women and families with children with information, advice and assistance about eligibility for financial support and assistance to apply for financial support.

This Plan sets out our strategic approach and commitment to undertake priority areas of work and key actions to alleviate child poverty. We will work with partners at both a national and local level as we take action throughout 2024/2025.

Child Poverty levels in the Scottish Borders continue to be challenging, for example:

- **19.7%** of our children still live in poverty (before housing costs)
- **23%** of our children still live in poverty (after housing costs)
- **8.2%** of our children in P7 to S6 state that they always or often go to bed feeling hungry.

However:

- The regional pay gap between the Scottish Borders and Scotland has greatly improved since 2021 for workers who live in the region. In 2023, the median gross weekly pay (residence based) was £673. This is £29 below the £702 for Scotland.
- There is an improving trend in the percentage of school leavers from quintile 1 (the most deprived areas) entering positive destinations after leaving school in the Scottish Borders. In 2018/19, 87.18% of quintile 1 school leavers entered a positive destination. This figure has steadily increased each year, reaching an impressive 97.65% in 2022/23.

We continue to align to Scottish Government's tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026, [Best Start, Bright Futures](#). This sets out how we will work together to deliver on Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty. It is a plan for all of Scotland and recognises the contribution that all parts of society must make to deliver the change needed for children and families. Another important national plan is [The Promise](#). Poverty is one of the five fundamentals contained in The Promise plan and organisations must be able to demonstrate how they are playing their part in mitigating the impacts of poverty. We continue to align with the Promise.

We recognise that partnerships are key to the achievement of the outcomes we plan for our children, young people and families in the Scottish Borders and thank the Child Poverty Group and the Community Planning Partnership for their contributions to the Plan.

Councillor Caroline Cochrane – Chair of Community Planning Partnership
David Robertson – Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council
Ralph Roberts – Chief Executive, NHS Borders

National Context

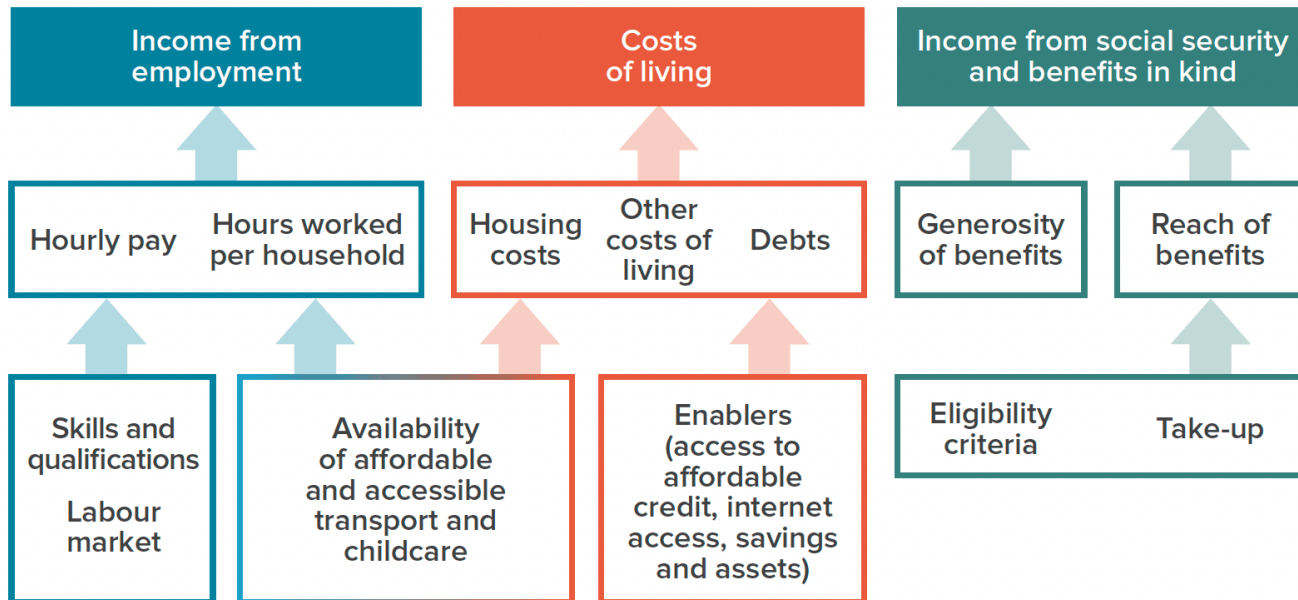
Best Start Bright Futures

Scottish Government's tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026, [Best Start, Bright Futures](#) sets out how we will work together to deliver on Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty.

Drivers of Child Poverty

The direct drivers of poverty fall into three main categories – income from employment, costs of living and income from social security. We remain focused on actions around these themes, as summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Drivers of child poverty



Source: [Best Start, Bright Futures](#)

Fairer Scotland Duty

The Fairer Scotland Duty (the Duty) places a legal responsibility on named public bodies in Scotland to actively consider ('pay **due regard**' to) how they can **reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions**. Therefore, it is crucial that public bodies consider the impact that their decisions have on socio-economic disadvantage and the inequality of outcome that both adults and children may experience as a result.

Families at greatest risk of poverty

The national Child Poverty Delivery Plan continues to focus on supporting the six priority family types. Almost 90% of all children in poverty in Scotland live within these six priority family types. We remain focused on actions to help these families.

1. Lone Parents
2. Families where a member of the household is disabled.
3. Families with 3 or more children
4. Minority ethnic families
5. Families where the youngest child is under 1.
6. Mothers aged under 25.

Source: [Best Start, Bright Futures](#)

Local Context

What do we know about Child Poverty in the Scottish Borders

The headlines below show that we face significant challenges in the Scottish Borders.

- Our children in low-income families (before housing costs) has **risen** from **19.5%** in 2021/22 to **19.7%** in 2022/23.
- 23% of our children still live in poverty (after housing costs) in the Scottish Borders
- 13.8% of Scottish Borders Households receive Universal Credit.

Appendix 1A shows more detail, including data relating to the nationally identified high priority family groups.

Households receiving Universal Credit

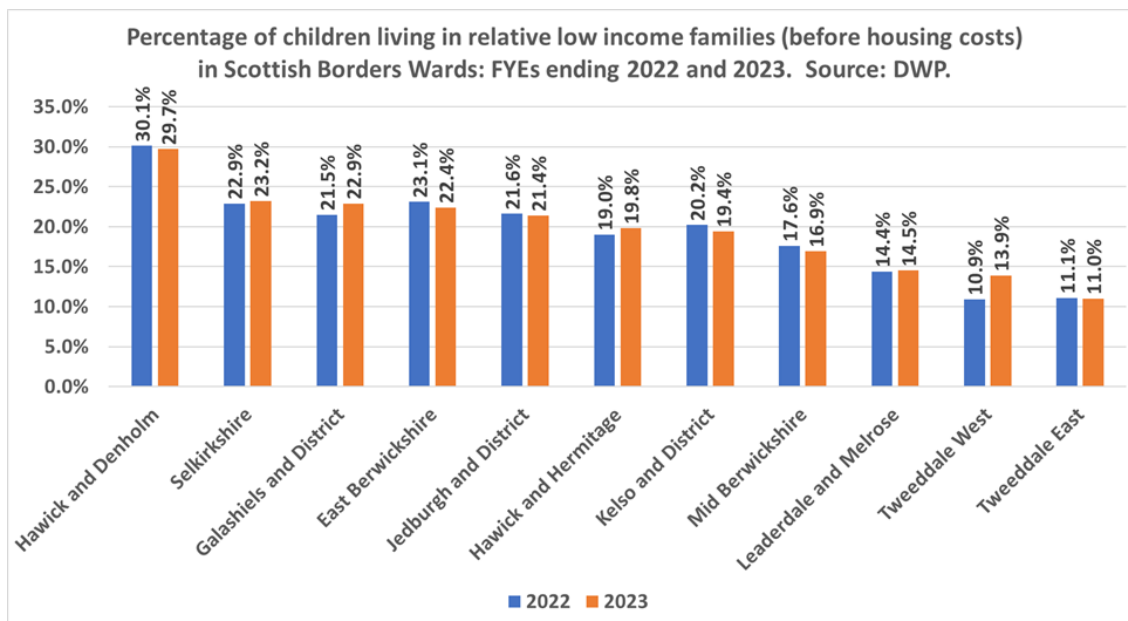
The table below shows the number and proportion of households in the Scottish Borders receiving Universal Credit (UC) compared to Scotland. Overall, the Scottish Borders has a lower proportion of households receiving UC (13.8%) compared to 17.1% for Scotland. In the Scottish Borders there were 3,233 households claiming the 'Child Entitlement' or 5.8% compared to 6.9% for Scotland.

Universal Credit Households November 2023 (provisional figures)	Scottish Borders No of Households	% of All Occupied Households	
		Scottish Borders	Scotland
All Occupied Households	55,858	100%	100%
All Universal Credit Households (UCH)	7,709	13.8%	17.1%
UCH with Children	3,427	6.1%	4.6%
UCH claiming Child Entitlement	3,233	5.8%	6.9%
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UCH with children - adult carer entitlement	505	0.9%	1.2%
UCH with children with a UC entitlement due to disability or incapacity of a family member	1419	2.5%	1.1%

Source: DWP/NRS

Children in Low-income Families in Scottish Borders Electoral Wards

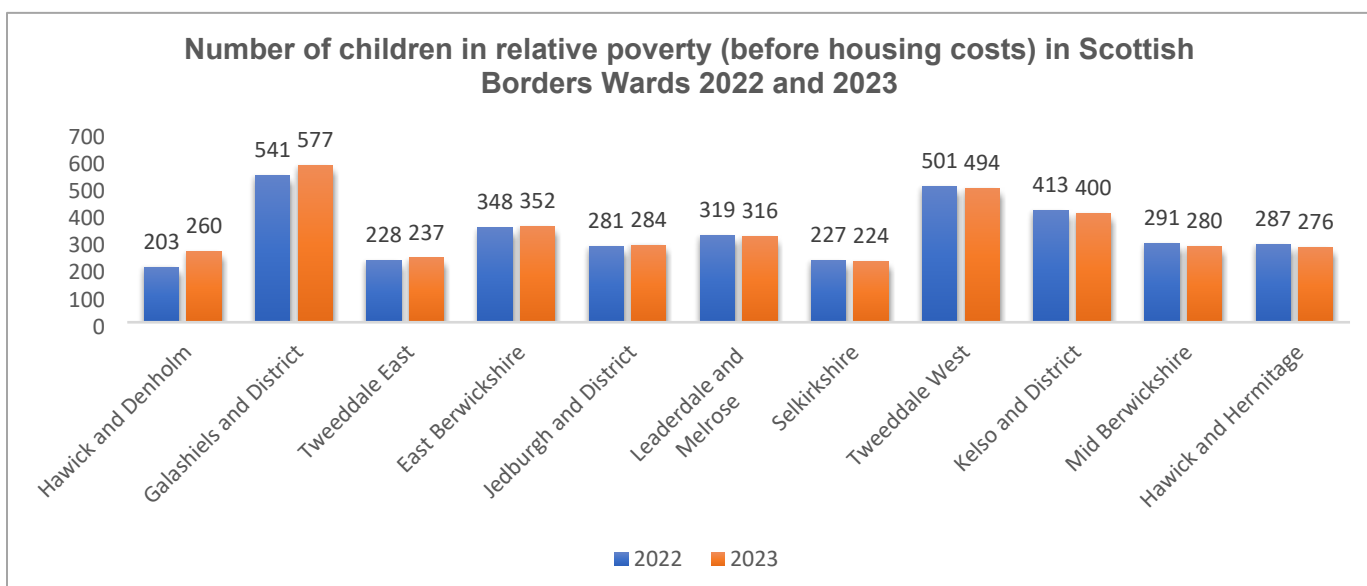
The chart below shows the Relative Child Poverty data at Scottish Borders Electoral Ward level for the financial years ending 2022 and 2023.



Child poverty is highest in the Hawick and Denholm Ward, which contains one of the region's areas of highest Multiple Deprivation. Selkirkshire and Galashiels and District also contain deprived areas, indicating that child poverty is strongly linked with deprivation, as we would expect.

Numbers of children in relative low-income families, Electoral Wards

The following chart gives an indication of the numbers of children who are estimated to be living in relative low-income families in the financial years ending 2022 and 2023.



The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index

The Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index (SB CPI) provides additional insight into Child Poverty in the Scottish Borders. The SB CPI was created to work alongside the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). SIMD provides a way of looking at deprivation in an area, covering the whole population and does not specifically reflect child poverty.

The SB CPI is a summary of two components, which are:

- Children in Low Income Families (**CiLIF**) – Source is [DWP/HMRC](#)¹. Relative low-income is defined as a family whose equivalised income is below 60 per cent of contemporary median income. Gross income measure is Before Housing Costs (BHC) and includes contributions from earnings, state support and pensions. The SB CPI uses the most recent available year's data, currently there is a one-year lag e.g., for SB CPI 2022 uses the CiLIF data for 2021-22.
- Clothing Grant (**CLG**) - Source is SBC. The proportion of pupils recorded for Clothing Grant of all pupils in area for school year.

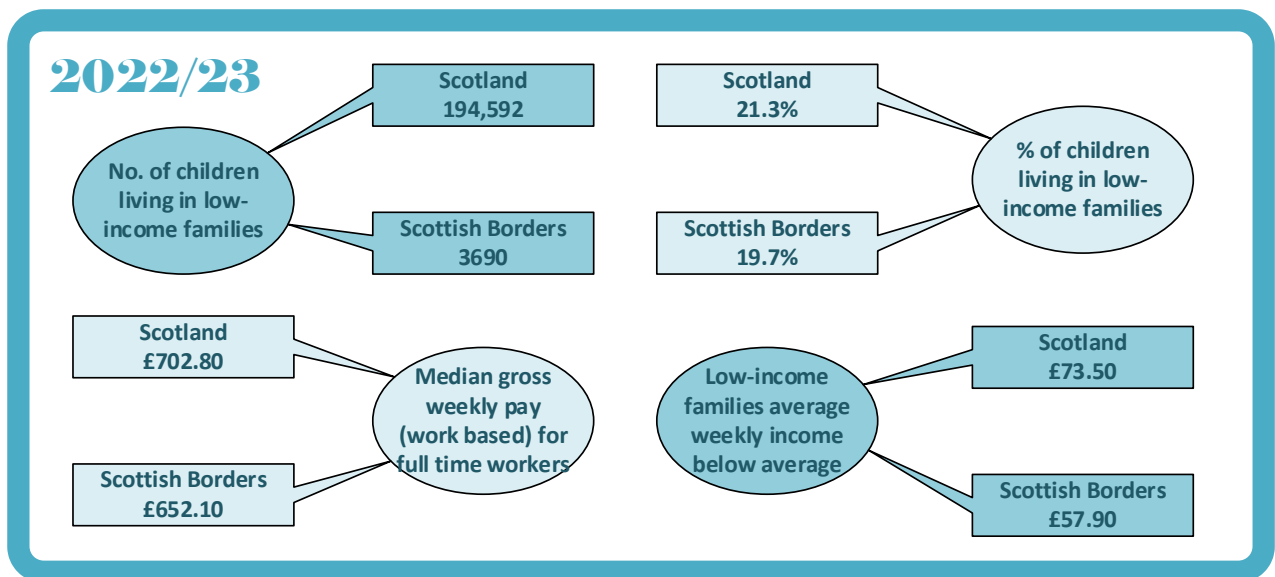
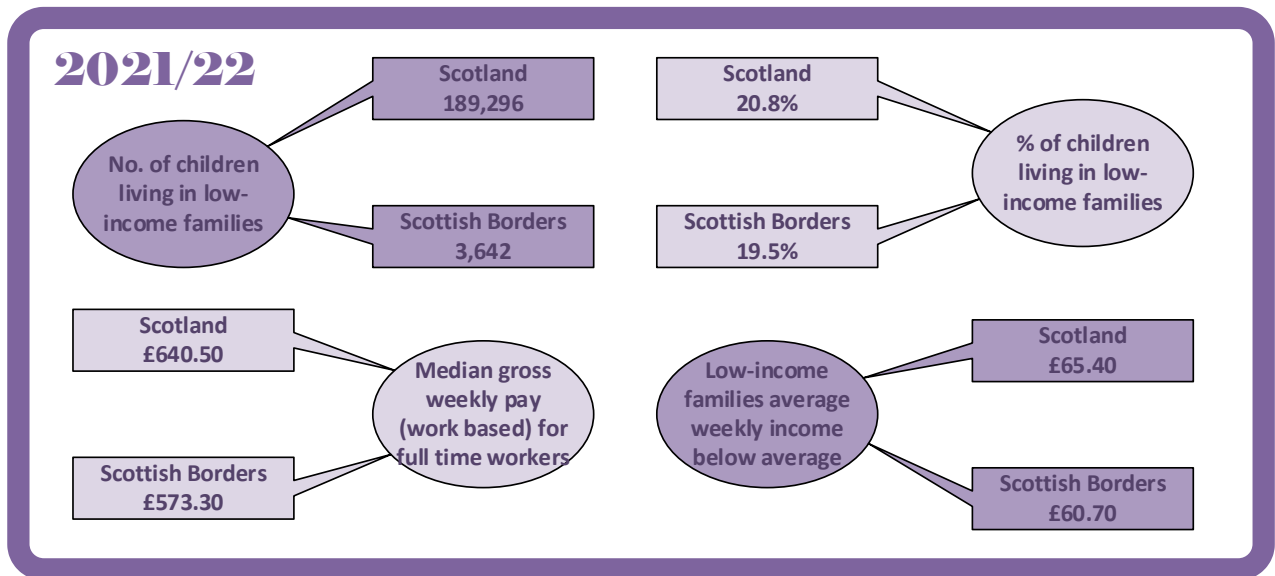
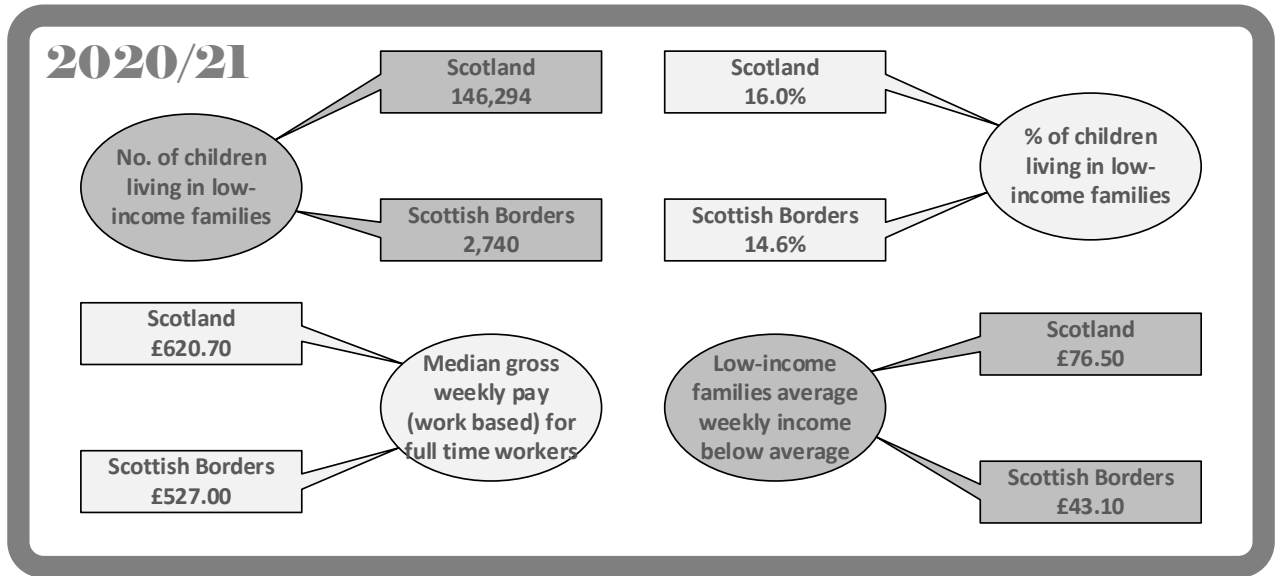
The table below shows the results for the Scottish Borders for 2017 to 2023

Child Poverty Index Component / Year	SB CPI 2017	SB CPI 2018	SB CPI 2019	SB CPI 2020	SB CPI 2021	SB CPI 2022	SB CPI 2023
Children in Low Income Families - CiLIF (DWP)*	19.0%	20.7%	20.5%	22.0%	18.0%	23.8%	23.9%
Clothing Grant - CLG (SBC)	14.6%	15.1%	15.2%	18.1%	18.0%	18.8%	16.7%

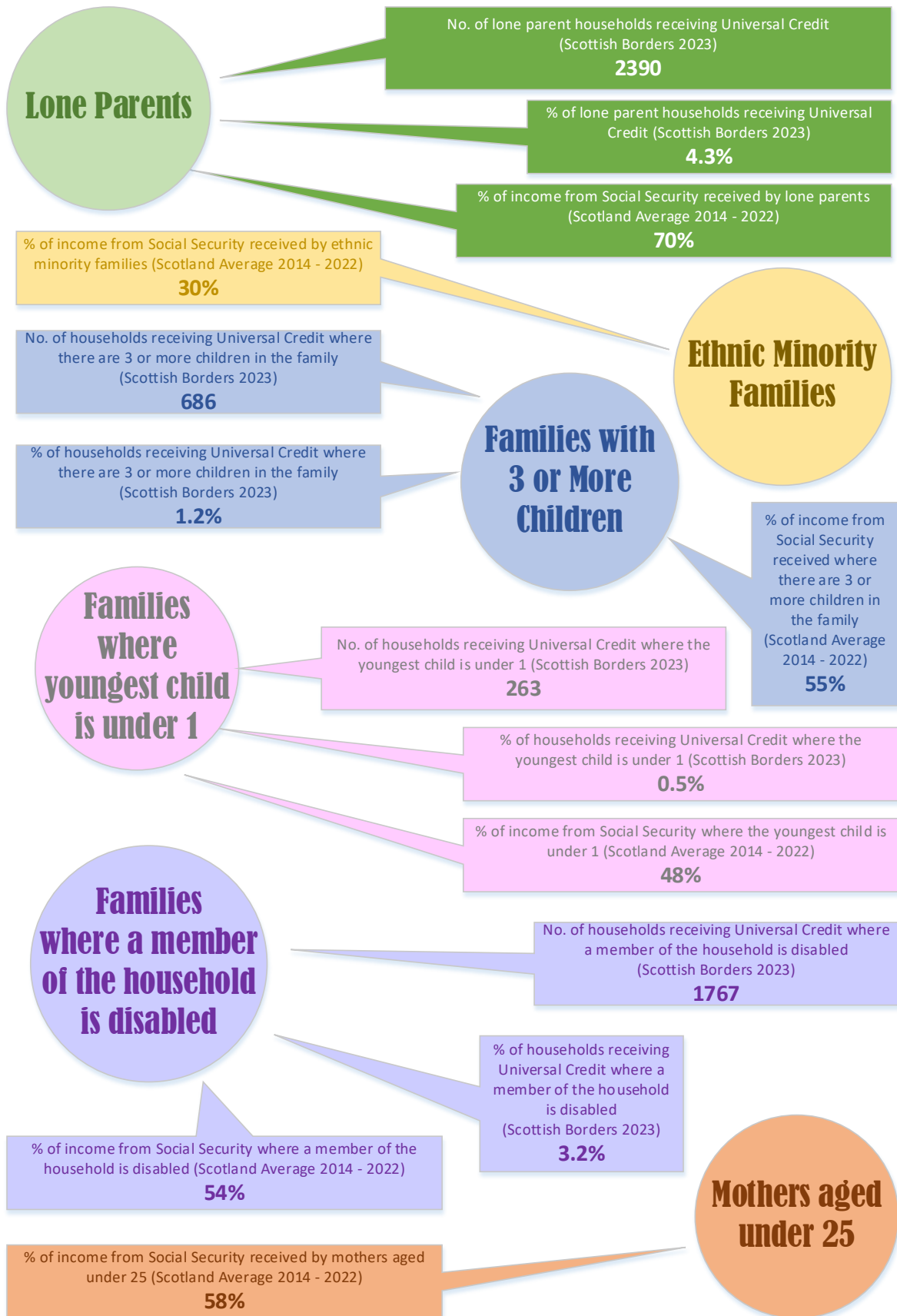
The impact of Covid19 and the cost of living crisis was seen in the number/proportion of data zones with Mid/High/Higher levels of child poverty. In 2017, 66% of data zones had Mid/High/Higher levels of child poverty. That increased to 71% in 2020 and then to 92% in 2022. However, for 2023 the proportion of data zones with Mid/High/Higher levels of child poverty returned to pre-covid levels at 68%.

¹ *The calculation of proportion of Children in Low Income Families for the purpose of the Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index differs to 'official statistics' due to the availability of the data from Stat-Xplore. The children in Stat-Xplore are defined as dependent individuals aged under 16; or aged 16 to 19 in full-time non-advanced education or in unwaged government training. (Not just those aged under 16 – unable to group into age bands). The figure for all children is then expressed as proportion of those aged 0 to 15 as published by NRS. It is recognised that this calculation is imperfect, but practical for the purpose of the SB CPI.

Understanding Child Poverty in the Scottish Borders



Understanding Key Drivers and Priority Groups data in the Scottish Borders



What are we doing about Child Poverty in the Scottish Borders?

Tackling child poverty in the Scottish Borders is governed through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The CPP has oversight and approval duties associated with the Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan but delegates the delivery of it to the Child Poverty Group. The Child Poverty Group is a multi-agency partnership made up of Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, and other key partners. They meet to discuss and support the local approach and respond where appropriate to national developments.

Local Plans outlined below all make a contribution to tackling child poverty in the Scottish Borders.

The Scottish Borders Council Plan

The [Council Plan](#) from April 2024 sets out a strategic framework for Council decision-making and operations.

Anti-Poverty Strategy

The Scottish Borders [Anti-Poverty Strategy](#) sets out the way in which the Council and its partners will aim to work together to help reduce poverty across the region and recognises that Child Poverty is included in this aim.

Children & Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026

Child Poverty features as a priority within the [Children & Young People's Services Plan 2023-26](#). The whole family support network outlined in the Plan works with the Child Poverty Group towards the following aim:

- *Reduce the number of children in poverty and reduce the impact of living in poverty on families. Ensure that children and their families are given the opportunity to contribute to shaping local policy and actions to reduce the social and economic impact of poverty.*

Scottish Borders Community Plan

'Working together with our communities and through targeted partnership action, will enable all people in the Scottish Borders to live their lives to the full'. The [Scottish Borders Community Plan](#) works with four priority themes to support communities. These themes support our child poverty agenda.

T.H.I.S Borders (Tackling Health Inequalities in the Scottish Borders 2024-2030)

[This report](#) describes systemic differences in people's health that are thought to be avoidable and unjust and outlines how these can be tackled in practice.

Children's Rights

Our [Children's Rights Report 23-26](#) reports on the steps we have taken to fulfil the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Equity Strategy

Our [Education Equity Strategy 2021-2026](#) has been developed to ensure increased excellence, accelerated progress and embedded equity in our schools and settings to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people (CECYP). The strategy coordinates the Attainment Scotland Funding streams; Pupil Equity Funding, Strategic Equity Funding and CECYP Funding to ensure maximum impact.

Local Housing Strategy

The [Local Housing Strategy \(LHS\) 2023-2028](#) is the key strategic document for housing in the region. The LHS sets out how we and our partners plan to address housing and housing related opportunities and challenges in all tenures over the five-year period.

Budgets and Funding

Significant Scottish Borders Council budgets and funding are attributed to tackling child poverty in the Scottish Borders. The table below sets these out for 2024/25. Additional child poverty funding streams are also expected, as set out in Best Start, Bright Futures, for No one left behind, employability projects, reducing barriers and childcare.

Budget/Funding	2024/25
Crisis grants	£156,000
School clothing grants	£390,800
Free sanitary products in schools	£44,000
Free sanitary products in public bodies	£50,000
Educational Maintenance Allowance*	£237,070
Pupil Equity Funding*	£1,919,000
Strategic Equity Fund*	£448,171
Care experienced Children and Young People Fund*	£159,250
Whole Family Wellbeing Fund	£661,000
TOTAL	£4,065,291

*based on 2023/24 funding

Scottish Borders Council is proud to be an accredited real Living Wage employer (current rate £12 per hour) and they remain committed to encouraging the wider adoption of the real Living Wage by partners, local employers, and suppliers. The Council has adopted the *Scottish Government Best Practice Guidance on Addressing Fair Work Practices*, including the Real Living Wage in Procurement for relevant contracts.

Key areas of Work in 2023/24

During 2023/24, **child poverty partners have been involved in a number of key areas of work that have had a significant effect on tackling child poverty and making a difference for children and their families.**

Your Family Your Voice: Whole family support

Scottish Government recognised the need for a Child Poverty Employability Coordinator who could:

- Create and Adopt a Whole systems approach
- Support strong communications between relevant partners and services locally
- Identify and promote key changes to local policy and practice that will contribute to child poverty targets.
- Design referral pathways between services, or improve those already in place if they are not effective
- Link between child poverty work and other related policy initiatives
- Ensure a clear understanding of the causes and solutions of child poverty is shared and informs action undertaken within Scottish Borders
- Engage nationally to share learning and identify what works in relation to tackling child poverty through employability.

The plan to enable the aims to be met were set out in four phases:

Phase 1	Parental engagement – Your family, Your voice Practitioner engagement – Whole Family Support-Child Poverty(employability)
Phase 2	Gathering & Collation of our conversations Planning and agreed Action Plans with partners & stakeholders – How do we make a difference? Agree measurable and achievable outcomes and data capture

Phase 3	Framework to embed policy, practice and referral pathways Staff support & training Delivery
Phase 4	Measurement & reporting Reflection and review

A number of events were held with young people, through the Cost of the School Day, Youth Voices Network, parents within Early Years Centre identified as being in the highest areas of deprivation and with Practitioners from both within and outwith the Local Employability Partnership. A total of 16 partner agencies took part in the Whole Family Approach conversations.

Conversation themes for Parents and Young People were around:

- ❖ Income
- ❖ Wellbeing
- ❖ Potential
- ❖ Attainment, (education, training, career)
- ❖ What can we do differently?

Conversation themes for Practitioners were around:

- ❖ Barriers
- ❖ Support
- ❖ Referral Pathways
- ❖ Lifespan Interventions
- ❖ What can we do differently?

From these conversations, parents and young people told us about the following areas in which services could work differently to best support their needs:

The outcomes:

Income	Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Advice around budgeting ❖ Help with fuel debt ❖ Benefits advice ❖ Income maximisation ❖ Benefits advice delivered locally ❖ Information in spoken and visual form ❖ Provide childcare for attending training etc ❖ Cost of travel options for families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Create time and space to talk ❖ Book club for parents ❖ Teatime clubs for parents and children ❖ Buddy bench for parents ❖ Exercise classes – Zumba, Pilates, kick boxing (in localities) ❖ Groups for parents with older children ❖ Support with parenting techniques ❖ Taster sessions for parents
Attainment	Potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Aspirational support ❖ Offer training in localities ❖ Support the whole families wellbeing ❖ Provide employability skills taster sessions ❖ CV building ❖ Support with dyslexia ❖ Provide courses that parents want ❖ Provide training mentors (local) ❖ Provide funding & technology to access online learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Funded out of school club places ❖ Support groups for parents and children ❖ Literacy support for children (no ipads) ❖ Provide learning opportunities within school times ❖ Provide flexible learning opportunities ❖ Provide learning opportunities taster session ❖ Childcare provision

Practitioners identified the following areas in which services could be delivered differently, to best support family's needs and make a difference:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve accessibility to buildings ❖ Offer locality based support ❖ Improve partnership working – in person where possible ❖ Upskilling tutors ❖ Waive college fees ❖ Tackle Mental Health needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Challenge stereotypes ❖ Public sector work experiences ❖ Make the small changes early enough ❖ Earlier interventions and conversations ❖ Taster sessions ❖ More inspirational conversations with parents
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Early Years

All Early Years settings, including the Early Years Centres, have reducing child poverty embedded within their practice. The provision of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for eligible 2-year-olds and all 3-and 4-year-olds and the expansion of hours to 1140, is a key national policy driver in reducing child poverty.

The Early Years Centres have a particular role in enabling families to be supported in maximising their income. An additional Early Years Centre has been opened using Mental Health and Wellbeing Funding. This Centre is in Kelso (chosen based on data from the NHS 27-30 Month Check). It is open part time during term time and data on its use and outcomes for families will be available for next year's report.

Equity and Excellence Leads play a critical role in supporting children to close the poverty-related outcomes gap by being an additional resource over and above usual staffing for a setting.

- Equity and Excellence Leads placed in settings with high deprivation (SIMD data) and lower attainment to plan interventions and support high quality pedagogy and practice.
- Impact of EE Lead role tracked and monitored over year by QIO and EYISO team.
- Additional SEYOs with Equity and Excellence remit placed in priority quintile 1 settings to plan and lead interventions to target identified cohort/individuals with gaps in learning and /or development
- All EE Leads work collaboratively with partners to support families to access benefits and support the actions of the SBC Child Poverty Action plan.
- EE Leads are all trained in Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP) and delivering to targeted groups of parents in areas of deprivation.

Housing

Housing Emergency – The Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency in May 2024. In May 2024 Scottish Borders Council considered a report which outlined the significant challenges that the Council and partners are experiencing in ensuring residents in the Scottish Borders have access to a home which meets their needs. It was agreed that SBC should consider declaring a local 'Housing Emergency' and a report will be brought to Council for further consideration.

The provision of new homes - the programme has delivered 183 general needs homes in 2023/24 and 38 of these were particular needs homes.

Homelessness – over the past 18 months SBC homeless service has been experiencing unrelenting demand from applicants – particularly from the private rented sector. This has increased the demand for temporary accommodation. There is a shortage of new build private supply, few starter and smaller homes for purchasing or downsizing and little opportunity for family accommodation. The lack of supply is increasing the demand on the service.

Demand for homes – the demand for homes over the past few years has increased significant with many

contributing factors:

- Supply of homes cannot keep pace with demand;
- There has been a significant increase in property values, at a rate well above national and local wage inflation;
- There is a smaller percentage of housing stock available as socially rented accommodation;
- Construction prices have increased significantly since 2021;
- The latest Scottish Government Quarterly Housing Statistics publication highlighted the lowest level of site starts in the social new build programme across Scotland since 1988.

These issues have a direct impact on property prices, rental levels, and general housing availability which contributes to wider economic and social challenges. We are seeing the demand in all sectors of housing:

- The average number of bids per available social rented property has doubled over the last 5 years – particularly in large family homes. For example, SBHA 's new homes in Kelso this year had 100 bids for 5 family size homes.
- More people are staying in their current homes. The number of RSLs let available has continued to decrease – meaning less availability of homes.
- Shortage in private new build. Over recent years there has been limited appetite from market house builders to develop in the Borders.
- Despite successful delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Programme over recent years and delivery of affordable housing, it remains challenging to deliver new build social rented stock at the necessary volume. The Borders is faced with high construction costs, often significant infrastructure requirements, labour and contractor shortages and increasing finance costs. The Affordable Housing Supply Programme Funding allocation for the Borders has been reduced by 26% for 2024/2025 which will have a detrimental impact on the delivery of new affordable homes.

It is important to note that notwithstanding the issues and challenges highlighted above, a significant amount of progress is already being made. Some examples include:

- The Council's empty homes service has expanded to bring disused properties back in to use.
- The Empty Homes Grant Scheme launched in 2022 is currently supporting 20 empty homes to be brought back into use. 13 of these homes will be made available for rent at an affordable level.
- The demolition phase for Upper Langlee is complete and Phase 1 of delivery started in early 2024.
- 221 affordable homes were delivered during 2023/2024. 177 of these were new supply affordable homes.
- South of Scotland Community Housing are working with Community groups across the Borders to support them to potentially deliver their own housing developments.
- £1.8m in 2022/23 invested in improving private housing stock energy efficiency with a further £1.8m in 2023/24. Measures installed included - Solar PV & Battery: 50 completions, Air Source Heat Pumps: 10 completions and Internal Wall Insulation: 25 completions.
- There have been 5,444 referrals and interactions with households through Home Energy Scotland
- Key worker housing has been provided in Galashiels for NHS & SBC Social Care staff.
- Expansion of Homes for Good into the South of Scotland.
- Introduction of the licensing of Short Term Lets.
- Increased proportion of RSL lets to Homeless households (target 50%; currently 41%).
- Established the Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers

Below we have set out some examples of the work undertaken to demonstrate how we are making a difference in the areas that are considered the key drivers for tackling child poverty.

Income from Employment

Positive Destinations

Data shows an improving trend in the percentage of school leavers from quintile 1 (the most deprived areas) entering positive destinations after leaving school in the Scottish Borders. In 2018/19, 87.18% of quintile 1 school leavers entered a positive destination. This figure has steadily increased each year, reaching an impressive 97.65% in 2022/23.

Several initiatives have contributed to this success, including targeted support for young people, close collaboration with partners such as Skills Development Scotland, employability services, Developing the Young Workforce, and Borders College. We have also focused on enhancing the curriculum to expand opportunities for students, including more work-based learning and courses. The established 14+ partnership, where schools and partners work together to plan supports for young people transitioning from school to their chosen destinations, has been instrumental in this progress. Furthermore, setting ambitious local stretch aims as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge has driven positive change.

Meanwhile, the rate for quintile 5 leavers (the least deprived areas) has remained consistently high, hovering around 97-99% over the past 5 years. In 2022/23, 95.77% of quintile 5 leavers entered a positive destination. Notably, the gap between quintile 1 and quintile 5 positive destination rates has significantly narrowed over time in Scottish Borders. In 2018/19, there was a 12.12 percentage point gap between the two quintiles. By 2022/23, not only had this gap closed, but quintile 1 actually surpassed quintile 5 by 1.88 percentage points (97.65% vs 95.77%).

This remarkable progress demonstrates the effectiveness of the targeted initiatives and strong partnerships in Scottish Borders aimed at improving outcomes and opportunities for school leavers from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. The concerted efforts of schools, the council, and various partners have created a supportive ecosystem that enables young people, regardless of their background, to transition successfully into positive destinations such as employment, further education, or training after completing school.

Parental Employability Service

Parental Employability Support (PES) uses a holistic keyworker approach to upskill and/or re-train, increasing family income, lifting themselves and their family out of poverty. PES workers provide personalised support for parents who face barriers to progressing in their careers. PES are currently supporting 135 parents within the Scottish Borders.

The Intensive Family Support (IFSS) takes a holistic whole family approach to working with families, supporting each individual within the family to progress as well as implementing whole family activities that build a support network. IFSS aims to improve family dynamics to enable families to provide effective support for each other. IFSS are currently supporting 29 families within the Scottish Borders.

Within the Scottish Borders PES and IFSS work together to ensure that all referred families and parents can identify their barriers and holistic support to reach their potential. Below is a case study from a Parent who has received tailored support from both services, and it showcases the work delivered by both teams and positive outcomes achieved through the support.

Bogdan moved to the Borders from Romania in 2019. He met his partner in 2020 and they moved in together 2021. His partner was referred to IFSS in 2021 whilst pregnant due to social isolation, financial hardship and health issues. He had limited English with no permanent employment, unstable housing and poor living conditions. Bogdan and his partner hoped for financial stability, a secure and safe home and permanent employment.

Support Pre-Employment

Financial Stability

- *Register with Universal Credit*
- *Apply for Child Benefit*
- *Apply for Scottish Child Payment*

Secure and Safe Home

- *Register with Social Housing, SBHA, Waverley and Eildon, contact Housing Officers to discuss family needs*
- *Contact current landlord regarding poor living conditions*
- *Apply for Community Care Grant including removal costs*
- *Apply for Fresh Start pack*
- *Liaise with Housing Officer to secure social housing tenancy*
- *Discretionary Housing Payment Application to cover dual rent*

Permanent Employment

- *Enrol on ESOL course at Borders College*
- *Connect Scotland Device and MiFi Device*
- *Register on My World of Work*
- *Create CV*
- *Register on My Job Scotland*
- *Support Bogdan to apply for jobs*
- *Contact SBC re Modern Apprentice Positions and ask that Bogdan be considered*
- *Support Bogdan to interview location*
- *Assist with pre-employment checks*

The family are now living in a SBHA tenancy, which is fully furnished. The family are in receipt of child benefit, Scottish Child Payment (and Universal Credit pre permanent employment) Bogdan has gained employment on a 4-year Mechanic Apprenticeship with SBC, earning the living wage and his English has improved.

Quote from Bogdan:

'I could not do it alone without your help

Thank you for everything, I will not forget all the things you do to help us'



The Cost of Living

Holiday Provision

The partnership offered funding for holiday programmes in 2023/24.

Live Borders

Through the summer holiday period of 2023 (1st July – 16th August 2022), Live Borders worked in partnership with Scottish Borders Council and other key providers to deliver the “Summer 2023” Holiday Activity Programme. Live Borders delivered a comprehensive programme of sport, physical activity, and cultural opportunities and continued to offer free places for identified children through discount codes and in some instances, making whole offers free of charge.

Activities included a variety of holiday camps in all school clusters (multi activity and sport), a Family Activity Pass for families referred by professional staff, free cinema access for targeted individuals, a range of museum and galleries activities, library workshops, and a partnership disability camp with a local third sector group. Key findings from the programme are as follows:

- Over **3500** visits made by children and young people to Live Borders activities.
- Activity camps (all) averaged **92%** occupancy with **52%** of places free of charge for targeted children and young people.
- 542 families accessed activity camps. 182 families were identified as low income and in need of targeted support.

- **47%** of children reported an increase in their resilience when having to deal with day-to-day problems through the summer holiday programme.
- **44%** reported an improvement in their self-confidence through participation in the summer programme.
- **61%** reported that they were more likely to be active in the future as a result of holiday activity participation.
- **82%** reported that they had greater confidence to attend further sport and physical activity opportunities in their schools and wider communities.

Children & Young People feedback

- 97% of children and young people reported having fun at holiday camp activity.
- 59% of children and young people felt that they had made new friends as a result of their involvement through the summer programme
- 64% stated that they had learned new skills.
- 57% reported that they were interested in new things.
- 27% reported that they had reduced their feelings of loneliness as a result of their participation in the summer programme.

Parents

Following the camps, parents were e-mailed an online survey to obtain feedback and further evidence the impact that the programme has had:

- *“My daughter is from Ukraine, and despite little practice of English, she felt very comfortable. Every day she wanted to run to the camp. We would like to thank everybody from the Live Borders team”.*
- *“Thank you. So rare for her to come home raving about going back. Well done!”*
- *“We REALLY appreciated the support and opportunity offered to SEN children. This made the difference between attending or not. Please provide more activities with your wonderful staff”.*
- *“My two had such an amazing time when they were there, and it made their summer 1000 times better”.*
- *“As a parent, to watch him grow in confidence through the week as he told me stories of new friends made and activities he had enjoyed was positive to see and hear”.*

Youth Borders

A total of **1,141 young people directly benefitted** from Summer 2023 funding by attending **285 youth work activities**. Young people enjoyed **2,924 snacks and 1,599 meals** during these summer activities. 22 YouthBorders members organisations delivered this programme.

People living in households on low incomes, young people undergoing transitions, followed by larger families were the top three factors targeted by YouthBorders member organisations.

Specific Households / Families	No.
People living in households on low incomes	539
Children undergoing transitions	238
Larger families (3+ children)	205
Children with a disability or ASN	185
People living in households with a disabled family member	85
Children supported by a child’s plan	85
Minority Ethnic Families	75
Children under 1	49
Mothers under the age of 25	44
Children in need of protection	42
Young Carers	33

Family Tea Group

Working with partners in Burnfoot Community Futures, our Community Learning and Development (CLD) team identified a need for families to work and have fun together and be fed to reduce rising costs in fuel and food costs. They planned and delivered a 6-week block of family fun/teatime activities for families who they were aware of in the community who would benefit from this intervention. Different family groups, single parents, large families, dads and kids, teenagers and high school families attended.

Activities included art and crafts, cooking, board games, junk modelling, gardening, STEM activities and the last session delivered party food and time in soft play (whatever the age).

Funding was provided through Burnfoot Community Futures (Bring Back Better Borders) and the CLD budget.

Families learned to work together, had the opportunity to play games together and value quality time together. Families were fed, thus reducing household costs in heating and food. Recipes were shared so that families were able to make affordable meals at home.

Families accessed wider support through conversations with CLD/Hub and were signposted to local services and support where relevant/required e.g., housing, access to Councillors, foodshare, etc. Adults from each group progressed into volunteering in the community garden, or further CLD learning opportunities and felt more able to participate having had the opportunity to build relationships and trust in this group in the first instance.

Cyrenians

Cyrenians are a charity who tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness. The first cook club and pantry in the Borders was set up in May 2023, closely followed by 3 others. They are currently operating in the following locations:

- Cheviot Youth, Kelso
- Oakwood Park, Galashiels
- Philiphaugh Community Centre
- Walkerburn Public Hall

The aims of this project are to get good, affordable food into communities that may be experiencing food insecurity and to bring the community together over food. They do this by using a dignified, community focused approach.

Uptake has been good and people are enjoying both the pantries and the cook clubs. Between May and October 2023, they had 86 people signing up for a pantry membership and the pantries were used a total of 1,149 times. They also distributed 7,765kg of food from Fareshare, equating to around 18,500 meals.

The pantry at Walkerburn is currently at full capacity and there are a few people on the waiting list. The Philiphaugh Pantry is also often at capacity and Kelso has a good uptake, identifying that there is a real need in these areas.

"The pantry has been very helpful, great choice, friendly staff and helpful. Appreciate the support during these difficult times"

"The pantry helps me and my wee boy immensely. The staff make me feel really welcome and we get a good chat too, which helps a lot being a single parent. The food really helps me out as I have to budget my food shop. Great service!"

"The pantry has been great in the community. It is very helpful feeding a large family. It has helped to save on cost considering inflation in supermarkets etc. Very grateful. Thank you"

The Cook Clubs see regular multi- generational audiences and each venue has its own characteristics based on the people who attend:

- Oakwood Park in Galashiels works with a teenager with an absent parent who is not attending school who comes to join this group each week.
- Kelso has a group of young adults with learning difficulties who seek the skills to live independently. Our users are supported to gain skills for healthy eating, managing food to reduce waste and associated cost and being able to afford to feed themselves independently. The cross over with Local Area Coordinators (LAC) has been very positive here.
- The Walkerburn group has as many as 25 attending, 12-15 of which are children. This is a loud and social environment and they sit down to eat the meal together at the end. Everyone is involved in preparation, laying the table, serving and clearing away. A relationship with the Citizens Advice bureau has been established at Walkerburn and this offers an invaluable opportunity to offer services to people who would otherwise find it impossible to access the advice and support they need.

Warm Welcome Spaces across the Borders

The cost-of-living crisis continued to have a negative impact on our rural communities in 2023/24. This issue becomes more exacerbated in the winter months when opportunities for social connections are reduced and the cost to eat and heat homes increases.

Funding of £40,000 was awarded from the National Lottery Community Fund and Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership to Borders Community Action who created a joint approach to support local communities, and the idea of Warm, Welcome Spaces emerged. The grant benefitted a wide range of community groups and organisations across the Scottish Borders with a varied spread across the 5 localities. It is estimated that a total of 3,900 people benefitted from activities, such as arts and crafts, food, cafes, games and youth activities.

Feedback was positive:

It helped me make new friends within our village

It's hard for my mum at home, free food on Friday evening's is a real help

Things like this make a big difference to me

I lost my Young Scot card and haven't eaten since breakfast (boy aged 13)

Can we come along just for food? (boy aged 14, family now connected to foodbank)

Food / Breakfast

Jedburgh Grammar Campus offers:

- The Filling Station (breakfast club before school) for targeted young people in primary and secondary
- Snacks for break in all primary classrooms, the Pupil Support Base and Science
- Prelim breakfasts for senior pupils offered by Home Economics staff

In Secondary: Young people experiencing poverty have the option to attend each morning. The aim is for every child to start the school day having eaten a healthy breakfast so that they...

- Have increased focus.
- Have higher energy levels.
- Are ready to learn.
- Can develop their social skills.
- Can make friends.
- Arrive in good time.

There is also a box of food in the Pupil Support Base and Science department which can be accessed by any young person who is hungry at any time of the school day.

In Primary: There is a Breakfast Club Supervisor. Children are referred via regular Health and Wellbeing Partnership Meetings. The Filling Station provides a nurturing and supportive environment for some of our

more vulnerable children to check-in each morning. There is also a P4-7 Soft Start intervention group each morning for 5 primary pupils in this area and they have a healthy breakfast which helps them to be ready to learn. A 'Wee Filling Station' is in each learning area for children who need a snack at break. While we target those children experiencing poverty, any child can access a snack if they are hungry.

Funding has come from book sales in the community, donations from local supermarkets, a donation from Jedburgh Rotary, funding application and the PEF fund. PEF Youth Worker *'The children in Soft Start don't get breakfast at home due to family circumstances. It's a healthy start to the day as the food on offer meets the guidelines and the breakfast gives them energy for learning.'*

Bumps, Babies and Toddlers Breakfast Club

A number of parents identified the need for a Group that could be held at their local community centre. It was imperative that the Group could accommodate pregnant women, those with babies and those with toddlers. They had already connected to other parents in the community who agreed that they would like to go ahead but needed support from CLD to make this happen. From these conversations, Langlee Bumps, Babies and Toddler Group was born.

CLD met with NHS Borders Joint Health Improvement Team (JHIT) to request their involvement for the provision of breakfast given prior knowledge of families and their circumstances i.e., the impact of the cost living crisis. CLD were aware of the various stages of pregnancy of some of the parents.

Aims and Objectives:

- Provide a bumps, babies and toddlers group for the local community in response to their need
- Provide a nutritious breakfast and raise awareness of good nutrition
- Provide information and signpost families to relevant organisations
- Emphasise the need for bonding, routine, boundaries, nurture and play
- Peer learning and support
- Work in partnership with Borders Community Action to build capacity of the parents by encouraging and supporting them to become a sustainable, funded community-led group

What We Did:

- A mapping exercise was facilitated with parents to find out what they would like on the programme of activities
- Key partners were contacted to see if they were willing to provide an input, and from there a 12-week pilot was developed and delivered and subsequently extended. Key partners positively engaged with parents: Weaning, Infant Nutrition, Social Security Scotland, DWP, Multiply, Social Work
- A nutritious breakfast was provided reflecting the EatWell Guide
- Resources were shared resources on behalf of key partners, including Money Worries App, 6 ways to be well and PND information booklets, healthy eating guides and recipes
- A safe space was provided for parents to bond with their child through free play, nursery rhymes and stories and engage in peer learning and support
- Applied for funding to extend the sessions for 1 year and worked with parents to set up a committee – this learning is ongoing

Outcomes:

- Partnership team successfully met all of our aims and objectives
- Parents have improved knowledge and clearer understanding of weaning and infant nutrition organisations available to support nutritious breakfast options and the benefits to their child(ren)'s development
- Parents have a clearer understanding of bonding, routine, boundaries, nurture and play and can link these to their child(ren)'s positive growth and development
- Parents have developed a network for peer support and feel better connected to their local community

The parents attending reported that the Group has had a positive impact on them and their children. It is hoped that the Group will become sustainable, grow and develop with the parents at the helm. This work has now

taken place and a committee has been formed. CLD applied for funding, and this was awarded to the Group through the Cost-of-Living Fund (SBC) following this successful 12-week pilot. The funding will provide breakfast for the group for the next year and by then the hope is that the group will be self-sustaining.

Closing the Poverty Attainment Gap

Over the last 2 years the local authority has made progress in narrowing poverty-related outcomes in attainment, attendance and positive destinations. Locally designed approaches to addressing the gaps are being designed and implanted in Clusters. The cluster model in the Scottish Borders is a commitment to working across a range of services, including third sector organisations and community partners working together with families, maximising local resources. This initiative aims to empower communities to take ownership of change, enabling them to adapt and thrive. The focus is on collaboration, consultation, and shared responsibility among stakeholders. This work is also a key part of the SBC Equity Strategy.

Clusters have adopted a range of approaches. For example, one cluster has employed a home school link worker with a focus on improving levels of engagement, attainment and attendance with targeted families. Another cluster has created a Wellbeing Team and a Family Wellbeing Hub which will deliver universal and targeted wellbeing activities for families.

Cost of the School Day

The local authority is making good progress in building a framework to ensure a consistent approach to tackling the costs associated with school. The community of practice (CoP) has received support from Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) Scotland and Education Scotland. Partners from educational psychology, Citizens Advice Service, Quarriers mental health service, Social Security Scotland, CPAG Scotland, NHS Borders, Community, Learning and Development (CLD) and employability services have been included in the CoP. A 'champion' from each cluster has been identified who will have a lead role in gathering and sharing examples of effective practice. There is recognition that some schools and settings have already taken significant action in reducing costs to families so a collation of case studies from the within the local authority will be gathered and highlighted locally and shared with CPAG Scotland.

Pupil Equality Funding (PEF)

PEF funding was used to create a "Snug" within Wilton Primary School. The Snug was to be used as a space to nurture young people identified as displaying increased distressed and deregulated behaviours, that were having a negative effect on their attainment and achievement especially in reading, writing and numeracy.

A junk room space in the school was given a makeover and a local supplier provided the furniture at generously reduced prices. The parents at the school also volunteered to help makeover the space.



The Snug has been running since April 2023. In just under a year, the Snug has run a number of groups, supporting over 60 children.

All of the children complete the Glasgow Motivation and Well-being questionnaire twice over the course of the

academic year. Once in October and again in April. The data from the questionnaire is analysed, and then discussed with class teachers. From this Snug groups are formed.

The children are in groups of no more than eight. The school runs two sessions a day, four times a week and the sessions are now run by two Additional Needs Assistant's (ANA's).

The Snug has been such a success that the school are now supporting young people from other schools within the Hawick cluster. It is truly becoming a shared resource. The school have also had professionals from outside agencies and from other schools across the Borders observe the nurture groups in the Snug.

The model is working well and the ANA's have been upskilled and trained using the Nurture groups in School Principles and Practice. They have also worked closely with Speech therapists, CAMHS and Education Psychologist to meet the needs of the pupils.

Outcomes:

100% of the children made improvements in both developmental and diagnostic strands.

98% of children improved their attendance as a result of attending the Snug.

100% of class teachers noticed a positive change in behaviours, relationships, communication and regulation.

Parents and carers have been very supportive of their children attending the Snug, with 100% of them agreeing to their children being selected for a nurture group.

Income from Social Security and benefits in kind

Financial Inclusion

A dedicated resource is now part of the Financial Inclusion Team supporting the Employability and Community Learning Teams. Benefit checks and advice are now available for parents who are looking to maximise their income or improve their employment prospects. Along with staff dedicated to Early Years Financial Inclusion (who already has strong links with SBC's Early Years Service, NHS Health Visitors and Midwives), they will provide an increase in support to a wider group of families in the Borders.

The work undertaken by these two staff resulted in over £1 million in financial gains for families in the Scottish Borders during 2023/24.

The Financial Inclusion Team, along with the Digital Innovation and Systems Team, have developed a new case management system which will improve reporting and day to day case management. It will offer improved reporting to monitor demand, identify trends and influence future take up campaigns. The team will also use Council data to maximise free school meal and clothing grant eligibility as well as encourage take up of Scottish Child Payment.

Post COVID and cost-of-living issues were less relevant within referrals in 2023-24, however there were more residence related issues reflecting an increase in job seekers arriving from overseas many who had no "access to public funds" and therefore unfortunately no rights to benefits.

The case studies outlined below clearly demonstrate the immense value that the joint SBC referral system and NHS Pathway Initiative bring to young families in the Borders. The support provided by Financial Inclusion staff can significantly increase the income of families, but the positive outcomes can extend much further than just an increase in income:

Case 1 A referral was received for a young person after concerns were raised by a key worker. This led to a conversation with their parent who was struggling to support the young person and their two siblings. After a benefits check was completed, Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods, Council Tax Reductions, Child Benefit, Universal Credit and Carers Allowance were awarded. The young person was awarded Educational

Maintenance Allowance and the support provided an increase of over **£7,000** per year in additional household income.

Case 2 A single parent lived with their teenage child in a poorly maintained private let. They had not worked for over 8 years and was offered a job but were concerned about losing their benefits. They received support from the team to apply for Universal Credit, Scottish Child Payment and Discretionary Housing Payment which meant they would be over £100 per week better off. Once the parent settled into the post, they received advice which led to them working overtime and starting a second job. They were also signposted to support regarding their tenancy which led to several repairs being carried out on the property.

Case 3 A single disabled mother with two disabled children was living in a very rural area in the Borders. A Health Visitor immediately recognised that the family were living in extreme poverty and had never claimed any benefits so contacted the Early Years Financial Inclusion team. A full benefits package was immediately arranged including many disability elements for both the mother and the children. In the end this amounted to an increase in income of over **£20,000** a year and the family were able to enjoy a much more fulfilling life.

Case 4 A single parent with two children had their benefits cancelled by HMRC and ordered to pay back over £30,000. Her physical and mental health deteriorated, and she was encouraged by her Health Visitor to get assistance. The Early Years Financial Inclusion team provided support, and the benefits were eventually reinstated resulting in the overpayment being cleared and a backdated payment of over **£8,000** being made.

Case 5 concerned a young mother with two young children who had failed to escape from an abusive relationship with her husband. This was found to be an extreme example of coercive control and she thought that because of this she would not be entitled to any support from the authorities. The health visitor reported that the mother was understandably terrified to leave her husband with no money and no alternative accommodation. In a joint effort with the Parental Employment and Homeless Teams they managed to find her alternative accommodation, a full benefit package and not least a small part time job and she and her children were finally able to safely move away from her abusive husband. This was an excellent outcome and a great example of joined up working.

Case 6 involved a couple with 6 children where the Health Visitor reported that she had been dismayed at the condition the family were living in. The Financial Inclusion team visited them and were very concerned to discover that the unemployed father was in fact claiming all the benefits and using the money to host drug parties with his friends leaving his own family in an almost destitute condition. The Child Protection Team were made aware of the situation and subsequently they involved the police who took the necessary action to remove the father. In the meantime, all of the benefits were transferred to the mother and the homeless team managed to get her alternative accommodation in another area of the Borders. All this took a while, but the mother reported later to the health visitor that she had never been happier.

At the time of referral, the incomes of each family were well below the Scottish Governments guide on poverty levels. On completing the referrals, all of them were over these limits so every family had been effectively lifted out of poverty following the health visitors and Financial Inclusion Team's intervention.

Other Activity During 2023/24

Throughout 2023/24 Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Community Planning Partners, and the Child Poverty Group have progressed a significant range of activity geared towards tackling child poverty in the Scottish Borders.

Detail on that activity can be found in **Appendix 1B**.

Looking Forward – Priorities for 2024/25

Our priorities for 2024/25 are set out below in four key themes. These themes have been identified by the Child Poverty Group Partners and demonstrate a commitment to working together to deliver differently in order to tackle child poverty going forward. A workshop is planned for the summer whereby Partners will work together to create specific actions for these priorities.

Understanding local need

Develop a shared data and intelligence resource across services, departments and organisations so that there is a more in-depth understanding of the drivers and impact of poverty in the Scottish Borders

Develop our work with people with direct experience of poverty so that they are meaningfully involved in service development and delivery. Ensure that membership of the Child Poverty Group reflects the voices of those who have experienced poverty and those who work closely with low-income families.

Use of policy levers and resources

Use a whole systems approach to poverty reduction and prevention, including high level strategic engagement from housing, economic development, transport and childcare in the child poverty agenda.

Ensure that our pathways are simple and intuitive so that families at risk of financial crisis are supported in a timely and dignified way.

Increase our focus on engagement in the early years so that low-income families receive the wrap-around, whole family support they need.

Understanding our progress

Create a shared outcome framework for child poverty, which allows all local partners to understand their progress towards shared goals in the short, medium and long term. This should include understanding the impact of key interventions on priority families.

Ways of working

Build stronger, clearer relationships between the Child Poverty Group, the CYPPP and ultimately the CPP. Ensure that the Child Poverty Group is empowered and resourced to take a strategic role in action to tackle child poverty in the Scottish Borders.

Glossary

CECYP	Care Experienced Children and Young People
CILIF	Children in Low Income Families
CLD	Community Learning and Development
CLG	Clothing Grant
COP	Community of Practice
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
IFSS	Intensive Family Support Service
JHIT	Joint Health Improvement Team
NIF	National Improvement Framework
NRS	National Records of Scotland
PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
PES	Parental Employability Support
PND	Post-natal Depression
SB CPI	Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index
SB	Scottish Borders
SBC	Scottish Borders Council
SBHA	Scottish Borders Housing Association
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
UC	Universal Credit
UCH	Universal Credit Households
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Appendix 1A

Local Child Poverty Data and Statistics

Information provided shows evidence on drivers of child poverty, along with information on the groups of people who are more at risk of experiencing child poverty.

The information in the Headlines section contains indicators that can be used as ‘proxy’ measures of child poverty locally.

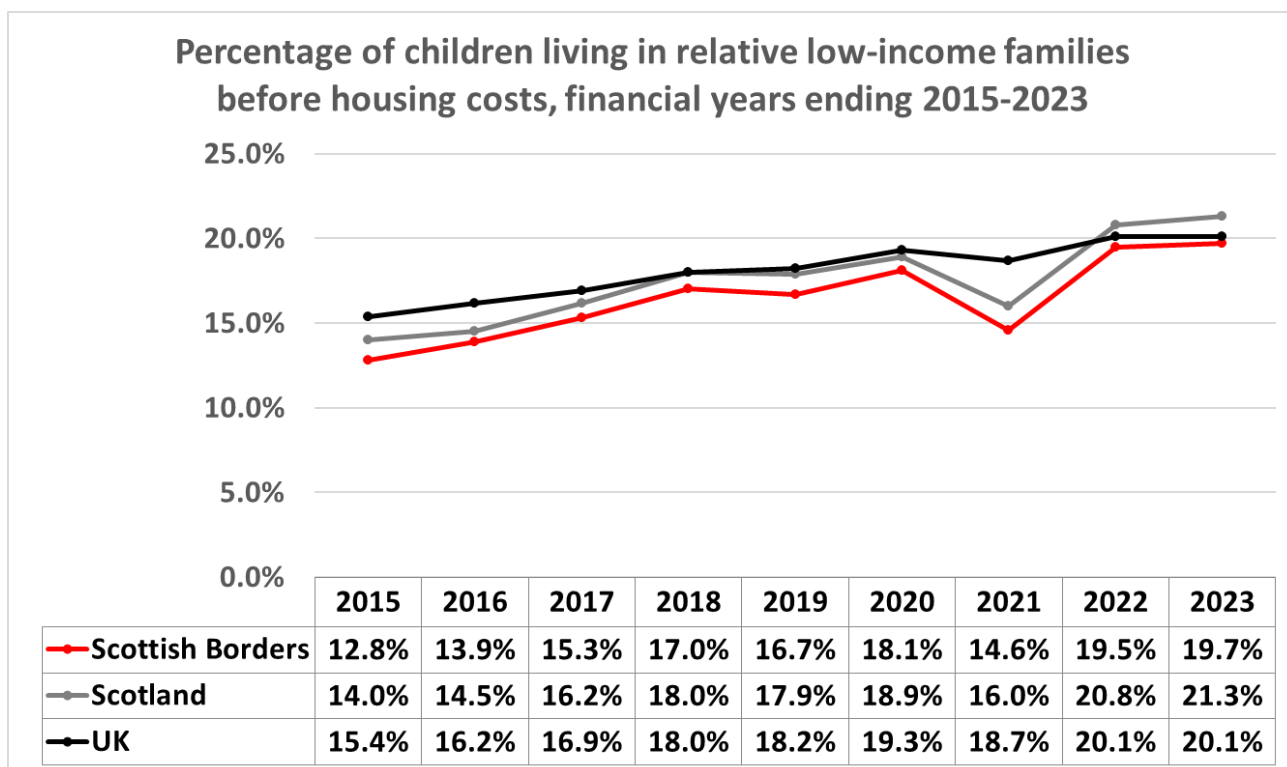
The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) publication “[Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2023](#)” provides information at local authority and ward level to help monitor child poverty and its drivers locally.

Children in Relative Low-income Families, before housing costs

Relative child poverty in a given year is when a family is assessed as having a low household income by the median income standards of the given year. The family must also claim Child Benefit and at least one other household income benefit (Universal Credit, tax credit or Housing Benefit) at any point in the financial year.

The chart below shows the DWP figures for the Financial Year Ending (FYE) 2023. **19.7%** of children aged 0-15 in the Scottish Borders live in relative low-income households. This is below the Scottish average of 21.3% and is unchanged from the previous year. The Scottish figure has increased since the previous year, indicating that child poverty in Scotland is getting worse but child poverty in the Borders is not so much. These are provisional findings, as the figure for Scottish Borders may be revised in due course.

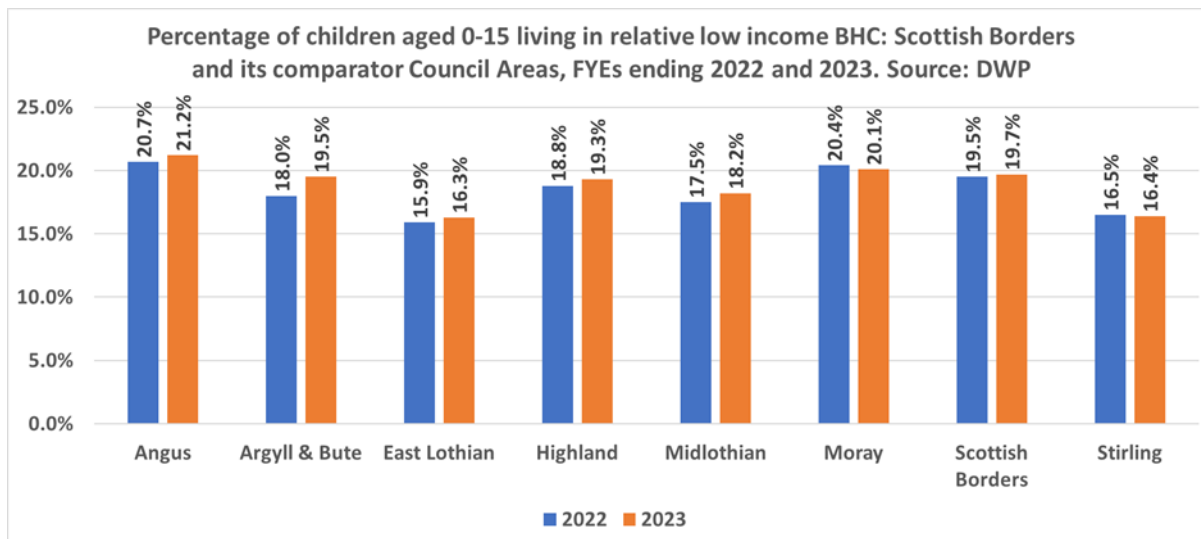
Children in Low-income households over time, FYEs 2015 to 2023 before housing costs



The line graph above shows the timeline of this measure since FYE 2015.

Changes since the previous year: Scottish Borders and comparator Local Authority areas

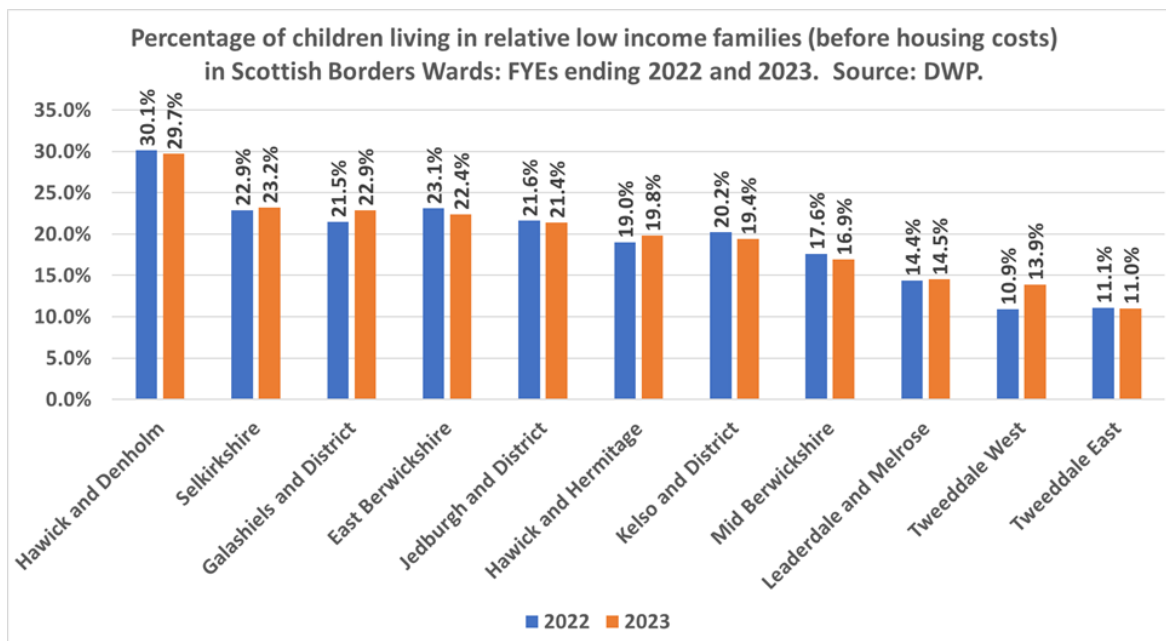
The Scottish Borders is in a benchmarking group with seven other Scottish Local Authorities. The bar chart below shows how relative child poverty in 2022 and 2023 compares with the position in these comparator areas.



Relative child poverty BHC in Scottish Borders is on the high side compared with its “family” of comparator Local Authorities. Only Angus and Moray have higher levels. This shows there is still work to do in Scottish Borders to reduce child poverty.

Children in Low-income Families in Scottish Borders Electoral Wards

The chart below shows the Relative Child Poverty data at Scottish Borders Electoral Ward level for the FYEs 2022 and 2023.



Child poverty is highest in the Hawick and Denholm Ward, which contains one of the region’s areas of highest Multiple Deprivation. Selkirkshire and Galashiels and District also contain deprived areas, indicating that child poverty is strongly linked with deprivation, as we would expect.

Numbers of children in relative low-income families, Electoral Wards

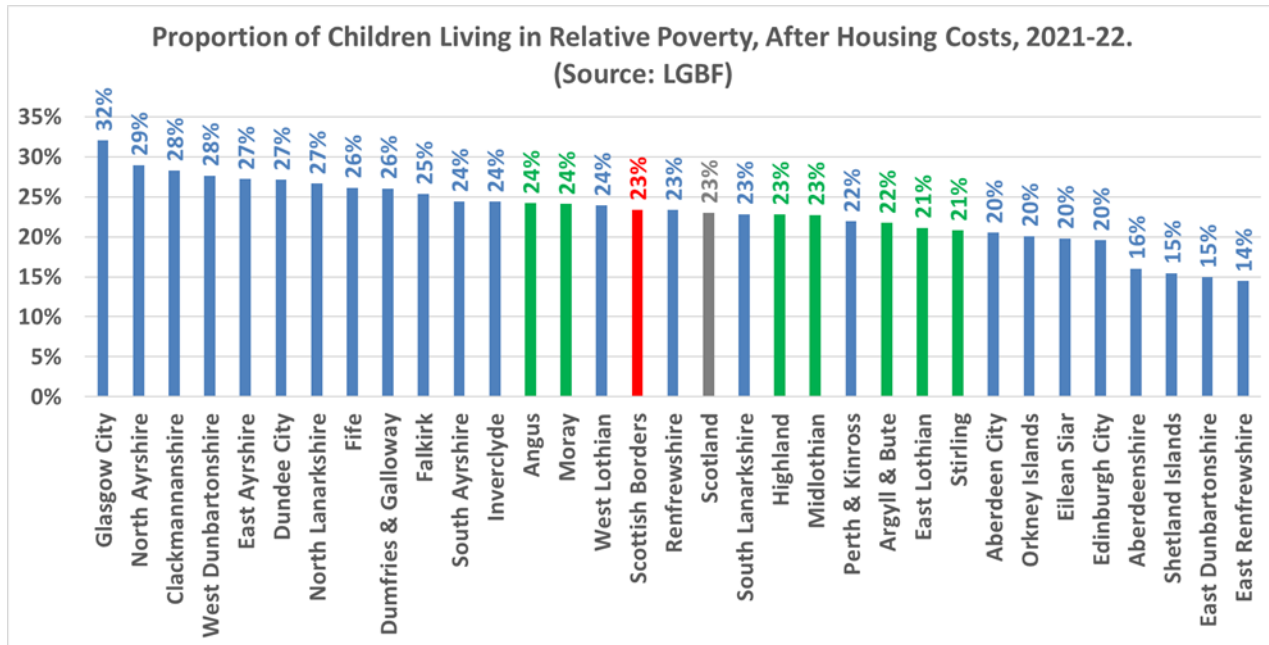
The following table gives an indication of the numbers of children who are estimated to be living in relative low-income families in the financial years ending 2022 and 2023.

Number of children in relative poverty (before housing costs) in Scottish Borders Wards				
Ward	2022	2023	% change 2022-23	No. of children 0-15, 2021
Hawick and Denholm	203	260	28.1	1,632
Galashiels and District	541	577	6.7	2,534
Tweeddale East	228	237	3.9	1,981
East Berwickshire	348	352	1.1	1,762
Jedburgh and District	281	284	1.1	1,455
Leaderdale and Melrose	319	316	-0.9	1,880
Selkirkshire	227	224	-1.3	1,489
Tweeddale West	501	494	-1.4	1,818
Kelso and District	413	400	-3.1	1,401
Mid Berwickshire	291	280	-3.8	1,582
Hawick and Hermitage	287	276	-3.8	1,188

Apart from having the highest levels of relative child poverty BHC, Hawick and Denholm has also seen the biggest increase in numbers of families living with child poverty since the previous year. Interestingly, the other Hawick ward has seen a decrease in child poverty, showing that there is a complex situation with a lot of inequality within the town.

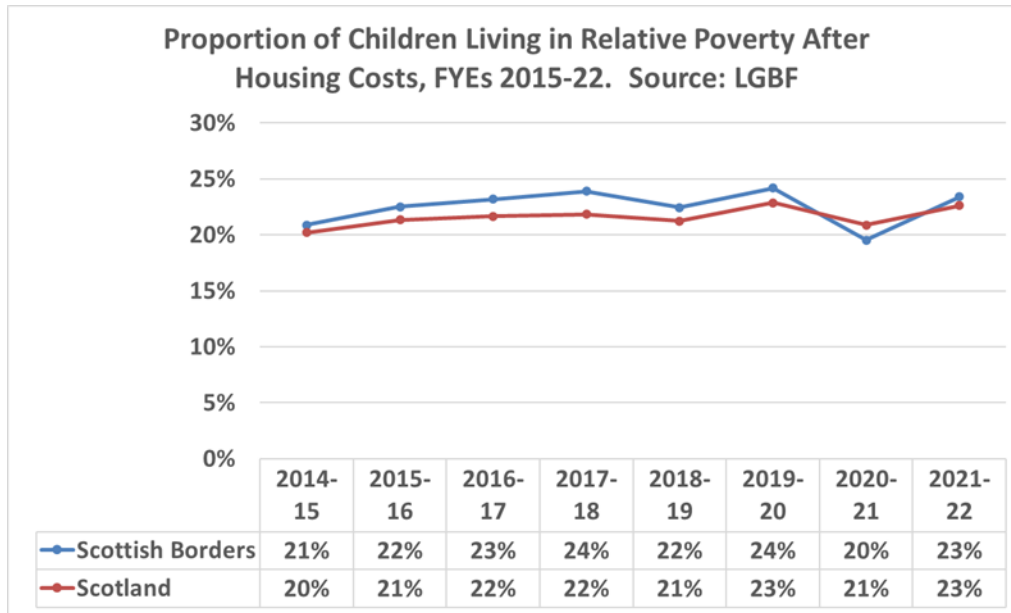
Children in Low-income Families (Relative poverty), after housing costs

The [Local Government Benchmarking Framework \(LGBF\)](#) presents child poverty estimates (after housing costs) at local authority level, which are produced by the End Child Poverty Coalition. This measure is for relative poverty after housing costs, which provides important alignment with the targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and is therefore regarded as the “key” statistic on child poverty. This data shows the period following the introduction of the Scottish Child Payment and during the cost-of-living crisis. The 2022-23 data are not yet available from LGBF.



The chart above shows that the Scottish Borders (red bar) had 23% of children living in child poverty in 2022-23 – that is to say, they were in households with a household income that was 60% below the median for that year, after rent or mortgage has been paid. This is worse than the previous year’s figure of 19.1% and is now similar to the Scottish average (grey bar). Child poverty after housing costs is higher than before housing costs, as we would expect, and shows that the burden of paying high rents and mortgage repayments is pushing more families into poverty. Scottish Borders is one of the less well-performing Council Areas compared with its comparator Local authorities (green bars). The comparator Local Authorities were chosen by LGBF as they share certain population, rurality, and deprivation characteristics with the Scottish Borders.

Children in Low-income households over time, FYEs 2015 to 2022 after housing costs

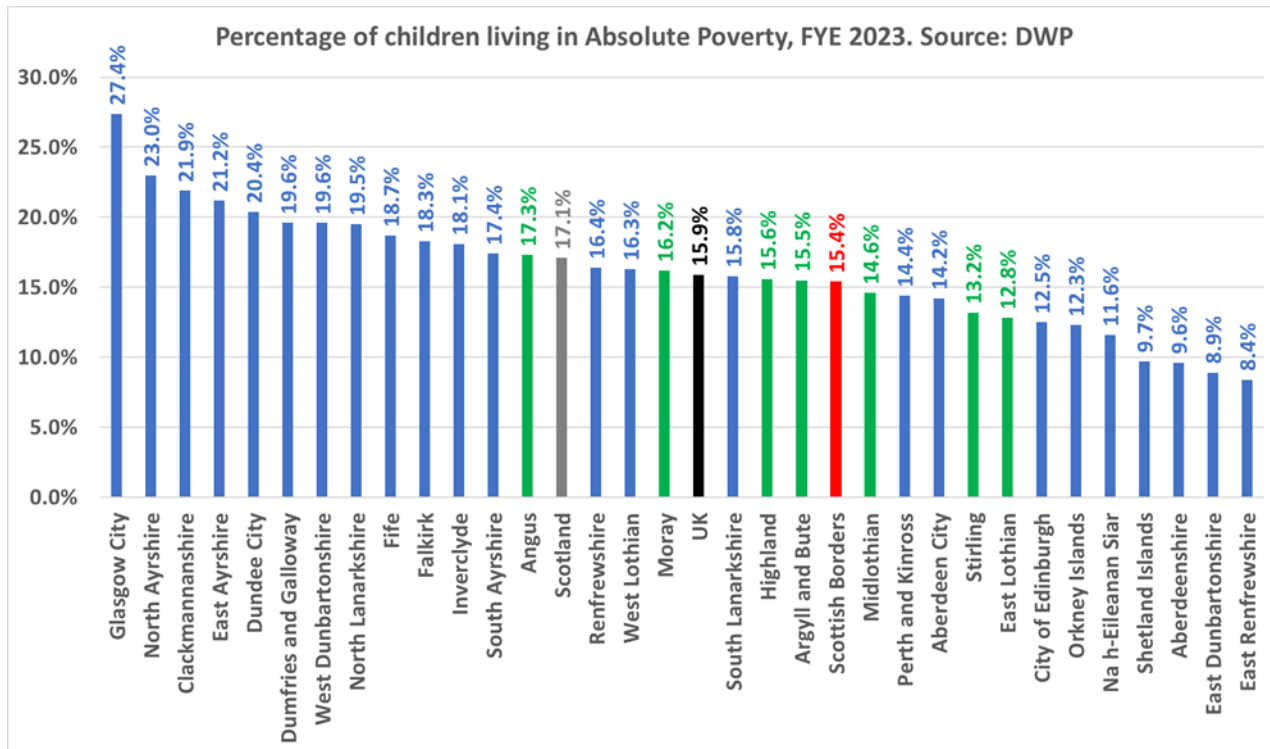


The trend in the Scottish Borders is similar to the Scottish average but has always been marginally higher, reflecting the higher impact of housing costs on relatively lower wages in the region. In 2020-21 the proportion of children living in poverty (after housing costs) had dipped down to below the Scottish average, but the 2021-22 dataset shows that it is now rising again, reflecting the rising cost of living. The Scottish Child Payment rose in December 2022 so this mediating effect should be reflected in next year's statistics.

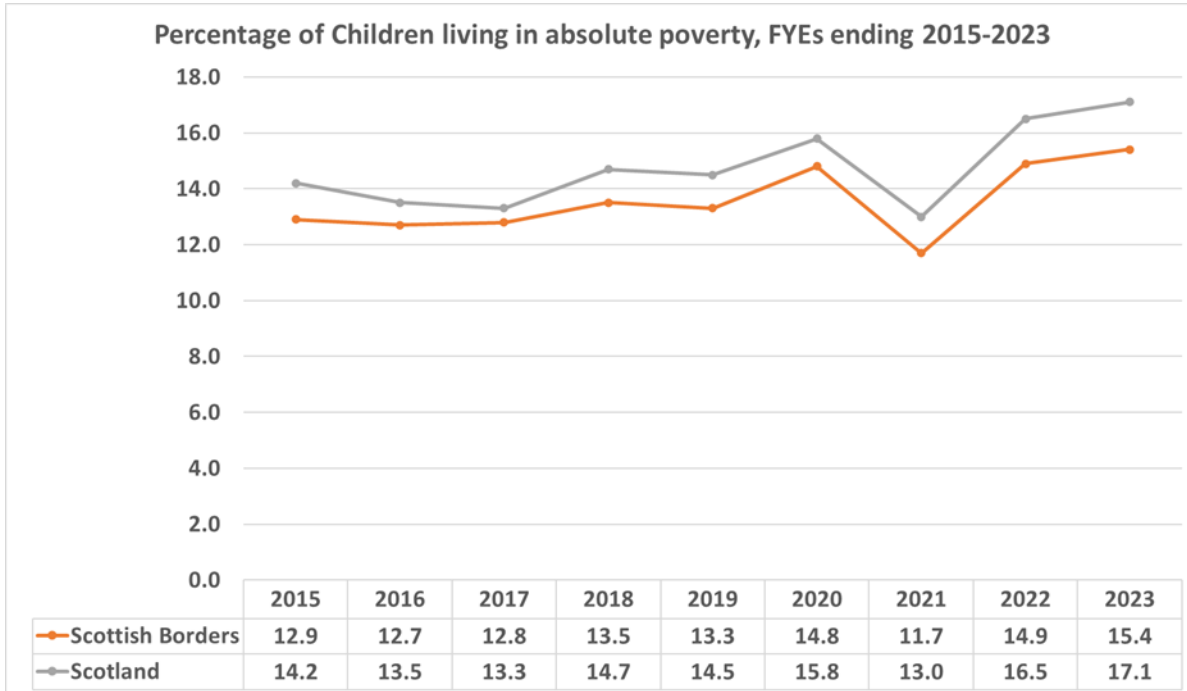
Children in Low-income Families living in Absolute poverty

Absolute low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year in comparison with incomes in financial year ending 2011. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits, or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

The chart below shows the DWP figures for the Financial Year Ending (FYE) 2023. **15.4%** of children aged 0-15 in the Scottish Borders live in absolute low-income households. This is below the Scottish and UK averages of 17.1% and 15.9% respectively. The green bars show the comparison with Scottish Borders’s “LGBF family group” and shows that Scottish Borders is performing around average in this measure compared with its “family” of demographically similar Local authority areas.



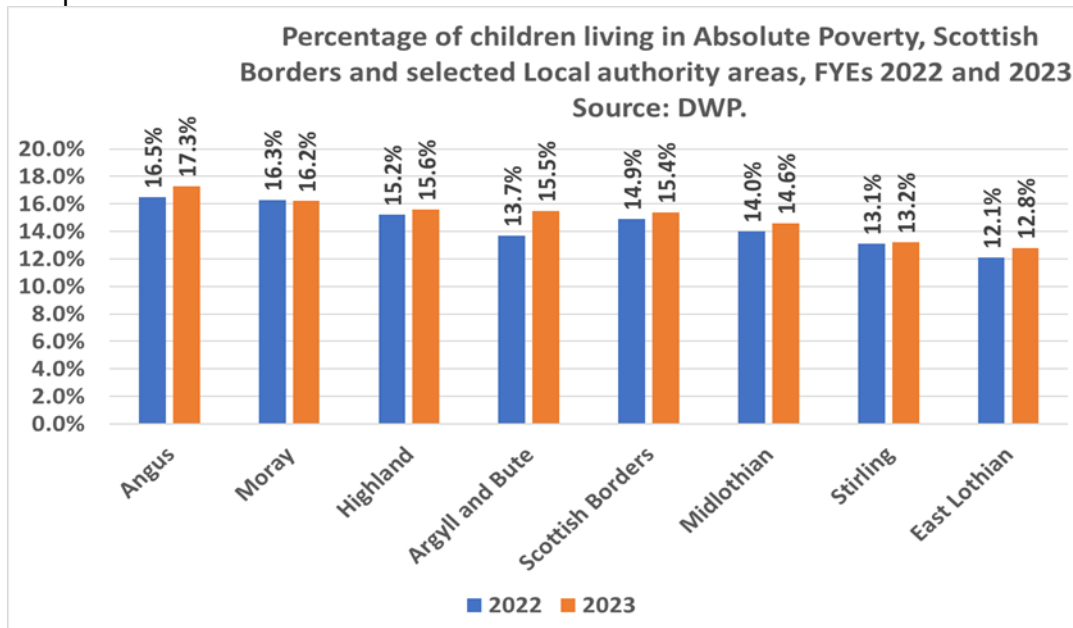
Children in Absolute Low-income households over time, FYEs 2015 to 2023 before housing costs



The line graph above shows the timeline of this measure since FYE 2015. Absolute poverty in Scottish Borders has always been below the Scottish Borders average but otherwise mirrors the Scottish pattern. It increased last year and is continuing to increase as the cost-of-living crisis continues to have an impact on living standards when compared with what they were in 2011.

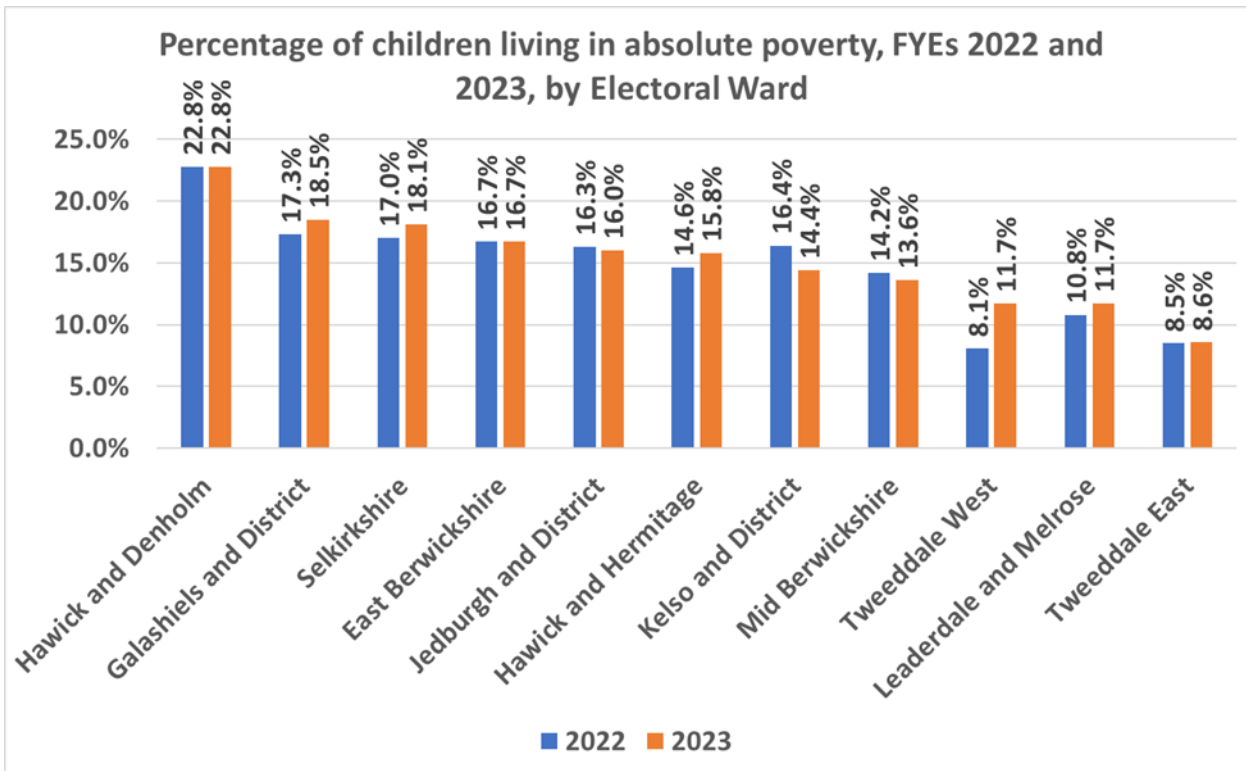
Absolute poverty since the previous year: Scottish Borders and comparator Local Authority areas

The Scottish Borders is in a benchmarking group with seven other Scottish Local Authorities. The bar chart below shows how absolute child poverty in 2022 and 2023 compares with the position in these comparator areas.



Children in Absolute Poverty in Scottish Borders Electoral Wards

The chart below shows the Absolute Child Poverty data at Scottish Borders Electoral Ward level for the FYEs 2022 and 2023.



Numbers of children in absolute low-income families, Electoral Wards

The following table gives an indication of the numbers of children who are estimated to be living in relative low-income families in the financial years ending 2022 and 2023.

Number of children in relative poverty (before housing costs) in Scottish Borders Wards				
Ward	2022	2023	% change 2022-23	No. of children 0-15, 2021
Tweeddale West	151	219	45	1,818
Leaderdale and Melrose	211	229	9	1,880
Hawick and Hermitage	175	189	8	1,188
Galashiels and District	437	466	7	2,534
Selkirkshire	258	274	6	1,489
Tweeddale East	174	176	1	1,981
Hawick and Denholm	380	380	0	1,632
East Berwickshire	298	298	0	1,762
Jedburgh and District	240	236	-2	1,455
Mid Berwickshire	231	221	-4	1,582
Kelso and District	236	207	-12	1,401

Child Poverty Drivers

The three drivers of child poverty considered in this report are:

1. Income from employment
2. Costs of living
3. Income from social security and benefits in kind

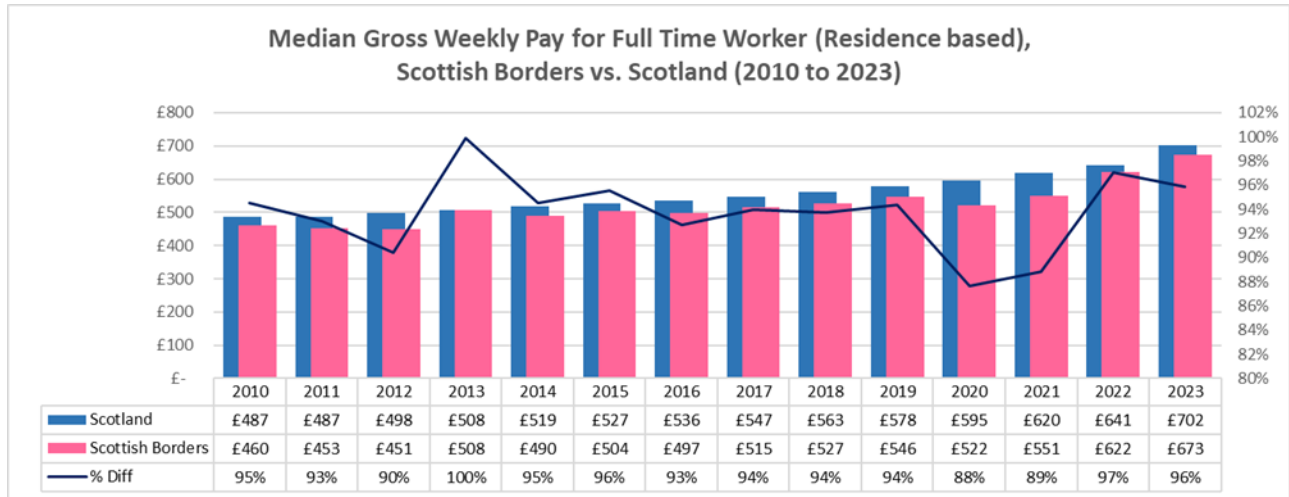
Income from employment

The following section presents evidence from official statistics on topics such as earnings and jobs, particularly in households with children. This does not measure child poverty directly but helps to provide some background context to the current position.

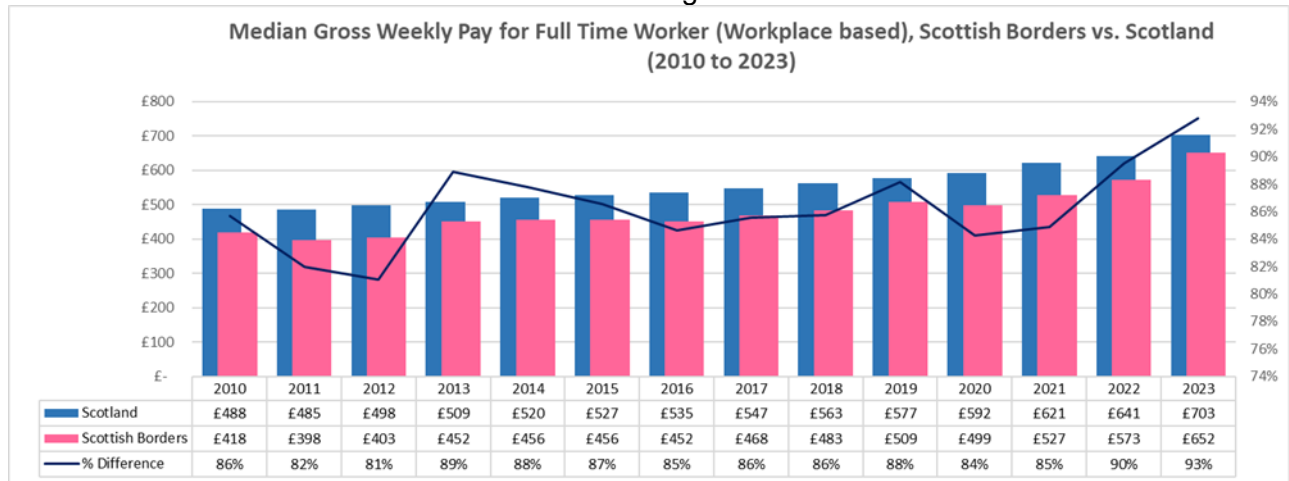
a) Average weekly Earnings

In 2023, the **median gross weekly pay** for full time workers living in the Scottish Borders (residence based) in the Scottish Borders was £673, **£29 below** the £702 for Scotland or **96% of the Scottish figure**. The regional pay gap between Scottish Borders and Scotland has greatly improved since 2021 for workers who live in the region.

[\(Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - NOMIS\)](#)



In 2023, the **median gross weekly pay** for full time workers working in the Scottish Borders (workplace based) was £652, £51 less than the £703 for full-time workers working elsewhere in Scotland. This is **93% of the Scottish figure**. The pay gap for workplace-based earnings has improved since 2021 due to recent pay awards for Borders workers in the wake of the cost-of-living crisis.



b) Percentage of employees (18+) earning less than the real living wage

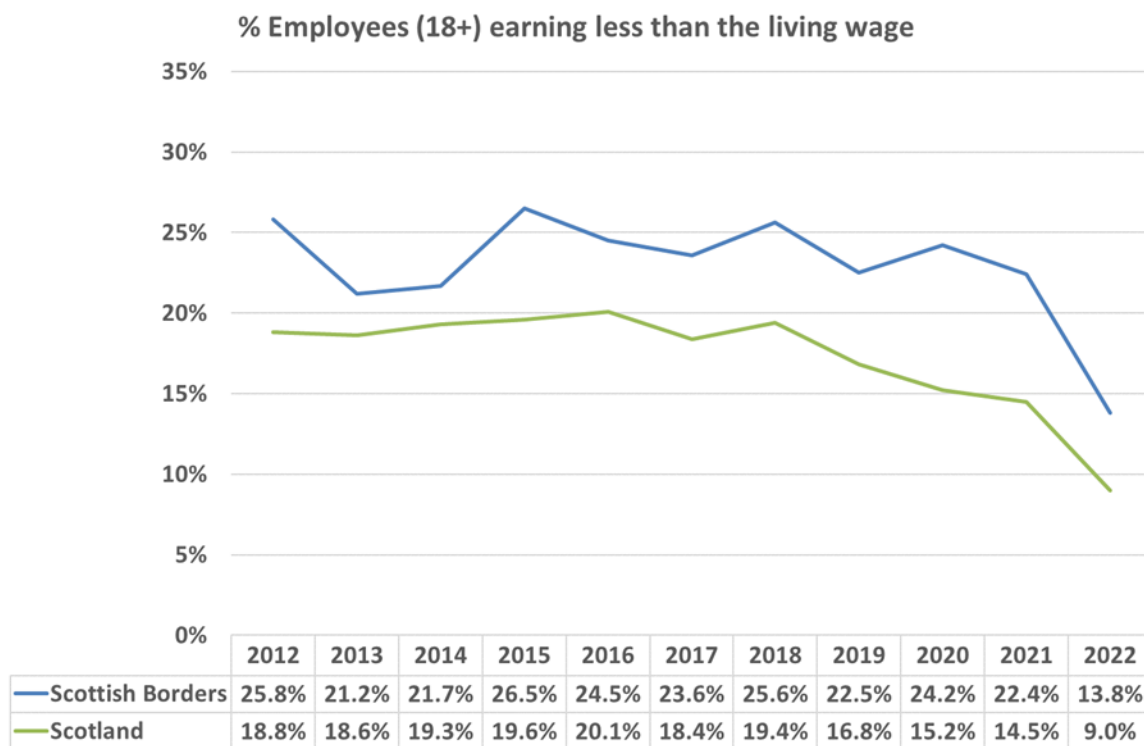
The Living Wage, also known as “the Real Living Wage”, refers to the hourly salary that is deemed by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) to be the minimum necessary for an employee’s basic needs to be met.

The current Real Living Wage is £12 per hour for the UK (£13.15 for London). **The Real Living Wage is not compulsory** but is paid by over 14,000 businesses in the UK who call themselves a “Living Wage employer”.

It is not to be confused with the **National Living Wage, which is the compulsory Government minimum for over 23s** and is currently £10.42 per hour. The statutory National Living Wage is calculated as a percentage of median earnings, whereas the voluntary Real Living Wage is calculated according to the cost of a basket of household goods and services at current prices. Therefore, the **Real Living Wage better represents the cost of living** during times of high inflation.

Figures are workplace-based, so include all those who work in the region, regardless of where they live.

The data in the chart below were sourced from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for [Scottish Government’s December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).



The above chart shows why Scottish Borders is often referred to as a “low wage economy.” The proportion of full-time workers who are paid less than the Real Living Wage has always been higher than the Scottish average. Out of the 17 Council Areas which provided valid data to the 2022 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Scottish Borders had the second-worst rate of low-pay, with only South Ayrshire having a worse rate. Rates of low pay are lowest in the city Council areas, where salaries are more competitive.

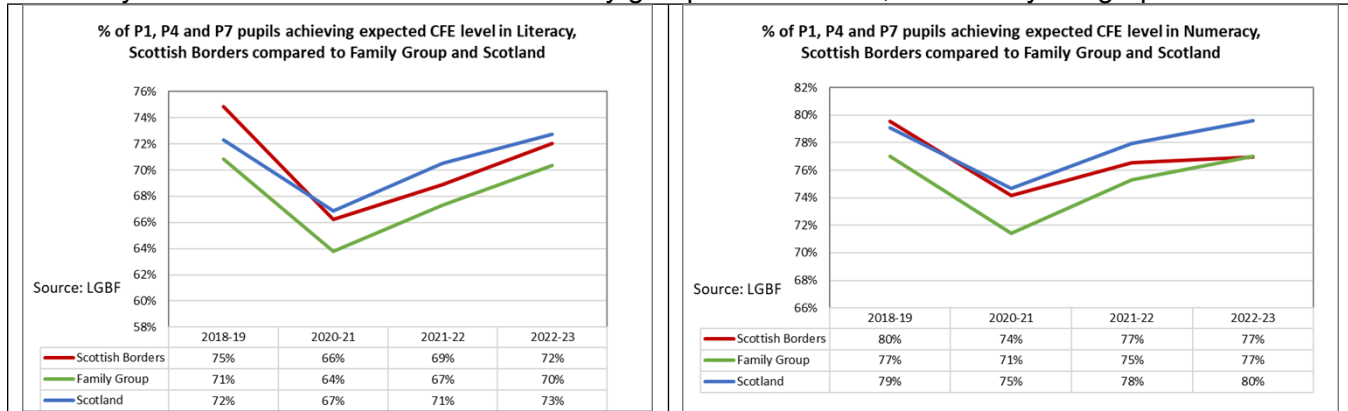
More encouragingly, there has been a significant increase in wages in 2021-22 across Scotland in response to the cost-of-living crisis and this has benefitted the region substantially. The proportion of over 18s who are paid less than the Real Living Wage in the region is at its lowest ever level.

c) Child poverty and Education Outcomes

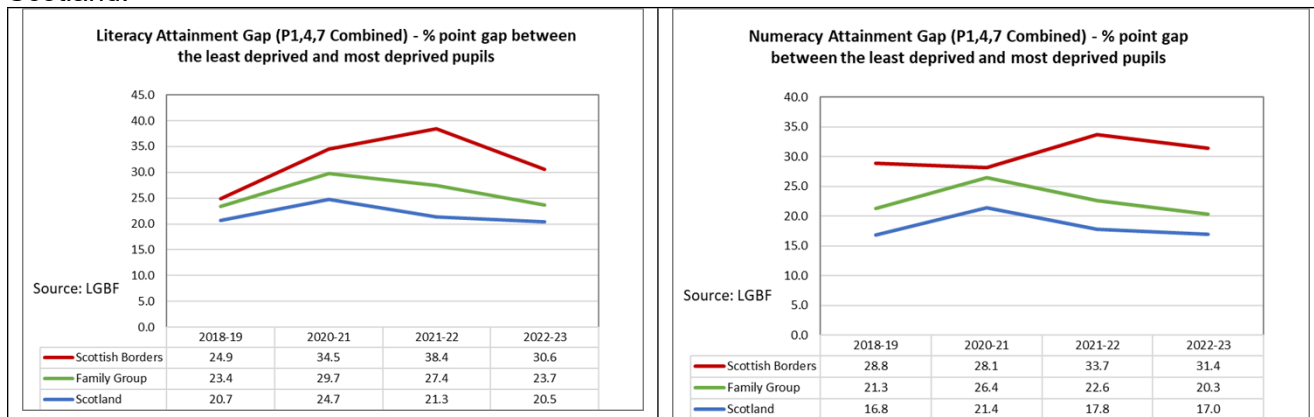
The link between poverty and educational attainment is complex. The aim is for educational attainment for those in the most deprived areas to be similar those in the least deprived areas. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) has several indicators that highlight the attainment of those pupils from the most deprived areas.

Literacy and Numeracy in primary school pupils

The pupils in the Scottish Borders are achieving the expected Curriculum For Excellence¹ level for literacy and numeracy are similar to the levels for the family group and Scotland, as seen by the graphs with tables below.



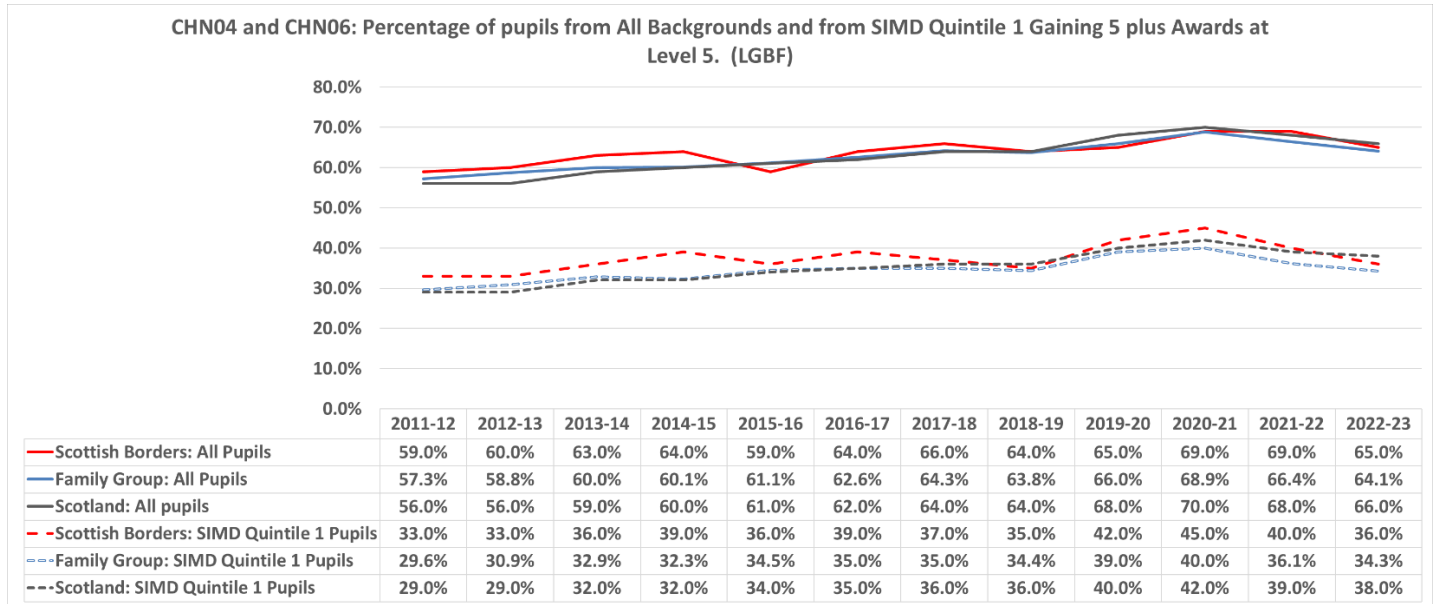
However, when looking at the % gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils there is a bigger gap in the Scottish Borders compared to the family group and Scotland. In the most recent years the gap for both literacy and numeracy in the Scottish Borders has reduced, but still bigger than the family group and Scotland.



¹ CFE = Curriculum for Excellence

Senior phase: impact of deprivation on Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 and Level 6

The graph below shows the proportion of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (SQA National 5) for all pupils and those from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland (a.k.a. "SIMD Quintile 1"). It compares Scottish Borders, its family group of comparator Council areas and Scotland.



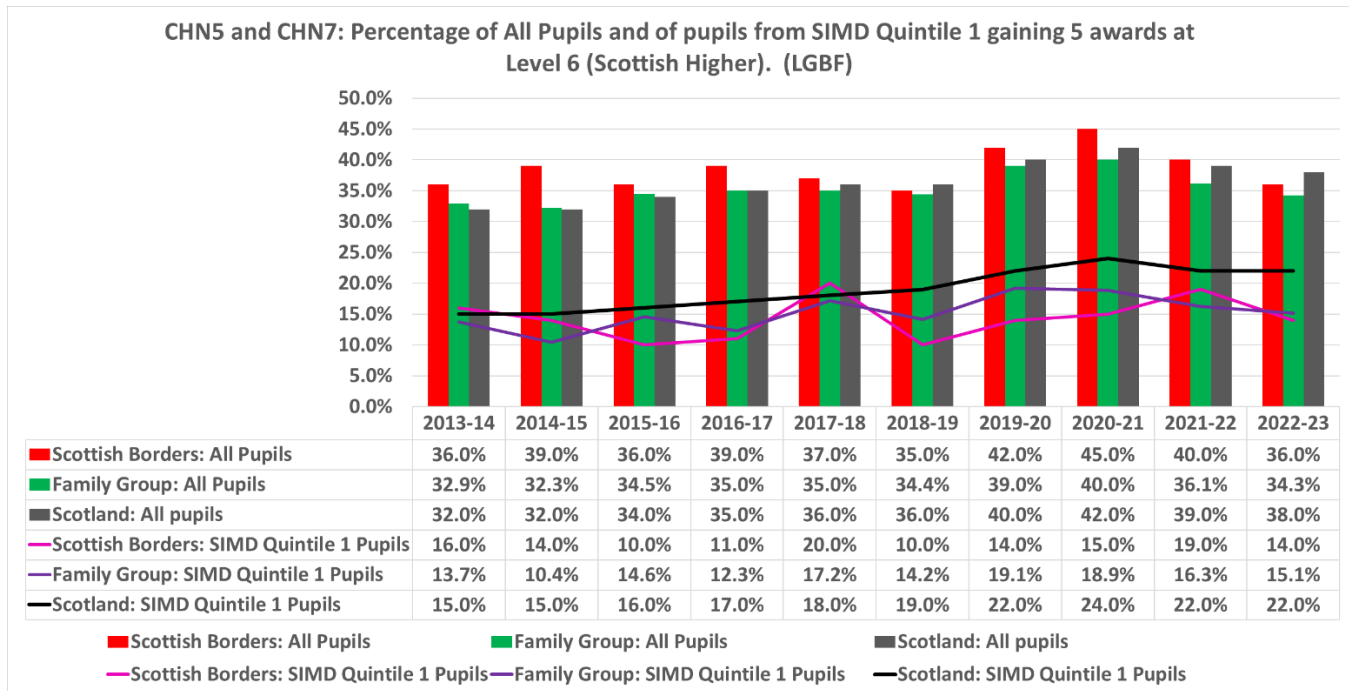
The graph clearly shows the difference in attainment between the 20% most deprived (dashed lines) and all pupils (solid lines) for all three selected areas. The deprivation attainment gap for National 5-level pupils is worse in Scottish Borders than its comparator Council areas, and both are worse than Scotland as a whole.

SQA National 5 Attainment gap between

All pupils and SIMD Quintile 1	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Borders	33.0%	40.0%	29.0%	42.0%	34.0%	40.0%	30.0%	33.0%	35.0%	28.0%	31.0%	34.0%
Family Group	25.8%	27.9%	24.9%	26.7%	25.1%	23.5%	23.7%	24.0%	21.1%	21.4%	22.5%	25.1%
Scotland	23.0%	21.0%	21.0%	20.0%	20.0%	19.0%	19.0%	18.0%	19.0%	17.0%	18.0%	16.0%

Deprivation Gap at Level 6 (Scottish Higher) Level

Although a lower proportion of pupils gain 5+ awards at level 6 (Scottish Higher) compared to level 5, the pattern comparing all pupils to those from the 20% most deprived areas is similar



There is a persistently larger Deprivation Attainment Gap in Scottish Borders than in both its family group and the Scottish average at Scottish Higher level, and this deprivation gap tends to fluctuate depending on the cohort of pupils, which is relatively small.

CHN5 and CHN7: Attainment Deprivation Gap at Scottish Higher Level	2013 to 14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Borders	20.0%	25.0%	26.0%	28.0%	17.0%	25.0%	28.0%	30.0%	21.0%	22.0%
Family Group	19.2%	21.8%	19.9%	22.8%	17.8%	20.2%	19.9%	21.1%	19.9%	19.1%
Scotland	17.0%	17.0%	18.0%	18.0%	18.0%	17.0%	18.0%	18.0%	17.0%	16.0%

Costs of Living

Information from [Institute For Government](#) states that the “Cost of living Crisis” refers the fall in “real” disposable incomes (adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits) that the UK has experienced since late 2021. This is triggered by the failure of wages and social security benefits to keep up with inflation but is also exacerbated by external factors such as the Ukraine war and escalating energy prices.

Inflation peaked at 11.1% in October 2022 and has come down since then. This does not mean that food prices have come down, only that they are rising less rapidly. Since then, there has also been a round of public sector pay awards and a lowering of energy prices, which has reduced the crisis. However, domestic, and small business finances, which were already running off savings due to the pandemic, are now stretched so thin that many families and businesses have no reserves left.

It is estimated that household incomes will finally catch up with living costs and Real Household Disposable Incomes (RDHI) will return to pre-2021 levels by 2027. For some households, the damage done by the erosion of their financial resilience during the previous 8 years will be felt for a long time.

a) Fuel Poverty

According to research carried out for [the 2021 Scottish House Conditions Survey](#), a household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, total fuel costs necessary for the home are more than 10% of the household’s adjusted net income (after housing costs) and the household’s remaining adjusted net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living – the so-called “heating or eating” debate.

Where a household is in fuel poverty, the “fuel poverty gap” is the annual amount that would be required to move the household out of fuel poverty.

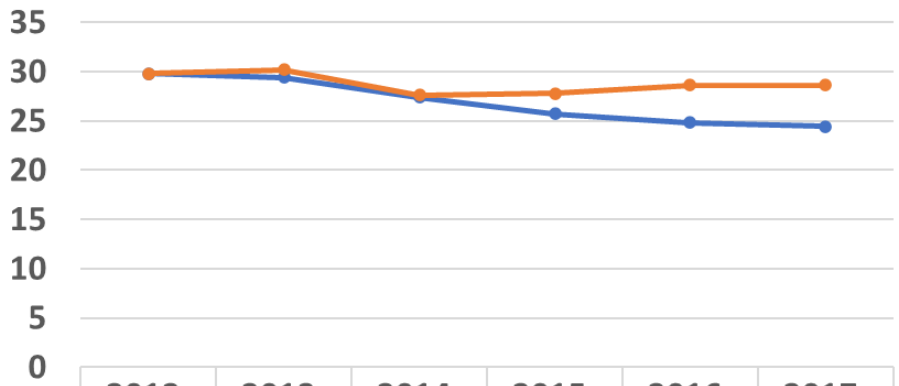
Definitions of all these terms, and exclusions to what is counted as income, are set out in the Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Act 2019.

The Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Act 2019 also set targets to eradicate fuel poverty. The 2040 targets are that:

- no more than 5% of households in Scotland would be in fuel poverty
- no more than 1% of households in Scotland would be in extreme fuel poverty
- the median fuel poverty gap of households in Scotland in fuel poverty would be no more than £250 at 2015 prices (adjusted to take account of changes in the value of money).

Tools for measuring this well-legislated aspect of poverty are currently very poor. Estimates of fuel poverty rates are available up to 2019 for Local Authority areas. The Covid-19 pandemic forced temporary changes in the way that the SHCS was gathered, meaning that 2020 and 2021 data are missing for Council Areas and that the Council Area measure for fuel poverty will not return to normal until after the 2022-24 three-year averages are produced, which will be in 2026.

Percentage of households living in "fuel poverty", up to 2019



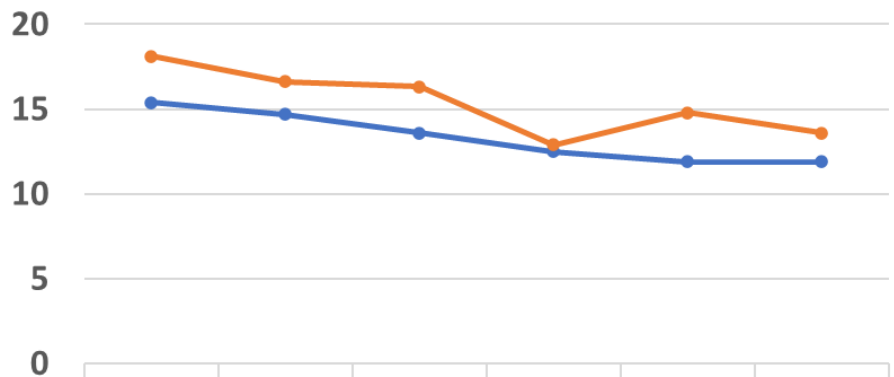
	2012-2014	2013-2015	2014-2016	2015-2017	2016-2018	2017-2019
Scotland	29.8	29.4	27.4	25.7	24.8	24.4
Scottish Borders	29.8	30.2	27.6	27.8	28.6	28.6

The chart above shows that fuel poverty in Scotland was gradually decreasing up to 2019, but it remains higher in Scottish Borders. There has not been any change since the previous set of figures.

Extreme fuel poverty

Extreme fuel poverty follows the same definition as fuel poverty except that a household would have to spend more than 20% of its adjusted net income (after housing costs) on total fuel costs to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, rather than 10%. To the statistics, extreme fuel poverty is a subset of fuel poverty and is not mutually exclusive.

Percentage of Households in Extreme fuel poverty



	2012-2014	2013-2015	2014-2016	2015-2017	2016-2018	2017-2019
Scotland	15.4	14.7	13.6	12.5	11.9	11.9
Scottish Borders	18.1	16.6	16.3	12.9	14.8	13.6

The previous chart showed that 28.6% of Scottish Borders households are estimated to be in fuel poverty. Just under half of these are estimated to be in extreme fuel poverty, according to the most recently available

figures. Extreme fuel poverty is estimated to affect 13.6% of households in Scottish Borders, although this does seem to be coming down since the previous set of figures.

The 2021 and 2022 Scottish updates on fuel poverty

The 2021 SHCS update found that 19.6% of households in Scotland were estimated to be in fuel poverty, but that was very likely to be an underestimate. The initial observations from the 2022 data show that the fuel poverty rate has risen to 31% in Scotland, which is a more credible increase on the 24.6% 2019 revised figure for Scotland. We would expect the rate in Scottish Borders to be about 4 percentage points above the Scottish average, meaning that it could now be as high as 35% in Scottish Borders.

The median fuel poverty gap for fuel poor households was estimated to be £690 in 2021 but is likely to be higher now. This is the additional annual amount that the average fuel-poor householder would need to bring them out of fuel poverty.

Respondents were more likely to be fuel poor if they:

- Lived in the social rented sector
- Used electricity as their primary heating fuel
- Had a prepayment meter
- Lived in a property with a low energy efficiency rating
- Had a low income

Some of these correlations might seem obvious, but it is stressed in the SHCS that low income is not the only cause of fuel poverty.

The 2022 initial observations showed that the long-term trend in energy efficiency of housing stock continues to show improvement, as do the levels of critical disrepair observed for the survey.

The Borders Housing Network have allocated over five thousand vouchers since 2021. In 2023/24, a total of 2,122 vouchers helped 2,789 adults and 1,332 children.

Year	Number	People	Cost
2021/22	1,026	2,034	£52,793
2022/23	2,247	4,251	£101,990
2023/24	2,122	4,121	£100,939
Total	5,395	10,406	£255,722

Income from social security and benefits in kind

Issues around social security benefits for families with children are listed as the third driver of child poverty. The Children in Low-Income Families indicator shows that most families are already living in at least relative poverty to qualify for welfare benefits. Official Statistics around use and take-up of welfare benefits fall into two categories:

1. Families who qualify for benefits and are supported by social security to meet their basic needs
2. Families who fall through the gaps in the social security system or receive inadequate support, and are in crisis

Families living in crisis due to insufficient social security support tend to be undocumented and are therefore very difficult to measure. These figures tend to present in different ways, such as food insecurity and foodbank use, housing insecurity and homelessness, chaotic lifestyles, crisis grants and mental and physical health problems.

Universal Credit (UC) is a single payment for each household to help with living costs for those on a low income or out of work. It is replacing six benefits, commonly referred to as the legacy benefits:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

Support for housing costs, children and childcare costs are integrated into Universal Credit. It also provides additions for people with a disability, health condition or caring responsibilities which may prevent them from working.

Claimants are at risk of not receiving the correct amount of Universal Credit, or being refused UC, if their circumstances or household income change frequently, or their living situation is unstable, or if they are not able to produce the correct paperwork, or if they are sanctioned or deducted for any reason. These households who fall through the safety net are then at risk of severe poverty, which is insufficiently documented, and which can manifest itself in other ways, such as debt, food bank use, homelessness, mental health problems, substance misuse and crime.

Although there is almost certainly a level of under-claiming due to households stumbling over the claims process or still awaiting transfer from legacy benefits, the statistics for Households receiving Universal Credit provides an insight into priority families in relative poverty.

a) Households receiving Universal Credit

The table below shows the number and proportion of households in the Scottish Borders receiving Universal Credit compared to Scotland. Overall, the Scottish Borders has a lower proportion of households receiving UC (13.8%) compared to 17.1% for Scotland. In the Scottish Borders there were 3,233 households claiming the 'Child Entitlement' or 5.8% compared to 6.9% for Scotland.

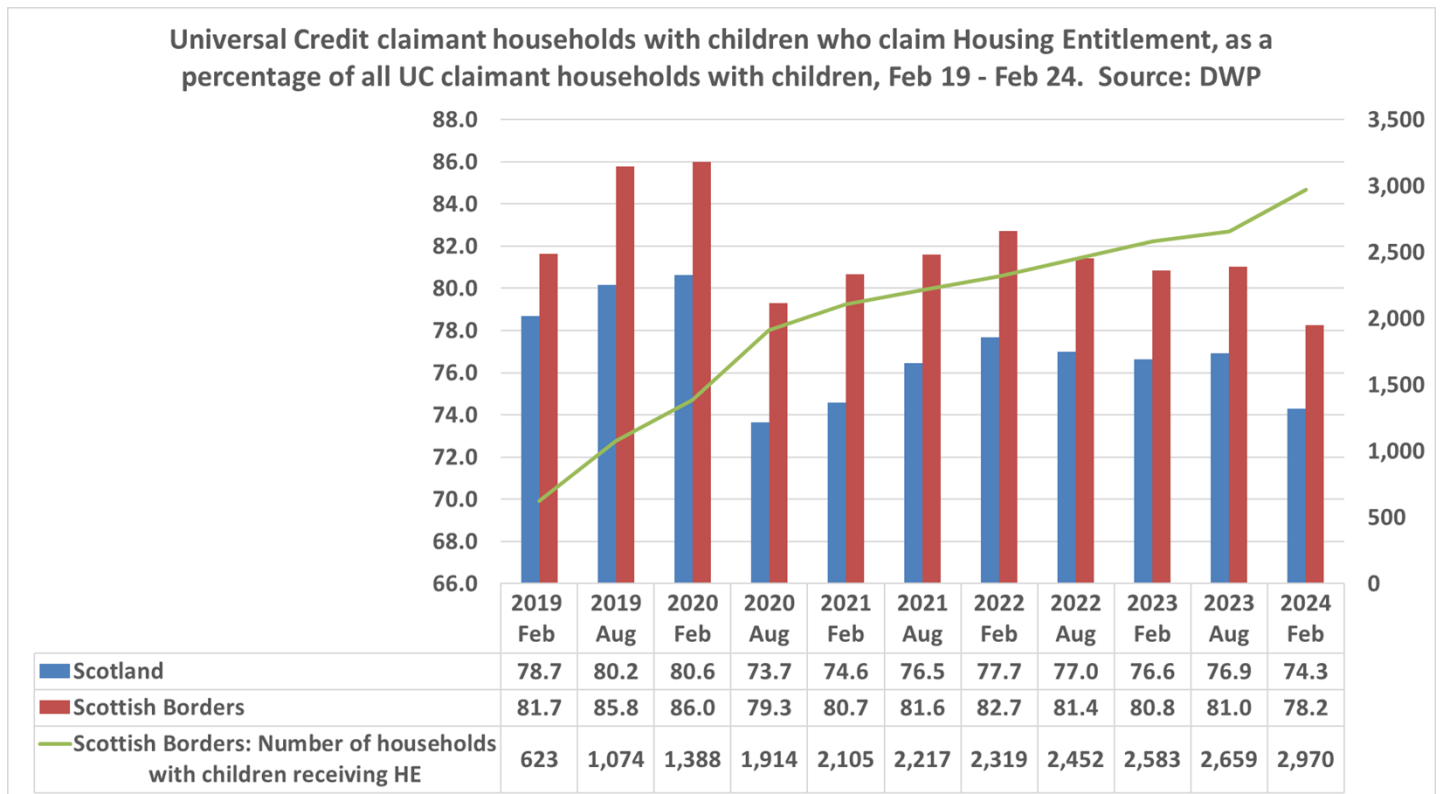
Universal Credit Households November 2023 (provisional figures)	Scottish Borders No of Households	% of All Occupied Households	
		Scottish Borders	Scotland
All Occupied Households	55,858	100	100
All Universal Credit Households (UCH)	7,709	13.8	17.1
UCH with Children	3,427	6.1	4.6
UCH claiming Child Entitlement	3,233	5.8	6.9
UCH Lone Parent	2,390	4.3	5.5
UCH with 3+ Children	686	1.2	1.4
UCH with Child Under Age 1	263	0.5	0.5
UCH with Children - Child Disability Entitlement	348	0.6	0.9
UCH with Children - Adult limited capacity for work entitlement	566	1.0	1.3
UCH with children - adult carer entitlement	505	0.9	1.2
UCH with children with a UC entitlement due to disability or incapacity of a family member	1419	2.5	3.4

Source: DWP/NRS

b) Households with Children who claim the Housing Entitlement of Universal Credit

The chart below indicates that the majority of households with children who interact with the Universal Credit system need help with their housing costs, and that housing unaffordability is affecting households with children in the Scottish Borders more than on average for Scotland. As of February 2024, 78.2% of all Universal Credit-claiming households with children, or 2,970 households in Scottish Borders, claim the entitlement formerly known as Housing Benefit.

The numbers below do not provide a full picture of housing insecurity. Housing Benefit is still in operation for some categories of claimant, and people who live in hostels or temporary accommodation are not eligible to apply for help with their housing costs. Applicants to Universal Credit must provide documentary proof of their housing costs. This means that the applicant must have paid their first instalment of costs for the housing before they are able to apply for welfare benefits, to be paid in retrospect, which is very difficult for families already in financial and housing insecurity to do. There is inevitably an unknown number of undocumented families who are unable to claim help with their housing costs and are at risk of homelessness.



c) Food insecurity

Foodbanks and community food redistribution outlets

Information available on the [SBC website](#) indicates that there are 31 **food redistribution outlets** in the Scottish Borders in 2024, including: food banks, FareShare providers, Early Years Centres, Community cafes and food larders.

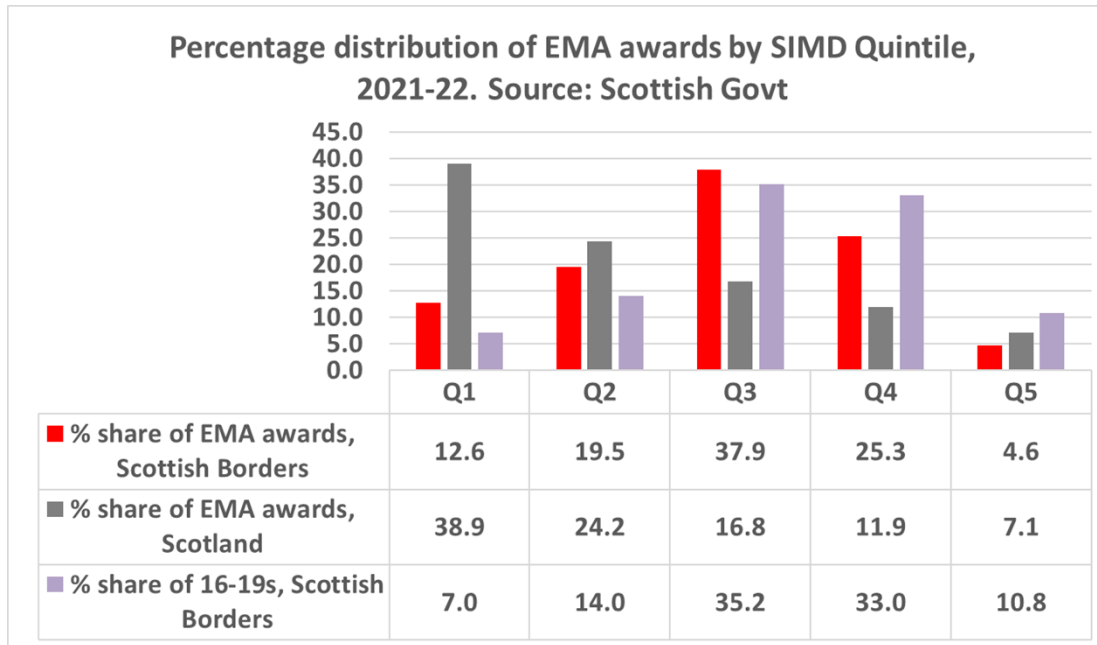
The locations were:

- 11 in Berwickshire
- 3 in Cheviot
- 7 in Eildon
- 3 in Teviot & Liddesdale
- 7 in Tweeddale

d) Education Maintenance Allowance

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a UK Government benefit of £30 per week, paid to eligible students aged 16-19 from low-income households, who choose to continue with their education, in an attempt to close the deprivation attainment gap between the most-deprived and the less-deprived areas.

According to the SBC SEEMIS Management Information System, there were 239 pupils receiving EMA in the 2023-24 academic year.



Scottish Government information breaks EMA awards down by Local Authority and SIMD Quintile. The graph above shows that 7% of 16- to 19-year-olds live in Quintile 1, the most-deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in Scotland. Senior pupils from Quintile 1 neighbourhoods in Scottish Borders are proportionally somewhat more reliant on EMA to remain in education (12.6% of all claimants) than pupils in Quintile 5.

This is, in fact, a much lower proportion than on average for Scotland: if it was in line with Scotland, we would expect 39% of EMA recipients to be living in Quintile 1 neighbourhoods. It indicates that take-up of the education incentive is somewhat lower than expected in Scottish Borders' most deprived neighbourhoods: either they do not qualify for it, or, more likely, they choose not to stay on in education despite the incentive. This is concerning, as there is already an education outcomes deprivation gap in Scottish Borders, which EMA was designed to address.

Interestingly, take-up of EMA is well above Scottish average in Quintiles 3 and 4 in Scottish Borders, meaning that more students from neighbourhoods with average and below-average deprivation live in low-income households and are eligible (and keen) to take up EMA in order to stay on at school. This means that senior school pupils' futures are being impacted by low household incomes throughout a wider demographic group in Scottish Borders, and this impact is not confined to pupils from the more deprived areas.

e) Free School Meals are available to all P1-5 children in the Scottish Borders, regardless of circumstances. A separate means-tested Scottish Government-funded scheme of free school meals for P6-S6 pupils is available to eligible households and is administered by the Local Authority.

According to the SBC SEEMIS Management Information System, there were 2,066 pupils receiving means-tested Free School Meals in the 2023-24 academic year, or 14.7% of the school roll.

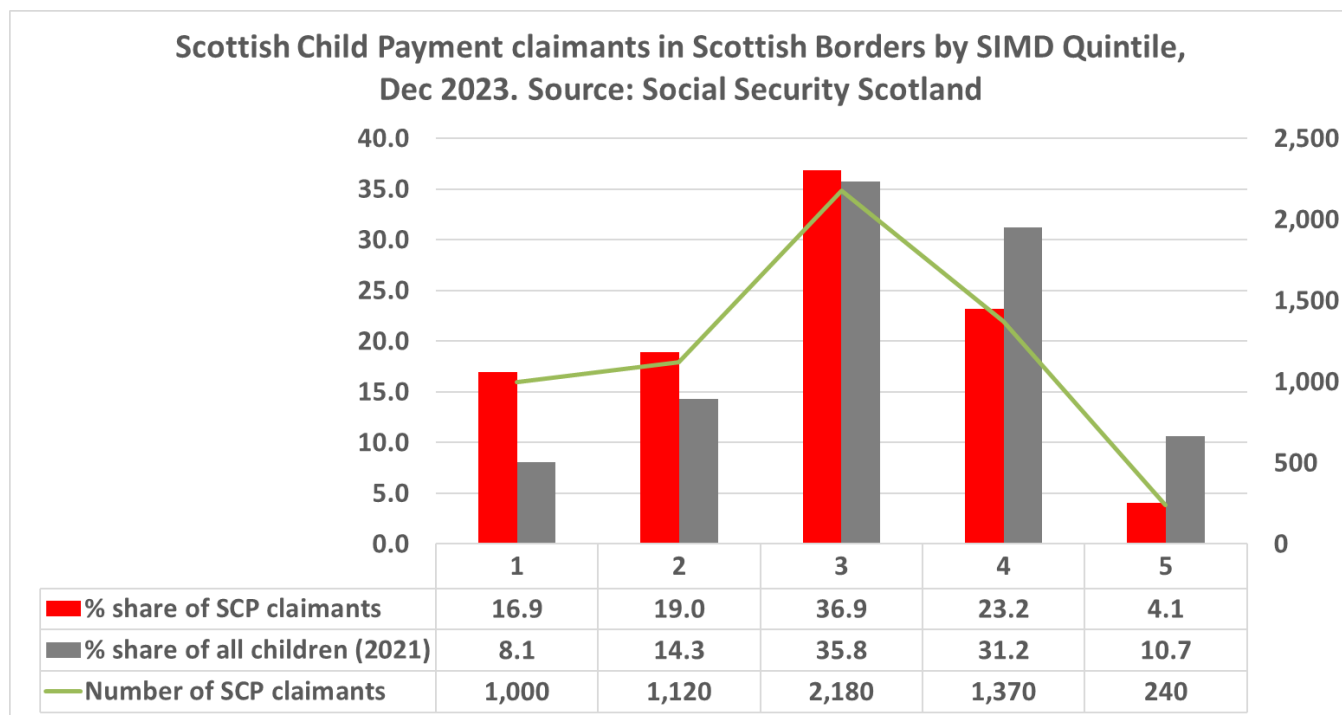
f) School Clothing Grant - in 2023-24 this was an annual payment £120-£150 per pupil to assist with the cost of school clothing and footwear. According to the SBC SEEMIS Management Information System, there were 2,453 pupils receiving Clothing Grant in the 2023-24 academic year, or 17.3% of the school roll.

g) Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Child Payment is a Scottish Government top-up benefit for households with children that was introduced in February 2021. Initially the weekly payment of £10 was awarded to families claiming universal credit with children aged 0-5.

Since December 2022, the weekly payment was increased to £25 per week and expanded to all children aged 0-15. The first set of Official Statistics for this new benefit are shown below.

In total, there were 5,910 claimants of Scottish Child Payment in Scottish Borders in December 2023.



The grey bars in the chart above show the distribution of the child population in Scottish Borders by SIMD Deprivation Quintile. 8.1% of children in Scottish Borders live in the most-deprived Quintile, i.e., the most-deprived 20% in Scotland – these include Langlee, Burnfoot, other parts of Hawick and Galashiels, and parts of Selkirk. The red bars show that a disproportionate share of Scottish Child Payment recipients (16.1%, or 1,000 claimants) live in these neighbourhoods.

10.7% of children live in the least-deprived Quintile, such as the southern part of Peebles, Innerleithen and Lauder, but only 4.1% of SCP claimants live in these areas. Nevertheless, there are still 240 claimants, which shows that there is evidence of child poverty in the most affluent areas.

The largest cohort of SCP claimants live in Quintiles 3 and 4 (average or below-average deprivation), which is where the majority of all Scottish Borders children live. This shows that there is child poverty wherever there are children. However, as expected, there is a concentration of child poverty in the areas of highest Multiple Deprivation.

Priority Groups

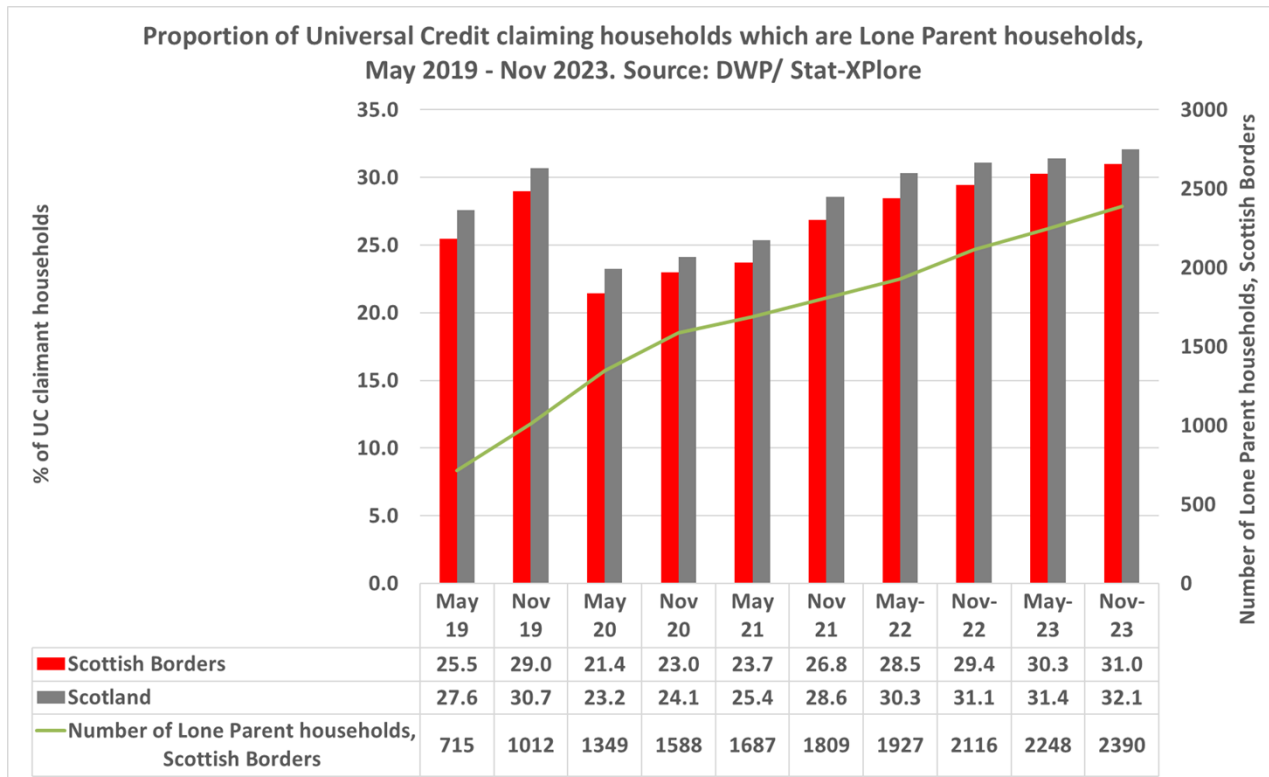
This section provides context on the priority groups identified in ['Best Start, Bright Futures'](#) and profile information on child population. According to [Public Health Scotland](#), more than 8 out of 10 children in relative poverty in Scotland are in at least one of these priority groups:

1. lone-parent families
2. a household where someone is disabled
3. families with three or more children
4. minority ethnic families
5. families with a child under one year old
6. families where the mother is under 25 years of age.

Priority Group 1: Lone Parents

a) Lone Parents claiming Universal Credit

The chart below shows that 31% of Universal Credit claiming households were Lone Parent Households in the Scottish Borders, in November 2023. This is equivalent to 2,390 households. The proportion has always been below the Scottish average, but it is increasing, indicating that more Lone Parent households which were previously managing without Universal Credit are now finding themselves in financial difficulties due to the cost-of-living crisis. The numbers of Lone Parent Households claiming Universal Credit is also increasing, in the Scottish Borders and Scotland.



Priority Group 2: Disabled

Households where the householder or a family member has a disability are more at risk of poverty in a number of ways:

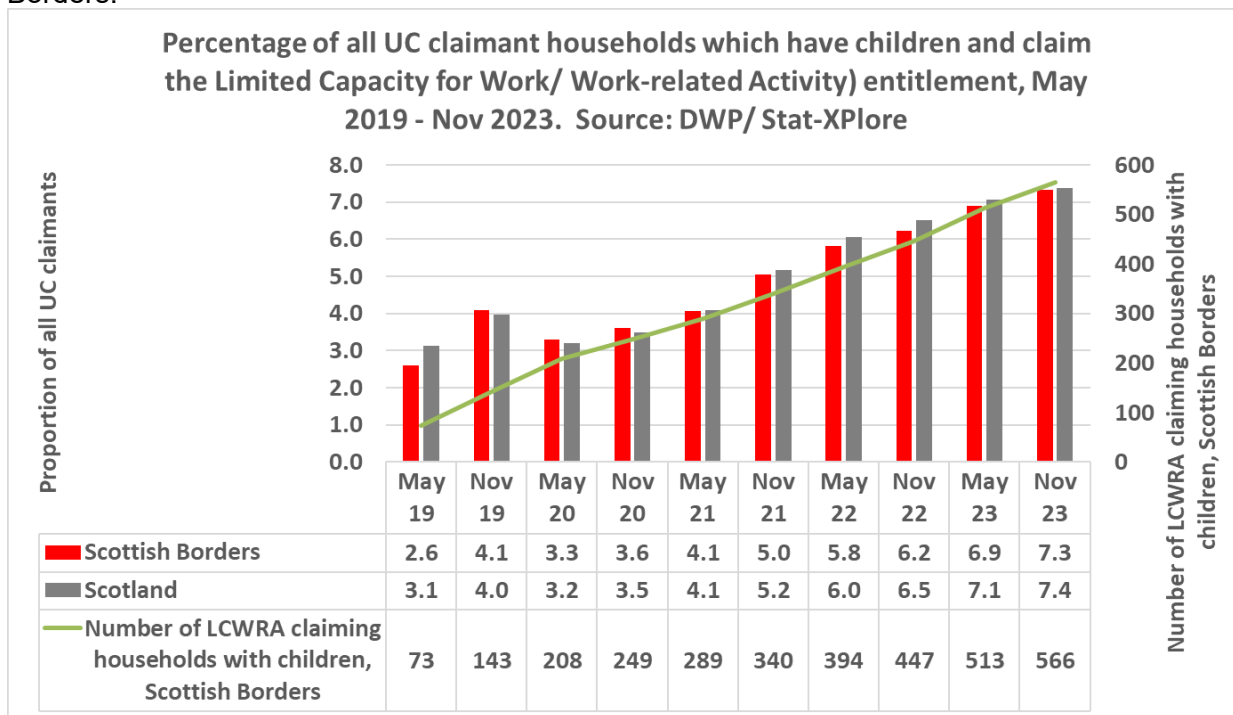
- Difficulty in accessing suitable, well-paid work and reduced work capacity due to the disability
- Difficulty in accessing well-paid work with suitable hours, due to unpaid caring responsibilities towards a disabled family member
- Additional costs incurred directly or indirectly by the disability

a) Universal Credit – Claiming households with children that claim the limited capacity for work element

The chart below shows the numbers and percentages of households with children where an adult has been awarded the limited capability for work/ work related activity (LCW(RA)) entitlement of Universal Credit. 7.3% of Scottish Borders UC-claiming households are families with dependent children who receive this entitlement, similar to the Scottish average and showing a similar trend. The number of awards and the proportion of households with children who receive it is steadily increasing, indicating both:

- a steady increase in the number of parents who are being diagnosed with a work-limiting health condition since the pandemic and are struggling to cope financially
- an increase in the proportion of adults with a work-limiting illness who are struggling financially, who had been managing better before the pandemic.

In November 2023, there were 566 family households with children claiming this entitlement in the Scottish Borders.



b) Young Carers

According to information from [Social Security Scotland](#), Young Carer Grant is a payment that can be applied for annually by young carers aged 16, 17, and 18 who care for someone normally paid a qualifying disability benefit. The payment is a flat rate of £326.65 that can be applied for once a year.

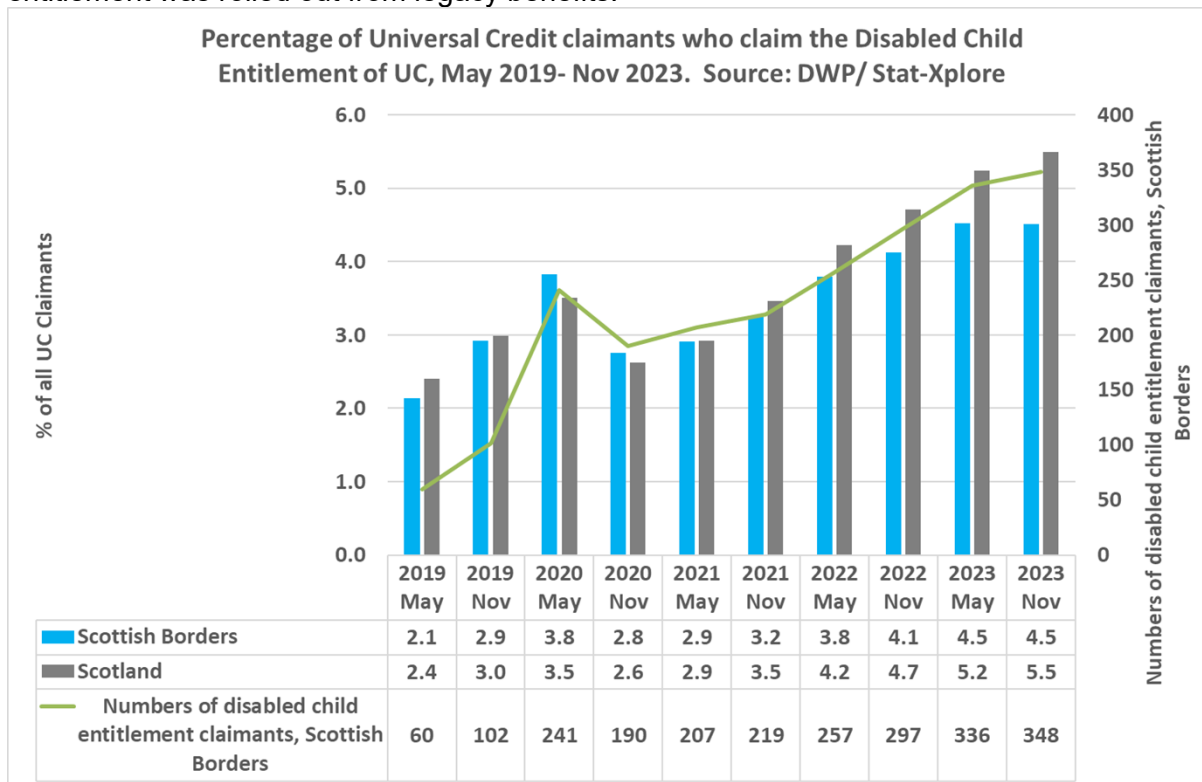
The payment is in acknowledgement of the young person's carer role and is intended to help them access life opportunities that are the norm for many other young people. Young carers can spend this money as they choose. On 1 April 2022, the value of payment for Young Carer Grant was updated from £308.15 to £326.65.

In the 2022-23 financial year, there were 15 applications for Young Carer Grant in Scottish Borders, representing 1% of all applications received in Scotland. By contrast, 15% of all Scottish applications were received in Glasgow City, and the urban Local Authority areas account for the highest share of applications. Applications from rural Council areas are generally fairly low. Of the 15 applications received in Scottish Borders, 54% of them were approved.

According to the SBC SEEMIS Management Information System, there were 93 Young Carers in Scottish Borders schools in the 2023-24 academic year. This means that the majority of Young Carers in the region either do not, or are not able to, apply for Young Carer Grant.

c) Universal Credit - Claiming households with children that have a disabled child

The chart below shows that the percentage of UC-claiming households with children that claim the Disabled Child element affects an estimated 348 households in the Scottish Borders, who are already living in relative poverty. The numbers of Disabled Child Entitlement claiming families have steadily increased, since the entitlement was rolled out from legacy benefits.



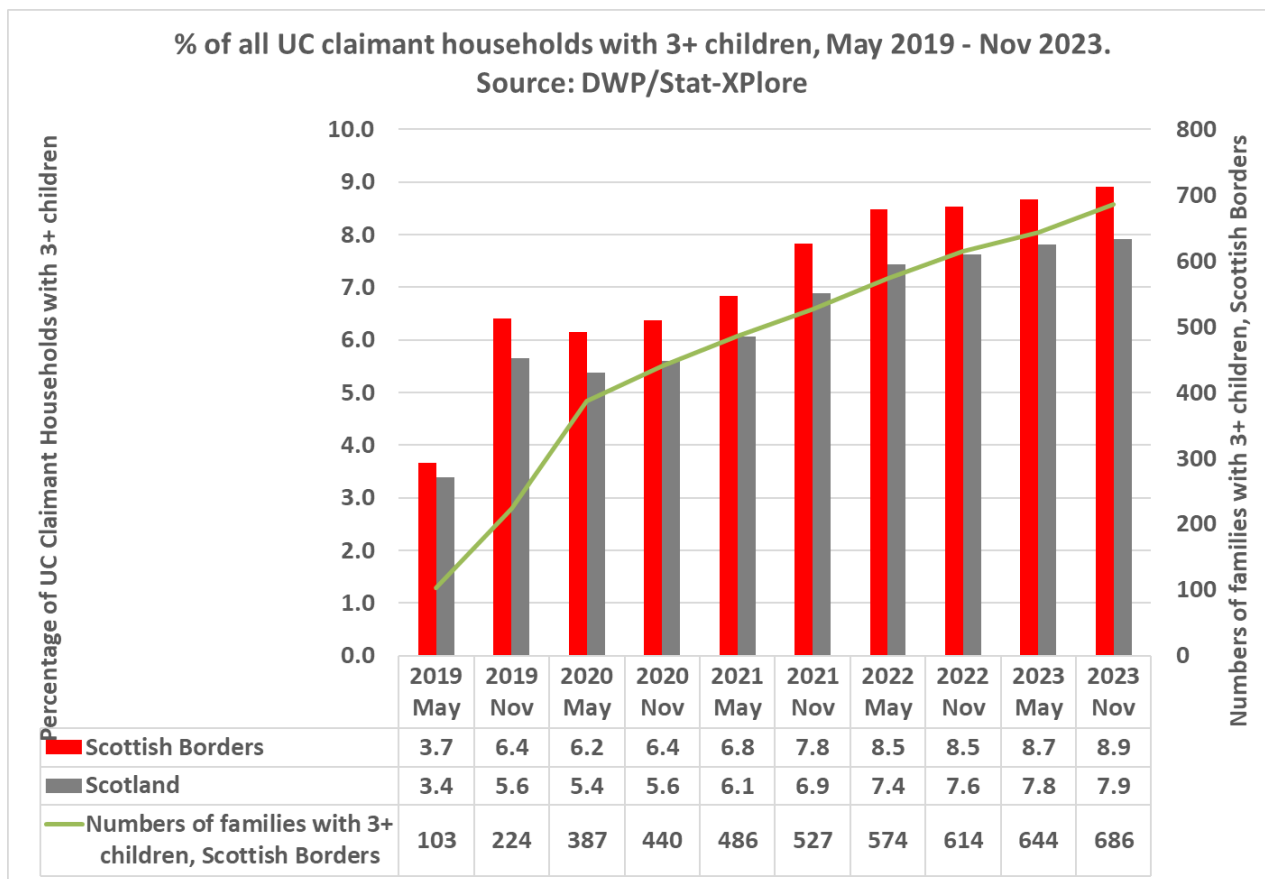
Priority Group 3: Households with 3 or more children

According to Public Health Scotland, 12% of all families in Scotland have three or more children. They are more at risk of being affected by child poverty because:

- they are disproportionately affected by the two-child Child Benefit policy and the benefits cap, which ensures no household receives more in welfare benefits than the average wage
- they face higher costs of living, even before the current crisis
- they are more likely to report they do not manage well financially and are more likely to be living in overcrowded conditions

a) Universal Credit claimants with 3+ children

The chart below shows that the proportion of all UC claimant households that have three or more children, is increasing, although the numbers are fairly small. Only 686 households were in this category in November 2023. This is a small proportion of families but is increasingly represented in the Universal Credit statistics. This indicates again that families who were able to manage financially before the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis are now finding themselves needing to claim Universal Credit in order to get by. The proportion of larger families in the Universal Credit statistics is consistently larger in Scottish Borders than in Scotland, due to lower household earnings in the region.



Priority Group 4: Minority ethnic families

According to recent [Scottish Government information](#), minority ethnic adults make up 12% of the population in Scotland. Minority ethnic people are more likely to suffer from poverty and child poverty because:

- they are more likely to live in a larger family with younger parents, which are also priority groups for child poverty
- they face additional barriers applying for, and working in, the better-paid jobs, despite often outperforming their White British peers at school
- as a consequence, they are more likely to be forced into low-paid work with irregular hours, which is contrary to a healthy family work-life balance
- they are also more likely to live with housing insecurity and higher rents in the private rented sector

There is very little information about the correlation between minority ethnic households and child poverty in the Scottish Borders. The uptake of Universal Credit is recorded by age and gender, but not by ethnic group.

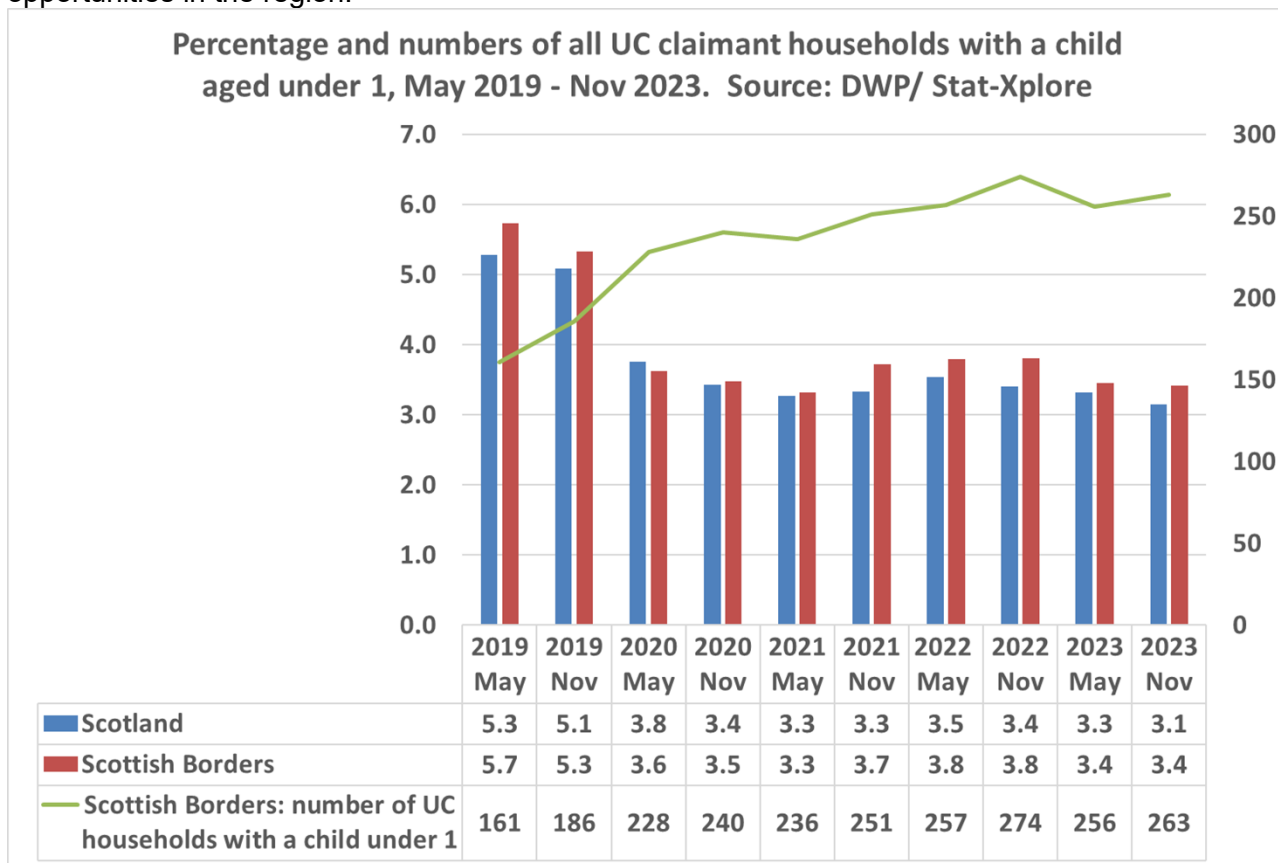
Priority Group 5: Youngest child aged under 1

Families with a child under 1 are more at risk of child poverty, due to the income deprivation caused by at least one of the parents taking maternity or paternity leave for up to a year.

National Registers of Scotland estimated that there were 847 births in Scottish Borders in 2022. The birth rate is decreasing in the region, which is a warning marker for the future sustainability of the population. If couples are putting off having children due to financial concerns, then this will exacerbate the long-term sustainability issue even more.

a) Universal Credit – families with children under 1

The chart below shows that there were 263 families with babies under 1 claiming Universal Credit in November 2023, which is about 31% of all recorded births in 2022 (the most recently available figure). The number of families claiming help with costs has increased in the Scottish Borders, despite the flat birth rate in the region. However, the proportion of UC claimant households that had children under 1 dropped sharply at the start of the pandemic, due to the system being swamped with larger numbers of other claimant types. Since the end of the pandemic and the start of the cost-of-living crisis, the proportion of claimants with a new baby has been higher in Scottish Borders than the average for Scotland, reflecting the lower wages and lack of job opportunities in the region.



Priority Group 6: Mothers aged under 25

According to [Scottish Government information](#), mothers aged under 25 are a diverse, relatively small and shrinking group but are more likely to live in a low income household, and more likely to live in a deprived area than older parents, for a number of reasons including:

- Less financial security and fewer savings
- Lower earnings from work, and being trapped in a cycle of in-work poverty
- Housing insecurity – less likely to afford own home and more likely to still be living with parents or in

unsuitable conditions

- A higher likelihood of also being in another priority group, e.g., lone parents, child aged under 1, disabled household member, which undermines their ability to work their way out of poverty even more.

These issues are magnified the younger the mother. Parents aged under 20 are more vulnerable than parents aged 20 to 24. The journey out of poverty for a young, disadvantaged parent is complex, and requires a lot of support from public services and welfare support.

Figures are provided by DWP on the age of individual claimants of Universal Credit, but it does not link them to which entitlements of UC they claim or whether they have children. The stats on Households claiming Universal Credit do not give information on the age of the claimant who is claiming on behalf of the child.

Appendix 1B - Scottish Borders Child Poverty Annual Progress Report 2023/24

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Employability Through these actions we will increase support available to parents, and uptake and awareness of that support, as well as giving parents access to skills, training and opportunities. This will strengthen the employment offer to parents and create new fair work opportunities, plus tackling inequalities which stop parents from entering and participating in the labour market.						
Financial Support						
Offer assistance with benefit appeals and specialist advice.	1, 3	SBC Financial Inclusion Team	Number of benefit appeals and specialist advice provided	Children and Families	A2	This is an ongoing service action.
Signposting for help with childcare (aged 2+), travel, digital skills and information on financial support through welfare benefits and Scottish Social Security Benefits.	1, 3	CAB	Increased take up of services and benefit entitlements	Parents	A2	This is an ongoing service action. Signposting provided for help with childcare, travel and digital skills as well as referrals and support to access financial support.
Increase awareness and accessibility of HMRC's Childcare Account for both working families and childcare providers.	1, 3	SBC Early Years	Increased number of families receiving support	Children and Families	A1	This service is regularly promoted so that parents are aware of the support available.
Provide support to parents to help them to take up, extend or sustain employment and maximise their income.	1, 2, 3	SDS	Uptake or extension of employment to maximise income	Parents	B3	Continue to deliver all age career, information, advice and guidance services across the region and lead on PACE (Partnership Action for Continuing Employment) to support individuals who have been made redundant. SDS are supporting the work of the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) with a particular focus on parents.
Administer a client intervention fund to assist with the removal of barriers to employment and support individuals to complete funding applications including Independent Living Fund.	1, 2, 3	SDS	Usage of funding	Families	B3	Barrier removal fund approved by the LEP and administered by the Council. In financial year 23/24 £100k was committed. £28,441 was awarded to 35 clients supported through the Parental

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						Employability Service (PES), £30,749 to 40 No on Left Behind (NOLB) clients and £18,485 was spent on Chromebook and reader pens.
Positive Destinations						
Increase skills and the likelihood of young people impacted by poverty achieving a positive destination.	1	SBC Education SDS DYW Borders Borders College SBC CLD	Increased skills of young people and achievement of positive destinations	Children and Young People	A3	The 2nd annual 3 day event "SkillsQuest" for Care Experienced Young People, Young Carers and invited others was held for S2 and S3 pupils. 80 pupils attended from 8 secondary schools. This was supported by 25+ partners. Schools continue to widen their senior phase curricula, one example being the Level 6 construction course partnership between Galashiels Academy, Morrisons Construction, Borders College and Powering Futures.
Ensure care experienced learners receive ongoing support through transition from school to positive destinations. Increase positive destination rate of learners living in quintile 1 and reduce the poverty gap.	1	SBC Education	Increased positive destination rate of learners	Young People	C3	Ongoing support continues for care experienced learners, this includes the 14+ planning process, partnerships with Borders College and employability services. The poverty related outcome gap in positive destinations continues to narrow.
Fair Work Nation						
Work with employers to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities to employees/workers in line with the principles of a Fair Work Nation.	1	CAB	Increased awareness of workforce challenges and Fair Work Nation	Families	A3	Work with the Employment, Rights & Advice Service, signposting clients who have employment concerns. Attend forums when requested and advise clients on their rights.
Engage with employers to ensure fair, rewarding and sustainable work opportunities are promoted and supported.	1	SBC Employability Service	Increased engagement with employers	Families	A3	Through organised events and outreach activities, we (will) actively engage with local businesses and employers, to ensure we are promoting and supporting fair and sustainable opportunities for people of the Scottish Borders, in accordance with employment laws. Our Employability Service offers in work

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						support and, in accordance with the equalities act, we can assist employers in ensuring appropriate, reasonable adjustments are in place where required.
Work with employers to support delivery of apprenticeship programmes and encourage Fair Work practices including payment of the Living Wage.	1, 2	Borders College SBC Employability Service Interest Link Borders	Number of apprenticeship programmes	Young People	C3	
Childcare						
Offer options for parents to engage in work and access to appropriate childcare.	1	Child Poverty Group Employability Service SBC Early Years	Engagement in work for parents accessing appropriate childcare	Parents	A2	Options provided through SBC Employability Services as part of their ongoing service actions.
Provision of support funding to cover Childcare requirements to enable students to fulfil their attendance, study and work placement requirements.	1	Borders College	Increased attendance levels	Families	A2	Depending on the circumstance, funded students may be entitled to support with childcare costs. This gives the option to place children into nursery or with a registered childminder. The award is based on timetables hours, with flexibility built in to manage study around the everyday challenges families encounter. Those studying a Further Education course can request help with childcare when completing the online funding application. Childcare support is also available through SAAS for eligible HE students. The colleges discretionary fund also provides additional support for childcare costs for FE students in financial hardship.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Volunteering						
Promote volunteering roles within the CAB Service to support parents/carers returning to the workplace.	1	CAB	Increase of parents returning to work	Parents	A1	Our Volunteer Training & Development Project Team have attended roadshows and groups. Team have attended parent groups and community events.
Develop volunteer peer mentoring to build confidence, responsibility and help with career decisions.	1	Interest Link Borders	Number of members & families supported, volunteers involved and sessions provided.	Families	B1	50 young peer mentors from local schools were involved in our befriending groups. These were mainly in Peebles, Galashiels & Hawick.
Create pathways into youth work and offer opportunities for learning and on the job training through volunteering.	1	Tweeddale Youth Action	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	We continue to support pathways into youthwork through volunteering opportunities and access to training and learning. Three former service users are now part of our staff team.
Information and Support						
Signposting and provision of information to parents will be done through the library service.	1	Live Borders	Number of parents supported	Parents	A1	Literature available in the library. Staff provide support using information from SBC, DWP, Citizens Advice website.
Signpost or refer parents to local specialist services who are looking for support back into employment.	1	CAB	Increased referrals	Parents	A1	Signposting and referrals completed to specialist services for parents who are looking to re-enter employment.
Provide learning opportunities to support parents into employment.	1	SBC Employability Service	Take up of increased learning opportunities	Parents	A1	This is an ongoing service action within the Employability Service.
Promote employability and other relevant projects across social media channels and through referrals from frontline staff.	1, 2	BHA	Increased employability promotion	Parents and families	A1	Borders Housing Network are members of the Local Employability Partnership and BHA promotes various employability projects via social media channels.
Provide advice, assistance and benefit checks to parents of young children.	1, 2, 3	SBC Employability Service	Provision, value and uptake of benefits and support	Parents	A1	This is an ongoing service action which has been extended to those engaging with Employability and Community Learning and Development Services.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Offer employability training to those requiring support, including young people and parents.	1	SBC ESS	Increased number of participating parents and young people at training	Parents and Young People	A1	<p>Our Pre-employability programme is designed to assist individuals in gaining skills, confidence, and resilience. The Key-Worker support assists people who face challenges and barriers into employment, education, or training, by implementing individualised, strengths-based programmes. Each bespoke programme can include a variety of workshops, learning opportunities, work experience, personal and wellbeing support, and guidance to become more independent and active within the community, at a pace determined by each individual and their personal circumstances.</p> <p>Our Employability Training provides individuals the opportunity to obtain accredited qualifications in employability, personal development, core skills and customer care. Training can be delivered to individuals, small groups, or within a workplace environment. As part of or training, work closely with local businesses and employers to provide opportunities to participate in workplace tasters, to speak to employers through engagement presentations and to explore opportunities in further education.</p>
Grow the BookBug Programme to support young parents and develop signposting alongside "return to work" schemes.	1	Live Borders	Increased parental participation of BookBug programme	Parents and families	A1	<p>Bookbug sessions are available in every Live Borders Library apart from Earlston (opening times restrict at present). Literature is available in all libraries. Staff are available to help with enquiries.</p>
Develop partnership approaches to jointly run events with roadshows/leaflets.	1	Live Borders	Increased participation at jointly run events	Parents and families	A1	<p>Library staff attended the Scottish Borders School Employment Fair to promote employment opportunities within Live Borders.</p>

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Collaborate with partners to offer digital skills in library spaces.	1	Live Borders	Usage of Connecting Borders devices	Parents and families	A1	Technical issues with Wi-Fi in libraries has prevented progress.
Offer activities, respite and unlimited support for family members to develop friendship networks, confidence and communication skills.	1	Interest Link Borders	Number of family carers benefitting and sessions provided	Families	A1, B1, C2	115 children and young people with learning disabilities and autism have been supported. 200 family carers benefited through respite. Two new groups for ages 18+ focused on skills development.
Expand outreach Careers guidance and employability support activities.	1	SDS Job Centre	Increased engagement from customers including parents and carers	Parents and families	A1	SDS closed their public access centre at Waukrigg Mill, Galashiels and now co-locate with the Job Centre at New Reiver House, Galashiels. Community delivery included all secondary schools, Borders College, SDS Hawick Public Access Centre, Abbey Row Community Centre, Eyemouth Community Centre, Southfield Community Centre, Food Punks and various cafes and community venues across the Borders.
<p>Monthly drop-ins at EY centres to provide Parental Employability Support (PES) for parents who are entitled to Eligible 2's placements.</p> <p>Fortnightly drop in support from the Parental Employability Service (PES).</p>	1	SBC ESS DWP	<p>Take up of training opportunities</p> <p>Eligibility of parents entitled to support</p>	<p>Children and Families</p> <p>Parents</p>	A1	Parental employability support workers visit and offer support to parents and families who attend the Early Years Centres across the Scottish Borders, on a monthly basis.
Provide numeracy courses for parents through the Government's Multiply initiative.	1	SBC ESS	Increased number of participating parents	Parents	A1	The service is working closely with Multiply to identify gaps within localities where Multiply programmes can be delivered to our families.
Offer 1-1 employability support to care experienced young people and engage with support services to ensure wrap around support is provided.	1	SBC ESS	Number of care experienced young people supported	Young People	C1	The service works closely with agencies and partners, including Social Care, Education and NHS Borders, to support young people with care experienced backgrounds, in accessing and sustaining employment. They offer a dedicated Employment Support Worker to provide

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						ongoing support and mentoring to individuals to find, and sustain, positive opportunities and destinations.
Projects and Programmes						
Shape a delivery plan and actions through the provision of local skills training and targeted interventions, including travel vouchers to ensure accessibility.	1	Borders College Local Employability Partnership SBC ESS DWP	Formulation of delivery plan and actions	Young People	A1	Those who qualify for funding support are eligible for free travel. This is available to anyone living more than 3 miles from their College base. Those between 5-21 years old are eligible for free bus travel.
Develop a Community Pop Up Hub employability programme.	1, 3	SDS DWP SBC	Increased engagement from individuals	Families Parents Disabled Minority Ethnic Mothers	A1	A community pop up model was piloted in 2022 on a weekly basis in the Burnfoot Community Café involving partners SBC, SDS, DWP and NHS. Due to low footfall accessing the services, this was paused in March 2023 with partners exploring the option of working with Community Officers to offer employability support and wellbeing information across the region working closely with established community groups. Most recent focus has been on individual partners supporting the Social Work What Matters Hubs.
Deliver programmes promoting independence/life skills and offer awards in volunteering to support participants to gain the skills required to enter paid work.	1	Borders College	Number of volunteering awards	Young People	C3	Through the Department of Business and Enterprise, Borders College delivers a range of leisure and community courses including National 4, 5 and Higher certificated courses. They also deliver a range of employability courses in partners with DWP and SBC. Skills for Life and Work programmes are designed to equip candidates with skills they need to lead successful and fulfilling lives. Awards within these programmes start an entry level and can progress to level 4. These include courses like 'Ready for Life', 'Tenancy' and 'Employability'.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Develop physical and mental health, mindfulness and meta skills through an employability boot camp.	1	Borders College SBC	Increased physical and mental health skills	Families	A3	In partnership with SBC, Utility Warehouse and DWP, Borders College ran the Employability - Developing Skills for Employment course. This course, which is aimed at people who are unemployed, provided opportunities including upskilling, recognised certificated, confidence building and interview experience. A further 'Train for Life' course provides training in customer service, data science, employability, health living and IT skills.
Provide an all age employability service (16+), including travel pass and digital connectivity access.	1	SBC Employability Service	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	This is an ongoing service action within the Employability Service.
Work with local partners to provide targeted employability skills training and support people into ancillary roles in the NHS.	1	Borders College SBC NHS	Improved target employability skills	Families	A3	Borders College, SBC, SBCares and NHS Borders work together to deliver an integrated health and social care partnership through the Care Career Academy, which provides a range of flexible training opportunities. This enables individuals to learn while they earn, develop a range of skills and offer progression on to chosen career pathways into health, nursing, care and social care.
Undertake meaningful industry insight visits over the summer to a broad range of key industry sectors.	1	SDS DYW	Visits conducted	Young People	A3	12 SDS industry insight placements took place across the South of Scotland over the summer of 2023 with 61 individual visits. Formal evaluation of the visits scored 8.8/10. Planning is underway with the DYW Regional Group for further visits in summer 2024.
Support partnership planning for poverty related issues by producing labour market information including Regional Skills Assessments.	1	SDS	Evidence from Regional Skills Assessments conducted	Families	A3	Regional Skills Assessments and Sector Skills Assessments are published by SDS on an annual basis and are available to support planning. Most recent publication was February 2024 - www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/wh

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						at-we-do/skills-planning/regional-skills-assessments
Break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by working with partner agencies to target hard to reach families.	1, 2, 3	SBC ESS Social Work Early Years	Take up of services	Families	B1	Targeted advice and support focusing on the 6 priority family groups, and offering generational support is being developed with providers including Housing and 3rd Sector.

Education

Through these actions we will continue to tackle the poverty related attainment gap and support the health and well-being of children and young people. This will in turn help children and young people to achieve better lifelong outcomes, thus helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Attainment

Achieve medium term outcomes of Scottish Attainment Challenge strategy to improve outcomes whilst closing the poverty-related attainment gap.	1	SBC Education	Achievement of medium term outcomes	Children and Young People	C2	All short and medium term outcomes of the Equity Strategy have been achieved. Work continues to narrow poverty related outcome gaps, including the setting of stretch aims in schools and the local authority.
Narrow the poverty attainment gap through resourcing improvements in pedagogy, curriculum development and learning teaching and assessment by utilising Strategic Equity Funding.	1	SBC Education	Narrowing of poverty attainment gap	Children and Young People	C2	Equity is at the heart of the new SBC Way breakthrough curriculum. All schools are engaging in the 3-year implementation plan. Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) has been devolved to clusters to support enhance initiatives to narrow the poverty related attainment gap. This is planned and monitored to ensure impact.
Develop a curriculum reflecting the aspirations of the OECD Review of Curriculum for Excellence as well as The Hayward Review on national qualifications and assessment.	1	SBC Education	Evaluation of practices, approaches and experiences of staff and children	Children and Young People	A2	Our new 3-year plan of the SBC Way, includes all schools engaging in improvements to the curriculum in literacy, numeracy and pedagogy. We await further national guidance on the Hayward review and the future of national qualifications and assessments.
Ensure Learning for Sustainability, UNCRC and The Promise are integral to our new curriculum and culture.	1	SBC Education	Evaluation of practices, approaches and experiences of	Children and Young People	A2	Work continues to ensure these areas are embedded in our schools, including rights respecting schools and the BrightSpots improvement programme.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
			staff and children			
Plan and lead interventions with children and parents/carers to close poverty related attainment gaps.	1	SBC Early Years	Attainment gap improvements	Children and Families	C2	This is an ongoing service action within the Early Years Service and Early Years Centres.
Transport and Travel						
Ensure all young people have access to the Young Scot website, support to apply for their Travel Card and free bus travel for under 22s is promoted.	1	SBC CLD Borders College SBC EES Tweeddale Youth Action CAB	Increased applications for Travel Cards Increased uptake of travel entitlement Increased bus travel applications	Young People	A2, C3	All pupils who have Ipads have a tile on their desktop to access Young Scot. All young people are encouraged by CLD and our 3rd sector partners to access travel cards.
Students who do not qualify for national travel entitlement schemes are provided with bus or train tickets where they meet the eligibility requirements of student bursary.	1	Borders College	Increased distribution of bus and train tickets	Young People	A2, C3	All students living within 3 miles of a College base are offered free travel as part of bursary support.
Digital Support						
Identify children and young people with learning disabilities and autism who would benefit from devices and connections.	1	Interest Link Borders Connecting Scotland Connecting Borders	Increased uptake in digital devices	Children and Young People	A2	4 Ipads have been given to eligible individuals
Student advice, guidance and support is available to all students and supported by a comprehensive student information portal to support successful learner outcomes.	1, 2, 3	Borders College	Positive learner outcomes	Families	B3	The Student Advice Centre is open to students Monday-Friday and offers a range of support including advice and guidance on travel, finances, academic issues and wellbeing. The college's student portal provides links to a range of

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						information to support their studies, including assessment information, learning support, student support, IT support and funding information. We are currently in discussions to develop a careers tile to support students with employability skills and are about to launch 'Report for Support' which is an accessible internal bullying and harassment reporting tool
Information and Support						
Provision of support funding to cover Childcare requirements to enable students to fulfil their attendance, study and work placement requirements of college qualifications.	1	Borders College SBC CLD	Increased attendance levels Increased access to childcare	Families	A2	Funded students may be entitled to support with childcare costs. This gives the option to place children into nursery or with a registered childminder. The award is based on timetables hours, with flexibility built in to manage study around the everyday challenges families encounter. Those studying a Further Education course can request help with childcare when completing the online funding application.
Libraries offer drop in craft and reading sessions and the 'summer ready challenge' for children.	1	Live Borders	Number of children supported	Children	C2	The summer reading challenge was available to all children during the summer holidays. A programme of activities was offered alongside the challenge to encourage children to visit the library and take part in the scheme.
Identify and support pupils, in partnership with schools, whose education may be affected by poverty factors.	1, 2, 3	SDS Schools	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	SDS deliver a targeted service offer in schools. Careers Advisers work with school guidance staff to identify those pupils most at risk of not progressing to a positive and sustained destination. Validation activity takes place twice a year and SIMD is a contributing factor. The school leaver destination publication shows an improving picture of the gap between the 20% most and least deprived.

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Ensure all young volunteers qualify for Saltire Awards.	1	Interest Link Borders	Number of volunteers	Young People	C3	All young volunteers achieved their Saltire Award in 2023/24.
Projects and Programmes						
Provide a mentoring programme specifically aimed at supporting, advocating and coaching young people who are most at risk of not sustaining a successful learning journey.	1	Borders College	Number of students supported	Families	C2, C3	The Borders Young Talent Mentor scheme provides mentoring support to care experienced students and student carers. Our student wellbeing coordinator provides dedicated wellbeing support for students who are struggling with their wellbeing. We also have two partnerships with external mental health organisations who support targeted interventions, including the delivery of counselling sessions.
Deliver enhanced inclusive economic growth through the Regional Economic Partnership, whilst continuing to adopt and embed the Fair Work approach.	1, 3	SOSE	Number of organisations funded whose activities indirectly or directly address child poverty	Families	A2	Sharing prosperity and inclusive growth are established as key values within the Regional Economic Strategy. The Regional Economic Partnership are reviewing their delivery plans but will continue to adopt and embed the Fair Work approach.
Information & Advice Through these actions we will help to ensure families receive the support they are entitled to. We will provide support to help overcome barriers to accessing this support, as well as improving the quality and availability of advice services.						
Transport and Travel						
Signpost to relevant services where it appears there is an entitlement to support with transport e.g. free bus pass.	1	SBC Financial Inclusion Team	Uptake of Travel Cards	Families	A2	This is an ongoing service action which has been extended to those engaging with Employability and Community Learning and Development Services.
Advertise and promote free bus travel for under 22s and Job Start Payment.	1, 2, 3	SBC Financial Inclusion	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	Independent, sustainable travel forms an integral part of the work done with young people seeking opportunities for work, education and/or training. As part of our intervention, we support all participating young people in applying for, and utilising, free bus travel, available through Young Scot.

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Signposting and Advice						
Signpost specialist support, including mental health and drug and alcohol services to young people attending youth club.	1, 2, 3	Tweeddale Youth Action	Number of Young People signposted	Young People	B1	Signposting continues through visible posters at our youth clubs, social media and our website as well as through targeted inputs/conversation at sessions.
Provide a holistic and whole family support library service by signposting and provision of authoritative sources of information.	1, 2, 3	Live Borders	Uptake in signposting	Families	B1	Information available in libraries from SBC/NHS staff helps to signpost customers using information from SBC and Third sector websites.
Signpost or refer to local and national employment support if relevant.	1, 2	CAB	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	CAB provides advice, information and support to all 16+. Income maximisation advice and support to apply for all benefits. Social Security Scotland also provide assistance with Scottish Child Payment applications.
Available Support						
Develop and produce a service directory which outlines available support for children and young people, families and professionals.	1, 2	SBC Financial Inclusion Team	Increased available support	Families	B1	Scottish Borders Council's website has been updated with a page showing support for families. Parents, children and young people Benefits and Financial Support Scottish Borders Council (scotborders.gov.uk)
Proactively promote free school meals (FSM) and clothing grant provision, conduct benefit take up campaigns and provide linked advice and support.	2	SBC Financial Inclusion Team	Increased uptake	Children and Young People	A3, B3	A take-up exercise is undertaken every summer before the start of the new school year
Students are supported to ensure that they access the maximum and appropriate funding sources available to them.	1, 2, 3	Borders College CLD	Uptake of funding sources	Families	B3	The Student Funding team provide ongoing support to students to access the funding available to them. The team are available to meet with students. They also provide workshops, 1-1s, drop ins and intro to funding sessions at various points throughout the academic year. The funding team is supported by the wider student services team who can also offer information and advice in relation to funding, support students to meet with the funding team, and complete applications to relevant community funds.

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<p>Housing & Energy Through these actions we will help to keep housing costs low, provide support with rising energy bills and tackle homelessness for families.</p>						
<p>Tenancy Sustainment</p>						
<p>Support families to secure settled, mainstream housing as part of the Rapid Rehousing Transition plan.</p>	<p>1, 2</p>	<p>SBC Homelessness</p>	<p>Reduction in homelessness</p>	<p>Families</p>	<p>A1, B4</p>	<p>A budget is assigned to our RRTP in Funding to Families with Children in the form of the Housing Intervention Fund (HIF) and the Crisis Intervention Fund (CIF). The team seeks to identify the needs of families and children at the initial point of contact, so that they can assist quickly. They also offer a Deposit Guarantee Scheme to help families and individuals attain the deposit they need for private rented accommodation, so that they are not missing out on opportunities, as well as supermarket gift cards as well as bus vouchers to access transport. The service aims to house families and individuals as quickly as possible, taking into account all their needs, determining appropriate access to amenities, school, work, other family networks etc.</p>
<p>Parents are signposted for advice and support on housing or tenancy related matters.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>	<p>SBC Financial Inclusion SBC Homelessness</p>	<p>Number of families supported</p>	<p>Families</p>	<p>B4</p>	<p>Referrals are made between the financial inclusion team and the homelessness team. The service also engages with CAB where needed.</p>
<p>Use social media and campaign marketing to encourage people facing homelessness to engage early with a view to set up repayment options and/or other suitable debt remedies.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>	<p>CAB Landlords</p>	<p>Number of families supported</p>	<p>Families</p>	<p>B4</p>	<p>Relevant information is shared on social media. A specialist energy project was undertaken in 2023/24 to assist with complex cases. Money advice workers assist with debt issues and fuel bank and discretionary funds requests are made when appropriate.</p>
<p>Fuel and Energy</p>						
<p>Award Crisis Grants or signpost to external partners to assist with fuel costs.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>	<p>SBC Financial Inclusion CAB Changeworks</p>	<p>Number of families supported</p>	<p>Families</p>	<p>B4</p>	<p>Referrals are made between partners to address specific issues for clients.</p>

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		Home Energy Scotland RSL's				
Utilise funding from the Scot Govt Fuel debt fund 2023/24 to support tenants with their heating costs and reduce their fuel debt.	2, 3	SBHA	Number of tenants supported, monetary gains	Families	B4	Since June 2021, the Borders Housing Network has distributed £1,543m in funds received from the Scottish Government's Fuel Debt Fund to over 5,000 social rented Tenants across the Scottish Borders who are in fuel poverty. This funding has reduced their heating costs and cleared their fuel debt. Of the 5,000 social rented Tenants supported, a total of 2,300 children are residing within these homes.
Support 2,000 social rented tenants through continued funding of the Warm and Well Co-ordinator and Energy Advisor.	2, 3	SBHA	Number of tenants supported, monetary gains	Families	B4	Over 5,000 social rented Tenants have received support from the Borders Housing Network's 2 x Warm and Well Coordinators, with 2,481 Tenants supported in 2023-24, against a target of 2,000. The increase in support over the past year can be attributed to the cost-of-living crisis and increased energy costs. Following an additional award from SBC's Cost of Living Fund for £40,000, the Borders Housing Network have been able to retain 1 x Warm and Well Coordinator to continue the service for another year, with an aim to support 1,000 social rented Tenants, reflecting a reduction in the service provision. The Network will continue to explore funding opportunities with partners to continue this invaluable service beyond 31 March 2025.
Warm Affordable Homes						
Creation of new social housing though warm, affordable housing and infrastructure.	2	BHA	New social housing creation	Families	B1	Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA), recognise the profound impact of safe, secure homes on families and children. In 2023-24 they expanded their commitment by developing 21 new homes in Duns at Springfield Drive. Through increased

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						investment, they are enhancing heating systems and improving thermal efficiency to reduce costs for customers. Partnering with WarmWorks has enabled them to implement Air Source Heat Pumps, along with PV and battery storage systems, ensuring that customers benefit from reduced heating expenses. They also remain dedicated to acquiring new sites for development to bolster housing stocks.
Information and Support						
Engage with support services to ensure they are easily accessible and available to all, as well as funding information.	1, 2, 3	SBC ESS	Number of families supported	Families	B4	Key worker support is a mandatory element of the delivery of employability services. This ensures parents and clients are aware and able to access the opportunities available. Engagement with RSL energy advisors as well as Sustainable Selkirk offer professional advice and support to those in fuel poverty.
Health & Wellbeing Through these actions we will provide financial, practical and emotional support, helping to tackle and mitigate the impact of poverty as well as preventing it.						
Food and Healthy Eating						
Secure funding to continue to support families with vouchers and continue to provide food at evening drop-in sessions.	1, 2, 3	Tweeddale Youth Action	Number of vouchers distributed Food provided	Young People	B1, B2	Tweeddale Youth Action continue to offer a free evening meal at drop-ins and school holiday activities and distribute occasional vouchers.
Invest in estates and community facilities including community food gardens.	1, 2, 3	BHA	Uptake in accessing benefits assistance	Families	B1	BHA continues to provide land and support for two community food gardens in Duns and Ayton in partnership with Abundant Borders. Various activities take place in the gardens to encourage the local community to participate and become involved in food growing and preparation, including children and families. BHA's community programme supports community groups with modest funding for activities that will benefit the

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						whole community including support to local foodbanks and larders.
Work with third sector services providing family support to build capacity in relation to health and wellbeing (eg healthy eating on a budget).	1, 2	JHIT		Families	B1	Community Food Workers (CFW) delivered several cooking on a budget sessions in the community including super snacks/meals on a budget. Approx numbers attending were 29 adults and 20 children. Support in the Summer Programme included 'fussy eaters fund with food' family lunch and food activity with 42 parents and 72 children participating. Additional cooking sessions were delivered for Post Natal Depression Group and via drop ins.
Offer students a free breakfast, supermarket vouchers, lunch/breakfast bars and provide regular drop in 'Wellbeing' cafes.	1, 2, 3	Borders College	Number of students supported	Families	C1	Breakfast packs and supermarket vouchers are available from the student services teams. Themed wellbeing cafes provide opportunities to discuss and raise awareness for key equalities themes, including corporate parenting, mental health and wellbeing and menopause.
Provide training to support Breakfast Clubs to deliver nutritious food for children.	2	JHIT	Number of children supported	Children	C2	A Breakfast Club Guide in line with current guidance was developed to support staff delivering breakfast clubs with examples of suitable foods to offer at clubs both to fit with the guidance and in keeping with a health promoting school/community ethos. JHIT and SBC delivered training to all 20 recipients of Breakfast Club funding. All participants were provided with supporting documentation.
Promote 'Ride Pingo' for its customers in Berwickshire and enable older people to attend lunch clubs and social community events.	1	BHA Berwickshire Wheels	Number of transport users	Families	A2	Ride Pingo is promoted via BHA social media and attendance to lunch clubs and local events is a key aim of BHA Befriends group activities. A total of 976 invites were made to befriends to attend 65 plus events with 64 individuals attending one or more of these local

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						events. The project also supported 96 lonely and isolated older people with individual befriending via 26 volunteer Befrienders. BHA Befriend was awarded a further three years funding by the National Lottery in January 2024.
Mental Health						
Offer Books on Prescription and signpost to mental health services.	1	Live Borders	Increased uptake Increased signposting	Families	B1	Books on prescription are available for loan. Free requests mean customers can access books from any library, offering them a greater choice.
Provide of tenancy sustainment services, direct and intensive support to prevent tenancy failure including financial inclusion and BeWell mental health project.	1, 2, 3	BHA	Uptake of sustainment services Number of families supported	Families	B1, B4	Total annual benefit gains generated for BHA customers amounted to £785,208 secured in the last financial year. This includes over £18k in Child Benefit and Scottish Child Payment awards. BeWell capacity expanded and extended to work with more customers under age 25. By December 2023 the project had supported 34 people since April 2023 and over 70 BHA customers since BeWell was initiated in November 2021.
Lobby for renewed funding for the student mental health counselling service. Continue to work with local third sector providers to provide collaborative interventions that will support student mental health and wellbeing.	1, 2	Borders College	Uptake in mental health counselling services	Families	B1	Scottish Government committed to a further allocation of mental health and wellbeing transitional funding in 2023-24. This funding was used to continue counselling provision while upskilling current staff, building on partnerships with the third sector and developing internal services.
Co-deliver Continuous Professional Development training on Mental Health Awareness including Trauma Informed Practice and Self Harm and Suicide Prevention.	1	NHS Borders SDS	Increase of trained SDS Advisors	Families	B1	The SDS leadership team and NHS Borders Mental Health Practitioners co-delivered Trauma Informed Practice training in March 2023 followed by Mental Health First Aid training in May 2023. This was complemented with an online module and signposting materials.

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Information and Support						
Provide five fortnightly peer-age befriending groups for children and young people with learning disabilities & autism aged 8-25. Also fifteen 1:1 befriending links.		Interest Link Borders	Number of members & families supported, volunteers involved and sessions provided.	Children and Young People	B1	16 groups for children and young people operated in the community, in-school and by Zoom. Young people aged 18-25 took part in a further 17 intergenerational groups. Fifteen 1:1 links operated.
Provide information on maternity rights, additional support offered, benefit checks and claim support.	1, 2, 3	CAB	Number of families supported	Families	C1	Benefit checks offered to all clients with information on maternity rights and support to make any relevant applications.
Provide local breastfeeding support groups.	1	JHIT	Number of parents supported	Parents	C1	Evaluation of Breastfeeding in the Borders is in progress. There are noted improvements in breastfeeding rates between women living in most and least deprived communities. Breastfeeding groups running in 8 areas across the Borders.
Provide Healthy Start Vitamins.	1	JHIT	Number of children supported	Children	C1	Evaluation of Health Start Vitamins and Vitamin D is in progress. The reach of distribution has increased over the last year supported by a new promotional campaign.
Provide weaning and healthy groups for families.	1	JHIT	Number of families supported	Families	C1	Weaning groups are taking place face-face, on-line and within breastfeeding groups. Face to face weaning sessions were provided to 73 people and virtual weaning to 28. The service have also piloted 'weaning on a budget' resources.
Projects and Programmes						
Implement the Team Around The Cluster approach in our school communities.	1, 2, 3	SBC Education	Uptake of families supported	Children and Families	B1	The Team Around the Cluster approach continues to be embedded in school communities with more resource being devolved to clusters (e.g Strategic Equity Funding). Cluster Lead 'pathfinders' have been appointed in each of the 9 clusters.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Increase the number of school and settings evaluating themselves as good or better for QI 3.1. Provide training for child protection coordinators and designated managers on aspects of The Promise and roll out play pedagogy.	1	SBC Education		Children and Young People	C1	A new 'Sharing the Standard' programme of activities has been launched with school leaders. Designated Managers have received input on The Promise. Schools have engaged with the Bright Spots programme. Further work in this area will be identified through the Bright Spots Action Plan and the Scottish Government's proposed Promise Education Outcomes strategy when this is published. All school leaders have received input on play pedagogy.
Monitor and evaluate whole family support provided to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the families.	1, 2, 3	SBC Early Years	Evaluation of support provided	Families	B1	This is an ongoing service action and is reviewed as part of the wider Early Years service alongside the Whole Family Support Network of the CYPPP.
Provide a programme of Bookbug for babies and toddlers.	1	Live Borders	Number of children supported	Children	C1	Bookbug sessions are available in all libraries (apart from Earlston) Duplo sessions and under 5 story times are available in larger libraries.
Support delivery of School Holiday programmes.	1	JHIT	Number of families supported	Families	C1	Participation in Christmas Grant Allocation Process & Easter Assessment Panel to review, discuss and agree funding awards. Draft submission to PHIRST For PH Funded Evaluation of programme, awaiting outcome.
Undertake core work with families on playing with their children through a number of sessions, ie Bookbug, Stay and Play, Tots Time.	1	SBC Early Years	Number of families supported	Families	C1	This is an ongoing service action within the Early Years Service. All nurseries and Early Years Centres offer stay and play sessions as part of core business.
Tackling Digital Exclusion Through these actions we will expand the Connecting Scotland Programme and help to provide devices for families in poverty to enable access to appropriate services and support.						
Utilise Connecting Scotland, NOLB and SPF resources to ensure all parents gain access to a device and appropriate IT training.	1	SBC EES	Access to digital devices	Parents	A2	Through the Barrier removal fund and key worker support, advice and support is provided to ensure parents/clients have the access they require to engage in support services and training.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Provide a laptop loan system whereby anyone who requires a laptop, digital device or broadband access receives this.	2	Borders College	Uptake of digital devices	Families Young people	C2, C3	All students who do not have their own laptop are provided with one via our loan laptop scheme. We have further laptops available across our campuses within laptop lockers. These can be loaned our short-term to students, which they access with their student card.

Communities & Partnerships

From these actions we will work with partnership, third sector and community organisations to provide holistic and whole family support.

People and Place

Deliver our vision for place and regeneration and support communities to form Place Plans.	1, 2	SBC Communities	Partnership working with third sector and community organisations	Families	B1	60+ place plans are under development in communities
Provide library membership for every baby born in the Scottish Borders.	1	Live Borders SBC Registrars	Number of families supported	Families	C1	ECALM (Every child a library member) is progressing in partnership with SBC registrars.
Support the delivery of play park programmes through the Capital Investment Scheme and Sport and active living funding opportunities.	1	SBC Communities	Delivery of play parks Number of children and young people supported	Families	C1, C2	The Play park investment programme has involved a number of engagement sessions with communities. Seven playparks have been completed in 2023/24 with a further 3 scheduled to be completed. Improvements to playparks in Newcastleton, Heiton, Broughton, Kelso and Burnfoot is planned.
Develop new partnerships, in both the third sector and community organisations to gain improved outcomes for our clients.	1, 2, 3	CAB	Number of families supported	Families	B1	The CAB are engaged in a pilot project with Social Security Scotland to ensure clients are supported to apply for Scottish Benefits. Pilot project completed ensuring clients are applying for Council Tax Reduction when appropriate.

Funding

Initiate and support community projects through community funds, some of which are now social enterprises.	1	BHA	Increased community projects	Families	A3	BHA continues to support community groups where possible, including seed funding, endorsement of larger funding applications and other partnership work,
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Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						including ad hoc support to local foodbanks and larders
Work in partnership with third sector and community organisations, attend fortnightly/monthly community meetings and co-deliver warm and well grant funding.	1, 2, 3	SBC Communities	Partnership working with third sector and community organisations	Families	B1	Funding was awarded to Borders Community Action from the National Lottery Fund and Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership. A total of £40k was obtained to support local communities.
Work with strategic partners to ensure there is help with heating costs through Cost of Living Support initiatives.	2	SBC Planning & Strategy	Cost of Living initiatives	Families	B2	The cost of living support initiatives continue to provide help with heating costs where appropriate
Support the roll-out Money Guiders Training Programme in partnership with Money and Pensions Service.	1, 2, 3	JHIT	Response to Money Guiders Training Programme	Families	B3	Staff from Health Improvement and Borders Addiction Service have taken part in the Money & Pensions Service National Evaluation and shared the partnership approach by working with SG Improvement Service and the Money & Pensions Service and facilitating presentations to share learning with the Scottish Money Guiders Network & the MAPS team in Bedford.
Holistic and Whole Family Support						
Provide holistic support through the Stepping Stones project and signpost to other organisations.	1, 2, 3	Tweeddale Youth Action	Number of referrals received	Young People	B1, B2	Stepping Stones delivery and signposting continues to have a significant positive impact on highly vulnerable young people.
Work cohesively in family assessments to provide a package of support as part of a shared 'whole family approach.'	1	SBC ESS	Increase to packages of support delivered	Families	B1	Initial meetings with referred families examine possible referral routes such as: Housing, Mental Health, Income maximisation. The service ensures that appropriate links are made with all services supporting the family to enable everyone's needs and wellbeing to be considered. Families are actively engaged in the process and work within a robust support plan which has a multi-agency and family focus.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Projects and Programmes						
Explore the possibility, working in collaboration with NHS, to ensure timely mental health support is offered to clients accessing employability services.	1	SBC ESS NHS	Delivery of collaborative working with NHS	Families	B1	Conversations are continuing with NHS but there are some resource issues to provide NHS mental health specific support to employability clients. The week of Wellbeing is being delivered by the NHS Wellbeing Team – A taster session and additional support is offered if required.
Work in collaboration with Peebles High School to offer daytime, vocational support for disengaged young people. Work towards PHS using SQA framework to recognise achievement through this support and tie in with business and enterprise.	1	Tweeddale Youth Action	Number of young people supported	Young People	C2	Food and Bike Punks are currently supporting cohorts of school refusers and those on blended timetables during the school day. PHS have recently allocated a teaching resource to support accreditation of young people accessing provision at TYA during the school day. Collaboration with CLD supports accreditation through youth awards.
Attend school career fairs to raise awareness of all types of support could be available depending on their circumstances.	1, 2, 3	CAB	Number of children supported	Children	C2	CAB attend local groups, pensioners groups, U3a, school and career fairs and parent groups. Energy training is offered and provided to both external groups and partners and resources provided.
Inform and shape provision based on the Annual Participation Measure, focusing on areas with poor participation.	1	SDS LEP YPG	Number of families supported	Families	C2	Use of data from school leaver follow up activity and participation data for 16–24-year-olds to target provision in areas of greatest need. For example, delivery of NOLB Stage 2 and 3 in Eyemouth and Hawick. Annual Participation Measure 2023 for the Scottish Borders was 95.6% versus 94.3% nationally and was an increase of 2.4% in 2022.
Improve the effectiveness, consistency and impact of 14+ meetings through a refreshed framework and event for core partners.	1	SDS LEP YPG	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	The 14+ framework was updated and an online session held with all 14+ leads in March 2024, co-delivered by SDS and Education and covering SLDR, data hub completeness and use and overview of LEP. 14+ meetings are being held regularly in all schools and the improvement in school leaver destinations

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						is evidence of impact. In the most recent publication 96.8% of 22/23 school leavers were in a positive destinations versus 95.9% nationally.
Engage fully in identifying, supporting and addressing child poverty throughout the Local Employability Partnership key themes of transitions, barriers, employer engagement, skills and leadership.	1, 2, 3	SBC Employability Service	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	Parental and practitioner engagement events have been held across the 3 most deprived areas in the region with clients and the following partners: Borders Housing Network, SDS, DYW, DWP, SOSE, Employability, CLD.
Fuel related activity						
Through these actions we will tackle fuel poverty and provide support with rising energy bills.						
Warm and Well						
Offer libraries as warm spaces during autumn and winter 2023/24. Signpost to the SBC Cost of Living Crisis website.	2	Live Borders	Number of participants Number of families supported	Families	B2, B4	Cost of living literature and information to help support people available in the library. All Libraries registered on warm spaces website and available as a warm space during opening hours.
Allocate Warm and Well funding to support the operation of warm spaces in communities during the winter period.	1, 2, 3	SBC Communities	Number of families supported	Families	B4	A total of 30 grant applications were received and 22 were awarded funds. The grants benefitted a wide range of community groups and organisations spread across the 5 localities. Approx 3,900 people benefitted from activities.
Attend Warm Spaces and other community groups to be pro-active to discuss energy saving ideas, schemes and funds available to help families.	1, 2, 3	CAB	Number of families supported	Families	B4	Energy training offered & provided to local groups and stakeholders in order to share knowledge & resources. Discretionary funds made available and referrals to crisis energy support provided.
Fuel and Energy						
Provide ongoing support to mitigate fuel poverty including distribution of SG Fuel Support funding, Fuel Bank vouchers and energy saving advice.	2	BHA	Funding and voucher allocation	Families	B2	BHA has supported 85 customers with large fuel debt amounting to £31,960 averaging £374 per household. Fuel Bank vouchers continue to be dispensed with BHA allocating 605 vouchers last year, helping 887 adults and 476 children. Borders Housing Network (BHN) collectively allocated 2,122 vouchers in the last year. BHN has distributed 5,395

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						FB vouchers in the Scottish Borders since 2021 helping 10,406 people.
Signpost clients to Housing Providers as part of Initial Assessment to ensure eligibility of all additional funds for Fuel costs.	2	SBC ESS	Increased eligibility identified from Initial Assessments	Families	B2	The service works with the Housing network to create a referral pathway, which will be consistent across all 4 RLSs and homelessness services, this will include referral to PES/IFSS and to Welfare Benefits for income maximisation.
Partnership Working						
Work in partnership on specific projects such as Low and Slow and provide energy training in local communities.	2	SBC Communities Changeworks CAB	Uptake of Low and Slow Project	Families	B2	The Low and Slow project has delivered a 6-week programme where families learned a new way of working, shared recipes and enjoyed good food.
Work in partnership with Borders Home Energy Forum members to support fuel poverty interventions.	2	JHIT	Number of families supported	Families	B4	Ongoing sharing of information with/from the partnership. Contribution to the LHEES Strategy Consultation through co-ordination and submission of a PH response.
Continue the partnership delivery of the Warm & Well Scheme in 2023/2024, including the services of an Energy Advisor.	2	SBC CAB	Monetary gains and support given	Families	B4	Specialist energy advice & support provided with delivery of the Warm & Well project.
Financial Inclusion						
Through these actions we will help maximise income of low income households, lifting children out of poverty and combatting the cost of living crisis.						
Education Settings						
Students under the age of 18 are assisted to apply for Education Maintenance Allowance and to ensure that they maximise the student income streams they are eligible for.	1, 2, 3	Borders College	Number of students supported	Young People	C2	Students are provided with support via our student funding team and student support team to apply for EMA.
Schools will work more collegiately in clusters on the cost of the school day, using pupil equity funding to support it.	2, 3	SBC Education	Monetary gains	Families	B2	A new cost of the school day network has been formed and collation of effective practice has taken place. Each cluster has an identified person to lead on COSD. CPAG Scotland have engaged with the network to enhance our knowledge. The network's focus moving forward will be aimed at establishing relationships with partners, developing a framework for schools/settings, including

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						recommendations and encouraging professional learning for staff.
Support parents to be more confident as parents and co-learners in the education of their children and help their child flourish as a member of the school and wider community.	1	SBC CLD	Number of families supported	Families	C1	CLDS delivers parental support programmes such as Living with Parents.
Income Maximisation						
Work in partnership with other local authority and third sector organisations to support families with income maximisation and access to benefits and grants.	1, 2, 3	SBC Education	Uptake of families supported	Children and Families	B3	Clusters are building relationships with partners through various means, including the Cost of the School Day Network.
Provide Financial Inclusion and signposting to relevant services including child specific welfare support, access to food resources and clothing grants. Maximise take up of child related benefits and resources.	1, 2, 3	BHA	Uptake in accessing assistance Update of benefits	Families	B2, B3, B4, C1	BHA tenancy support service generated an annual benefit gain for BHA customers amounting £785,208 in the last financial year. Regular referrals to foodbanks and clothing resources are made as part of ongoing support provided.
Provide a comprehensive Income Maximisation assessment to clients to ensure all funding streams are explored for families both unemployed and in work. Ensure all eligible families are in receipt of the package of 5 family benefits.	1, 2, 3	SBC ESS	Volume of Income Maximisation Assessments	Families	B2	Recruitment of a welfare benefits assistant has provided the offer of an in-work Benefit calculation to all participants engaging with Employability services. The delivery of a Parents Programme includes the offer of a welfare benefits check to each parent to ensure income maximisation.
Provide benefit checks and advice (including referrals from Employability Team) and signposting	1, 2, 3	SBC Financial Inclusion SBC Early Years	Uptake of referrals Updates in benefits checks	Families	A3, B2, B1	Dedicated support is now in place within the Employability Service which will make a difference to families in providing benefit checks.
Provide support and signposting for applications for disability benefits and assist with appeals if required.	1, 2, 3	SBC Financial Inclusion	Uptake in benefits applications	Families	B2	This is an ongoing service action.
Projects and Programmes						
Provide pilot pop up welfare/employability hubs offering wellbeing and employability support and advice.	1, 2, 3	SBC ESS SBC Communities	Attendance at hubs	Families	B3	In collaboration with LEP partners and external agencies, such as housing and NHS Borders, the service will provide opportunities for individuals and communities, to engage in hubs

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
						promoting and supporting wellbeing and employability.
Undertake take-up campaigns to encourage people to apply for benefits or support where parents might not have been aware of their potential entitlement.	1, 2, 3	SBC Financial Inclusion	Referral intake	Families	B3	Specific campaigns have included free school meals, clothing grants and Scottish Child Payment.
Money Worries Through these actions we will put money directly in the pockets of low income households, lifting children out of poverty and combatting the cost of living crisis.						
Cost of Living						
Provide funds to run free breakfast clubs across 20 schools.	2	SBC Communities	Attendance at breakfast clubs	Children and Families	B2	£50k was made available to 16 schools/organisations to enhance or start a breakfast club. Feedback is currently being gathered.
Ensure all students eligible to receive student funding have received additional cost of living payments to help mitigate the cost-of-living crisis in the 22-23 academic year.	2	Borders College	Continuation of Scottish Government funding	Families	B2 B4	Cost of living payments continue to be provided to students at Borders College, of up to £5,000 per year. This is provided in installments across the year. Students are invited to apply for this payment by e-mail (they just need to respond saying they would like to receive it). All students who made an initial application will automatically be provided with further instalments throughout the year.
Support families 1:1, liaison with housing, vouchers available for supermarkets, linking with and referrals on to charities. Hold clothing swap shops.	1, 2, 3	SBC Early Years	Number of families supported	Families	B4	This is an ongoing service action within the Early Years Service.
Income and Benefits						
Increase awareness of benefits among parents of primary and secondary pupils through continued campaigning.	3	SBC Financial Inclusion Team	Monetary gains, support given	Families	B3	Specific campaigns have included free school meals, clothing grants and Scottish Child Payment. Where appropriate, referrals are sent to CAB for money advice.
Work with people and families to maximise their income in person, by telephone, near me digital service and mail, attending community events and outreach services.	1, 2, 3	CAB	Increase to number of families supported	Families	B3	Income maximisation is provided in person, by telephone, email and near me video call. Debt advice provided to clients with debt issues and attended community events to raise awareness.

Action	Poverty Driver*	Partners Involved	How will impact be assessed?	Intended beneficiaries or target groups	Best Start, Bright Futures Indicator**	Update
Provide support with Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payment applications to assist with rent payments.	1, 2, 3	SBC Financial Inclusion	Number of families supported	Families	B4	A campaign to identify parents affected by the Benefit Cap was undertaken and awareness sessions with other partners delivered.
Promote welfare benefits and Scottish Government benefits relevant to the young person.	1, 2, 3	CAB	Number of young people supported	Young People	C3	Benefit checks are offered to all clients to ensure they are receiving full entitlement. Clients are also encouraged to attend Social Security Scotland drop-in service in bureau.
Information and Support						
Promote the Money Worries App to increase uptake	1, 2, 3	JHIT CAB NHS Borders	Usage of Money Worries app Number of families supported Monetary gains	Families Parents	B3, C1, A2	The Money Worries App continues to be promoted to clients.

Poverty Drivers

- 1 – Income from Employment
- 2 – Costs of living
- 3 – Income from Social Security and benefits in kind

****Best Start, Bright Futures Indicators**

- A1 – A strengthened employment offer to parents
- A2 – Connectivity and childcare
- A3 – Transforming our economy
- B1 – A transformational approach to People and Place
- B2 – Enhanced support through social security
- B3 – Income maximisation
- B4 – Access to warm affordable homes
- C1 – Best start to life
- C2 – Supporting children to learn and grow
- C3 – Post school transitions

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Stage 1 Scoping and Assessing for Relevance

Section 1 Details of the Proposal

<p>A. Title of Proposal:</p>	<p>Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Report 2024-25 and Progress Report 2023-24</p>
<p>B. What is it?</p>	<p>A new Policy/Strategy/Practice/Project <input type="checkbox"/> A revised Policy/Strategy/Practice X</p>
<p>C. Description of the proposal: (Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the proposal being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes, including the context within which it will operate)</p>	<p>The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report and an Annual Progress Report.</p> <p>As per the Scottish Government's statement of intent to eradicate child poverty by 2030, the objective is to identify and reduce child poverty by mitigating financial and hardship risks.</p> <p>This work is facilitated by multiple partners, their action plans, workshops, poverty drivers, impact analysis and intended beneficiaries.</p>

E. Lead Officer: (Name and job title)	Janice Robertson, Strategic Planning & Policy Manager
F. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)	Multiple – these are cross-partnership Reports incorporating partners from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and the third sector. These can be made available upon request.
G. Date(s) IIA completed:	April 2024 May 2024

Section 2 Will there be any impacts as a result of the relationship between this proposal and other policies?

Yes
<p>If yes, - please state here:</p> <p>Scottish Borders Council Anti Poverty Strategy Children and Young People’s Services Plan 2023/26 Council Plan 2024 Community Plan Community Learning & Development Plan Children’s Rights Report 2023/26 Scottish Government Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022/26 Best Start Bright Futures</p>

Section 3 Legislative Requirements

3.1 Relevance to the Equality Duty:
Do you believe your proposal has any relevance under the Equality Act 2010?

(If you believe that your proposal may have some relevance – however small please indicate yes. If there is no effect, please enter “No” and go to Section 3.2.)

YES

Equality Duty

A. Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment. *(Will the proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)*

Reasoning:

The proposals will help to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, as all proposals are inclusive.

The report highlights activities undertaken in 2023/24 showing the intended beneficiaries and how attainment will be measured in order to realise Scottish Government targets.

B. Promotion of equality of opportunity?
(Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)

The 6 priority family groups at highest risk of poverty are lone parents, disabled, 3+ children, minority ethnic, youngest child aged less than 1 and mothers aged less than 25.
The Drivers of Child Poverty fall into 3 main categories; Income from Employment, Cost of Living, Income from Social Security.

The report sets out how all of these groups have been considered and all actions detailed confirm that agencies involved are working collaboratively to promote equality and reduce exclusion.

C. Foster good relations?
(Will your proposal help to foster or encourage good relations between those who have different equality characteristics?)

Relationships have been established between all partner agencies Under the Equality Act there are nine protected characteristics. The plans make positive impacts on many of these as outlined below.

**3.2 Which groups of people do you think will be or potentially could be, impacted by the implementation of this proposal?
(You should consider employees, clients, customers / service users, and any other relevant groups)**

Please tick below as appropriate, outlining any potential impacts on the undernoted equality groups this proposal may have and how you know this.

	Impact	Please explain the potential impacts and how you
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	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	know this
Age Older or younger people or a specific age grouping		x		The plans are inclusive to all children, young people and their families regardless of age.
Disability A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This may be visible or invisible, progressive or recurring.		x		Commissioned Services are in place which deliver positive emotional and mental health support to all children and young people who require it.
Gender Reassignment anybody who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.		x		The reports are inclusive to all children, young people and their families irrespective of gender reassignment/gender identity.
Marriage or Civil Partnership people who are married or in a civil partnership	x			These are not nationally identified key risk groups in relation to Child Poverty.
Pregnancy and Maternity (refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth),		x		The Early Years Financial Inclusion Team campaigns, provides advice and support in relation to maternity payments, childcare and entitlement to Best Start Grants and Scottish Child Payments. Midwives and Health Visitors are proactive in referring expectant and new mothers for benefit checks. In 2023-2024 over 500 referrals were made resulting in benefits gains of approx. £1m.
Race: including colour, nationality, ethnic origins, including minorities (e.g. gypsy travellers, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers)		x		Minority Ethnic Groups are a nationally identified key group and are recognised within the plan. The reports are inclusive to all children, young people and their families irrespective of race

Religion or Belief: different religious or philosophical beliefs, customs (including atheists and those with no aligned belief) e.g. Christianity, Islam, Hindu, pacifism, vegetarianism, gender critical.	x			Religion and Beliefs are not nationally identified key risks in relation to Child Poverty. The reports are inclusive to all children, young people and their families irrespective of religion.
Sex women and men (girls and boys)	x			Gender is not nationally identified key risk groups in relation to Child Poverty. The reports are inclusive to all children, young people and their families irrespective of sex.
Sexual Orientation , e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual	x			Sexual Orientation not nationally identified key risk groups in relation to Child Poverty. The reports are inclusive to all children, young people and their families irrespective of sexual orientation.
<p>3.3 Fairer Scotland Duty</p> <p>This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making <u>strategic</u> decisions.</p> <p>The duty is set at a strategic level - these are the key, high level decisions that SBC will take. This would normally include strategy documents, decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources and commissioning services.</p>				
<p>Is the proposal strategic?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>If No go to Section 4</p>				
<p>If yes, please indicate any potential impact on the undernoted groups this proposal may have and how you know this:</p>				
	Impact			State here how you know this
	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	

Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.		x		Income from employment is one of the 3 main drivers of child poverty. The report shows multi agency actions undertaken, how these are assessed, intended beneficiaries and the progress of such actions. Income maximisation work and employability work contribute to ensuring families have enough money to live.
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies		x		Costs of Living is one of the 3 main drivers of child poverty. The 2023/24 Report shows multi agency actions undertaken, how these are assessed, intended beneficiaries and the progress of such actions. Information about the provision of Warm Spaces is shown along with school holiday activities and other initiatives to work with children, young people and families to provide support.
Area Deprivation – where you live (e.g. rural areas), where you work (e.g. accessibility of transport), see rural proofing guidance		x		Borders College works with the Local Employability Partnership, Employment Support Services and DWP to ensure course times are arranged with transport vouchers to ensure accessibility. The under 22's free bus travel scheme continues to assist young people travelling to work or college.
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income		x		Income from employment is one of the 3 main drivers of child poverty. The 2023/24 Report shows multi agency actions undertaken, how these are assessed, intended beneficiaries and the progress of such actions. SBC and Borders College support the Parental Employability Project through collaborative development and implementation of Introduction to Childcare Course with Borders College.
Care experienced people		x		The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has a focus on providing a family group decision making service involving care experienced people.
Carers paid and unpaid including family members		x		The CHIMES service engages with each school cluster to re-emphasise the importance of support for young carers and encourage the completion of young carers statements.
Homelessness		x		The homelessness team work with families to ensure that they have a home.
Addictions and substance use		x		These are not nationally identified key risk groups in relation to Child Poverty. Our commissioned youth services signpost specialist support, including mental health and drug and

				alcohol services to young people who attend their clubs. This information is clearly displayed so that young people can access it.
Those involved within the criminal justice system		x		The criminal justice team work with schools to deliver specific programmes to keep children and young people out of the system, eg. No knives, better lives.

3.4 Armed Forces Covenant Duty (*Education and Housing/ Homelessness proposals only*)

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to the three matters listed below in Education and Housing/ Homelessness matters.

This relates to current and former armed forces personnel (regular or reserve) and their families.

Is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty applicable?

No

If "Yes", please complete below

Covenant Duty	How this has been considered and any specific provision made:
<p>The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces; The <u>MOD Statutory Guidance</u> gives the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger • Geographical Mobility • Separation from Family • Service Law • Unfamiliarity with Civilian Life • Hours of Work • Stress 	

<p>The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces;</p>	
<p>The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.</p>	

Section 4 Full Integrated Impact Assessment Required

Select No if you have answered “No” to all of Sections 3.1 – 3.3.

Yes

If yes, please proceed to Stage 2 and complete a full Integrated Impact Assessment

If a full impact assessment is not required briefly explain why there are no effects and provide justification for the decision.

N/A

Signed by Lead Officer:	Janice Robertson
Designation:	Strategic Planning and Policy Manager
Date:	June 2024
Counter Signature Director:	Jenni Craig Director Resilient Communities
Date:	June 2024

Stage 2 Evidence Gathering and Consultation

A. Title of Proposal:	Local Child Poverty Progress Report 2023/24 and Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan 2024/25
B. Service Area: Department:	Resilient Communities
C. Lead Officer: (Name and job title)	Janice Robertson, Strategic Planning & Policy Manager
D. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)	Multiple – these are cross-partnership Reports incorporating partners from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and the third sector. These can be made available upon request
E. Date(s) IIA completed:	April 2024 May 2024

Section 1 Data and Information

A. What evidence has been used to inform this proposal?

(Information can include, for example, surveys, databases, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints made, user feedback, academic publications and consultants' reports).

Information from Agencies and partners
 National Statistics
 Local Data and Statistics
 Lived Experience information via case studies and feedback
 Case Studies
 Publications
 Action Plans and Progress Reports
 Other key plans and strategies

B. Describe any gaps in the available evidence, then record this within the improvement plan together with all of the actions you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis, and when this is planned)

The Child Poverty Action Group will identify key collaborative priorities throughout the year.

Work to consolidate partner actions to align more closely with Child Poverty drivers continues.

These actions will help to highlight any gaps in our approach to Child Poverty.

Section 2 Consultation and Involvement

A. Which groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement

Various multi-agency partners are involved in the process. Any consultations undertaken by partners inform the content of the report.

The review of Action Plan and Progress Report will be ongoing and all groups and agencies will be involved in this.

B. Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the process

Planning is underway to hold a multi-agency partner workshop in 2024-25 to encourage collaborative partnership working and positive outcomes in reducing Child Poverty. The Child Poverty Action Group (a multi-agency working group) will be responsible for managing the process.

C. Describe the results of any involvement and how you have taken this into account.

All involvement is recorded in the Action Plan and Progress Report.

D. Describe any events held and views obtained (if applicable). Add or remove as needed.

n/a

Stage 3 Summary and Next Steps

Section 1 Summary

Summarise what you have learned then develop this further.

(Describe the conclusion(s) you have reached from the evidence, and state where the information can be found.)

Please consider the following:

What have you learned from the evidence you have and the involvement undertaken? Does the initial assessment remain valid?

What new (if any) impacts have become evident?

Is the proposal not to proceed because of a disproportionate impact on equality or Fairer Scotland characteristics?

Evidence has been gathered and input provided partners to inform the report.

Data and statistics have been specifically gathered for this report.

The Child Poverty report meets Fairer Scotland considerations and has a positive impact on this as well as the Equality Act.

The initial assessment remains valid because child poverty is a prominent issue within the Scottish Borders. The 6 high risk groups identified in the national delivery plan Best Start Bright Futures are considered in the plan and align closely with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act.

A. Please indicate if the proposal will proceed

- Yes, please see below section 3 for next steps
- No, the proposal will not proceed based on disproportionate impact on equality or Fairer Scotland characteristics

Section 2 Sign Off

Signed by Lead Officer:	Janice Robertson
Designation:	Strategic Planning and Policy Manager
Date:	June 2024
Counter Signature Director:	Jenni Craig Director – Resilient Communities
Date:	June 2024

Section 3 Monitoring and Review (complete if relevant, remove if not)

B. State how the implementation and impact of the proposal will be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?

Annual Reports will be prepared and reported to Community Planning Partnership
Child Poverty Action Group will create an Action Plan and monitor it's implementation

C. What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example who will put this in place? When will it start?

Child Poverty Group monthly meetings

D. When is the proposal due for review?

Statutory publication in June

E. Who is responsible for ensuring that this happens?

Child Poverty Group and the Community Planning Partnership

F. Please indicate if you have developed an Action Plan to take forward any remaining actions

- Yes, please see attached on final page
 No, no further actions required

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LOCAL EMPLOYABILITY PARTNERSHIP (LEP) REPORT TO CPP APRIL 2024

“We will work together to deliver effective and easily understood employability and skills pathways focused on positive outcomes which are person-centred and lead to sustainable, fair and rewarding work”.

Subgroups

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers - We will identify any barriers you face and support you to overcome them in the right way at the right time through employability support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions - We will support you to successfully access or transition between opportunities in education, training, employment, or volunteering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Engagement - We will encourage and support you as an employer to adopt a more diverse and inclusive approach to recruitment, development, and retention of employees, enabling fair and rewarding work for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills - We will support you to develop the skills and qualifications required for successful, sustainable, and rewarding work aligned to local employment opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership - We will develop the collaborative leadership and capacity of our LEP through continuous improvement and in partnership with all our stakeholders to evolve, design and deliver services for the future.
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Theme 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people from low-income households are supported to develop life skills to help them to succeed in life. 	
<p>Principles of good Transitions 3 training</p>	<p>The Transitions Subgroup held a Principles of good Transitions 3 training session delivered by Arc Scotland in April. There were 14 attendees at the session from over 8 organisations. The afternoon session looked at the local offering, where the gaps are, and where improvements could be made. The group are now exploring the delivery of a life skills programme in schools. This is in the very early stages of development, but there will be a further update in the next report.</p>

<p>ASN Transitions Development Officer (BANG)</p> <p>Borders Family Firm Project</p> <p>DFN Project Search</p>	<p>The LEP have funded an ASN Transitions Development Officer for Borders Additional Needs Group (BANG). The aim is to develop an inclusive project for young people with additional needs that supports them to plan for their future by identifying goals, offering accreditation, and working with employers to understand the benefits of employment.</p> <p>Supporting Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) aged 16 – 25 years old find and sustain paid employment. Through 1-1 key worker support offering a menu of employability interventions including job tasters, work experience, working interviews, job search training, ongoing support and in work support ensuring the young person is best prepared to find, secure and sustain paid employment.</p> <p>Partnership with SBC, Borders College and NHS Borders Offering a one-year internship programme for young people aged 16-29 with additional needs to gain skills and experience for employment. The Project provides Key worker support whilst undertaking 3 x 10 week work experience placements with various employers, help in compiling CV's, completing job applications, preparing for interviews, and arranging work experience placements and providing ongoing advice and guidance once a job has been found.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people have a clear route to progress into a greater variety of jobs, learning and training opportunities available within the Scottish Borders. 	
<p>Mapping and Gapping Project</p> <p>Jobs Fair</p> <p>Supported Employment</p>	<p>The LEP have funded Borders Community Action to run a mapping and gapping exercise of the employability landscape in the region. This will identify current provision, and areas requiring additional support and investment.</p> <p>The LEP funded a jobs fair at Galashiels Job Centre. 25 employers attended, and around 300 job seekers passed through. This allowed providers to network and to share more information on the employability services and the support that can be provided to employers and their employees. Employability Services actively engaged with individuals who attended the jobs fair with many of them now actively receiving support from appropriate services to either find work or sustain employment.</p> <p>Providing help and support to overcome barriers into employment by offering help with job search, compiling CV's, completing job applications, preparing for interviews, arranging work experience placements, and providing ongoing advice and guidance once a job has been found.</p>

	Employed within the team is a bilingual, Ukrainian and English speaking, Employment Development Officer who offers support to Ukrainian clients needing help to move into paid employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are supported to enter, remain, and progress in work. 	
Stable Life Project	Working with Stable Life the development of an intensive 4-day programme where parents and children could learn new skills whilst working in a stable environment. The skills they gained were intrinsic in helping them move forward into a healthier, empowered, and independent lifestyle. Working in groups they made friends, reducing isolation. By enhancing employability opportunities through the work experience, individuals gained confidence, improved self-awareness, coping strategies, and experience of a working environment.
Driving Theory and Driving Test Support	Currently delivering a successful project funding theory tests and driving lessons for parents who lived in rural areas and struggle to access public transport. This is to help remove the barriers associated with accessing employment and training opportunities.
Parental Employability Support (PES)	Supporting Parents from the priority families across the Scottish Borders providing 1:1 Employability support. The support is person-centred and allows parents to address their barriers to work, which might include a lack of skills or work experience, health support, ASN, money advice, confidence building or motivational support. PES provides the opportunity to gain formal training and/or qualifications to move into a new area of work or progress in their current role.
Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS)	This Borders wide service supports young parent families and families where parents are isolated from existing services, with a focus on supporting lone parent and low-income households affected by worklessness, helping adults to provide a better environment for their young people and progression opportunities for every member of the family.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people, especially our older community, have the skills to benefit from digital and mobile connectivity. 	
Chrome Books	Delivery of employability provision through No One Left Behind and child poverty identifies those who have limited or no access to digital resources. Through various funding streams key workers can support individuals to obtain appropriate devices.

SIM Cards

SIM cards are available from the Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber for clients who require access to connectivity.

Key Issues / Progress Updates / Future Plans

A grant offer letter for funds for the first quarter has now been received, however, funding has not been confirmed for the rest of the year. The LEP are unable to allocate funds to projects or interventions until the annual allocation of Scottish Government No One Left Behind funds have been confirmed through further grant offer letters.

The Leadership group is looking at ways to introduce a commissioning process to allocate No One Left Behind Funds.

The subgroup leaders are due to meet in May to go through their priorities and align them further with the CPP so there will be updates on this within the next report.



CHANGE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD TO BECOME AN UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

Report by Director - Resilient Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

30 May 2024

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to notify Council of the Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board's intention to remove itself from the Council's committee structure.

1.2 Community Planning Partnerships were established under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 with the responsibility for delivering community planning sitting with local authorities. This responsibility changed with the enactment of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) which conferred joint responsibility to five organisations: local authority (Scottish Borders Council), health board (NHS Borders), Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and Scottish Enterprise (South of Scotland Enterprise).

1.3 The Act does not prescribe the organisational structure or governance arrangements that Community Planning Partnerships must adhere to, it is very much what best suits the local situation. Although the Act changed the responsibility for delivering community planning, there were no changes made to the legal structure and, in the Scottish Borders, the CPP Strategic Board remained a committee of the Council, covered by the Council's Scheme of Administration.

1.4 Scottish Borders Council agreed at its meeting in August 2022 that the Community Planning Strategic Board could remove itself from the Council committee structure should it wish to become independent of SBC.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that Council:

- a) Notes the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) had decided to remove itself from Council's committee structure, and**
- b) Agree that the Council's Scheme of Administration is amended to remove the Community Planning Strategic Board as a formal committee of Council.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Community Planning Partnerships were established under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 with the responsibility for delivering community planning sitting with local authorities. This responsibility changed with the enactment of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) which conferred joint responsibility to five organisations: local authority (Scottish Borders Council), health board (NHS Borders), Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and Scottish Enterprise (South of Scotland Enterprise). The Act sets out additional membership and confers community planning partnerships the authority to invite other appropriate organisations/groups to join the Partnership.
- 3.2 The Act does not prescribe the organisational structure or governance arrangements that Community Planning Partnerships must adhere to, it is very much what best suits the local situation. Although the Act changed the responsibility for delivering community planning, there were no changes made to the legal structure in the Scottish Borders at that time and the CPP Strategic Board remained a formal committee of Council covered by the Council's Scheme of Administration.
- 3.3 The community planning family in the Scottish Borders is represented by the Community Planning Strategic Board, which is a formal committee of Scottish Borders Council, and a Delivery Board which is not. The Strategic Board's functions are covered in Scottish Borders Council's Scheme of Administration and are appended to this report.
- 3.4 Scottish Borders Council agreed in August 2022 that the Community Planning Strategic Board could remove itself from the Council committee structure should it wish to do so following a review that was being undertaken.

4 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 In 2021 Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP) undertook a piece of work with the Improvement Service to review arrangements. This work included a review of the governance arrangements and structure of the Partnership.
- 4.2 At its meeting on 7 March 2024 the Community Planning Strategic Board agreed to amend the governance arrangements and remove community planning from the Council's committee structure, with the Strategic Board becoming an unincorporated association. This will give greater freedom to include statutory and non-statutory partners in the governance of the partnership and better reflect the shared responsibility to deliver community planning.

- 4.3 As Council had previously agreed that the Community Planning Strategic Board could be removed from the committee structure, this report seeks to notify Council that it is becoming an unincorporated association and that a change to the Council's Scheme of Administration is required.

5 ONGOING SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1 As a statutory partner, with responsibility for delivering community planning, administration support will continue to be delivered by Scottish Borders Council although it will be reviewed at a later date. The provision of administration support for any new groups that may be established, as part of the CPP structure going forward, will need to be considered by the Partnership itself.
- 5.2 SBC will also continue to provide officer support to assist the CPP in delivering its duty as set out in Part 2 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to the proposals contained in this report.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

- a) There are no risks to the Council associated with the proposals in this report.
- b) As an unincorporated association the Community Planning Partnership would not have a separate legal personality meaning that the body itself could not be sued. However, its office holders could be.
- c) As an unincorporated association the CPP could not hold property, employ staff or enter into any contracts. In practice, however, all work carried out on behalf of the Partnership, to improve outcomes and reduced inequality, would be done by partner organisations and their employees. This very fact means that lack of ability to own property or enter into contracts is not a matter of great significance to how the CPP would operate.
- d) Therefore, while becoming an unincorporated association would result in some legal incapacity and a level of risk for office holders, it is considered that the risk is small and the impact of that legal incapacity is of little practical significance.

6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact assessment has been carried out and has not identified any impacts associated with the proposals in this report.

6.4 Sustainable Development Goals

There is no impact on the UN Sustainable Development Goals arising from the proposals contained in this report.

6.5 **Climate Change**

There are no climate change impacts resulting from the proposals in this report.

6.6 **Rural Proofing**

n/a

6.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

6.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

The Community Planning Strategic Board should be removed from the Scheme of Administration as a formal committee of Council.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Director (Finance & Procurement), the Director (Corporate Governance), the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), and Corporate Communications will be consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Name: Jenni Craig

Title: Director - Resilient Communities

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Clare Malster	Participation Officer, 01835 826626

Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Initial amendments to the Interim Scheme of Administration and changes to Standing Orders, Scottish Borders Council 25 August 2022

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Clare Malster can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Clare Malster, 01835 826626, cmalster@scotborders.gov.uk

Appendix

Scottish Borders Council Interim Scheme of Administration

COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC BOARD

General

The Community Planning Strategic Board shall comprise Scottish Borders Council Elected Members meeting together with Statutory and other Community Planning Partner representatives.

Constitution

(a) Any three from the following Elected Members of Scottish Borders Council being:-

- (i) 4 Executive Members;
- (ii) the Leader of the Opposition

(b) Representatives from each of the other statutory Community Planning Partners, being:-

- (i) NHS Borders – 2 representatives
- (ii) South of Scotland Enterprise – 1 representative
- (iii) Police Scotland – 1 representative
- (iv) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – 1 representative

(c) Representatives from the following Community Planning Partners:

- (i) Registered Social Landlords – 1 representative;
- (ii) Borders College – 1 representative;
- (iii) Third Sector – 1 representative.

Chair

The Board must be chaired by an Elected Member of the Council.

Quorum

Two Elected Members of the Council and one representative from each of 2 other statutory Community Planning Partners shall constitute a quorum.

Functions Referred

The following functions of the Council, within policy, budget and legislative requirements, and in compliance with any statute and regulations governing these public, private and voluntary sector organisations involved, shall stand referred to the Board -

1. Approve, monitor and evaluate progress on the Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) and the individual Locality Plans.
2. Monitor the work of the Joint Delivery Team and Themed Delivery Groups.
3. Find consensus in reaching decisions on those issues that involve competing interests or are controversial or contentious.

*4. Identify the ideal level of resources necessary to achieve the outcomes of the Plans and advise partners of these.

Scheme of Administration – amended by Council – 26 May 2022

5. Work together to resolve any problems arising from significant issues.

- *6. Consider and make recommendations to the Community Planning Consultative Partnership and/or partner organisations on any aspects of community planning in terms of issues or improvements.
7. Provide the Community Planning Consultative Partnership with an annual assessment of community planning in the Scottish Borders.
8. Sign off the Annual Report on Community Planning, after consultation with the wider Community Planning Consultative Partnership.

Functions Delegated

All functions above NOT marked *. Those functions marked * are referred to the Board for consideration and recommendation only and must receive approval of the Council and other relevant Community Planning partner organisations

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CPP Forward Planner

		Meeting dates	
Delivery Board		Strategic Board	
15/05/24	→	06/06/24	
14/08/24	→	05/09/24	
23/10/24	→	14/11/24	
12/02/25	→	06/03/25	
14/05/25	→	05/06/25	

Meeting cycle	Subject	Org	Officer	Delivery Board	Strategic Board
2024 Summer	Governance & Operating Framework	SBC	C Malster	14/08/24	05/09/24
	Theme updates	All	Theme leads	14/08/24	05/09/24
	Quarterly partnership updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Justice Partnership CLD Strategic Partnership Children & Young People's Planning Partnership 	As listed		14/08/24	05/09/24

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