

# Moving Towards Poverty Sensitive Decision Making in Scotland

## A Scoping Paper and Case Studies



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## **Background and aim of Scoping Paper**

This paper was produced by the Poverty Alliance for the Scottish Government.

The initial thinking was that around 8-10 case studies would be produced which would demonstrate where public bodies had taken decisions to impact on poverty, the processes involved in taking those decisions and that this decision making went beyond traditional poverty, regeneration or economic development based services.

An initial scoping discovered that overall public bodies were at the early stages of developing anti-poverty strategies. Whilst many of these were aimed at developing a poverty sensitive decision making approach it was clear that to have a range of case studies the more strategic level approaches would need to be highlighted.

It was agreed with the Scottish Government that the case studies would focus on what approaches public bodies were taking as part of a general scoping exercise highlighting where poverty sensitive decision making was developing. In addition the scoping would highlight emerging themes, including challenges and barriers, related to the development of poverty sensitive decision making.

## *What is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making (PSDM)*

Poverty sensitive decision making helps to make clear the impact of decisions made by services and organisations on people experiencing poverty. The widely accepted definition of poverty is having an income which is less than 60% of the national average.

It encourages a decision-making environment in which the impact on poverty is duly considered, evidenced and justified and plans put in place to lessen or avoid any negative impacts.

This approach is intended to go beyond traditional poverty, regeneration or economic development based services to take wider services into account which may also have a significant impact on the experience of poverty. For example, health, education, transport or environmental services.

Although it is hoped that more poverty sensitive decisions will be taken as a result of this process the aim is not to introduce an overly restrictive bind on those responsible. Rather, the aim is to demonstrate that poverty has been considered and if the decision has any unintended negative impacts action taken to lessen these where possible.

## *Promoting Poverty Sensitive Decision Making*

The Scottish Government are interested in promoting poverty sensitive decision making on the basis that it could provide the stimulus for more effective anti-poverty work in that:

1. It suggests a high level of commitment to tackling poverty and of an approach that is prepared to

the address key issues by identifying and mitigating possible negative impacts in the future.

2. It widens responsibility for tackling poverty (beyond field-based practitioners and those managing projects), to include those with 'backroom' administrative responsibilities, such as finance officers and treasurers. It is a tool for demonstrating that tackling poverty is everybody's business.
3. It establishes a culture whereby each decision is accompanied by reflection on the extent to which it impacts positively or negatively on poverty may increase the probability that positive initial decisions or budget allocations are taken in future.
4. It can be a stimulus to better understand the specific contribution to tackling poverty of any particular service, budget line, project or organisation. It could heighten accountability and demand improvements in how poverty impact is to be understood, measured and appraised.

This paper was aimed at building on the good practice and emerging thinking identified in a recent Action Learning Set (ALS) on poverty sensitive budgeting / decision making. A number of initiatives were considered as part of the ALS which demonstrated the role of poverty sensitive decision making and budgeting in addressing poverty. The report from the ALS concluded that:

*There are grounds for some cautious optimism over the prospects for poverty sensitive budgeting in the years' ahead. The success of fledgling initiatives, such as those described in this paper,*

*and the particular challenges of public sector restructuring make it more likely that poverty-related decisions will be closer to the heart of decision-making in the next few years.*<sup>1</sup>.

There is a growing level of interest in poverty sensitive decision making. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation will be undertaking work with the University of Glasgow to analyse patterns of local authority spending cuts, particularly their impact on poorer people and places.<sup>2</sup>

### **Methodology**

A wide range of public bodies were contacted via telephone and email and asked if work in their area fulfilled a set of criteria developed by the researchers and agreed with the Scottish Government. The Tackling Poverty Officers' Group also provided numerous initial contacts which enabled researchers to target specific individuals with knowledge of anti-poverty work across Scotland. Other contacts were obtained through Poverty Alliance membership network and external links.

Potential participants were provided with a project brief, project criteria, and a pro-forma for information submission. Four stages were highlighted in the project brief:

- Identify Potential Case Studies: participants to consider whether their experience fits all or some of the criteria;
- Information Gathering: participants to outline a pro-forma with main policy elements, submit additional

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<sup>1</sup> Local Prospects for Poverty Sensitive Budgeting in Scotland (2011) The reflections of an independent Action Learning Set

supporting evidence, participate in an initial interview, and provide their consent for participation;

- Comprehensive Review of Key Case Studies: researchers choose case studies and undertake any follow up interviews;
- Reporting: case studies to be published by Scottish Government

Initially, researchers approached the enquiry with the original specific primary and secondary criteria and its identifying factors. They aimed to interview key stakeholders with knowledge of where policy and decision makers at local and national levels have taken poverty into account when making choices or spending decisions over differing policy and / or service options. Most importantly, researchers emphasised at this stage the importance of potential participants outlining clear evidence of policy/ service change resulting in positive or improved outcomes for people on low incomes.

This early enquiry proved too stringent, yielding mostly tentative responses as few public bodies were in a position to show how particular policy decisions have resulted in positive outcomes for people living in poverty. As a result, researchers widened their outlook to ascertain ongoing anti-poverty work at strategic levels. This second enquiry yielded a higher number of positive responses, clearly highlighting that although most public bodies are currently unable to show positive outcomes, more are moving towards strategic thinking around poverty sensitive decision making.

One to one interviews were arranged with those who expressed an interest in highlighting their work. It was also possible to draw on a range of materials provided by those willing to take part. Follow up interviews were held where appropriate, and information exchanged via email. Participants were provided an outline of their case study for their perusal and consent for publication.

The case studies presented in Section 6 are not intended to be a representative sample of the anti-poverty strategies being developed by public bodies in Scotland. They are highlighted because they were able to commit the time to being involved in this bit of work. We are aware that there a number of other initiatives which could be included here but due to time constraints this was not possible. Poverty Alliance believe that there is a need for a fuller scoping across Scotland which will show the full range of work in this area.

## Context

The economic crisis has placed increasing pressure on low income families and individuals. It is well recognised that the effect of cuts in public spending are likely to impact disproportionately on those already living in poverty, on low incomes and often vulnerable.

In Scotland around 870,000 people were living in a low income household in 2009/10. Around 20 per cent of the population are living in poverty. Pensioner poverty has decreased significantly in the last 10 years – albeit with a slight increase in 2010 – whilst

levels of child poverty have decreased slightly<sup>2</sup> although projections are that changes to the welfare system will lead to an increase in child poverty across the UK.<sup>3</sup>

Unemployment remains a concern with the latest figures showing that Scotland has an unemployment rate of 8.1 per cent.<sup>4</sup> Of particular note is the rate of youth unemployment with 22.9% of people aged 16-24 out of work.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst individuals and families face these difficulties there is also increased pressure on public spending and public services more generally. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth has estimated that the Scottish budget would reduce by £3.3bn, or 11% below the 2010 -11 level, in the next three years. While the capital budget, which pays for infrastructure projects like roads and schools, would drop by 36%<sup>6</sup>. Against this backdrop in their rationale for using poverty sensitive decision making the Scottish Government note that:

*In the current economic climate we are all having to make tough decisions concerning budgets, service provision and support that is on offer. However, we need to make sure that the consequence of these tough decisions don't impact disproportionately on the*

*most vulnerable in our society. Evidence suggests that recession does not widen the risk of poverty. It increases it for those people already most at risk of becoming poor or remaining in poverty for longer<sup>7</sup>.*

Public bodies face significant challenges in delivering public services and ensuring that the impact of budget and service decisions do not disproportionately impact on the poorest. The case studies in section 6 demonstrate that work is taking place in local authorities and Health Boards that seek to achieve this.

## Key Themes from Case Studies

### Incentives

It is clear that public authorities are increasingly interested in measuring the impact of policy and budgetary decisions on people living in poverty in their area. Whilst the methods for this differ between authorities the reasons for doing so are broadly similar. Almost all of those involved in this scoping identified welfare reform, decreasing employment opportunities and other policies aimed at reducing the deficit as likely to have a significant impact on communities, services and individuals. In some areas there is clearly a concern that these factors will make existing poverty and inequality worse.

### Tailored Approaches

The different approaches taken in different areas are set out in the case studies. Some authorities have developed specific anti-poverty

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/TrendPoverty>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/5373>

<sup>4</sup> Labour Market Statistics Dec – Feb 2012. Office National Statistics.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/AnalyticalPapers/YUmainApr2012>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6606>

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/povertysensitivedecisions.aspx>

strategies or frameworks. These are essentially new bits of work developed in response to the current situation but have links with existing policy and decision making structures such as Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning Partnerships. Other authorities have adjusted current impact assessments to include a socio economic indicator or measure whilst financial inclusion is the main driver in one of the case studies.

### **Senior Leadership**

It was apparent that senior leadership has a central role in driving a poverty sensitive approach. Such leadership gives an impetus and a priority to the work of officials as they develop the process. Whilst this was not explicitly apparent in all areas, where the process had been instigated at a senior level there was more opportunity to apply it across the work of the authority.

### **Political support**

A key challenge for all authorities is that they find themselves working in an environment of diminishing resources. In some cases it is recognised that it will be a challenge to maintain political commitment if there are increasing numbers of people affected by poverty and the work and effort that has gone into developing poverty sensitive decision making is not seen to have an impact.

### **Scale**

The complexity of budgets and policy making makes it challenging to apply poverty sensitive decision making. This is particularly the case in larger authorities where there are clearly many more challenges to applying such an approach.

## **Issues for Further Consideration**

**Sustainability:** There is a clear commitment from a number of authorities to measure the impact of policy and budgetary decisions on people living in poverty. Nevertheless there are challenges to the continued development of poverty sensitive decision making. Among these are a difficult funding environment and the related issue of the need to maintain political commitment when in reality the benefits of taking such an approach may not be immediately apparent. It may be that putting this type of approach on the same statutory footing as Equality Impact Assessments could enhance the sustainability of poverty sensitive decision making across Scotland.

**Evidence Base:** Thought needs to be given to presenting robust evidence of where poverty sensitive approaches have had an impact on the everyday lives of people and communities. This report highlights that it is early days in the development of such approaches but to ensure sustainability processes need to be developed now to gather this 'real life' evidence.

**Profile of PSDM:** The Scottish Government have been at the forefront of promoting poverty sensitive decision making. This could be developed further by pulling together examples of good practice at local and national seminars and forums on the issue. Such an approach will raise the profile across the public sector and have a role in developing good practice and guidance.

**Further Research:** This scoping was limited to those authorities who had the time to participate. Consideration could be given to a Scotland wide research project that can build on this work and the research being carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

## Case Studies

The case studies in the following section are a sample of work in Scotland that is aimed at mitigating and tackling poverty. The authors were particularly interested in strategic approaches that demonstrated that poverty sensitive decision making was developing. Some of those set out below are more explicitly geared towards that aim whilst others have the potential for poverty sensitive decision making to develop.

The case studies are grouped into three main categories:

1. Explicit Anti/Tackling Poverty Strategies/Action Plans/Frameworks
2. Impact assessments which incorporate criteria on low income or socio economic status.
3. Financial Inclusion Strategies

Case studies are broken down into a number of areas.

- How poverty sensitive decision making was developing in a particular area.
- Why the approach was taken.
- The process itself and how it has contributed to poverty sensitive decision making.
- The timescales involved in developing the process.
- Any outcomes or anticipated outcomes.

- How the process and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated.
- If there was any consultation with stakeholders.
- Any other work in the area related to poverty sensitive decision making and any next steps.

Each case study also has contact details for the key person in each area for further information.

**The views contained within the case studies are those of the individual authority or health board.**

### **Dundee City Council/Partnership**

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

The Dundee Partnership includes Dundee City Council, Scottish Enterprise, Tayside Police, Tayside Fire and Rescue and NHS Tayside, along with local academic institutions and representatives of the business, voluntary and community sectors, providing a vehicle for coordinated inter agency working. The Partnership is developing an Action Plan for Fairness as part of a broader strategy for challenging poverty and promoting inclusion in Dundee.

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

There was recognition that whilst Dundee is a modern, vibrant city which has undergone a remarkable transformation it also has levels of poverty and deprivation that make life a struggle for individuals, families and communities across the city. The percentage of the population living in data zones ranked within the 15% most deprived in 2009 was 28%. This compared to 15% nationally and meant that of all 32 local authorities Dundee has the third largest percentage of its population living in the 15% most deprived areas. The Dundee Partnership recognised that the global recession, government policies to reduce the national deficit, welfare reform changes and a difficult employment

market will likely combine to create the circumstances where poverty and inequality are likely to become even worse.

The Action Plan for Fairness will be built on the partnership's belief that every person and family in Dundee wants, and should have the right, to share in the success achieved as a city. The overall strategy will pursue fairness by ensuring that every person and family in the city:

- have **enough to get by on** by providing effective financial inclusion support, developing sensitive charging policies and concession schemes
- have **someone to turn to** in their families, communities and in services to help them to feel valued, cared for and supported and so that they can have the sense of purpose and security we all need
- have **hope for the future**, by providing support to develop confidence, skills and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

This is an ongoing process. It recommends a step change and renewed commitment to tackling poverty. The intention is that the strategy and action plan will be linked to the long track record of anti-poverty work in the city – from the first Anti-Poverty Strategy in 1999 –

## Category 1: Anti poverty strategies/ frameworks/ action plans

and the Financial Inclusion Strategy for Dundee which runs until 2013. There is a particular interest in ensuring that the Action Plan for Fairness is linked to current Single Outcome Agreements (SOA).

In developing the Action Plan for Fairness the process has been to:

- identify the range of actions in the Single Outcome Agreement Delivery Plan for Dundee which aim to tackle the root causes and effects of poverty
- begin the process of 'logic modelling' which helps services and agencies to define the contribution which they make to achieving the outcomes in the new framework for Fairness and Inclusion
- examine fairness and anti-poverty research and strategies across the UK to highlight innovative ideas which could be applied in Dundee.

The Partnership Launched a consultation draft at the Dundee Partnership Forum in September 2011 to begin the public debate on the challenge of achieving Fairness in Dundee.

The Action Plan for Fairness is to be produced by May 2012. This will ensure that the next Single Outcome Agreement for Dundee can fully reflect the Partnership's commitment to reducing social inequalities through a detailed analysis of deprivation in the city and clear targets for improvement.

### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

A particular challenge is the economy in general and employment more specifically. It is difficult to maintain that work is a guaranteed route out of poverty when in work benefits are being cut. Employability becomes a real problem. Another challenge is that faced by services in responding to welfare reform. It is recognised that just keeping people informed about their entitlement will be a significant challenge for services and the Partnership as a whole

Overall there is a concern that the scope to achieve change is limited because the focus will be on making sure that the cuts don't make things worse.

### **What are the timescales?**

Process of producing an Action Plan for Fairness started with consultation in September 2011. Action Plan to be produced in May 2012.

### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

The outcomes are included in the Outcome Framework for Fairness and Inclusion in Dundee. They are:

- Increase social inclusion, decrease inequality, stigma and discrimination of people living in poverty.



## Category 1: Anti poverty strategies/ frameworks/ action plans

- Increase financial inclusion and security and reduce income inequality and fuel poverty.
- Build social capital, connectedness and trust in disadvantaged communities.
- Promote safe and supportive environments at home, at work and in the community.
- Improve health and healthy behaviour for people in poverty.
- Increase learning, skills and employment opportunities for people in poverty.

### Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitored through SOA process set against clear targets for improvement.

### Was there any consultation with stakeholders?

The first phase of the anti-poverty strategy involved close liaison between the Partnership and groups representing the interests of those experiencing poverty and exclusion. This resulted in the commissioning of a local organisation to facilitate widespread consultation and participatory research on the everyday lives of individuals in Dundee<sup>8</sup>.

Informed by results of an event facilitated by the Equally Well test site in Dundee in April 2011.

Wide ranging consultation with stakeholders launched in September 2011.<sup>9</sup>

### Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?

With the support of the Equally Well test site for Dundee, a new outcomes framework has been developed to support the delivery of fairness and inclusion in Dundee. Based on the national framework for wellbeing produced by Health Scotland, this reflects all aspects of community life and Dundee SOA outcomes and endorses the view of the Tackling Poverty Board that *anti-poverty action must be a mainstream priority and the responsibility of every Community Planning partner.*

The framework is nationally recognised, giving partners the confidence to build its actions on an evidence-based foundation. Already the framework has provided the basis for discussion with agencies and services across the city to identify their contribution to the achievement of these outcomes through the logic modelling process.

### Key Contact

**Peter Allan, Community Planning Manager, Dundee City Council/Partnership**

Peter.allan@dundeecity.gov.uk

<sup>8</sup> Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum and Paul Spicker (2003) – No Room for Dreams, Poverty in Dundee.

<sup>9</sup> Dundee Partnership (2011) For Fairness in Dundee: A strategy for challenging poverty and promoting inclusion in Dundee. Consultation draft.

### **Renfrewshire Council**

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

Renfrewshire Council and Community Planning Partners have developed a Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy<sup>10</sup>

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

Preventing poverty, providing support and routes out of poverty to people experiencing poverty, strengthening partnership work and assessing the Council and partners' work at reducing poverty remains central to Renfrewshire Council. Following the 2006 Financial Inclusion Strategy, Renfrewshire Council recognised a need to broaden the strategy to reflect specific poverty issues. There was leadership from the Chief Executive's Service for such an Anti-Poverty Strategy and Strategy Group, with the desired outcome of increasing the strategic focus on poverty policy and outcomes.

Issues of poverty also appear strongly in the Chief Executive's Service Plan, and feature within the priorities of partners such as NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and Renfrewshire Community Health Partnership. There are high levels of

deprivation in Renfrewshire, with approximately 18% of people living in the most 15% most deprived areas in Scotland.

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Building on the work and Scottish Government funding for Financial Inclusion, and led by the Chief Executive's Service, the previous Financial Inclusion Strategy Group expanded its membership and remit to become the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group in 2009. The Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy was drafted by the Chief Executive's Service and underpinned by extensive research and data making the case for addressing poverty in Renfrewshire.

The Strategy's Action Plan was developed over 2010 by the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group, setting out objectives, clear actions, resources, timescales and lead partners. Membership of this Group includes partners such as Reid Kerr College, Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau, Renfrewshire Community Health Partnership, Jobcentre Plus, Renfrewshire Wide Credit Union, Engage Renfrewshire, Skills Development Scotland, Renfrewshire Association for Mental Health, and all Renfrewshire Council Service Departments.

The Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group was established as a

<sup>10</sup>

[http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ilwwcm/publishing.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/ce-AntiPovertyStrategy/\\$FILE/ce-AntiPovertyStrategy.pdf](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ilwwcm/publishing.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/ce-AntiPovertyStrategy/$FILE/ce-AntiPovertyStrategy.pdf)

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formal sub-group of the Wealthier and Fairer Renfrewshire Community Planning Group, positioning anti-poverty within the context of wider social, physical and economic regeneration objectives and therefore enhancing opportunities for integrated and coordinated action.

The role of the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group is to:

- Implement Renfrewshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy to tackle poverty in Renfrewshire; to prevent poverty, intervene where poverty exists, assist those who are in poverty, and seek to ensure that any action taken is sustainable in the longer term;
- Act to ensure tackling poverty is embedded across all Community Planning thematic groups and a focus on anti-poverty work is maintained;
- Ensure that community planning partners work together to achieve the outcomes and targets identified in the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- Produce an Action Plan that enables partners to jointly co-ordinate activities and resources to achieve agreed tackling poverty outcomes and targets;
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework that measures and reports on Action Plan progress;
- Maximise partner commitment and resources towards tackling poverty outcomes;
- Undertake activity as directed by the Wealthier and Fairer Renfrewshire Community Planning thematic group.

### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Resourcing a Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy in the current climate of austerity measures and a reduction in public service spending will affect the capacity of Local Authorities to invest in poverty programmes. It is important that poverty work is not viewed as crisis management but instead adopts longer term strategic outcomes and early intervention and prevention approaches. Responding to welfare reform changes and mitigating against reforms will also be an ongoing challenge.

A multi dimensional approach required to tackle poverty issues challenges the Community Planning structures to work with a cross cutting policy theme. It requires strong strategic and partnership commitment – supported by an explicit target within Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreements, strong leadership and senior management commitment, and political champions. The ability of the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group to agree such joint priorities based upon a common understanding of local poverty issues and intelligence is essential.

Encouraging and implementing a decision making environment in which the impact of poverty is duly considered and any positive and negative impacts are recognized is a clear challenge; the aim would be to minimise the disproportionate

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impacts on the most vulnerable and those in poverty resulting from changes to policy, service delivery, and budgets.

### What are the timescales?

The Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group was established in 2009, and the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy was agreed by the Council and Community Planning Partnership in September 2009, with the Action Plan agreed in late 2010. The Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group have implemented a Poverty Action Plan 2010-2012 in support of the Strategy, undertaking a range of activities and programmes aiming to significantly reduce the numbers experiencing financial exclusion, poverty and inequality in Renfrewshire.

### What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?

Renfrewshire Council and Community Planning Partners' retain a clear commitment to tackling poverty as demonstrated by the commitments within their Community Plan and SOA of: tackling significant inequalities in Scottish society (Community Plan 2008-17); and reducing levels of deprivation in Renfrewshire (Renfrewshire's Single Outcome Agreement 2008-11).

Renfrewshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy led to increased awareness about poverty, and a higher profile for anti-poverty work in Renfrewshire. The Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group continues to work towards a

strategic focus on poverty policy and outcomes, including priorities such as promoting more efficient advice services, moving forward key strategic planning and policy actions, and promoting early intervention approaches. Renfrewshire Council's Chief Executive's Service has also identified a priority outcome for those experiencing financial exclusion, poverty and inequality. The key areas that will be taken forward to achieve these outcomes include: refreshing Renfrewshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy to ensure Council and Partner's strategic and operational plans continue to focus upon the poverty agenda; developing a Child Poverty Strategy to tackle specific issues relating to child poverty; developing a Poverty Sensitive Decision Making environment; co-ordinating Renfrewshire's Anti-Poverty Strategy Group's understanding and response to Welfare Reform and implement strategies to mitigate the significant impacts of welfare reform on Renfrewshire's residents; and developing proposals to secure external funding for new poverty programmes in Renfrewshire.<sup>11</sup>

The work of the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group has successfully kept poverty on the agenda locally. The Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership are currently undertaking a Strategic Needs Assessment process to

<sup>11</sup> Service Improvement Plan. Chief Executive's Services. [http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ilwwcm/publishing.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/ce-ChiefExecServicePlan12-15.pdf/\\$FILE/ce-ChiefExecServicePlan12-15.pdf](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ilwwcm/publishing.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/ce-ChiefExecServicePlan12-15.pdf/$FILE/ce-ChiefExecServicePlan12-15.pdf)

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inform the refresh of the Community Plan and development of the next SOA, and early indications suggest tackling poverty and child poverty will be more explicit within these strategic documents.

The Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy highlights a number of key aims which include: helping people into work; improving educational qualifications; maximising income and reducing indebtedness; giving children the best start in life; supporting vulnerable families; tackling health inequalities, and addressing fuel poverty.

### Monitoring and Evaluation?

The Action Plan is regularly reviewed at Anti-Poverty Strategy Group meetings, however there is a requirement to develop and implement more rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures. Progress is also to be reported annually to the Community Planning Partnership, communities and partners, along with a range of performance indicators.

### Was there any consultation with stakeholders?

Community consultation happens most regularly through Renfrewshire's Public Services' Panel which has asked financial inclusion and poverty questions on an annual basis since 2005. Renfrewshire's Community Planning Conferences 2011 had a poverty focus, with an interactive quizdom session and Ketso workshops. In 2011, there were 412 attendees at

the Renfrewshire Community Planning Conferences from the Renfrewshire public, community groups and charitable organisations.

The Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group are also keen to progress community representation on the Group, and the development of an 'evidence, participation, change' programme with those experiencing poverty.

### Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?

- Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Community Health Partnership have actively participated in the Healthier Wealthier Children Programme to secure benefits for Renfrewshire's residents and reduce child poverty by helping families with money worries.<sup>12</sup>
- The Advice in Primary Care Service received a COSLA Excellence Awards 2011, Gold Award, providing financial inclusion advice and practical assistance in Renfrewshire's GP surgeries and health centres, targeting vulnerable groups who may not otherwise access these services due to a range of factors such as ill health, lack of transport or lack of knowledge about benefits or welfare rights.
- In Renfrewshire, to enhance engagement and participation in Save the Children's Museum of Poverty, Beechwood Women and

<sup>12</sup>

[http://www.nhsgg.org.uk/content/default.asp?page=home\\_hwc](http://www.nhsgg.org.uk/content/default.asp?page=home_hwc)

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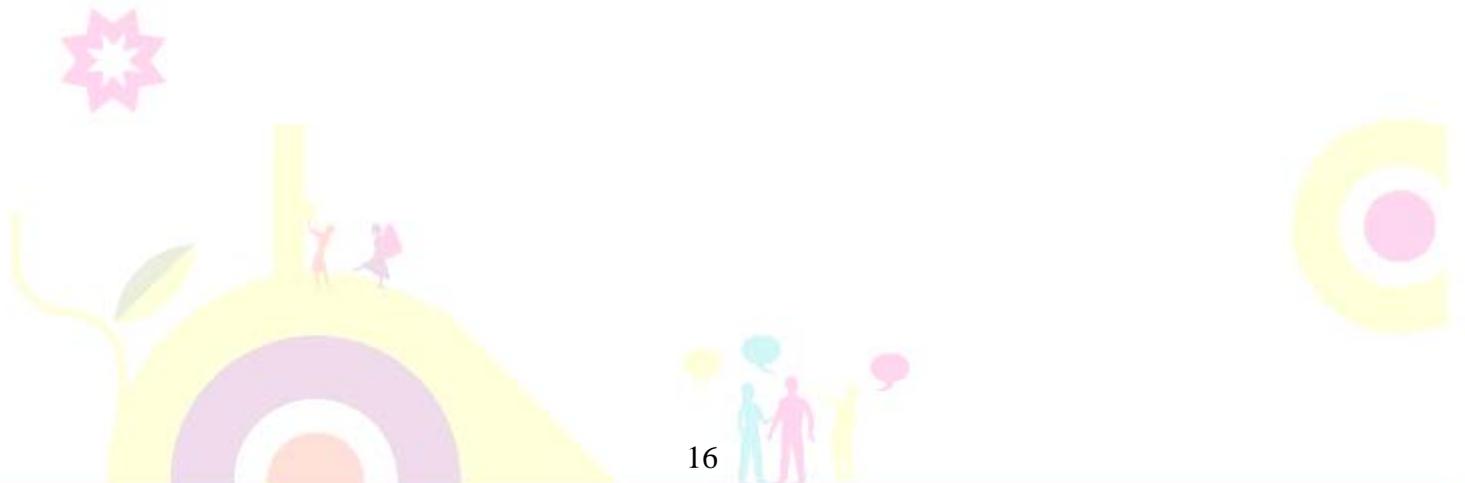
Arts Group performed their forum theatre piece "Morag's Story" for the Renfrewshire Anti-Poverty Strategy Group, Elected Members and the public. The piece explores the issues of a family dealing with poverty and works interactively with its audience to explore solutions and how best to support people experiencing poverty within our community.

- Renfrewshire hosted a third Renfrewshire Money Week in November 2011, offering a programme of 31 events and activities to help people make the most of their money, raise awareness of financial inclusion issues, and promote the range of advice and support services available in Renfrewshire.

### Key Contact

**Pamela Rennie, Senior Policy Officer, Community Planning and Regeneration, Chief Executive's Service**

pamela.ennie@renfrewshire.gov.uk



### **Scottish Borders Council**

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

Scottish Borders Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy & Poverty Proofing Impact Assessment

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

The new Strategy will be underpinned by Welfare Reform and will reflect the impact of changes on communities within the Scottish Borders. The 2010 Strategy was developed with Fairer Scotland funding following the 2008 recession and increasing levels of personal debt, unemployment, and prices of essential goods and services. Tackling poverty in the Scottish Borders is an increasingly high priority and the Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy aims to: reduce households in or at risk of debt; improve access to affordable and manageable financial services; and improve access to information and advice to maximise incomes.<sup>13</sup>

A 'Poverty Proofing' policy to impact assess all new Council policies and strategies was developed in 2009 with support from the Executive to support the Council's Single Outcome Agreement of 'Fewer Peoples' lives will be affected by Poverty.' Poverty proofing is a policy designed to ensure the needs of

people affected by economic or socio disadvantage are considered fully in the development of all new Council strategies and policies.<sup>14</sup>

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

With strong support from councillors, Fairer Scotland funding was used in 2009 to fund the development of the 2010 Strategy. The Strategic Partnership Against Poverty (SPAP) has overall responsibility for tackling poverty, and is a multi-agency group including representatives from housing, welfare benefits, housing benefits, CAB, Debt Advice, Education, Corporate, RSLs, and Health.

The new Strategy is in the process of being re-drafted to reflect a recent Health Check including gaps and key priorities, and a project brief drafted outlining the new Strategy. 90% of the actions identified in the 2010 Strategy have since been implemented, a 'Health Check' has been performed to identify strengths and gaps, a project brief for the new Strategy has been completed, evidence is being gathered, and the Review Group met in Feb 2012 to support progress moving forward; this Review Group includes members from the Strategic Partnership Against Poverty (SPAP). Scottish Borders will be undertaking a consultation process between Feb

<sup>13</sup> Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy Briefing Note, January 2012

<sup>14</sup> Scottish Borders Council Poverty Proofing Checklist, Version 1 Draft, November 2009

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and June 2012, preparing a consultative draft and action plan, obtaining information about local contexts, integrating other strategies/policies, and interviewing key stakeholders.<sup>15</sup>

The Poverty Proofing Impact Assessment is used by all Departments when submitting reports to Executive or full Council involving the approval of new policies or strategies. The ten question checklist was designed to be simple and not onerous. Since creation the assessment has been incorporated into the Economic Impact Assessment (EIA), completed on all Strategies prepared by the Scottish Borders Council.

### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

The Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy faced challenges partway through its formation as a result of ongoing changes to a number of government funded schemes. It also continues to face challenges associated with the decreased availability of funding.

### **What are the timescales?**

The Scottish Borders Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy was developed in April 2009 and published in 2010. A new 2012 Strategy is in the process of being developed.

<sup>15</sup> Project Development Brief: Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy 2012. November 2011

The Poverty Proofing Assessment was developed in 2009, used from April 2010 in all departments, and incorporated into the EIA in 2010.

### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

Tackling poverty in the Scottish Borders is an increasingly high priority and the Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy aims to: reduce households in or at risk of debt; improve access to affordable and manageable financial services; and improve access to information and advice to maximise incomes.<sup>16</sup>

From the development of the Strategy a number of areas have been positively affected including:

- More effective referral pathways and partnership working to improve access to advice, financial and support services;
- Poverty is now included in the Economic Impact Assessments (EIAs), completed on all strategies prepared by Scottish Borders Council;
- An SOA target of Increased monetary gains by people accessing Welfare Benefits services achieved 142% of target;
- Partnerships established between local money advice services and Macmillan Cancer Support, exceeding 2011 targets;
- 25 awareness sessions of advice and information delivered to

<sup>16</sup> Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion Strategy Briefing Note, January 2012

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voluntary groups and ongoing work with health visitors/district nurses to ensure reaching most vulnerable

### Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring of the Strategy is carried out through Scottish Borders Council's business plan. This plan has been reported to members, a progress report has been completed, and a couple reports were also provided to Scrutiny. The Strategic Partnership Against Poverty Group (SPAP) is central to the monitoring process, with progress reported through the member-led Council, Scrutiny, and the senior Social Work manager team. Strengths and gaps have recently been identified through a 'Health Check', a tool for the Council and partners to review the Strategy and push forward the agenda. This Health Check is driven by a Review Group whose members come from the SPAP, and whose remit is to develop the newest Strategy.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the Poverty Proofing checklist is used and collated in annual monitoring reports. Each Department/Service also ran an awareness raising and training session prior to service-wide delivery in April 2010.

### Was there any consultation with stakeholders?

Scottish Borders Council undertook extensive consultation, including a qualitative report and launch.

### Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?

Other related work has included: Poverty awareness training for all staff as part of the Council's Equality and Diversity training; the establishment of the Tackling Poverty Unit the Director of Social Work and potentially incorporating the Debt Counselling service into this Unit; and building upon the work of the Capital Credit Union to provide low cost loans.

Next steps include: an awareness campaign of Money Matters in the Borders; expanding the Tackling Poverty Unit to include education and employment; further implementation of Borders Fuel Poverty Partnerships; promoting take up of Capital Credit Union; and homeless prevention initiatives with increasing emphasis on financial management.<sup>17</sup>

### Key Contact

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### South Lanarkshire Council

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

South Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

South Lanarkshire Council has a small team of staff members dedicated to tackling poverty issues and deepening internal and external partners understanding of poverty. Support for collective action is growing, with the Council and partners in the early stages of both developing a Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan and supporting a local community planning pilot in one of its most deprived neighbourhoods. In addition tackling poverty and inequality is a key priority in a number of local plans and strategies such as the Integrated Children's Services plan and the Community Plan .

Poverty has long been central to South Lanarkshire's planning and policies. Scottish Govt ring fenced funding such as the Fairer Scotland Fund built on previous work in Social Inclusion Partnerships, and South Lanarkshire has since agreed to continue its financial commitment and maintain a dedicated resource - the Tackling Poverty Fund

The Community Regeneration Partnership, one of the Community Planning Partnership's themed sub

groups, oversees this budget and early intervention is recognised by the group as central and a key long term action for addressing poverty, along with supporting financial inclusion, improving employment prospects and tackling poor health.

A 2009 Tackling Poverty in South Lanarkshire conference (also noted below) outlined a long, medium and short term action plan which, aligned with partner commitment and targeted investment, will feed into the formation of the Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan.<sup>18</sup> A further Tackling Poverty conference is planned for autumn 2012.

Research from Burnhill (a small community and one of South Lanarkshire's most deprived) which asked residents a range of questions about poverty in their community showed that 79% of residents surveyed thought that people in the area lived in poverty. Some suggestions from residents to tackle poverty include: more activities and facilities, and support for training and jobs. Such suggestions will help develop the Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan.

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

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<sup>18</sup> Tackling Poverty Performance Improvement Plan Update (2011). Community Regeneration Partnership.

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South Lanarkshire's Anti-Poverty Improvement Plan will feed directly into the SOA and is designed to embed tackling poverty into policy making. Other complementary improvement plans focussing on the Early Years; tackling Health inequalities; and the economy and community safety plans will also have a positive impact on poverty issues in the area and outcomes.

The Poverty Improvement plan is in an early scoping stage, with the aim of bringing together stakeholders including service providers and community members. Key principles and a number of priorities and actions are outlined, with the longer term outcome of fewer people in South Lanarkshire experiencing poverty. Priorities include improving an understanding of and commitment to tackling poverty, managing the impacts of Welfare Reform on South Lanarkshire communities, and maximising household income. These priorities will be supported by a range of actions which are currently ongoing, some of which will be strengthened by the plan; from promoting poverty sensitive decision making across CPP Partners, to reviewing service delivery and programmes to improve financial capability; others include developing financial education within the Curriculum for Excellence to reviewing support for fuel poverty and promoting the Living Wage.

South Lanarkshire Council has also reviewed the worst 5% of their data zones and is supporting community research work in a number of areas, followed by capacity building work to

support residents to become more active and involved and to improve links to services – Council and others. An assets based approach is being applied to this work. The work in one of the areas targeted, Burnhill, is being extended to pilot a local community planning process, which will involve a range of Council and other partners working with the community to develop more effective ways of working that best meet the needs of residents and improve local outcomes. Through the community research work, supported by Clyde Gateway, Council staff and resources and a local Community Development Trust (Healthy N Happy Enterprises), the researchers sought to engage with each household to discover key community issues. An activist group was formed which will continue to support the Council and partners' work. When issues are raised in the group, for example policing, the two parties are brought together to find solutions. Currently there are early discussions with the NHS around delivering public health services in a more effective way and with Job Centre Plus. The group is also looking at potential changes at the leisure centre in which a part time community café has been established.

### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

South Lanarkshire Council is aware that more needs to be done to mainstream poverty into decision making and to take a more strategic

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approach to supporting the work of individual services. The Council is very aware of the impacts on individuals and families that the Welfare Reforms are going to have, as well as the impacts on their own services and is currently establishing a senior corporate group to give this further consideration and develop an action plan to mitigate the worst impacts. Partners' agency involvement in this agenda will also be sought.

As for all local authorities, South Lanarkshire faces the broad challenge of the current economic climate, and the impacts it is having on individuals and communities, as well as the impacts on public services in relation to reducing budgets and increased demand for services.

### **What are the timescales?**

South Lanarkshire Council began focused work on the new Tackling Poverty Improvement plan in 2011. The aim is to complete this by summer 2012 as it will inform the next SOA which will be a 10 year agreement from 2013.

### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

The current Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan attached to the current SOA has draft indicators which show progress is being made. Sustained focus hopes to embed poverty sensitive decision making across agencies, thereby also improving understanding and

commitment to tackling poverty. 1 in 8 people in South Lanarkshire live in the most deprived areas of Scotland so the Council is keen to continue their focus on lifting people out of poverty despite the numerous challenges involved.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation?**

Monitoring of the Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan will fall to the Community Regeneration Partnership and details of outcomes, indicators and targets will be outlined following the completion of the plan. The Tackling Poverty team within Regeneration Services in the council will have a monitoring responsibility and will support the work and ensure actions are taken forward.

### **Was there any consultation with stakeholders?**

As noted above.

South Lanarkshire is keen to continue involving community members from the most deprived areas in order to support the Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan.

### **Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

At the 2009 Tackling Poverty in South Lanarkshire conference there was a clear commitment to do more to tackle poverty, and recognition of both the importance of early intervention and of the impact of individual Council departments and CPP agencies. For example,

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priorities included: more focused use of mainstream budgets to underpin strategic priority and use of anti-poverty impact assessment tools in each partnership organisation; and increasing South Lanarkshire Council's employees' awareness of how they can contribute to tackling poverty.<sup>19</sup> Although the most recent SOA did not explicitly highlight poverty it is hoped that the forthcoming SOA will have this focus.

There is also movement within South Lanarkshire Council towards gathering key people to discuss what structural poverty sensitive decision making would look like, following research within the Council. This research may support the work of those interested bodies to be gathered in support of the Tackling Poverty Improvement Plan.

Child and Family poverty continues to be a key focus for South Lanarkshire Council and the Community Planning Partnership and this will be reflected in the new Integrated Children's Services Plan. The recently published Child Poverty data, which was produced at a datazone level, has been a very useful dataset to share with partners involved in children and family services to highlight where challenges are most significant.

In outlining the importance of tackling poverty through increasing income, South Lanarkshire also pays the living wage for its staff.

### Key Contact

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<sup>19</sup>

<<http://niptuc.seeit.co.uk/SOADocs/Tackling%20Poverty%20in%20South%20Lanarkshire.pdf>>

### Stirling Community Planning Partnership

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

The Council have led on the development of a Tackling Poverty Framework which has been further developed by the Community Planning Partnership Tackling Poverty Working Group. This is a partnership approach to tackling poverty and inequality in the council area.

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

There were a range of reasons why the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) adopted this approach:

- The general idea that there was a need to look at as many areas related to poverty and inequality as possible and to make decision makers aware of the potential impact of their decisions and, at the same time, supply them with enough insights into what the issues are that people and communities face.
- The Tackling Poverty Framework approach includes a number of components, including to make poverty sensitive budget and service planning decisions and to raise awareness of poverty and inequalities and of everyone's responsibility in tackling them.
- Taking forward poverty sensitive decision making will very much be a part of the CPP's refreshed Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) approach. The first round of SOA's was focussed on

integrated area profiles which were about gathering as much data as possible in a particular area. The CPP is taking a much more targeted approach looking at life stages and geographical communities and gathering softer data through local community plans. The aim is to better identify the issues faced by people and communities.

- Welfare reform and the economic situation more generally has been a key driver of taking this approach. An Audit Commission report found that the announced cuts to the welfare budget would see a total loss of resources from welfare and benefit payments to the Stirling economy of £20.2 million by 2014/15 and up to 25.8 million by 2015/16.<sup>20</sup>

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

The idea of a Framework came through discussions at a Council strategic policy forum led by an Assistant Chief Executive who effectively acted as a sponsor to the idea. The Community Planning Partnership agreed that it should be a partnership approach. The Tackling Poverty Framework is supported by the Tackling Poverty Action Plan and taken forward by the Tackling Poverty Working Group,

<sup>20</sup> The Audit Commission (2011) The Impacts of Public Sector Expenditure Change: forecasting and proposing responses to changing levels of public sector expenditure in the Stirling Council area.. London

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which is a sub-group of Stirling's Economic Partnership. It is a key strand of the CPP's wider economic strategy.

The Tackling Poverty Framework seeks to:

- Secure a commitment to tackling poverty and deprivation within mainstream budgets
- Map and evaluate existing approaches to more fully understand the extent of efforts to tackle causes and mitigate impacts.
- Engage with services to identify priorities and agreement for action.
- Maintain a live poverty and deprivation data profile
- Deliver a programme of awareness raising about the picture of poverty and deprivation in the area; the complex and multi layered nature of poverty and deprivation, how this has a negative impact on the whole area and the role and responsibility of politician's, agencies and services in decision making.
- Further development of socio-economic factors within Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA). This would allow the adoption of a poverty/socio economic screening tool for the council budget from 2012/13, change programme workstreams and other major programmes and could be used with partners to alleviate potential multiple impacts.

- Improve approach by networking and learning from practice elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

A key element of the approach is that the Working Group will drive forward work to ensure that people know who is doing what in their particular area. In education, for example, it's about letting people know that work they are doing on the lowest 20 per cent of achievers in school is linked to a wider poverty agenda and that agencies involved in tackling poverty are aware of what goes on in education. Guidance has been issued on poverty impact assessment and poverty sensitive budget decision making more generally

### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Challenges to the development of a successful approach are both external in terms of the sheer scale of the problems created by changes to welfare and the general economic picture and internal in relation to the resources available.

Implementing the Framework across the Partnership and taking account of and understanding the complex and multi-dimensional causes and impacts of poverty is recognised as a considerable challenge. Engaging with and sharing information,

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.stirling.gov.uk/services/council-and-government/politicians,-elections-and-democracy/council-general-information/partnerships/stirling-economic-partnership/tackling-poverty-framework>

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evidence and insight with groups and agencies will be important and will need to be a shared responsibility. Developing and supporting poverty sensitive decision making is at an early stage but will require the highest level of commitment across partner agencies to be effective and to avoid multiple impacts. The impact of welfare reform is also recognised as one of the main challenges: making Councillors, agencies and communities aware of the changes and finding responses to them.

### What are the timescales?

The Tackling Poverty Framework was approved by the Council in June 2011 and the CPP Executive Delivery Group in September 2011. It will be reviewed annually. The Tackling Poverty Group Action Plan has been agreed for the period to 2013.

### What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?

The CPP is currently refreshing its' SOA under the banner of 'Outcomes for Stirling'. This process was agreed at the end of 2011 and will respond to the need to look at the inequalities within the Stirling area and to agree outcomes 'within Stirling' for particular geographical communities and groups of individuals. The Tackling Poverty Framework and poverty sensitive decision making are core to this approach.

The Framework has a range of outcomes:

- A high level commitment to poverty proofing, strategic direction for decisions and service development.
- An increased understanding of the picture of poverty and deprivation in the area.
- Politicians, agencies and services are clear what their role is in tackling poverty.
- Longer term and core commitment to tackling poverty and addressing inequality within service delivery.
- A better understanding of the extent of the effort to tackle causes and mitigate impacts of poverty and deprivation.
- Improved prioritisation and targeting of resources where they will make the most impact.
- Identification of potential gaps and development of new initiatives/services or redesign of services to address gaps.
- Establish an evidence base for targets and indicators
- New policies and decisions take account of potential negative impacts and consider mitigating action.
- Strategic budget and change programme decisions take account of the potential impact on socio economic disadvantage.

### Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring and evaluation is central to the success of the Tackling Poverty Framework. The overall policy will be reviewed on an annual basis via the Tackling Poverty Group. Key reporting and monitoring pathways have been identified in the

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framework and lead groups identified.

### **Was there any consultation with stakeholders?**

Rolling out the wider Framework approach and supporting poverty sensitive decision making will start through information sharing at briefings and workshops with a range of stakeholders. In addition there is the opportunity to raise awareness and receive feedback through the consultation programme for 'Outcomes for Stirling'.

### **Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision making?**

An area based approach that reflects the Tackling Poverty Framework is currently being developed in a Stirling urban area with multiple deprivation, and is being viewed as a pilot from which partners hope to learn. It was recognised that 'Masterplanning' in this community needed to take account of socio-economic issues and a programme of research with front-line workers and consultation with the lead community group has taken place. A steering group, to drive the 'people action plan', has been established and it will aim to reflect the strategic approach but make links to grassroots work and the capacity already in the community. There is recognition that mainstream services will need to change their focus and work more effectively together: this is reflected in the action plan and will be key to achieving improved outcomes.

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### West Lothian Council

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

The Council are developing the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

West Lothian Council is committed to addressing poverty through prevention and co-production, supporting activities which aim to reduce poverty, working with partners to ensure targeted resources, and listening to the voices of people affected by poverty. The Council is also keenly aware that the increasingly challenging economic climate and the forthcoming welfare reforms will have a dramatic effect on people living on low incomes in West Lothian.

The priorities for West Lothian Council and its Community Planning Partners include strengthening partnership work and ensuring resources and actions more specifically target those at risk of poverty. The Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan support and evidence this work, and is rooted in a growing understanding of the experience of those living in poverty.

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

West Lothian Council has historically had strong interest and activity in

tackling poverty issues, but began a more strategic approach in 2006. The Advice Shop, along with Access2Employment, the Council's employability service, provides the main practical anti-poverty support in West Lothian and in recognition of peoples' growing financial difficulties and the potential forthcoming impact of welfare reforms, the Advice Shop was asked to lead on drafting an Anti-Poverty Strategy. The Chief Executive offered unequivocal support for this work, and in April 2011 a group of services from the council and other Community Planning Partners and chaired by Head of Area Services formed an Anti-Poverty Strategy Development Group.

The Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan was formally adopted at a meeting of the Chief Executive in February 2012. The Strategy and Action Plan will be in place for five years and will be reviewed in 2014, with annual quarterly monitoring as detailed below. The Strategy has six priority areas: Income, Employability, Housing, Health, Education and Community; within each priority area there are numerous actions and details of indicators, milestones, leads, partners, and links to the Council's wider Life Stages Planning Programme. The Strategy is also part of a longer term plan which will also involve the private sector, the Council's welfare reform strategy, the Green Agenda and other major employers such as the Council.

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### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Ensuring the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan reflect public need and move beyond a strategic bureaucratic structure is essential. There is ongoing work to mitigate this challenge, outlined below. Attempts to involve the private sector in this process may be pursued in the future.

### **What are the timescales?**

A strategic approach to tackling poverty in West Lothian began in 2006 with the introduction of financial inclusion funding, however anti-poverty work The Anti-Poverty Strategy was well received throughout 2011 at various strategic meetings such as the Community Planning Partnership, Corporate Management Team and Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel meetings, as well as at various Money Week Events. It was adopted by the Council Executive in early 2012.

### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

Various positive changes for people living in poverty have occurred as a direct result of the Anti-Poverty Strategy Development Group, but driving these changes is the increased opportunity for more effective communication, information and resource sharing, monitoring and evaluation of the Council and its

partners' anti-poverty work. The School Clothing grant has doubled since the start of this group, with £1000 going to each school for its pupils' clothing needs. The Council is putting in additional resources for adult learning via online services to help people facing fuel poverty, and is funding a part time post specifically for that purpose.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation?**

The Anti-Poverty Strategy Development Group continues to meet monthly following drafting of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan in order to strengthen partners' commitment to tackling poverty in West Lothian, share information about ongoing initiatives and future planning, and uphold the agreed actions within the Action Plan. There is a monitoring and evaluation procedure in place involving quarterly monitoring form submissions to an appointed staff member dedicated to the Strategy Group, with additional monitoring from the Community Reference Group (outlined below). The Action Plan is also linked to the Council's wider Life Stages outcome planning programme, an extensive and strategic programme of change delivered across the Community Planning Partnership, and includes outcomes also supporting their SOA.

### **Was there any consultation with stakeholders?**

In 2010 West Lothian undertook a Anti-Poverty Strategy consultation to support the drafting of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. 300 individuals

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contributed to an online request for information, followed by group discussions.

West Lothian Council initiated *Your Voices Matter* to ensure stakeholder involvement in the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. With support from The Poverty Alliance, Your Voices Matter is a campaign designed to raise awareness of the Strategy and Action Plan, as well as widen community responsibility for the details of the actions therein. The Poverty Alliance has held a dozen workshops throughout West Lothian to gather feedback on the specific actions in the Action Plan, and has created a Toolkit to further facilitate this process. A Community Reference Group of people with experience of low income, the West Lothian Community Action on Poverty, are becoming co-producers of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. Formed in early 2012 this group will assist in monitoring the Action Plan, advising Strategy Group members, and supporting community-led anti-poverty activities.

Although West Lothian Council considers feedback from partners and their front line staff through the Anti-Poverty Strategy Development Group, they are clear that involving people with direct experience of poverty in this process is essential.

**Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

- Money Week offers over 50 free events and activities across West Lothian to support people to improve and better manage their finances;
- West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy Development Group is planning six major financial events, including an annual Money Week, to raise financial awareness and deliver financial education to West Lothian residents; throughout 2013/2014;
- West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network will support volunteer financial champions in 7 smaller communities in West Lothian in order to support communities to access local financial advice;
- West Lothian Council will continue to support community engagement work alongside The Poverty Alliance over 2012/2013 in order to raise awareness of welfare reforms and their potential impact, encourage uptake of welfare Benefits 'Health Check', as well as create a network of 'community champions' in West Lothian

### Key Contact

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## Category 2: Impact assessments

### **Falkirk Council**

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

The Council developed a Poverty Impact Assessment as part of a broader poverty strategy. Towards a Fairer Falkirk has the overall purpose of reducing poverty and the impact of poverty on individuals and communities in the Council area and that inequalities between the wealthiest and the poorest are reduced and everyone has a better life.

Our strategy is based on the good practice in our area, learning from other areas and importantly based on sustainability in the longer term.

*Our commitment means that*

- Some services being targeted to ensure that the most disadvantaged in our communities have the same opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Our employees understanding the barriers that poverty imposes on individuals and on communities and will work to identify and reduce discrimination and disadvantage.
- Understanding the impact of our decisions on budgets, policies, and activities to improve the lives of our most vulnerable and specifically those in poverty.
- Communities and individuals are enabled to participate as equals in society.

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

With the drive for public sector financial savings the Council wanted to make sure that whatever decisions were taken on budgets they did not impact on the poorest in our communities. Welfare reform and other austerity measures increased concern that poverty and disadvantage could increase unless effective intervention is taken. In addition responses to the Council's budget consultation exercises had identified that our communities wanted vulnerable groups or the less well off to be protected from the impact of any savings or other negative budget decisions i.e. increases in charges.

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Officers were tasked with developing a poverty strategy, a charging and concessions policy (recognising the disproportionate impact on those on low incomes) and a Poverty Impact Assessment process.

In developing the Poverty Impact Assessment officers tested a process and review tool on the previous year's budget and applied it retrospectively to decisions made on budgets cuts to ensure that the process worked. It was also discovered that even although the process was not in place at the time those cuts had been made, the impact on vulnerable groups had

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been considered. Whilst there was still concern about making cuts to budgets, it was felt they were made in a way which took poverty into account.

In order to take the process forward, once it had been approved by Elected Members, Officers made a presentation to all services on poverty, the affects of poverty, the poverty strategy and then the process of undertaking a poverty impact assessment. It is important that the poverty impact assessment is done as part of a wider understanding on poverty and its impacts and not in isolation or with a distorted perception of poverty.

In addition poverty was added to the screening tool for Equality Impact Assessment. A number of Poverty Impact Assessments have been carried out in relation to the current budget in combination with the screening through the Equality Impact Assessments. This has had an impact in areas like transport and taxi fares.

“For me what is really good is that people in non traditional (poverty) areas are starting to think about what the potential impacts could be of decisions on vulnerable groups”  
*Council Official*

The next stage in the process will be to better integrate Poverty Impact Assessment with the Equality Impact Assessment process.

**What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

The main challenge was to ensure this process was not seen as an add on but integral to the options that led to decisions being made. The Poverty Impact assessment will be used on only in the consideration of budget decisions but also when decisions are taken on service changes and policy developments. It was also a challenge to change the culture and thinking of the organisation.

“Sometimes you need time to get people on board as people are not used to thinking in that particular way. We have to change culture and that can’t happen overnight. It’s hard for people to change their working practices, attitudes and behaviour.”  
*Council Official*

There was recognition that if services changed then people living in poverty could be affected but it was also important to get people thinking about how to mitigate the impact on vulnerable people and communities.

The link between equalities and poverty is challenging in that there is a recognition that the next part of the process will be about better integrating Poverty and Equality Impact Assessments. Nevertheless it also recognised that there is a need to retain the distinctive nature of Poverty Impact Assessments. It has also been recognised that many of those who are considered to be in an equality group are also disadvantaged and living in poverty.

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Maintaining support is important and challenging. Poverty is recognised as a difficult issue and because of welfare reform is likely to get worse. There is a challenge to maintain a locally based approach when there is no big picture improvement.

It is also recognised that a particular challenge is the scale of welfare reform and the impact that this will have on people in the community and services:

“For example with Employment Support Allowance we are aware of the negative impact this is having on people in the community and services as well. It would be great if we could record this to show the impact but we know people are so busy and overwhelmed. We are just at the beginning so we are happy to be doing the impact assessments that we have at the moment”.  
*Council Official*

### What are the timescales?

The timescale between development of the Poverty Impact Assessment process and its implementation was very short - around 6 months. However the process is developing and will continue to be refined over the coming months and years.

### What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?

The guidance on Poverty Impact Assessment suggests a number of outcomes of the process:

- That the impact of decisions on vulnerable communities has been

understood and considered prior to taking a decision to change a service.

- Being able to demonstrate that the impact of decisions on Falkirk’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups has been integral to the decision making process.
- That the changes to services are monitored over time.
- That the cumulative impact of changes to services on people and communities are understood

### Monitoring and Evaluation?

Chief Officers are part of this process along with other managers and officers. They have to sign off on the Poverty Impact Assessment before it is finalised.

Being developed is an annual summary statement which will provide Elected Members with an overview of all the impact assessments and the outcome of utilising the process. The Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement will be responsible for reporting to the Corporate Management Team on the poverty impact of the totality of budget decisions, service changes and policy decision in May each year.

### Was there any consultation with stakeholders?

Consultation is carried out on an ongoing basis and as part of the process of information sharing with services



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### **Any other work or next steps related to poverty sensitive decision making?**

We are looking to further integrate the poverty impact assessment with the equality assessments. We are also looking to extend use to our Community Planning Partnerships decision making processes.

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## Category 2: Impact assessments

### NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC)

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

The Board are developing a process to inequality proof budget decisions. A specific part of this process includes looking at poverty as part of the Equality Impact Assessment. As such a specific section of the Impact Assessment relates to social class and socio economic status.

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

Following a board reorganisation 6 years ago and following a needs assessment it was recognised that inequality and poverty in particular were significant issues in the Glasgow and Clyde area. It was felt that although there was legislation on inequality groups, for example disability, gender and race, there was a need to include issues of social class and socio economic status in Equality Impact Assessments. This was important as it helped people think about whether decisions on services could be discriminating against people due to their lack of income or stigma and prejudice related to social class. In general the aim was to build staff's capacity to do impact assessments, understand equality issues in relation to the services they provide and to embed the assessments across the service rather than having a team of experts who do this job.

It was also felt to be important to raise awareness amongst staff of the

impact of the recession on health and to keep that in mind when making decisions.

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

All areas of NHSGGC are asked to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on significant service changes or where budget decisions might impact adversely on inequality groups including social class. Staff are trained to do their own Equality Impact Assessment. This is then checked by the quality assurance group. It is then published on the website ([www.equality.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.equality.scot.nhs.uk)) and included in a database. Specifically, staff are trained to use the Equality Impact Assessment and understand the methodology behind it. In addition the quality assurance group is made up of staff from outside of the inequalities team. Feedback is provided to staff when assessments are returned and actions attached to them. The aim is that the service should identify risks and take action to address them.

In relation to the impact of the recession NHSGGC has developed a suite of indicators to monitor trends in areas of health where the recession may have the greatest impact, for example mental health. Local areas have also been asked to identify issues drawing on their local knowledge of people's experience of financial worries, use of money advice services or issues relating to

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welfare reform. Monitoring this will give us an idea of how the health of patients is being affected by the recession.

### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

The complexity of how budgets are managed in a Health Board the size of Greater Glasgow and Clyde poses a significant challenge. While areas can impact assess their own budget decisions the challenge will be understanding any aggregate impact on equality groups. An additional challenge is ensuring that once an assessment is made there is follow up on the actions identified.

### **What are the timescales?**

As noted above, the process is ongoing but initially followed a board reorganisation and needs assessment in 2006.

### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

That social class and socio-economic status are considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment and that the impact of the recession is considered in relation to health. Specifically that this includes:

- Building staff capacity to do impact assessments and understand inequality, poverty and social class issues in relation to the services they provide

- Monitoring trends on a range of indicators in relation to the impact of the recession on health and using this, and local knowledge, for planning future services

### **Monitoring and Evaluation?**

Assessments included on the database are flagged every 6 months or every year. The inequalities team will then follow up with the individual service to see how progress on actions is being made.

### **Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making**

This work is ongoing and forms part of an annual planning process. Some related anti-poverty work includes;

- Healthier Wealthier Children which supports families with referrals to financial inclusion advice via their health workers;
- Work on tackling child poverty at a City level through the Glasgow City Child Poverty Group which is a partnership group consisting of Community Planning partners;
- Work on Gender Based Violence and routine enquiry by health workers where women can experience poverty or financial abuse from partners;
- Employability initiatives at local level between health and other partners

### **Key Contact**

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## Category 2: Impact assessments

### NHS Lothian

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making Developing?**

The Health Board has developed a Rapid Impact Assessment (RIA)

#### **Why has this approach being taken?**

Poverty and inequality are inextricably linked and are significant health determinants. Under Equalities legislation, the Board has a requirement to assess impacts on equalities groups using Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (EQIA). It wished to expand this to include other vulnerable populations – including people in poverty – and wider health impacts. NHS Boards develop and implement many policies and strategies, so the approach had to be proportionate and appropriate for use by any member of staff developing a strategy or policy. Members of the Public Health Directorate had experience of Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and commonly involve groups of stakeholders at the scoping stage of an HIA to identify health impacts. The NHS Lothian Equality Impact Assessment Steering Group used this experience to develop Rapid Impact Assessment (RIA).

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

It is NHS Lothian Board policy that all new proposed policies and strategies should have a Rapid

Impact Assessment. The individual leading on the strategy or policy is responsible for ensuring that an RIA is done and its recommendations implemented. The template for Board papers includes a section that asks for a brief summary of the RIA findings and changes made as a result. Over 100 RIAs were completed in 2011.

The RIA is done by a group of at least four people. The group uses a checklist to identify systematically: who will be affected by the proposed strategy or policy; how particular vulnerable groups may be differentially affected; and how the proposal may affect health. Participants agree whether further evidence is required, and whether a more detailed impact assessment should be completed. A report is submitted on a standard template that includes an action plan to address the recommendations of the RIA.

The EQIA steering group has developed guidance and training for those doing the RIAs. Members of the group offer support to colleagues doing RIA and facilitate some RIAs. The steering group quality assures a sample of RIA reports against agreed criteria, and all RIAs are audited to ensure the recommendations are implemented.

This RIA approach both influenced, and has been influenced by, the Scottish Government pilot of Health Inequalities Impact Assessment (HIIA). The NHS Lothian Public

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Health Consultant who chairs the EQIA Steering group was seconded to Scottish Government to develop HIIA. The scoping stage of HIIA is similar to RIA, but has been expanded to include consideration of Human Rights impacts. In the HIIA pilot the scoping workshops were found to be the most valuable part of the process in generating insights about how policies might impact on vulnerable groups and suggesting improvements.

Following the pilot, the checklist and guidance used in NHS Lothian have been amended to reflect the experience gained in the pilot. However, the EQIA Steering Group is adopting another approach to Human Rights as it believes further staff training is needed before this can be encompassed routinely within RIAs.

The RIA guidance provides some information on the key issues that may cause differential impacts. For example people who are socio-economically deprived have increased health needs but may face barriers in accessing care related to transport costs, costs of time off work, and poor literacy skills.<sup>22</sup>

### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

The EQIA Steering group faces a continual challenge to balance the

need to ensure appropriate scrutiny while not adding unnecessarily to the workload of those developing strategies and policies. The RIA process is designed to be proportionate but also identify proposals that merit further assessment. But in practice very few more detailed impact assessments have been done to date. The steering group is doing further work to identify proposals in which more detailed assessment is likely to be needed.

Work continues to ensure compliance with RIA, and to ensure that they lead to better policies. Members of the steering group have met the chairs of Board sub-committees to ensure they are aware of the rationale for RIA and that all Board papers seeking approval for a new strategy or policy should report on the RIA.

The EQIA steering group has a significant workload in quality assuring and auditing RIAs.

The current economic climate places financial pressures on all public services including NHS Boards. This may increase pressure on NHS staff who may consequently find it more difficult to give time to RIA. But it is also important to ensure that any changes in services do not further disadvantage groups of people who are already vulnerable, and RIAs are important to do this. As disadvantaged groups have the greatest healthcare needs, they are likely to be most affected by service redesign. RIAs are usually done on individual policies and further work is

<sup>22</sup> Rapid Impact Assessment Guidance and Checklist February 2011  
<http://www.nhsllothian.scot.nhs.uk/YourRights/EqualityDiversity/ImpactAssessment/Pages/default.aspx>

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needed to assess the incremental effects of service changes.

### **What are the timescales?**

The Board approved the policy of requiring RIA for all new strategies and policies in 2006. Since then it has continued to improve the quality of this assessment, including building on learning from the HIIA pilot.

### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

RIA are designed to assess policies and strategies in their draft stages in order to determine potentially unlawful or discriminatory effects on particular population groups, including people of low income. They also highlight positive impacts, evidence available and make recommendations. There are positive examples where RIAs have assisted in protecting people of low income from proposed funding or service changes by outlining need alongside other affected population groups.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation?**

Members of the EQIA Steering Group regularly review a sample of completed Rapid Impact Assessments against quality criteria.

All RIAs are audited to ensure recommendations are implemented, and this is reported to the Board's Mutuality and Equality Governance Committee. Recently the EQIA steering group has begun assigning each completed RIA a Risk Score.

RIAs that are deemed High Risk are those where it is particularly important to ensure the recommendations are implemented to avoid discriminating against disadvantaged groups. These are followed up more closely.

There is strong support for RIAs among directors, including the requirement in the template for Board papers to summarise the findings of the RIA and changes made to the proposal to ensure disadvantaged groups are not discriminated against.

### **Was there any consultation with stakeholders?**

NHS Scotland Participant Standard requires the 'supportive and effective involvement of people in service planning and improvement,' so involvement of members of the public, voluntary organisations, patients, carers, should form part of the development of strategies and policies. Where relevant RIAs involve wider stakeholders in the group process, and the RIA report template includes a section to note who has been consulted during development of the proposal. All RIAs are available online for consultation purposes.

### **Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

The Health Inequalities Impact Assessment process mentioned above was developed by the Scottish Government with support from Health Scotland. It aimed to

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meet one of the recommendations of Equally Well and further developed the approach described here. A full report <sup>23</sup> and guidance<sup>24</sup> are available on the Health Scotland website.

It has now been further developed as an approach to assessing impacts on poverty and inequality. Further information may be found on the Scottish Government's Tackling Employability and Poverty webpages.<sup>25</sup>

### Key Contact

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<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/5133.aspx>

24

<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/5563.aspx>

25

<<http://www.employabilityinScotland.com/inequalityimpactassessment.aspx>>

## Category 2: Impact assessments

### Shetland Islands Council

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

The council undertook a Poverty Impact Assessment of the budget setting process.

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

There is clear consensus within Shetland Council that all approaches to tackling poverty must begin by understanding its nature and complexity. They must also be meaningful rather than routine 'tick box' exercises, where people trust the processes evolving within an open community.

The Council hopes this approach will not only identify those service areas where budget cuts might have the greatest negative affect on people living in poverty, but also aid in the redesign and development of such services in order to improve outcomes for people living in poverty.

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Driven by a request from Head of Finance and supported by a Council workshop revealing the importance of avoiding a 'tick box exercise', a small group of individuals took a proportional approach to assessing the potential poverty impact on 80 service changes within the draft set of budget cut proposals for 2012 – 2014. In addition to assessing the

poverty impact on proposed changes, the group also undertook equalities, socio-economic and employment assessments. This approach forged strong connections among key Council staff members and maintained clear links to the SOA.

The group undertaking the Poverty Impact Assessment worked over one day in December 2011 to sift through potential service changes, meeting as a group in order to increase objectivity. They asked three colour coded questions for each service change: *green* for 'no impact on people on low incomes/deprivation'; *amber* for 'with tweaking no impact on people on low incomes/deprivation, or minor change'; *red* for 'requiring full impact assessment, need to analyse as will have major impact'.

The Poverty Impact Assessment was next assessed by directors, and reviewed by a Council and Officer Finance Review Group. Each of the five directors described the potential impact of changes on their respective service area. Although the Impact Assessment Process was not specifically put before councillors in their report for final budget decisions, those final decisions did, in the main, align with the outcomes of the Poverty Impact Assessment.

#### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

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Challenges are unsurprising in a climate of declining council budgets, but undertaking an objective measure of service area knowledge and understanding of poverty and social exclusion increases this challenge. Such a measure raises issues of protectionism, requests openness to potentially unwelcome but necessary changes, and demands sharing of resources.

### **What are the timescales?**

Design and delivery of the Poverty Impact Assessment operated from late 2011 to final budget decisions in early 2012. Although Shetland Council has a long history of considering issues of poverty and deprivation, Shetland Community Planning Partnership received specific resources to tackle deprivation in 2005/06, and for the first three years this was from the Community Regeneration Fund. Since 2008/09 national funding was made available to Shetland from the Fairer Scotland Fund, and in 2009 the Fairer Shetland Partnership was formed.

### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

Shetland Council initiated a constructive and replicable process which inserted poverty into the core of budget decision making. Shetland Council aims to ensure positive outcomes for people living on low incomes and in deprived areas, and in an increasingly difficult economic climate is also particularly concerned with rising child poverty.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation?**

Monitoring of the process is outlined above.

Further anti-poverty work, outlined below, resides under the outcomes of the Fairer Shetland Partnership and with various individuals whose main focus in the Council is poverty and deprivation. The partnership also reports progress through Shetland's Single Outcome Agreement.

### **Was there any consultation with stakeholders?**

Timescales and logistics involved in the Poverty Impact Assessment prevented consultation with stakeholders, however broader consultation on Fairer Shetland and focused consultation with young people (outlined below) did facilitate deeper understanding of issues of poverty. Council members regularly communicate with managers and coordinators to ensure frontline staff are aware of the issues facing people with whom they work, and Fairer Shetland also hosts annual events for Council staff and people living in poverty to set priorities for the forthcoming year.

### **Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Over the next few years the Council will continue to focus on their Fairer Shetland Framework whose key outcomes aim to reduce poverty and improve access to social opportunities. The five operational

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outcomes of this Framework include: maximising health and resources, including increasing the acceptability of thriftiness; employment, including supporting vulnerable people at most appropriate times; changing ways of working through focusing on and strengthening outcomes (poverty sensitive decision making is particularly important here); social networks, focusing on young people; and reducing stigma, raising awareness of poverty. With 10% of Shetland living in poverty, the Fairer Shetland partnership recognises that improving people's life circumstances is as much about existing frontline services working together, with the individual or household, as it is about additional resourcing of services.<sup>26</sup>

Shetland Council also has ongoing work to educate and support young people to talk about poverty and take an active role in its demise. They have undertaken peer research: *Poverty is Bad, Let's Fix It*, with the aim of producing a film on living in poverty in Shetland, and currently support a group of 12 young people who developed and enacted six action 'hubs' addressing:

- A lack of social opportunities and spaces – so young people are now involved in transport services, as well as applying to funding for more bus services and a 'pop up' café;
- The difficulties of growing up in a rural area, where it is difficult to be different – so young people

are also in the process of defining who mentors may be, differences between 'good' and 'bad' media, and have written to Stephen Fry for his support in creating a film; and the lack of opportunities therein – so young people are now involved in participatory budgeting through You Choose;

- Anger surrounding the stigma of one's family living in poverty – so young people are now drawing up a contract with media to increase understanding of how damaging this experience can be.
- A lack of awareness about accessing services – so young people are now working on a film launch and presentation at the end of March; this work is also contributing to some of the young peoples' MV. They have also developed a survey on survey monkey, resulting in numerous statutory agencies who interface with young people getting in touch.

Young people also continue to present their work and experiences to various bodies including the voluntary sector, NHS and the young people's commissioner.

### Key Contact

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<sup>26</sup>

Fairer Shetland.

<<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/documents/FairerGovernance.pdf>>

## Category 3: Financial Inclusion Strategies

### Glasgow City Council

#### **How is Poverty Sensitive Decision Making developing?**

The Council have developed and implemented a Financial Inclusion Strategy which addresses Financial Education; Financial Inclusion and Employability.

#### **Why has this approach been taken?**

There is widespread agreement in Glasgow that tackling poverty requires partnership, strategic sharing of resources and knowledge, and political leadership. Financial Inclusion is no longer the sole responsibility of Glasgow City Council. Glasgow City Council focuses on enabling dialogue between partners and the core of Glasgow's anti-poverty work resides within the Financial Inclusion and Service Development Team in Financial Services; all decisions endeavour to incorporate issues of poverty into decision making processes and partnership working.

This partnership working is also strongly reflected in the current joint bid between Glasgow City Council, the NHS and Glasgow Housing Association, outlined below. The NHS embraces poverty as a health indicator, housing associations in Glasgow are closely connected to their social and ethical responsibility policies, and general attitudinal changes in recent years lean towards joint responsibility for tackling poverty.

#### **What has been the process in developing Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Glasgow City Council's City Advisory Panel, formed in 2009, is the central strategic group for financial inclusion and anti-poverty work, with major partners represented such as the NHS, housing associations, and Job Centre Plus. Below this panel is the Area Delivery Group, comprising all of the operational services in Glasgow such as financial advice services, charities and other housing associations. Two-way communication between these two groups informs trends and strategies, which then enable action or mitigate risk.

Following the success of such partnership working and through the Financial Inclusion Strategy, the current April 2012 Glasgow City Council contract is now a combined bid with NHS and Glasgow Housing Association and so enables a greater pooling of resources in a time of increasingly difficult economic circumstances. So for example if Glasgow City Council finds a gap in outreach provision of advice services, they can approach the NHS about available space in a health centre; and the Welfare Reform Group is using NHS screens in health centres to advertise GAIN and forthcoming welfare changes.

#### *Financial Education*

In partnership with Education Scotland and the Education Department, financial education is now part of the Curriculum for

### Category 3: Financial Inclusion Strategies

Excellence and is building a strong community between schools and financial inclusion agencies, and across schools supports greater sharing of good practice and resources. A seconded Financial Inclusion Development Officer has worked over the last few years to support schools to embrace financial capability and education as a cross cutting theme across the curriculum and school improvement plans. As a result, teachers now receive information, guidance, training and online support to address issues such as money management, credit, tax, budgeting, banking and borrowing. The Financial Education Focus Group aims for broad community representation across Glasgow to enable both sharing of information and strengthening support for staff and teachers. As a next step in this process Glasgow City Council is trying to secure funding to bring the Credit Union into schools, following a successful example in Yoker.

#### *Financial Inclusion and Employability*

Funded by the Scottish Government's employability and financial inclusion policies, in 2011 the main regeneration agency with the Glasgow Works contract examined the intrinsic links between financial inclusion, poverty and employability and created a framework for employability providers which added financial inclusion capability questions to their assessment process, and a referral protocol into financial inclusion agencies. The framework supports employability advisors to identify

trigger points in a client's journey, for example when the most appropriate time is to make a referral to a financial inclusion service; financial inclusion providers are then accountable for the progress of that referral.

In 2012 the reverse process is happening where financial inclusion agency advisors will be questioned about employability in their initial assessments, and making appropriate referrals to regeneration or employability providers. The focus remains on employability rather than employment, e.g. on soft skills such as literacy and numeracy, confidence building or stress management.

#### **What are the main challenges and barriers to the development of Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

##### *Financial Education*

The first year of the new curriculum will likely be a learning curve. This may highlight gaps in provision, and there is some concern about properly embedding the changes. Funding for the work is an issue so there is concern about maintaining momentum and retaining valuable learning. The next stage of the process is bringing financial inclusion agencies into schools. Coordinating this process on dwindling resources is an expected challenge, but there are examples of where this is happening successfully (with Credit Unions in Yoker, for example). Flexibility is also important as schools may have local challenges

### Category 3: Financial Inclusion Strategies

such as a particularly vulnerable community.

#### *Financial Inclusion and Employability*

Formalising the introduction of employability questions into financial inclusion services' assessments is a challenge. Nevertheless this challenge will be mitigated by a constant focus on employability skills rather than employment and by supporting staff and volunteers to ask pertinent questions at the appropriate times. Training of staff and particularly volunteers is a challenge but regeneration agencies are available to support this process, and financial inclusion services often have substantial local knowledge to support people with developing 'soft' employability skills.

#### **What are the timescales?**

##### *Financial Education*

Although many Glasgow schools have incorporated aspects of financial education into classrooms, the formalised new curriculum started in 2011/2012 and builds on the 2008/2009 Financial Inclusion Strategy for Glasgow.

##### *Financial Inclusion and Employability*

Building on Scottish Government financial inclusion funding and subsequent partnerships, specific strategic focus on links between services began in 2011 and will continue in reverse focus from 2012.

#### **What are the outcomes or anticipated outcomes of this approach?**

##### *Financial Education*

Long term investment in financial education from a cross-cutting perspective across the range of curriculum will hopefully strengthen financial capability across Glasgow. Glasgow Community Planning also funds a post within Education Scotland looking at the potential replication of this programme beyond Glasgow.

##### *Financial Inclusion and Employability*

Two way communication between financial inclusion and employability services will facilitate greater understanding of issues of poverty, closer partnership working and sharing of resources, and improved outcomes for people living in poverty – both softer outcomes such as increased confidence, and long term stronger employment prospects.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation?**

Formal partnership among Glasgow City Council (GCC), NHS and Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), along with the City Advisory Panel and Delivery Group partnerships enables constant monitoring of progress on financial inclusion policies.

##### *Financial Education*

A mapping exercise is currently being undertaken to support this

### Category 3: Financial Inclusion Strategies

work, and to highlight available links between schools and financial inclusion services in local communities. Where there are good links between financial inclusion services and schools, such as between the Credit Union and Yoker schools, good practice will be shared across Glasgow.

#### *Financial Inclusion and Employability*

Recent studies undertaken on softer outcomes and reported in the current combined GCC/GHA/NHS bid clearly support the influence of these outcomes on employability, with people reporting better control of finances and reduced stress levels. A scoping exercise is determining what financial inclusion agencies are currently doing in terms of referrals to employability providers. Glasgow City Council monitor financial inclusion agencies and Glasgow Works monitor employability agencies, so a monitoring framework for this partnership is developing. The NHS are also keen to measure the impact of this increased focus on employability, for example in reduced prescribing.

#### **Was there any consultation with Stakeholders?**

Glasgow City Council works closely with its partners and their frontline staff, including the voluntary sector and anti-poverty organisations such as Child Poverty Action Group to ensure connection and understanding of issues of poverty. Pilots from these partnerships which evidence individuals' experiences of

services also feed into key policies within the Council.

#### **Any other work or next steps in relation to Poverty Sensitive Decision Making?**

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership are also in the process of designing a city wide anti-poverty strategy, which has widespread support. This multi agency anti-poverty strategy, and within that a child poverty strategy, will also incorporate elements of the successful Healthier Wealthier Children pilot.

Glasgow City Council manages a frontline multi-agency advice service, Long Term Conditions Macmillan, which offers a holistic service from 2008 to cancer sufferers with a single point of contact. This service began as a small project offering benefits and debt advice, but has expanded to also include links into social work, housing, and health not only for cancer sufferers but also other long term conditions including heart, COPD, stroke, cardiology, respiratory, and cystic fibrosis. There are discussions now with Alzheimer's Scotland, and with the Brownlee unit to support HIV patients with a similar programme. 17% of cancer sufferers nationally lose their home but since the introduction of this programme no one has lost their home; mortgages have been restructured, housing associations have bought properties, rent arrears have been dealt with, etc.

### Category 3: Financial Inclusion Strategies

Other key areas of work include: ScotCash, a Community Development finance initiative offering banking facilities to people who find accessing banks difficult, and GHeat, Glasgow's home energy action team work to address fuel poverty in Glasgow with a direct line into the social responsibility teams of energy suppliers.

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