Addressing Child Poverty in Midlothian

Action Plan 2012–17

Midlothian Community Planning Partnership
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Executive summary

In developing *Addressing Child Poverty in Midlothian*, Midlothian’s Community Planning Partners have sought to create an overview of the ways in which Midlothian’s Community Planning Partners are working together to tackle the cycle of poverty within Midlothian’s communities. This document is not a new strategy or stand-alone action plan. Nor is it an exhaustive account of the services we are providing for vulnerable families; these services are already spelled out in the Single Outcome Agreement and range of strategic Community Planning documents available here:

[http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200130/communities_and_community_planning/367/community_planning/2](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200130/communities_and_community_planning/367/community_planning/2)

Rather, it is a starting point on our journey towards helping families and their communities become more resilient to economic hardship and better equipped to identify their own local solutions for overcoming barriers to work, education or training, such as:

- Lack of skills and confidence
- Health inequalities, including mental health and wellbeing
- Childcare
- Access to support and information
- Caring responsibilities
- Social or structural barriers including discrimination, racism and gender inequality or violence

The reduction of poverty- and its long-term impacts upon those who experience it as children- is absolutely critical to the success of our overall aims with the Community Planning Partnership. The partnership has identified the reduction of inequalities in Early Years outcomes as one of their current key priorities. The other key priorities, about improving outcomes for school leavers and economic development within Midlothian, are both contingent upon and necessary components of, the success of the first.

This document reflects our need to ensure that the wellbeing of vulnerable families is considered within all of our planning processes, and in terms of the relationships between people and the communities of which they are a part. As the Scottish Government states in its 2011 Child Poverty Strategy, “a strategic approach to child poverty requires considering a very wide range of polices and resources through a ‘child poverty lens’.”
Midlothian’s Community Planning Partners have identified the reduction of inequalities in early years outcomes as one of their key priorities. The other key priorities are about improving outcomes for school leavers and about promoting economic and business development. Success in the first of these areas is linked to our ability to support families move and stay out of poverty, and this will help lay the foundations for success in the other two priorities.

Through our mapping work, we have identified the following themes, which will form the heart of this action plan:

**Supporting families** who are in or at risk of poverty to cope with and be more in control of their circumstances.

**Building resilience** within local communities, so that vulnerable families feel better supported and able to access services and resources they need.

**Supporting vulnerable young people** to gain easier entry into employment, training or further/higher education.

**Addressing the inequalities** which are the most significant contributing factors toward poverty.

**Widening access to services** through: a) better publicity and: b) better use of community facilities to enable individuals to access support in a non-stigmatising way.

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**The aims of this document are to enable all of our Community Planning Partners to:**

A) gain a clearer view of what we are currently doing effectively in relation to child and family poverty in local areas;

B) identify where the gaps in services or effective partnership working are; and

C) set directions for future work focusing on breaking the poverty cycle in communities.
1 Introduction

“We know that the current system of welfare does trap people. It erodes their dignity, restricts their choices, and keeps them in poverty, dramatically reducing their capacity to develop, change and take opportunities. But we also know that a very high percentage of the ‘welfare bill’ goes to people who work (although the overwhelming majority goes to people of pension age). In a very real sense the welfare budget benefits landlords charging extortionate rents, because they can, and employers paying minimal, erratic and unreliable wages, because they can. Many landlords and employers are massively dependent on benefits. Without benefits they would really struggle.

And yet the public and political discourse denies this. It automatically equates benefit recipients with idleness. It ignores the fact that half of all poor children come from working families. It ignores the contribution unpaid carers make to society. It allows poor people to be blamed for an expensive, creaky and inappropriate system of welfare, and ignores the nature of the jobs market, and the operation of the housing market, which together keep people in poverty. And instead of blaming policy and practice for poverty, it lays all the blame at the door of people who are living lives of real complexity, challenge and hardship.

In the 21st century we need a new social contract that recognises that we are all mutually dependent citizens, and that just as the solution to poverty has never been found in the welfare benefits system, so too it can never be found in a single, simple solution. Affordable childcare and jobs that offer real hope of progression to ensure a lasting route out of poverty are essential elements of any anti-poverty strategy.”

Julia Unwin, Chief Executive, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, 9 February 2012

The purpose of Addressing Child Poverty in Midlothian is to ensure that the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership develops more effective plans to break the cycle of poverty among vulnerable families. By necessity, this requires a long-term vision, which acknowledges the complexity of both the causes of poverty and the reasons why individuals and families struggle to emerge from it.

This document represents the best efforts of Midlothian’s Community Planning Partners to address child and family poverty during a time of economic downturn and major public sector spending cuts; this effort requires us to re-examine how we allocate existing, and indeed diminishing, resources.

In order to do this, we aim to embed the outcomes and actions set out here within the work of existing partnerships and service delivery mechanisms. This plan aims to address existing gaps in services available for families living in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty, and to
ensure that all of Midlothian’s Community Planning Partners are routinely considering the impact of their service planning and delivery on vulnerable families.

During the development of this strategy, we have attempted to engage widely with public and voluntary sector service providers who are directly supporting families experiencing poverty, and also with individuals themselves.

**Midlothian and East Lothian: Shared Services in Education and Children’s Services**

Midlothian Council and East Lothian Council have agreed a phased approach to achieving twin aims – improving services and reducing costs in Education and Children’s Services for both councils. This has implications and potential future benefits for addressing child poverty across both council areas.

Key recommendations are:

- To continue to develop shared services arrangements for the strategic management of, and operational support service to, Education and Children’s Services
- To implement shared services arrangements on a phased basis, and begin by bringing together the management of, and operational support to, the education function in one integrated structure
- To appoint a joint Head of Education,
- Retain political accountability for service delivery, with the current governance arrangements for education and children’s services remaining in place for both Councils.

There is an expectation that the shared service will deliver financial savings which will be identified as the phased implementation develops.

Details of the process of engagement and communication with employees and the full range of stakeholders, such as parent groups, and partner organisations, are being planned as part of the phased implementation.

With regard to integrated children’s’ services planning, the relevant multi agency partnership groups in both Midlothian and East Lothian are exploring, individually and jointly, the possible linking of these plans, in relation to community planning. The key agencies involved in the antipoverty agenda will be part of this process, and it is hoped that a joint approach across two local authority areas may be helpful in attracting funding and identifying shared learning, expertise and resources.
2  Why focus on child poverty?

We have chosen to address child and family poverty, as opposed to poverty in general, for three reasons:

- Because the families with young children experience the highest levels of poverty in Scotland, and after housing costs, young children (and their parents/carers) are at greater risk of poverty than any other major population group, including pensioners. ii

- Because evidence shows that growing up in poverty can have a serious and lasting impact upon an individual’s life chances. Poverty has implications for an individual’s access to services and opportunities, and also for their physical and emotional development and long-term health outcomes. Work which successfully reduces poverty among children and their families should ultimately have preventative outcomes with respect to poverty across the board.

- Because the UK Child Poverty Act 2010 provides a legal impetus for work which specifically aims to reduce both the causes and effects of poverty affecting children, young people and their families. The Act’s key target is the reduction in the percentage of children living in relative poverty to 10% by the year 2020. However, it is now likely that this and the other major targets of the Act will be missed nationally. iii

The growing body of evidence connecting children’s earliest experiences with their long-term life chances has informed the UK Child Poverty Act 2010 and the Scottish Government’s Child Poverty Strategy (2011), and makes a strong case for the front-loading of resources into support for children and families during the early years of life.

In addition to the points above, it is our collective belief that no child deserves to have poorer health or fewer chances in life due to the fact that they have been born into situations of poverty or in areas of deprivation. To give people the best chances of challenging these inequalities within their own lives, we must purposefully understand the link between them and the wider economic context. We must particularly work to ensure that people born into situations of deprivation are equally able to access good quality education, training and employment opportunities, and that they have the support, information and service infrastructure they need to be able to do so.

For these reasons, it was felt that an approach which draws together the specific policy and service delivery strands relating to children, young people, and their parents or carers would make the most impact in terms of long-term poverty reduction and prevention.

The perfect storm: what we can’t solve at the local level

It is evident that at a UK-wide scale, poverty has been increasing since the financial collapse and start of the economic downturn in 2008. The combination of public spending cuts and
welfare reform, increasing unemployment and inflation in the costs of household essentials such as food and fuel, means that poverty is likely to continue to increase, possibly - as predicted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies - until 2020.

There are also suggestions that if current pricing trends continue, and without major changes in the sources and delivery of household fuels, average-income households could fall into fuel poverty as early as 2015. IV This means more and more households will literally face the choice between eating and heating. It also means that in the UK, and globally, the incentive for finding sustainable and affordable renewable energies is implicitly connected to the anti-poverty agenda. Although in Midlothian, we are currently proactive in supporting local residents to access free or subsidised home insulation through grants from the Scottish Government, it is apparent that we will need to look increasingly toward renewable energy sources and innovative solutions at the local level to address fuel poverty. Community energy schemes such as small-scale windfarm developments, solar farms or hydro electric schemes are developing elsewhere in the country and should be investigated for Midlothian.

The combination of financial collapse, high inflation and issues of sustainability cause a perfect poverty storm, over which we have very little control at the local level. In the adoption of a co-ordinated response to child poverty in Midlothian, we are aware that we have little power to address UK-wide or global economic trends. Neither are we able to directly challenge the inequality of wealth distribution, which research tells us has a significant relationship with poor health and social outcomes. IV

In short, we know that we cannot abolish or fully prevent child poverty in Midlothian, no matter how ambitious the targets set for us by central government. Rather, this is our attempt to be better connected in the provision of support to families in crisis or, preferably, before they reach crisis point, to better equip both parents and children with the skills and personal capacities they need to feel in control of their circumstances, and to foster the growth of inclusive and accessible community-based support networks for all families.

However, a necessary part of our local effort must be to work with colleagues in the Scottish Government, charities and other national policy bodies to raise the profile of good practice at the local level, and to report on how the changing national and global context impacts on the daily lives of our local citizens.
3 Profile of poverty in Midlothian

Poverty in Midlothian exists at moderate levels throughout the local authority area, with more concentrated pockets primarily in the larger social housing estates on the eastern side of the county: Woodburn, Mayfield/Easthouses and Gorebridge. However, it should always be noted that the majority of individual families experiencing relative poverty live outside of areas of multiple deprivation\textsuperscript{VI}, which means that it is insufficient to target anti-poverty work solely at the communities named above.

Child Poverty Map

According to the most recent figures published by the Child Poverty Action Group’s End Child Poverty Now campaign, roughly 18% of children in Midlothian are living in poverty. This is slightly higher than the Scottish average of 17%.

![Percentage of Children in Poverty](image)

At ward level, the percentages of children living in poverty are:

- Midlothian West: 13%
- Penicuik: 14%
- Bonnyrigg: 15%
- Midlothian East: 20%
- Midlothian South: 21%
- Dalkeith: 23%
The above report defines children to be living in poverty if they live in families in receipt of out of work benefits or in receipt of in-work tax credits, where their reported income is less than 60% of median income. This is the closest to an equivalent measure we have of local levels of child poverty.

It is also a measure of income before housing costs, so does not take into account the impact of high rent or mortgage payments. In 2008/09, the percentage of children living in relative poverty after housing costs was 26% in Scotland as a whole. There is no available statistical data about the level of poverty after housing costs at local authority level. However, the comparatively high cost of housing in Midlothian means that actual levels of poverty after housing costs will be higher than shown above.

**Poverty indicators in Midlothian**

Midlothian as a whole rates similar to or slightly better than the Scottish average against a range of indicators which contribute to child and family poverty, although it should be borne in mind that Scotland overall rates poorly on many poverty indices - particularly those related to health- within Europe. Here is a brief overview.

- As of March 2012, Midlothian’s Job Seeker’s Allowance Claimant Count was 4.4%, which is the same as the average figure for Scotland and slightly higher than the UK-wide average. For the 18-24 age group, this figure rises to 10.2%, which is significantly higher than both the UK and Scottish averages.

- Average weekly earnings for Midlothian residents, both male and female, are currently significantly less than both Scotland and British averages, having risen to meet the Scottish average income in 2010 before dropping sharply in 2011. For all full time workers living in Midlothian, gross weekly pay was £452.20 in 2011, compared with the Scottish average of £490.60 and the British average of £503.10. For women, this drops to £398.70, compared with £441.04 and £446.30 in Scotland and Britain respectively. A combination of lower than average income and higher than average housing costs will be a significant factor in rates of child and family poverty in Midlothian, importantly including in-work poverty.

- Midlothian has significantly fewer than average people employed in professional and management roles. It has roughly twice as many people employed in construction and related industries as the Scottish average, which is likely to be a significant contributing factor to the general increase in unemployment during the recent downturn.

- In 2008, just over 32% of employee-jobs in Midlothian were in public sector administration, education or health: slightly higher than the Scottish average of 30%. It is possible that this could lead to higher rates of unemployment and in-work poverty in coming years as the cumulative impact of public sector budget cuts, including both pay freezes and job losses, takes effect.
• The numbers of people aged 16-24 presenting as homeless have increased sharply with the economic downturn, leading to increased numbers requiring temporary accommodation.

• Educational attainment remains an area of concern for some parts of Midlothian. In particular, school leavers from Newbattle High School and Dalkeith High School continue to be significantly less likely to enter Higher or Further Education than their counterparts from elsewhere in Midlothian and Scotland, and are more likely to remain out of work or training upon leaving school. Although school leaver destinations from these catchments have improved with a range of interventions by Midlothian’s Community Planning Partners, young people in these areas have not yet achieved parity in terms of educational attainment with other parts of the county.

• Rates of pregnancy among women under 20 appear to be increasing, and are currently higher than the Scottish average, having risen from below average in 2006. In 2009, there were 66.3 pregnancies per 1000 population under the age of 20 in Midlothian, compared with 52.7 throughout Scotland.

• Drug taking among individuals in their mid to late twenties appears to be high in Midlothian, with the rate of new clients at drug treatment services considerably higher than the Scottish average among 25-29 year olds.

• Midlothian has a higher than average, and rising, rate of prescriptions for antidepressant medications.

• Midlothian has the highest percentage of adults with learning disabilities of any local authority in Scotland.
4 How we understand poverty

Policymakers adopt a variety of ideological positions regarding poverty, and these influence their responses to it. Simply put, there have long been tendencies to regard poverty either as a result of individual behaviours or lack of capacity, or as an outcome of socio-economic change over which individuals have little control. These polarised positions lead to incomplete policy responses. An overly narrow focus on changing individual behaviour or developing individual capacity does little to address the real social, economic, and cultural barriers that people may experience in trying to access quality employment or other opportunities. Conversely, economic development approaches which focus solely on job creation and property-based regeneration can alter the fortunes of a geographic area but tend to move poverty from one place to another or fail to benefit the people who are most vulnerable.

It is more useful to take an approach which recognises the cyclical relationships between socio-economic and individual causes of poverty. As Bradshaw states, “Spirals of poverty, problems for individuals (earnings, housing, health, education, self-confidence) are interdependent and strongly linked to community deficiencies (loss of business and jobs, inadequate schools, inability to provide social services etc.).”

This cyclical approach should lead to more holistic policy responses, which allow individuals and families to take an active role in creating change both in their own lives and in their wider communities. Our approach, then, is to try to address child and family poverty from a variety of policy-driven angles.

To do this, we recognise the importance of the community planning model and the necessity for all of Midlothian’s community planning partners to actively drive this work forward.

Poverty and early years development
The Early Years Framework for Scotland (2008) makes explicit the connection between poverty experienced in the earliest years of life, and even pre-birth, and a person’s long-term outcomes. Exposure to high levels of parental stress - most significantly caused by financial hardship, substance misuse, domestic abuse or poor relationships, and homelessness - has marked effects on a child’s development and can be observed in both physical and behavioural development as early as age 3.

The Early Years Framework sets a clear direction which prioritises investment in early years interventions, including parental support and learning, family peer networks, nursery and pre-school provision, better-integrated childcare options, more intensive support for vulnerable families, and increased opportunities for play for vulnerable children. The framework also recognises that effective investment in early years interventions should result in preventative savings in other areas.
Midlothian’s *Integrated Children’s Services Plan* places considerable emphasis on early years development and parental support. Midlothian Sure Start is the key third sector agency with the remit for parental support locally. It has a good network of centres throughout the county and works effectively alongside Midlothian Council and other agencies in developing programmes, identifying and supporting vulnerable families, and protecting children.

This document is intended to ensure that early years interventions in Midlothian are sufficiently connected to the economic factors which are so critical in determining whether a family is healthy, happy and safe.

**In-work poverty**

Because Midlothian’s unemployment levels have been on the low side of average, particularly in comparison with other former coalfield or industrial areas, it has perhaps been too easy to underestimate the impact of poverty upon families within the county. For this reason, we have found it difficult over many years to lever in funding for larger scale regeneration and economic development programmes leading to business growth and private sector investment. Within the last several years Midlothian has fallen out of eligibility for some European and Scottish Government funding streams due to its lower levels of unemployment. Nevertheless, it has been recognised for many years that our local economy relies significantly upon low-waged, low-skilled jobs in service industries and retail, or upon small-scale and sometimes unstable businesses in construction and related trades.

Roughly half of children in poverty in the UK live in a household where at least one adult is in paid employment. Research undertaken by Edinburgh Napier University for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggests that for many parents, leaving benefits and entering low-paid work is not an effective route out of poverty. It can also lead to higher levels of uncertainty and stress. This can be due to a number of factors, particularly:

- Minimum wage does not raise a family above the poverty line.
- Childcare costs and the requirement to pay deposits for childcare places. Also the requirement to pay childcare fees for part sessions or weeks that children do not attend, in order to hold places.
- Concerns over the claims process for Working Tax Credit, which is based in previous earnings and can lead to overpayments and debts if earnings go up.
- Transport costs

Often, these additional financial strains lead to parents actually leaving work and feeling financially better off on benefits. For employment to be an effective route out of poverty for parents, the Napier University research suggests that the following factors are essential:

- Pay must be higher than the minimum wage and work must be reliable
- Access to affordable, flexible and good quality childcare
- Greater employer flexibility to enable parents to meet their caring responsibilities
• A benefits/tax credits system that is more responsive to the needs of people on very low incomes, and which minimises the potential impact of overpayments and gaps in payments. (It is not certain whether the current Welfare Reform Bill will do this).

• Holistic, integrated support which is focused around the individual client’s needs depending on the issues (substance misuse, learning needs, employability, childcare, debt counselling and money advice, etc- along the model of the Working for Families Programme).

• Ongoing support for employability and confidence building to help individuals move toward higher-paid jobs.xv

**Childcare**
Access to childcare is one of the most fundamental factors which determines whether parents or carers are able to gain and maintain employment. It is recognised within the Scottish Government’s Child Poverty Strategy that childcare must be one of the central themes of any approach to reducing child poverty. Issues around childcare are not simply to do with affordability, but also with the fact that childcare is not readily available over nights and weekends to accommodate shift patterns. However, this recognition has not been accompanied by an increase in investment in childcare provision from the Scottish Government to local community planning partners.

In Midlothian, there is uncertainty about the current market for out-of-hours childcare, but anecdotal evidence suggests that need may be larger than we currently estimate. In the future, furthermore, it is likely that demand will increase. Given that Community Care has been highlighted as a key growth area for employment in Midlothian, and that care work is delivered on a round the clock basis, this is a critical issue. However, the need to consider the affordability, as well as the financial viability and sustainability of childcare provision, means that innovative solutions will be required.

**Child poverty and equalities groups**
Families belonging to certain equalities groups are disproportionately at risk of poverty in Scotland. These include:

*Lone parents, particularly mothers, both those who are in receipt of benefits and those who are working.* Women still experience a significant gender pay gap, and are more likely to work part time in order to accommodate their caring responsibilities. Likewise, gender stereotyping and occupational segregation are still significant factors in determining earning potential for many women. Women are also more likely than men to be forced into situations of poverty through domestic abuse and violence.

*Families affected by disability or ill-health* (of either an adult or child). Roughly 26% of families containing a disabled child are in relative poverty in Scotland.xvi Disabled people, as well as parents of disabled children, are much more likely to be unemployed or to be in low-income employment, than average.
Families from minority ethnic communities. In 2008/09, 40% of children in Asian households and 34% of children in households of ‘other ethnic groups’ were living in relative poverty in Scotland\textsuperscript{xvii}. Recent research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggests that most minority ethnic communities in Scotland appear to be disadvantaged on one or more indices of poverty.\textsuperscript{xviii} Often these disadvantages stem either from discrimination in the labour market, language or literacy issues. Some communities, such as Gypsy/Travellers, are more likely to experience poverty as an enduring problem for families than others such as East Europeans.\textsuperscript{xix}

Poverty and health inequalities
There is a well established body of evidence which demonstrates a close cyclical relationship between poverty and health inequalities: poor health is both a cause and a result of poverty. In Scotland, the gap in life expectancy between people living in the richest and poorest areas is widening.

Dr Harry Burns, the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, draws a powerful connection between situations arising from poverty, chronically raised levels of stress, and individuals’ likelihood of developing illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, as well as mental illnesses. Suicide among adult males in Scotland has risen sharply since the mid 1970s. Most urgently, Scotland’s rates of mortality from chronic liver diseases caused by excessive alcohol consumption have risen sharply since the early 1990s, for both men and women, and are the highest in Western Europe.\textsuperscript{xx} Scotland’s national alcohol problem cuts across socio-economic levels, but is notably worse in areas of multiple deprivation.

Burns presents a convincing argument that in order to effectively address Scotland’s significant health problems, we must do more to engage local communities in the process of ‘health creation’, and in enabling people to feel more resilient and better able to take control of their own circumstances. This includes enabling them to move out of the benefits and poverty trap and into employment where they feel productive and valued. Burns equally stresses the importance of workplace practices, supportive management and reward structures, flexible working policies and the encouragement of healthy lifestyles in the workplace.
5. Impact of welfare reform

It is very likely that child and family poverty will increase, locally and nationally, as various aspects of Welfare Reform take effect. This will be compounded, at least in the short to medium term, by the weak economy and highly challenging job market. It is anticipated that these two pressures will lead to rises in homelessness, household debt, and potentially the need for children to be taken into care as families reach crisis points - with ensuing financial implications for both statutory and voluntary agencies.

The full impact of the Welfare Reform Bill on vulnerable families is yet to be known, and is to some degree dependent on the final content of the Bill. However, significant concerns are shared by national and local organisations, including the Child Poverty Action Group, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Citizens Advice Bureaux, as well as Midlothian Council Housing services and Registered Social Landlords about the implications for vulnerable families.

Here are some of the key points of concern:

**The transfer to Universal Credit, beginning in 2013, means that a single payment will be made directly to claimants.** While this is intended to provide welcome simplification of the benefits system, there are fears that it could lead to an increase in households falling into rent arrears or debts. This could lead to an increase in evictions and homelessness. Locally, Melville Housing Association are investing in tenancy support, to help tenants with budgeting and other issues, in order to minimise this risk.

**The housing benefit cap will particularly affect families with children living in private rented accommodation.** This has the potential to force families to move to smaller or less suitable accommodation, facing overcrowding or homelessness, or having to leave communities where they have networks of family and friends. This could lead to children being withdrawn from schools, and to increased levels of isolation and social exclusion.

**The restriction of Housing Benefit for those under 35 to the cost of a room in shared accommodation** is very likely to affect non-resident parents’ ability to have overnight contact or shared residence as their ability to accommodate children overnight will be made significantly more difficult.

**The ending of contributory Employment & Support Allowance** after a year will mean couples where one partner is in employment and one receiving ESA are likely to lose benefit of £94.25 per week, a considerable drop in income for people with long-term health problems.

**The replacement of Disability Living Allowance by Personal Independence Payment is budgeting for savings of 20% on expenditure for disability benefits.** Although not directly comparable, it appears that those currently on the lowest rate of the care and mobility components of Disability Living Allowance will have most difficulty qualifying under the new
rules for Personal Independence Payment, thus losing £19.55 or £39.10 per week in benefit, although it is unlikely to be just those in this position who will lose out. Loss of disability benefits can often result in loss of premiums for means-tested benefits also

**Cuts to in-work tax credits, particularly the reduction of the childcare element of child tax credit from 80% to 70% of childcare costs will particularly impact low-income working families who are paying for private childcare.** The average cost of full time private nursery care in Scotland, in 2008, was roughly £158 per week for a child under 2, and £151 for a child over 2. This is over a third of the average gross full-time weekly wage of a female Midlothian resident.

The proposal to cap total benefit income in most cases to £500 a week for couple and lone parent households and £350 a week for single-person households will in particular affect larger families. As the cap will include money for rent currently covered by Housing Benefit, this will restrict the areas in which families will be able to live and the types of accommodation which they will be able to afford. The Welfare Reform Act does not exclude Child Benefit from the overall benefit cap, the Commons having overturned a House of Lords amendment on this issue.

**The Child Poverty Action Group** has compiled case studies as examples of how individual families may be affected by various aspects of the changes. These are not reprinted here but can be accessed online:


It is evident that Welfare Reform is going to have widespread implications for many vulnerable families in Midlothian, and for all of the services which they are accessing. An effective response to Welfare Reform requires a co-ordinated approach between Midlothian Council and Community Planning Partners, the Registered Social Landlords, and the voluntary sector. This approach should focus upon support for families to minimise debt and maintain tenancies, budgeting, financial inclusion and education, life skills such as cooking- which can both reduce household expenditure and improve health- and ongoing employability work which focuses both on getting people into work and on gaining the skills and opportunities to move into more secure, better paid employment.
6. How we identified service gaps in Midlothian

As part of the background preparation of this document, Midlothian Council’s Regeneration Section has worked in partnership with Education and Children’s Services, partners from Housing, and from the voluntary sector in order to identify the overarching themes and specific actions. This has involved a range of mapping activities and engagement with partners and stakeholders, representing agencies and local community groups.

These included:

A series of interagency meetings involving key agencies/practitioners from Midlothian Council, NHS Lothian and the voluntary sector to map what services are currently in place to support vulnerable families, and where the gaps are, held in the spring of 2011. The key gaps identified were:

- **Anti-natal education**: Should involve planning for parenthood rather than just birth i.e. importance of stimulating child during the early years for development Also create opportunity for establishing peer support
- **Access to Mental Health/Wellbeing Supports for Parents**
- Hard for parents to get support- also need access to info about the value of physical exercise for mental health
- **More work to be done contacting and involving Parents who need support**: via schools and the range of informal children’s activities
- **Maximising contact with range of 0-3 Services**: playgroups etc.
- **Appropriate Play**: More to be done re social education/marketing on appropriate play. Importance of appropriate and safe play being positively represented - i.e. free resources, risk taking - building/improving on Play, Talk, Read
- **Short term funding of services** for children with additional support needs and Working for Families, Equally Well, is problematic.
- **Access to accurate benefit and debt advice**: Welfare Rights Advice for children and families. Need for a central resource/information is very important for families but these services are precariously funded.
- **Front line services may not link parents with appropriate support services**: such as financial advice. There may be a role here for Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network (MFIN).
- **Multi – professional training to explore shared values** – encouraging move away from individual parental deficit model
- **Schools**: issue of how schools can be more welcoming to parents in the context of limited access.
- **Need for non stigmatising access to information for parents who need support**: For example – Integrated universal services with multi agency staff in 3 localities, Community Hubs: e.g. Hawthorne CC, Mayfield Sure Start, Penicuik Sure Start
A strategic development day in April 2011, which engaged a wide variety of partners in discussion groups in order to identify thematic areas for action. Key areas for development included:

- Need for improved collaborative service delivery at local level to remove barriers to services
- Better support to build employability skills
- Community development and capacity building should link more clearly to anti-poverty agenda
- Financial awareness and income maximisation services
- Childcare and early intervention
- Work to redress the stigma and negative media image of families in poverty

Engagement activities with stakeholders in the community, including parents’ groups, adult learners, the Midlothian Youth Platform, specialist practitioners, primary school head teachers, and primary school children. These took place in the summer/autumn of 2011.

There was significant alignment in the themes and issues which emerged from all of these conversations:

- Parenting support: positive feedback about Midlothian Sure Start but feeling that there is a gap in provision once children have moved beyond Sure Start age. Parents struggling to deal with aspects of parenting for children of a range of ages find it difficult to access support that does not involve the intervention of statutory service. Fear of social work involvement.
- Lack of availability of childcare to meet needs of parents who work evenings, nights and weekends. People feel that assumptions are made that there will be family support to cover this, but that this is not always the case—particularly for people who are new to the area or who do not have good relationships with their own parents/relatives.
- Lack of support for the emotional aspects of poverty or deprivation. People feeling that services exist to ‘channel’ people down particular paths when they are not ready, or when they are barely able to cope with the situations they are in. Resilience.
- Disjointed nature of service provision and difficulty of getting information about services.
- Particular issues for parents of children with Additional Support Needs. Access to childcare to allow parents to go out to work is almost impossible. Attitudes of employers.
- Lack of trust or faith in ‘the community’—common perception that people in the community are not interested in helping each other, or are only interested in gossip. Some parents report feeling ‘like outsiders’, or that ‘my face doesn’t fit’—isolation. This can be related to discrimination on a number of grounds. Need for work to increase community cohesion/basic capacity building.
- Welfare reform: people needing information to help plan for changes to benefits. Serious worries about housing, potential homelessness.
Midlothian Youth Platform

A ‘round the tables’ exercise was conducted with the Midlothian Youth Platform. This involved young people moving between tables which had specific discussion issues, engaging in short conversations and making notes. Significant emerging themes included:

- Extreme difficulties for young people in moving into employment, no matter what level of qualifications they have. Being under-qualified or, sometimes, over-qualified. Employers refusing to take you on if you have not had previous employment experience.
- General dissatisfaction with level and quality of careers guidance. Feeling that guidance is ‘too little too late’ and that if you don’t have good parental support to explore options for college, training or work, that it is very difficult to get this.
- Emotional issues connected with poverty: situations of poverty leading to isolation, depression, drug and alcohol misuse.
- Skills needed to be a successful adult: focus on personal skills and ‘character’ traits: compassion, motivation, morals, interpersonal skills, confidence. Also practical skills such as budgeting and managing a household.

Meetings with teachers

A meeting was held with a small group of primary head teachers, who then continued to feed into the development of the action plan. Issues flagged up were:

- Need for training and awareness raising for schools staff on poverty issues- and for this to include office staff who may be first point of contact for parents.
- Need clearer lines of communication between schools and Housing, to look at impact of poor housing on readiness to learn, places to study, etc.
- Ongoing difficulties of engaging with some parents: not attending school events, parents evenings, etc. Need clearer ways of building those relationships.
- Possible idea for CLD workers to be present at parents evenings to help build relationships between parents, create better link between ‘school’ and ‘community’.
- Need clearer, and more accessible information for schools about other sources of help and support for families—places they can refer people to.
- Breakfast clubs- need to find ways around barriers for breakfast club provision at some schools.

A meeting was also held with the link teachers for Gypsy/Travellers and English as an Additional Language. Issues arising from this meeting were:

- Difficulty of knowing whether Gypsy/Travellers were experiencing poverty or financial vulnerability, because families often help each other financially (there is evidence of difficulties for Gypsy/Traveller families in accessing bank accounts and insurance).
- Gypsy/Travellers often do not access universal services because of literacy issues, discrimination or the fear of it, and other for other cultural reasons. Serious issues of diet and access to health and dental care.
• EAL families: often finding that services are not offering sufficient access to interpretation/translation.
• Lack of awareness/training for frontline staff in schools with respect to non-English speakers.

Primary 5-7 Survey

We put out a survey via Survey Monkey to all P5-7 classes in Midlothian, and received 267 responses. The aim of the survey was to gain insight about the extent to which primary aged children were aware of poverty within their communities, what they thought were the ‘causes’ of poverty, what they thought was hardest for children experiencing poverty, and whether they were actively discussing issues connected with poverty within the school educational setting.

Themes emerging:

• 59% of children responding didn’t know whether there were many children living in poverty in their area.
• Like other groups of stakeholders, the children frequently identified feelings of worry, or being excluded from school trips and activities as one of the hardest things about being poor.
• For children, the perception that being poor means not being able to afford to eat enough was also significant. Although this is a perception, the reality that some families are struggling to afford enough suitably nutritious food is supported by both anecdotal evidence from teachers and other frontline professionals, as well as by the level of absolute poverty.
• A great number of children also felt that not being able to afford a place to live- or sometimes having to move around a lot- was an issue.
• Most children did not strongly agree with the statement that people were poor because they did not want to work hard, but rather felt there were not enough jobs to go around.
• 70% of children said they intended to go to college or university when they left school, but only 44% strongly agreed with the statement that they would ‘earn plenty of money’ when they grew up.
• Over 90% of children responding said that in school they had talked about poverty in other parts of the world, but only around 70% had talked about poverty in Midlothian.
7 Key concepts

This section outlines some of the key concepts which underpin this document and much of the related work undertaken by key partner agencies working on issues of poverty and disadvantage in Midlothian. We understand the potential and attractiveness of community-focused approaches, but must issue the basic caveat that working alongside community members and service users as equal partners is not necessarily an easy route toward achieving public sector savings. Investment must continue to be made in building the capacity of individuals and community groups—particularly those experiencing poverty and disadvantage, and for whom the barriers to active involvement in local democracy or the formal mechanisms of Community Planning are particularly challenging.

Resilience

Resilience is a theme which runs throughout this document and the actions detailed here. Indeed the concept of community resilience is one which is becoming increasingly attractive to development practitioners and theorists—in social, economic and environmental terms. Although it may be important to point out that there is no universally accepted definition of resilience, all of the themes contained here are intended in some way to enable individuals and communities to respond more constructively to economic change, periods of uncertainty, and the emotionally-damaging effects of poverty and vulnerability. We look at ways of increasing the long-term resilience of children by supporting parents to provide the most stable, supportive environments they can, and that of young people and parents by helping to build their confidence, skills, and capacity to cope with transitions and difficult circumstances. We also seek to build the resilience of wider communities by strengthening support networks, information resources and expanding the use of community facilities such as libraries and village halls to provide key services for vulnerable families.

Community regeneration

Anti-poverty work must cross disciplinary and service boundaries, but must remain linked to wider processes of regeneration. Regeneration focuses upon the inextricable relationships between people and places. The Scottish Government’s understanding of regeneration is as a ‘holistic process of reversing the economic, physical and social decline of places where market forces alone won’t suffice.’

It is now widely recognised that previously dominant top-down, property investment-based approaches to the regeneration of disadvantaged communities have been largely unsuccessful as means of reducing poverty. Specifically, they have largely failed to reduce the disparity of income between the richest and the poorest in Scotland. Indeed, the gap has widened since devolution, as the earnings of the top 30% have increased and those of the bottom 30% remaining static. Top-down regeneration approaches have also failed to reverse the notoriously poor health outcomes in Scotland’s most disadvantaged communities: in the years since devolution, the gap in healthy life expectancy between the 20% most deprived and the 20% least deprived areas has increased from 8 to 13.5 years.
With the publication of its *Achieving a Sustainable Future Regeneration Strategy* in late 2011, the Scottish Government has acknowledged that future regeneration work must do the following:

- **Put communities first, effectively involving local residents in the regeneration process and empowering communities**
- **Be holistic, in making connections between the physical, social and economic dimensions**
- **Adopt a long-term vision for places and focus on the safety and quality of places**
- **Take account of the specific function of neighbourhoods and integrate regeneration initiatives into wider economic strategies**
- **Make tailored interventions to link economic opportunity and need to address worklessness and deliver sustainable quality employment**
- **Be supported by simple and aligned funding streams and maximise the impact from mainstream resource by better integration with place-based interventions**
- **Have strong leadership with clear accountability and make effective use of partnership working, involving the private sector, both in investment and in shaping ideas and development.**


Through both the recognition of this failure and the inevitable changes brought about by the economic downturn and the collapse of the property market, the Scottish Government is looking increasingly toward community-based models of regeneration based upon the personal, social and physical assets within communities.

Through Neighbourhood Planning, we will work with community members in local areas to identify key actions to improve the quality of places and life within them, and to ensure that opportunities and services within those places are inclusive and accessible to people experiencing poverty.

**Community empowerment, capacity building and asset transfer**

The Scottish Government has been driving the implementation of approaches to community development and poverty reduction which build on the ‘assets’—strengths, resources and qualities—that are based within local communities, rather than service models which are based around what are perceived to be deficits. The Community Empowerment Action Plan, published jointly in 2009 by the Scottish Government and COSLA²⁶, sets out a vision for the range of methods and approaches that can be used to increase local people’s stake in democracy and in the community planning process.

**Capacity building and co-production**

Perhaps most importantly amongst these is the need for ongoing investment in dedicated community capacity building work, which builds up the confidence, skills and leadership potential of local people. As the Community Engagement Action Plan rightly highlights, capacity building is a complex process which involves long-term relationships between workers on the ground, organisations and individuals. Specific efforts must be made to
enable local people to work effectively, and in equal partnership, with statutory and voluntary agencies as they plan and provide services, and to feel confident to speak as representatives of their communities (either local or ‘interest’).

There is a necessary relationship between community capacity building and the idea of ‘co-production’ - which is the direct involvement of service users in the design and delivery of services. In many regards, capacity building is a prerequisite for effective co-production. Midlothian Council is currently promoting the use of capacity building and co-production approaches as part of its new corporate strategy. An assessment should be made as to whether current community capacity building activity invests sufficiently in supporting a new generation of community activists and leaders, and also whether it enables local people to become effective co-producers of the services they use. This is particularly important in the areas marked by more significant levels of disadvantage.

Asset transfer
The other key strand of the Scottish Government’s Community Empowerment model is the transfer of key physical assets from either public or private control into community control and, crucially, ownership. Assets could be land, buildings such as community centres or pavilions, or sometimes even housing stock. The transfer of assets to innovative community-led bodies such as development trusts opens up a range of social enterprise opportunities, leading to greater sustainability and a wider range of uses.

However, again, the potential for successful asset transfer is to a large degree determined by the capacity of community organisations to take the asset on and develop it. In Midlothian, we have a number of examples of assets that have been transferred into community ownership. In all of these cases, there has been strong and vocal leadership from highly experienced and capable individuals, and it could be suggested that the long-term success of these and future social enterprises hinges on availability of individuals with equal vision, determination, and dedication to the community.

Community-based energy generation
A number of rural communities throughout Scotland, and now followed by a small number of urban or suburban communities, are generating their own energy through wind turbines or solar power. Development Trusts and community-owned estates, such as the Isle of Gigha, have been able to generate significant profit through the sale of electricity back to the national grid, and to return this to the community through investment in community projects including infrastructural improvements and economic development activities. It is also possible for profits to be returned directly to vulnerable households to address fuel poverty. This is an area of work which should be explored for Midlothian.
8 Our themes for action

The mapping work, consultation and multi-agency planning process have enabled us to formulate five key themes, which will provide the focus for the actions outlined in this document. These themes, which aim to fill the service gaps we have identified, are:

- **Supporting families** who are in or at risk of poverty to cope with and be more in control of their circumstances.

- **Building resilience** within local communities, so that vulnerable families feel better supported and able to access services and resources they need.

- **Supporting vulnerable young people** to gain easier entry into employment, training or further/higher education.

- **Addressing the inequalities** which are the most significant contributing factors toward poverty.

- **Widening access to services** through: a) better publicity and: b) better use of community facilities to enable individuals to access support in a non-stigmatising way.

**Overarching approaches**
As well as the specific actions that are listed in the next section, we have some cross-cutting approaches which will ensure that the profile of poverty remains an explicit focus for service planners and delivery agents.

**Equalities Impact Assessment**
Resulting from the development of this strategy, Midlothian Council has already expanded the scope of its existing Equalities Impact Assessment process to include poverty. This means that all new council strategies and policies must be considered in terms of their potential impacts upon people experiencing or at risk of poverty. This came into effect in late 2011.

**Neighbourhood Planning**
Neighbourhood Planning is the ‘community face’ of Community Planning in Midlothian. Roughly three Neighbourhood Plans are undertaken per year, involving extensive community consultation, engagement and action planning, bringing together local people and Community Planning Partners. Although Neighbourhood Planning does not specifically focus upon the alleviation of poverty over and above other issues, it does give a platform for communities to articulate their concerns about issues such as employment opportunities (or
the lack thereof), childcare, adult learning opportunities, support for parents, and community cohesion and/or divisions.

The process of Neighbourhood Planning is under continual review, and the overall success of the approach will be evaluated at the end of the full programme of plans in 2015. It is and will continue to be important to ensure that Neighbourhood Planning makes all possible efforts to reach families and young people who are in situations of poverty, and that their voices are represented.

For example, during the Mayfield and Easthouses Neighbourhood Plan, we have undertaken focus groups with parents using Sure Start and a local mums/tots group, and have also engaged with primary school pupils and with young people. These conversations will give rise to specific, targeted actions.

Resource sharing and budget pooling
An important future aspect of our work to address child and family poverty will be to progress toward a position of budget pooling across the Community Planning Partnership. Implementation of budget pooling should be taken forward by the Financial Officers group of the Community Planning Partnership, to enable more effective planning of future spend for preventative work and evaluation of the returns on investment on a partnership-wide basis. Pooled budgets to address high level strategic priorities such as child poverty would also better enable the participation of community stakeholders in the prioritisation of investment and in joint planning. As an intermediary step toward this, cross-agency sharing of resources to develop key areas of work should be considered.

Building on good practice
The following examples of good practice provide some directions for future work.

Working for Families
The Working for Families Programme was rolled out across many local authorities in Scotland through Scottish Government funding between 2005-2008. In Midlothian, this has been subsequently continued under Fairer Scotland Fund. The programme provides one-to-one key worker support for parents seeking to enter or return to the jobs market, offering support to overcome a range of barriers such as childcare but also linking with other services to address problems such as substance misuse, debt or housing issues. Evaluation of this work shows the model to be effective in enabling people to enter and remain in work.

Income maximisation
Midlothian’s Older People’s Project undertakes benefit reviews with pensioners and ensures that they are receiving the full range of benefits to which they are entitled. This has been highly effective in increasing income to vulnerable pensioners, and a similar model could be rolled out for low-income families. In Midlothian, income maximisation support for people under 60 is currently only available via social work referral. It is hoped that funding can be secured to roll this service out more widely.
**Midlothian Sure Start**
Midlothian Sure Start’s model of broad-based support for parents of children between birth and 3 years has achieved excellent outcomes for vulnerable parents, enabling them to build skills and confidence, develop their parenting skills, and move on to positive outcomes. Midlothian Sure Start is aware that there is demand for this type of support for parents whose children have progressed into nursery and school, but currently there is insufficient capacity or funding to effectively develop this.

**Family Nurse Partnership**
This programme, based on an American model, has been rolled out in parts of Edinburgh and involves intensive, focused home visits for vulnerable teenage from early pregnancy until the child turns 2. It involves parenting skills, confidence building, health improvement and education, and support for parents to improve their financial circumstances. Although still at pilot stage in Edinburgh, this model has been demonstrated to be effective elsewhere. NHS Lothian is considering the roll-out of this model into Midlothian.
9. Action plan

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1) Supporting families in or at risk of poverty to cope with and be more in control of their circumstances</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions in this theme aim to enable individual families to become more resilient through improved access to appropriate support for both the financial and emotional aspects of poverty.</td>
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<tr>
<th>What will be done</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Lead delivery framework</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
<th>Related Community Planning Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
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<tr>
<td>Big Lottery Improving Futures in Midlothian (IFM): services will include Family Group Conferencing, individual and group therapy, and parenting classes for the most vulnerable families with children under 10. This will focus on improving partnership working between agencies and widening access to preventative services for families not yet identified on the Child Protection Register. To focus on families affected by substance misuse, disability (including mental health) and unemployment/homelessness.</td>
<td>Midlothian Sure Start and IFM delivery partners</td>
<td>IFM programme</td>
<td>Delivery between 2012-2017</td>
<td>This area of work will feed into a range of community planning outcomes across ICSP, IOM</td>
<td>Overall target: 300 families using the programme over 5 years. The number of families who have worked with the Therapeutic Support Worker, 1-2-1 or in group settings The number of families participating in Family Group Conferencing The number of parents participating in Incredible Years parenting classes The number of children participating in the project The number of families who have received support that</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain Working for Families type provision, providing one-to-one keyworker support for vulnerable parents, combining support for childcare with support to overcome barriers to employability. Current Fairer Scotland Fund funding</td>
<td>Economic Development/New Leaf</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>Funding source to be identified post March 2013</td>
<td>This area of work feeds into outcomes both within IOM and ICSP</td>
<td>Roughly 200 client registrations per year. 190 (95%) or more of clients will report that they are more confident about their ability to make choices leading to sustained or improved employment training or education. 108 (54%) clients signposted/provided with</td>
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arrangements to be reviewed.

| Seek funding for Income Maximisation Service for Families, based on successful project for Older People, made available beyond social-work referral basis (current Income Max for Under 60s available only on social work referral basis). | Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network and CABx | IOM and Welfare Reform Working Group | Planning 2012 | IOM: Reduce relative poverty levels in Midlothian. | The availability of a one-to-one service for families
The number of families having increased access to financial services and receiving full benefits to which they are entitled |

| Explore options for delivery of emergency family assistance throughout Midlothian | Regeneration and MFIN | IOM and ICSP | Planning and research 2012 | The IOM currently does not have an outcome addressing absolute poverty. However, implications of Welfare Reform may generate a need for this.
ICSP Outcome 4: Children and young people and their families receive appropriate support from services at the right time. | Number of families who have immediate needs met during situations of financial crisis: food, shelter, furnishing, clothing |
| **Build on the success of the Healthy Reading Scheme pilot through Midlothian Libraries to build availability of self-help materials and resources appropriate for parents/families.** |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **Inclusion of online resources** | **Libraries/NHS Lothian and referring agencies** | **ICSP** | **To be agreed with Libraries-** | **ICSP Outcome 3: Parents are enabled to provide high quality care to maximise the healthy development of their children** |
| **Widen range of support available to parents or prospective parents to cope with stress/anxiety. Prioritise these in geographic areas showing higher levels of deprivation.** | **MWIN** | **IOM** | **Sense of Belonging Strategy** | **ICSP Outcome 3: Parents are enabled to provide high quality care to maximise the healthy development of their children** |
| **Sense of Belonging:** | **Lothian Joint Mental Health Strategy** | **To be agreed- Martin Bird** | **IOM: Reduce inequality in health outcomes** | **Sense of Belonging: work tackling health inequalities focusing on individuals and communities more likely to experience difficulties.** |
| **Greater variety and availability of support networks, reaching more people.** | **Users report positive changes in emotional wellbeing based on evaluation.** | **Number of parents referred to library material by partner agencies** | **Users reporting positive changes in emotional wellbeing based on evaluation of service.** |
| **Roll out opportunities for parents/carers (and prospective parents) to learn about attachment and its impact on child development and health outcomes.** | **Parents Voice Network and Parenting/Family Support Subgroup partners** | **ICSP** | **2012-13** | **ICSP Outcome 3: Parents are enabled to provide high quality care to maximise the healthy development of their children** |
| **Housing have indicated interest in future involvement, in terms of homelessness prevention** | **Housing** | **Midlothian Sure Start** | **2012/13 through FSF underspend, and seeking ongoing funding** | **IOM: Children and their families are engaged with service development and delivery** |
| **Budgeting classes/sessions for families.** | **Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network** | **IOM** | **Number of parents accessing learning opportunities** | **Numbers of sessions/beneficiaries to be determined (MFIN)** |
| **Midlothian Sure Start** | **Ongoing funding for this work is identified.** | **Baseline numbers to be established** |
| The Money Advice Service provides "1-2-1 financial services advice throughout Midlothian through Penicuik and Dalkeith CABx  | CAB/MFIN | IOM | 2012-13 | As above | Number of individual sessions offered in Midlothian |
| Develop provision of free crèche facilities in targeted areas with aim of -providing respite from children for vulnerable parents -enabling parents to come into community rooms to meet, access information or further training | CLD-ICSP | IOM | 2012-13, ongoing subject to evaluation of pilot | IOM: Increase participation and improve access to and outcomes for those engaged in lifelong learning | Number of parents accessing the crèche: pilot scheme for 6-8 children, with roll-out to be based on evaluation. Feedback from parents through evaluation |
| Housing information and awareness advice and assistance, including support for people to deal with housing benefit changes, made available in community venues, and tenancy support. Explore viability of offering this in outreach basis/ community venues, possibly in partnership with Housing Associations. | MC Housing Services, in partnership with RSLs | ICSP | To be provided by Housing | ICSP Outcome 4: Children and young people and their families receive appropriate support from services at the right time. | Number of people accessing information and advice. |
### Theme 2) Building resilience and knowledge within local communities so that vulnerable families are better supported and able to access services and resources they need.

Actions in this theme seek to build the resilience of wider communities by fostering social inclusion, the growth of community-led services such as childcare, and building the capacity of statutory services to be sources of information and guidance to people experiencing poverty.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What will be done</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Existing strategic delivery framework</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
<th>Related Community Planning Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public information campaign about Welfare Reform, including information in Midlothian News, the Advertiser, Midlothian Council’s website and Facebook Page</td>
<td>MFIN, linking with key partners (Housing and RSLs, CABx, others)</td>
<td>MFIN Action Plan</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>IOM Outcome: children and their families are engaged with service development and delivery</td>
<td>Visibility of information available in a range of formats/media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration demand for and alternative models of childcare provision, including co-operative and social enterprise models, in response to shortage of flexible, affordable childcare</td>
<td>SEAM in partnership with Childcare and Early Years and parents through Sure Start/other networks</td>
<td>SEAM action plan</td>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>IOM Outcome: children and their families are engaged with service development and delivery</td>
<td>Start up of new childcare services in response to need within the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate training for schools frontline staff (teachers and support staff) on financial inclusion, welfare rights and anti-poverty work into annual CPD/in-service programmes. This should be integrated with training on GIRFEC, with annual updates.</td>
<td>Schools/Education Regeneration</td>
<td>Education Professional Development Programme Regeneration Section Plan,</td>
<td>Development 2012, delivery annually thereafter</td>
<td>ICSP: Agencies are maximising opportunities for multi-agency working, to improve outcomes for children, young people and families</td>
<td>School staff are accessing an integrated and multi-agency approach to developing and delivering training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer support for parenting, including both ‘formal’ networks and groups and parents/carers enabled to offer informal but</td>
<td>Parents Voice Network and Parent/Family Support Subgroup</td>
<td>ICSP</td>
<td>2012 with ongoing implementation</td>
<td>ICSP Outcome 3: Parents are enabled to provide high quality care to maximise the healthy</td>
<td>Parents and carers are accessing a range of parenting support across Midlothian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informed advice and information to other parents.</td>
<td>partners</td>
<td>ICSP Outcome 3: Parents are enabled to provide high quality care to maximise the healthy development of their children</td>
<td>Baseline to be established</td>
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<td>Explore options for antenatal parent education - which looks at family budgeting, cookery and other lifeskills</td>
<td>TBC - voluntary sector/Childcare and Early Years/NHS Lothian</td>
<td>ICSP Prevention Subgroup partners. Delivery mechanism to be established.</td>
<td>2013-15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support families to improve health, reduce household expenditure and food waste by raising awareness of healthy cooking and efficient meal planning</td>
<td>Midlothian Food and Health Alliance including Sure Start and other partners</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>IOM Reduction of Health Inequalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create and maintain Family Information Service which makes it easier for families to access information on services for including benefits</td>
<td>Childcare and Early Years, in partnership with other sections</td>
<td>ICSP-</td>
<td>ICSP Outcome 4: Children and young people and their families receive appropriate support from services at the right time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthen services in communities aimed at enabling people to move into employment, self employment, or training, including bringing Business Gateway Services into communities. Pilot Job and Enterprise Club on partnership delivery model in Mayfield/Easthouses. If successful roll out elsewhere.</td>
<td>Economic Development/ Mayfield and Easthouses Neighbourhood Planning Implementation Group</td>
<td>Economic Development Framework Mayfield and Easthouses Neighbourhood Plan</td>
<td>Development 2012/13, implementation ongoing with possible roll-out</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Numbers of business start ups supported within local communities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Midlothian Economic Development Framework Objective 3: to support enterprise</td>
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### Theme 3) Supporting vulnerable young people

Actions in this theme aim to build on existing work and create more holistic multi-agency approaches to supporting vulnerable young people to improve their life chances.

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<tr>
<th>What will be done</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Existing strategic delivery framework</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
<th>Related Community Planning Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning opportunities for parents to be able to offer effective support to their children to succeed in education and make successful transitions at key learning stages.</td>
<td>Parents Voice Network/Parent and Family Support Subgroup partners</td>
<td>ICSP Parent and families support subgroup</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>ISCP Outcome 8: children and young are supported at key life stages</td>
<td>Families and young people are provided with relevant information on the transition and services available at key life stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for very young parents to make informed choices regarding their own learning opportunities, employability, and employment options.</td>
<td>Working for Families New Leaf Skills Development Scotland Job Centre Plus Midlothian Training Services</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>IOM: Increase participation and improve access to and outcomes for those engaged in lifelong learning</td>
<td>Numbers of very young parents supported Learning outcomes and destinations of parents participating in these opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAVE programme to offer Midlothian Youth Financial Literacies Inclusion Project (MYFLIP) training to young people in MCMC group</td>
<td>Regeneration Section</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>Jan-March 2012</td>
<td>IOM: Increase participation and improve access to and outcomes for those engaged in lifelong learning</td>
<td>Increase the number of young people achieving personal development goals through accredited awards in informal settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidance/support for young people at risk of exclusion</td>
<td>2012 and ongoing</td>
<td>ISCP Outcome 5: children and young people are supported into positive destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Welfare Officers as well as TOPS Service, EASL, PAVE and MCMC IOM 2012 and ongoing</td>
<td>ISCP Outcome 5: children and young people are supported into positive destinations</td>
<td>Vulnerable young people are supported into positive destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot partnership links between Newbattle High School and biotech/science parks - work placements/talks in schools</td>
<td>Beginning 2012/13</td>
<td>ISCP Outcome 5: children and young people are supported into positive destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Development and Schools Mayfield/Easthouses Neighbourhood Plan, IOM</td>
<td>Year with further roll-out based on evaluation of pilot.</td>
<td>ISCP Outcome 5: children and young people are supported into positive destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Strategy Economic Development Framework</td>
<td>To be established</td>
<td>ISCP Outcome 5: children and young people are supported into positive destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midlothian Council to take forward discussions toward creating new opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships within Council services</td>
<td>Corporate Management Team, Education and Communities</td>
<td>Baselines to be established from existing projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to support ESF Priority 5 programmes: a range of programmes focusing upon youth employment</td>
<td>Midlothian Action Employment Network/Regeneration Plan and IOM</td>
<td>Baselines to be established from existing projects</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Theme 4) Addressing inequalities which are the most significant contributing factors toward poverty**

Actions in this theme aim to improve awareness of the structural and attitudinal factors that contribute to high rates of poverty among key equalities groups, and to build capacity within individuals and groups to challenge these factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will be done</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Existing strategic delivery framework</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
<th>Related Community Planning Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combat inequalities caused by the prevalence of low-waged jobs and the gender pay gap by investigating the possibility of implementing the Living Wage for all Midlothian Council employees.</td>
<td>Midlothian Council Corporate Management Team and Elected Members</td>
<td>Midlothian Council Corporate Strategy</td>
<td>To be determined.</td>
<td>IOM: Reduce relative poverty levels in Midlothian.</td>
<td>Number of council staff moved onto Living Wage, who feel more in control of their household finances and are less dependent upon in-work benefits and tax credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the support of CLD Midlothian People’s Equality Group will develop a range of initiatives which aim to combat discrimination - by enabling people from equality groups to learn about equality issues and increasing their capacity to teach others - using tools such as Participatory Rapid Appraisal research courses and presentations; Midlothian Wellbeing Mela in collaboration with Health in Mind; Supporting diversity in local Galas; collaborative learning with local schools; producing a film/drama on equality issues and using as a tool to teach others</td>
<td>Midlothian People’s Equality Group-Margaret Petrie (Equalities Engagement Officer and CLD workers)</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>2012-ongoing</td>
<td>Supporting Healthy, Caring, Diverse communities where local needs are met (Theme 1a and 1b)</td>
<td>Increase visibility and appreciation of the diversity of Midlothian’s population in local Galas. Increased involvement of local people from equality groups in community groups and local services Discrimination is undermined and employment opportunities are increased by improved social and cultural networks of people from equalities groups Reduction in reported Hate Crime - following active response to spikes in hate crime in specific Midlothian areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build on links with Midlothian Employment Action Network to ensure that individuals experiencing health inequalities or disabilities are able to access appropriate and sustainable employment</td>
<td>MEAN Action Plan</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>To be established in MEAN Action Plan (under development)</td>
<td>Promote Independence for People with Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Actions to be established in MEAN Action Plan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>More effective work to reduce violence against women:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A) Multi-agency risk assessment conferencing (subject of funding bid to Scottish Government).</td>
<td>Multi-agency risk assessment conferencing (subject of funding bid to Scottish Government)</td>
<td>Violence Against Women Partnership</td>
<td>Subject to outcome of funding bid 2012-development and delivery</td>
<td>All children and vulnerable adults have safe lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Preventative awareness raising work to be carried out in schools using drama /arts: to encourage young people to challenge violence, bullying, and abuse; Individual support will also be offered to children experiencing domestic abuse</td>
<td>Voluntary sector partners / CLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women experiencing repeated domestic abuse receive more joined up, inclusive support</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplify access to information and support for parents of children with additional support needs,</td>
<td>Working with Parent Carers Network, linking with Family Information Service</td>
<td>ICSP</td>
<td>Implemented by end 2012/13, with maintenance, updates ongoing</td>
<td>ICSP Outcome 1: Vulnerable children and young people reach their potential</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Parents of children with additional support needs report that they have fewer difficulties accessing information about services they need</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 5) Widening access to services by ensuring that services are delivered and promoted in ways that do not create barriers for those most in need

Actions in this theme seek to challenge the stigma and isolation of poverty by making services for those experiencing it easier to access, locating them in more central community venues and promoting/advertising them more visibly.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand use of libraries as venues for service outreach and information for parents/carers. Parent/Carer information points in libraries.</td>
<td>Library Services, in partnership with key services</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>Meeting to be arranged with Libraries to plan roll-out: Spring 2012</td>
<td>ICSP Outcome 4: Children and young people and their families receive appropriate support from services at the right time.</td>
<td>Numbers of library users accessing information points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work toward making community rooms in schools more accessible as venues for work with vulnerable members of the community.</td>
<td>Education, CLD, linking in with school management services</td>
<td>Customer Service Charter</td>
<td>To be established</td>
<td>Partnership Outcome Indicator: We will put our customers first</td>
<td>Positive user feedback reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widen role of community development trusts, village halls and other community venues as service hubs, and build their role as key regeneration anchors in local areas.</td>
<td>Regeneration and CLD working in partnership with SEAM</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>2012-2015</td>
<td>IOM indicator: Increase the membership of Community Development Trusts</td>
<td>Number of sessions/services offered to families by Development Trusts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More effective promotion and marketing of services, linking in with Family Information Service</td>
<td>All services, in partnership with Third Sector Interface, Family Information Service and local media</td>
<td>ICSP</td>
<td>Implemented by end 2012/13, with maintenance, updates ongoing</td>
<td>ICSP Outcome 4: Children and young people and their families receive appropriate support from services at the right time.</td>
<td>Increased attendance of classes and events, combined with service user feedback about awareness of opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes


ix Statistics from various sources, compiled from Profile of Midlothian 2010

x http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038432139/report.aspx#tabempunemp


xii For a more complete discussion of the differing theories of poverty, see Bradshaw, T. 2006. Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programmes in Community Development. RPRC Working Paper No. 06-05. Rural Poverty Research Centre. www.rpconline.org.

xiii Ibid, p. 22.


xv Ibid.


xvii Ibid.

 xix Ibid.


 xxii Fiery Spirits Community of Practice: Exploring community resilience in times of rapid change; 2011.


 xxv Ibid.

 xxvi http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/20155113/0

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