
To: Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee

On: 22nd March 2023

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: School Holiday Childcare and Food Provision

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides further detail on the policy context of school holiday childcare provision nationally alongside an overview of national and local provision.
- 1.2. A motion was proposed at Council in September 2022 seeking to establish a fund to increase the provision of meals and social activities for school children over school holiday periods throughout Renfrewshire. Council agreed the request be forwarded to the established Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-committee for consideration. It was agreed that the sub-committee should review the current provision over school holiday periods and seek to identify any gaps which may require to be addressed.
- 1.3. An update was provided to the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee on 1st February 2023, and it was agreed that a more detailed report would be provided to the Sub-Committee with results of the baselining exercise, consultation and evaluation of the current provision and resource allocation from Scottish Government for 2023/24.
- 1.4. There is a range of activity programmes and funding sources for holiday activity provision locally and it is recommended officers continue to map current provision and coverage to ensure maximum impact, and make sure provision is reaching the families that need it most.
- 1.5. As at the time of writing this report, officers are awaiting notification of the Scottish Government resource allocation to Renfrewshire Council from the Scottish Government Holiday Food and Childcare programme.
- 1.6. It should be noted Council agreed a further allocation of £100,000 in its budget agreed on 2nd March 2023. This allocation is to provide a programme of summer activities for children and young people from low-income families, encouraging them to access a wide range of

activities and healthy food. It is anticipated that this fund will be supplemented by Scottish Government resource as was the case in 2021/22.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee note the report

3. Background

- 3.1. The following motion was proposed by Councillors G Graham and Gilmour at Council on the 29th September 2022;

"Child Poverty

It is widely recognised that holiday periods add to the stress of family poverty and results in less access to food and social activity for them than their peers. Foodbanks report increased demand during holiday periods.

18% of our children and young people live in relative low income families, whilst a15% live in absolute low income families. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis is hitting these working families the hardest.

Renfrewshire Council recognises these facts. To assist local families this Council agrees to establish a Holiday Hunger Fund of £1 million pounds to be utilised over the lifetime of this administration. This fund will be used to increase the provision of meals and social activities for school children over school holiday periods throughout Renfrewshire. The Council will commit £200,000 per annum from this fund to enable 3rd sector groups in our communities to apply for money to establish new provision in areas where there is a currently unmet need."

- 3.2. Council agreed the request be forwarded to the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-committee for consideration. It was agreed that the sub-committee should review the current provision over school holiday periods and seek to identify any gaps which may require to be addressed.
- 3.3. Further to this, Council agreed a further allocation of £100,000 in its budget agreed on 2nd March 2023. This allocation is to provide a programme of summer activities for children and young people from low-income families, encouraging them to access a wide range of activities and healthy food. It is anticipated that this fund will be supplemented by Scottish Government resource as was the case in 2021/22.

Policy context

- 3.4. Coram Family and Childcare carry out an annual Holiday Childcare Survey¹, based on surveys from local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales. Key findings include:

¹ [Coram Holiday Childcare Survey 2022.pdf \(familyandchildcaretrust.org\)](https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/coram-holiday-childcare-survey-2022.pdf)

- The average price of holiday childcare is £148 per week in Britain. This is a 5 per cent rise since 2021. Price increases are higher in Scotland (7 per cent) and Wales (8 per cent) than in England (4 per cent).
- The report provides information on the ‘sufficiency’ of childcare across England, Wales and Scotland – although it is important to note that the majority of local authorities in Scotland do not hold the data to allow them to answer questions about childcare sufficiency. The report shows Scotland has seen an overall increase in sufficiency of holiday childcare ‘in all areas’, but from a low baseline and with substantial gaps in data. Local authorities report an increase in the majority of categories, the highest being for 12-14 year olds (+11 per cent).
- Only 12 per cent of local authorities have enough holiday childcare for working parents. The lowest levels are for parents working atypical hours, with only 4 per cent of local authorities reporting enough holiday childcare.
- The report also provides some further information on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the availability of holiday childcare across Britain.

3.5. The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Unit at Glasgow Caledonian University has carried out a number of research reports into holiday out of school provision in Scotland. Their ‘Holiday Out of School Provision in Scotland: Case Study Analyses of Claims to Impact and Drivers of Success’ report² published in September 2021 provides a useful overview of the national landscape in Scotland, as well as exploring the social policy context and the claims to impact of various methods of provision.

3.6. In their advice for the Scottish Government³ on addressing poverty during the school holidays, the Poverty and Inequality Commission recognised that families face a range of pressures during the school holidays, including food insecurity and childcare, but also relating to wider finances, play and activities, parenting, and social isolation. They also drew attention to a number of innovative and successful examples of projects and services, but heard, however, that this type of provision was not available consistently across the country and that there was a lack of co-ordination, leading to gaps, duplication and people being unaware of what is available.

3.7. Additional costs and challenges for low-income households include:

- Key supports for children and families may not be provided during the holidays, such as breakfast and after school clubs, and guidance/pastoral support
- There is some evidence that ‘summer learning loss’ may be more significant for children from low-income families, and may be a key contributor to the educational attainment gap between the richest and poorest children
- Access to free or low-cost activities may be limited in particular areas, or because transport is a barrier to accessing them or because there is not suitable provision or suitable places to play
- Financial pressure due to increased costs of food, activities, transport, clothing and heating for children and young people
- Availability and/or cost of childcare during the holidays can make it more difficult for parents to take up or sustain work. Most working parents need to use annual leave, reduce

² [SAC-SPIRU - Holiday Out of School Provision - Final Draft V2 210910 \(gcu.ac.uk\)](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/sac-spiru-holiday-out-of-school-provision-final-draft-v2-210910)

³ [Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-advice-on-poverty-in-school-holidays.pdf \(povertyinequality.scot\)](https://www.povertyinequality.scot/Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-advice-on-poverty-in-school-holidays.pdf)

working hours or rely on family support to accommodate their working hours during school holidays.

- Both parents and children may suffer from social and emotional pressures from the holiday period, with parents often reporting feeling guilty for being unable to provide the same experiences as their peers, or missing out on time with their children. Parents and children may also experience a lack of social and emotional support during this time.
- Some pressures may be exacerbated for some families due to their particular circumstances. For example, families with a disabled child or adult, families in rural communities or lone parent households.

3.8. Online polling carried out by StepChange Debt Charity in summer 2022 showed that parents were feeling additional pressure during the school holidays due to rising costs of food and energy. The polling found that:

- Over a third of parents (37%) with children aged 18 and under were worried that their finances will suffer during the school summer holidays due to additional cost pressures. This rose to nearly half (46%) of parents with primary school children (aged 5-11) and to over half (51%) of parents in receipt of Universal Credit.
- Many parents were expecting to borrow more and use savings in order to afford essentials during the summer. Around 1 in 5 parents (22%) said they will be using savings or other assets to pay for their everyday expenses. Parents on Universal Credit are more than twice as likely as other parents to use credit or 'buy now, pay later' schemes to cover their essential spending (28% versus 12% respectively).
- The polling shows a significant number of parents also expect they will have to sell personal or household items to make ends meet this summer – 19% of all parents said they will do this, with this figure almost doubling for parents on Universal Credit (35%).

Scottish Government Holiday Food and Childcare programme

3.9. Transforming the system of school age childcare and expanding provision of meals to include the school holidays are key ministerial priorities set out in the Programme for Government. Ministers have committed to make holiday childcare provision available to all children from low-income families by 2023, starting with delivery of a summer 2022 offer to provide coordinated access to food, childcare and activities during the school holidays.

3.10. Local Authorities across Scotland have been allocated funding to augment existing summer holiday provision within their area, or where there is no existing provision, to initiate the creation of services. These services should enhance equity by widening opportunities for children from low-income families to play, socialise, get active and access a range of activities that broaden their experiences, supplement their learning and deliver positive outcomes, integrating food provision wherever possible.

3.11. The expectation is that within each local authority area there will be a mix of holiday provision making best use of existing cross-sectoral capacity, including regulated and unregulated childcare services (such as local authority providers, Out of School care providers; youth work; third sector organisations and activity-based clubs providing activities in the school holidays (whose primary function is not childcare), that offer flexibility and choice to families and respond to their needs. Services will vary across and within authorities, with an expected focus on coordinated services in areas with higher SIMD ratings.

- 3.12. The aim is to deliver integrated, flexible and accessible services that meet the needs of children aged 5-14 from low-income families, removing barriers to access which are context-specific, and shaped by issues such as geographical location, income level, family support, access to transport and the additional support needs of children. Childcare or activities should also be integrated with food and wider family support where possible for households particularly adversely impacted by poverty, as defined by this guidance.
- 3.13. 85% of this funding is intended to be targeted at children and young people from the priority family groups, with 15% of the funding to be used flexibly to reach other children.
- 3.14. On 25 March 2022, COSLA leaders approved the allocation of £10 million to local authorities in line with the Scottish Government's commitment for targeted provision of accessible activities, childcare and food for 5–14 year old children from low-income families during the 2022 school summer holidays.
- 3.15. Renfrewshire Council was allocated £292,415 of the funding, which was used to deliver a programme of activities for children, families and young people, encouraging them to access a wide range of activities and healthy food. Further details of Renfrewshire's approach for Summer 2022 is detailed at Section 4 of this report.
- 3.16. As at the time of writing this report, officers are still awaiting notification of the Scottish Government resource allocation to Renfrewshire Council from the Scottish Government Holiday Food and Childcare programme.

School Holiday Free School Meal Payments

- 3.17. It should be noted that cash payments are made in lieu of free school meals for the periods of times children have been on school holidays. This is paid at £2.25 per day for primary school children and £2.60 for secondary children. A lump sum is paid into parent's bank accounts just before the start of the relevant school holiday period.

4. Holiday food and childcare in Renfrewshire

- 4.1. Renfrewshire Council currently provides holiday activities and meals for young people as part of the provision delivered by Street Stuff and funded by the Tackling Poverty Programme, and this activity is also now further augmented by targeted funding from Scottish Government.
- 4.2. Work has commenced on a baselining exercise to determine the existing provision of meals and social activities throughout holiday periods throughout Renfrewshire. Officers are working across services and with partners to build a comprehensive picture of provision across sectors. The sections below provide a summary of provision in Renfrewshire, including CLAD and Street Stuff, Additional Support Needs, One Ren and Out of School childcare providers.

Community Learning and Development / Street Stuff

- 4.3. Street Stuff have delivered activities during the school holidays, covering 9am to 3pm, with the provision of a healthy meal since 2015 funded by Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty Programme.

- 4.4. The age range targeted was initially 10 years and over, and due to a gap in service provision this was reduced to 8 years and above. Since 2021, the age range has further reduced to 5 years and over.
- 4.5. All activities are free, including food provided in house by catering teams and activities are targeted to areas with higher levels of deprivation according to the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).
- 4.6. This provision has been augmented by funding from the Scottish Government has been received for the summer holidays and it is anticipated this may be increased to include all holiday periods. CLAD, including Street Stuff will be delivering these going forward to enable a wider range of activities to be provided, such as arts, crafts, drumming, dance and trips.
- 4.7. The approach taken was to develop a programme that would offer several core activities targeted to 5-14 years from low-income families throughout the summer, along with some youth work provision, a new project for Ukrainian refugees and family learning groups. The approach built on tried and tested programmes and interventions and the feedback on learning and engagement previously undertaken with young people from the Get Into Summer initiative of 2021. Almost 1,000 individual children benefitted from these activities over the summer period.
- 4.8. An update on the 'Summer of Fun' programme 2022⁴ was presented to Communities and Housing Policy Board on 25th October 2022, which provides details of the programme of activities for children, families and young people which was provided, as well of a summary of the evaluation submitted to Scottish Government.
- 4.9. Children who are in a low-income household and do not live in a SIMD area are able to attend if there is space. There is also a stand-by list for Social Work referrals where some parents may not have access to register their children. The Class4kids portal is used as the sign up, and there are limits set on numbers per venue. There is a waiting list and hold spaces for referrals.
- 4.10. Currently, evidence of low-income is not requested although this may be suggested in Scottish Government criteria and guidance for future years. The sign-up process has built-in criteria questions (in relation to single parent, additional support needs etc.) to feedback on evaluation.
- 4.11. There is no transport provided, as the activities are delivered in local communities most in need, however it should be noted that all young people aged 5 years to 22 years are entitled to free bus travel as part of the Scottish Government initiative.
- 4.12. A Community Learning and Development Outreach Survey is currently live for children and young people aged 10-25 to complete and provide their views on current provision. This is being shared widely with schools, youth services and partners, and outreach sessions will also be developed as part of this exercise. The Survey will be live for 6-10 weeks throughout Spring 2023.

Additional Support Needs provision

- 4.13. The Renfrewshire Playscheme has been running since 2016 for children aged 5 years to 18 years with additional support needs. It is open to all children in Riverbrae School along with the communication units in St Paul's Primary School, Foxbar and St Anthony's Primary School in Johnstone. The Playscheme runs during the Spring and Summer holidays, offering

⁴ [Microsoft Word - Summer of Fun 2022 \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com)

the children two days at Spring and five or six days in the Summer. The children attend from 10am to 2pm with buses provided.

- 4.14. Registration with the Care Inspectorate is for forty children per day – running eight days at Spring and twenty-five days over the Summer holiday only.
- 4.15. A hot meal is provided for lunch each day together with cereals and toast in the morning with water and fruit available throughout the day.
- 4.16. Children from Mary Russell school are able to attend the Summer of Play provision in their area run by Community Learning and Development.
- 4.17. There is no cost to the families for the playscheme, food or transport.

One Ren

- 4.18. One Ren provide a range of sport, leisure and cultural programming for children and young people across the school holiday periods. OneRen have recently launched a range of activities as part of their ‘Step into Spring’⁵ programme.
- 4.19. As an example, the OneRen Spring Kids Camps run from 3rd-14th April for children in P1-S3, and are provided by Active Schools Renfrewshire. The camps include a mixture of indoor sporting activities, outdoor activities, football, dance and ASN sessions, running across the Easter holidays at On-X Linwood, Park Mains High School and Lagoon Leisure Centre.
- 4.20. In April 2023, the kids camps run between 10am to 3pm and were priced at £60 for the full week or £17-£18 for a single day. Early drop off from 8am is an additional £3 per day charge and late pick-up (until 5.30pm) and is an additional £3 per day. 20% discounts are available for people in receipt of Universal Credit and for additional children.
- 4.21. Lunch is not provided by OneRen, although at the multi-activity camp at On-X a lunch bag is available to purchase for £3.50. Transport is not provided.
- 4.22. Parent/guardians must stay with young people participating in the Disability Sport and Activity Club.
- 4.23. In addition to sport and leisure based activity clubs, there is a range of cultural activities on offer for families through the Spring period with a mixture of low cost and tiered price points including a range of free activities offered across the Library network and the Skoobmobile.

Out of School Childcare Providers

- 4.24. Within Renfrewshire there is a mix of Out of School Childcare Providers, with the Council, Community Groups and private companies providing childcare during the school holidays, in addition to breakfast clubs and after-school care.
- 4.25. From the Care Inspectorate website, a list of out of service childcare providers was collated, and this was cross-referenced with the providers that each primary school were aware of their pupils using either after school, or during school holidays. No providers were referenced by Lochwinnoch, Langbank, or Bridge of Weir primary schools.
- 4.26. The costs vary between each provider, with four examples provided below as an illustration of the variation of costs to parents and families.
 - One Community Voluntary Group in Renfrew is charging £40 per week per child, snacks are included but children have to bring their own packed lunch.

⁵ [Spring | OneRen](#)

- One Council provider in Paisley, is charging £10.10 per day per child, snacks are included but children have to bring their own packed lunch.
- One private provider in Paisley, is charging £30 per day per child, although there is a discount for additional children from the family. Snacks are provided but children have to bring their own packed lunch.
- One Community Interest Group in Linwood is charging £20 per child per day, or £85 per child per week.

(For context, the UK average weekly cost of holiday childcare for working parents outside of term time is on average £138 per week. This average costing was obtained from the charity Coram's Childcare Survey in 2022.)

- 4.27. Some providers are operating at their Care Inspectorate registered capacity, which is generally either based on staffing levels or venue size. These providers generally have a waiting list, which could reflect their geographic area and alternative provision, or the level of demand, or the cost of the childcare.
- 4.28. Other providers, however, are reporting a reduction in demand. Factors cited as reasons behind this is cost-of-living financial pressures on parents, making childcare unaffordable for those on low incomes, and also the increase in parents working from home therefore giving greater flexibility around childcare requirements.
- 4.29. Many providers are reporting financial pressures, and uncertainty around the sustainability of their business. The main costs relate to the rental/let of their venue, increased staff costs, staff training and resources for activities. The ratio of staffing required for children with additional support needs, has also been cited as a factor of the increasing staff costs. In comparison, the childcare charges that parents have to pay has not reflected the cost increases.

5. Next steps

- 5.1. Evaluation work is currently underway on elements of Street Stuff programme funded by the Tackling Poverty Programme, which funds the provision of food alongside activities as well as provision across holiday periods not currently funded by Scottish Government.
- 5.2. Work is underway alongside the Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel to explore holiday childcare provision in more detail, with a particular focus on understanding the experiences, needs and barriers of low-income households. It is hoped that work will help inform the allocation of the additional £100,000 from the Council's budget for additional summer activities for children and young people from families on low-incomes.
- 5.3. There is also a current consultation exercise currently underway for young people aged 10-25 being run by Community Learning and Development to inform future provision of activities, as detailed at Section 4 of this report. This exercise will help to inform Community Learning and Development programmes moving forward, shaped by the feedback of children and young people themselves.
- 5.4. The programme of activities for summer 2023 will be developed following announcement of Scottish Government funding allocation from the Scottish Government Holiday Food and Childcare programme. It is anticipated that further detail will be brought to Leadership Board in April 2023.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – There are no financial implications associated with this report.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – The Fairer Renfrewshire Programme is a key driver in achieving the ‘Fair’ strategic outcome and theme within the Council Plan, and covers a number of the key actions identified in the plan. It also represents a significant partnership programme of work which supports the ‘Fair’ theme within the Community Plan, with dedicated partnership governance being established to ensure alignment between these areas of work.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** – Equality and human rights are a key pillar of this plan, and it is anticipated that the programme will likely advance equality of opportunity.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** – none

Author: Annabelle Armstrong-Walter, Strategic Partnerships and Inequalities Manager, Annabelle.armstrong-walter@renfrewshire.gov.uk