

## Notice of Meeting and Agenda Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-committee

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday, 22 March 2023	10:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

MARK CONAGHAN  
Head of Corporate Governance

### Membership

Councillor Jacqueline Cameron (Convener): Councillor Graeme Clark (Depute Convener):

Councillor Anne Hannigan: Councillor Alec Leishman: Councillor Marie McGurk:  
Councillor Iain Nicolson: Councillor Jim Paterson:

### Further Information

This is a meeting which is open to members of the public.

A copy of the agenda and reports for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the Customer Service Centre, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley and online

at <http://renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/CouncilandBoards.aspx>

For further information, please email  
[democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

### Hybrid Meeting

Please note that this meeting is scheduled to be held in the Council Chambers. However, it is a hybrid meeting and arrangements have been made for members to join the meeting remotely should they wish.

## **Webcasting of Meeting**

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<https://renfrewshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

## **Apologies**

Apologies from members.

## **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

<b>1</b>	<b>Cost of Living Update</b>	<b>5 - 16</b>
	Report by Chief Executive	
<b>2</b>	<b>Fairer Renfrewshire Programme Update</b>	<b>17 - 24</b>
	Report by Chief Executive	
<b>3</b>	<b>Parental Employability Support Fund</b>	
	Presentation by Economic Development Manager, Chief Executive's	
<b>4</b>	<b>School Holiday Childcare and Food Provision</b>	<b>25 - 34</b>
	Report by Chief Executive	
<b>5</b>	<b>Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel</b>	
	Presentation by Strategic Partnership & Inequalities Manager, Chief Executive's	






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**To:** Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee

**On:** 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

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**Report by:** Chief Executive

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**Heading:** Cost-of-living Update

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This paper provides an overview of key context and evidence around current pressures on household finances, both in terms of household income and expenditure. These regular updates are provided to the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee to provide a snapshot of recent changes in economic factors and policy and supports, which have a significant effect on the pockets of Renfrewshire residents.
- 1.2. Since the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee last met in February, key updates include:
- The rate of inflation is now 10.1% (January 23), after reaching a high of 11.1% in October. The rate is expected to fall further, with an updated rate due to be published on the 22nd March 2023.
  - The inflation rate for food, however, has continued to rise and is now 16.7%. Research shows the prices of items in supermarkets' 'basic' ranges is higher, having gone up by an average of 21.6%.
  - The energy regulator Ofgem announced that its quarterly cap on household bills for average dual-fuel direct-debit customers will fall by around 23% from £4,279 for the January to March quarter to £3,280 from 1 April. The UK Government's Energy Price Guarantee, which limits the maximum costs of energy, will be kept at £2,500 from 1st April, to the end of June: a three month extension.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee:
- Note the content of the report

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. At the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee meeting on 16 August 2022 an overview of key context and evidence around current pressures on household finances, both in terms of household income and expenditure was examined.
- 3.2. A regular update has since been provided to the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee to provide a snapshot of recent changes in economic factors, policy and supports, which have a significant effect on the pockets of Renfrewshire residents.

### **4. Impacts of cost-of-living crisis**

- 4.1. Figures released by the Office for National Statistics on 27 February 2023 show the impact of the cost of living crisis, including on eating, heating and on mental health.
- 4.2. The ONS's latest data found that from November 2022 to January 2023:
  - Around 1 in 11 (9%) adults reported they had often or sometimes run out of food and could not afford to buy more in the past month.
  - Around half of adults reported that they were buying less when food shopping (50% in the latest period, 49% in the previous period); 40% reported this in both the latest and the previous period, and 10% reported this for the first time in the latest period.
  - Around 1 in 8 (13%) reported they had cut down meal size or skipped meals in the past month because there was not enough money for food; 21% of these adults reported they had done so on more than 14 days in the month.
  - Around 2 in 10 adults (19% in the latest period, 23% in the previous period) reported that they were occasionally, hardly ever, or never, able to keep comfortably warm in the past two weeks; 12% had reported this in both the latest and the previous period (22 November to 18 December 2022), and 7% reported this for the first time in the latest period.
  - Around a third (34%) agreed (strongly agreed or agreed) that increases in the cost of living had negatively affected their mental health.
- 4.3. ScotPulse, a dedicated online research panel for Scotland run by STV, held a panel between the 6th - 8th February 2023, which received 2,409 responses and the following cost of living behaviours were noted:
  - Seven in ten (69%) people report that they have cut their energy use through methods such as switching off lights and not using the oven to cope with rising prices and inflation. This is even higher among Scots aged 55 and over, with three-quarters (74%) saying that they have done this to cope with rising prices and inflation. This new measure is the most reported behaviour among Scots in response to the cost of living crisis. Similarly, six in ten (60%) report not turning their heating on when they otherwise would have done to save money, though this has decreased from 68% in November 2022.
- 4.4. People also report cutting discretionary spending, including spending on non-essential purchases (68%) and on leisure activities (61%) in roughly similar proportions as November 2022 data. Reducing charity donations (43%) and taking money out of saving to cover higher

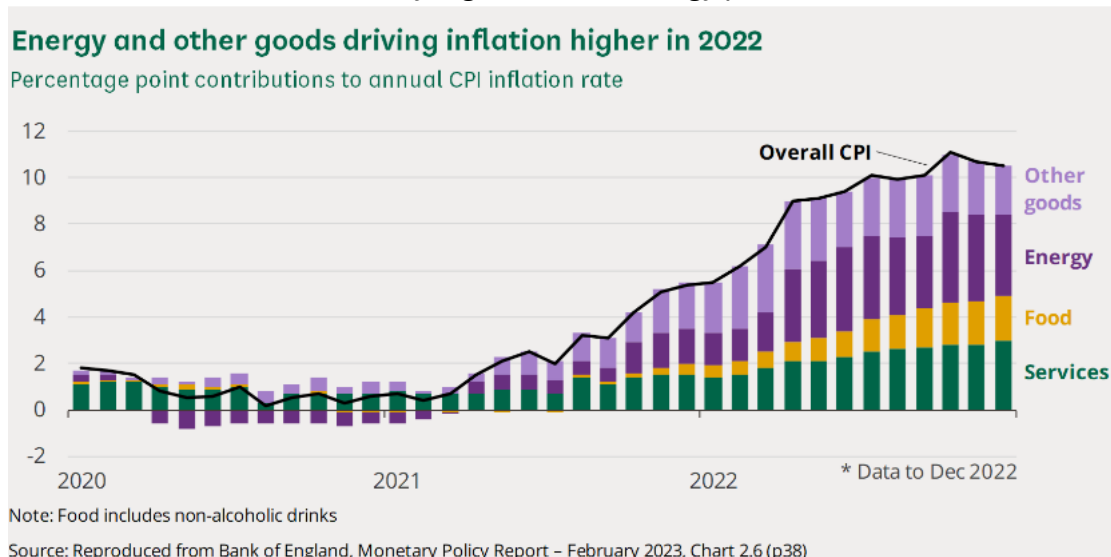
costs (42%) have both increased in prevalence among Scots since November by three and five percentage points respectively.

- 4.5. The proportion of people taking money out of their savings to cope with higher costs has increased from 37% to 42% since the last wave. There has also been an increase in the proportion of Scots changing or looking to change jobs for more money from 17% to 20% and an increase in the use of 'Buy now, Pay Later' schemes from 15% to 18%. Overall, it remains the case that most Scots are feeling the squeeze of rising prices and taking action to protect themselves.
- 4.6. A quarter (25%) of people, excluding those answering 'don't know' or 'not applicable', are not confident that they would be able to pay for an emergency expense of £100 without having to take out a loan or borrow money. This figure rises to 45% for an emergency expense of £500.
- 4.7. More than a third of Scots living in households with children are not confident that they could afford an emergency expense of £100 without having to take out a loan (36%) compared to those in households with no children (22%). This rises to six in ten (60%) among those in households with children if the amount is increased to £500 and to 40% in households with no children.

## 5. Income and Expenditure

### Inflation rate

- 5.1. The cost of living increased sharply across the UK during 2021 and 2022. The annual rate of inflation reached 11.1% in October 2022, a 41-year high, before easing in subsequent months to 10.1% in January 2023.
- 5.2. The price of food, goods, energy and fuel have been increasing the most, with low-income households are most affected by high food and energy prices.



- 5.3. The inflation rate is typically expressed as the percentage change in consumer prices compared with one year before. Both the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) and Bank of England expect the annual inflation rate to ease in 2023, as the steep rises in energy prices seen in 2022 fall out of the annual comparison. It was announced at the Spring Budget, that the OBR forecasts that inflation will fall to 2.9% by the end of 2023. This does not mean that costs will come down, just that they won't increase by as much.

- 5.4. According to the Office for National Statistics, 94% of adults in Great Britain reported an increase in their cost of living in January-February 2023. In addition, the OBR expects real post-tax household income to fall by 4.3% in 2022-23, the biggest fall since comparable records began in 1956.
- 5.5. Low-income households spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food, so are more affected by price increases. Renfrewshire Foodbank has seen an increase in vouchers issued from the previous year with 1362 issued in the quarter to 31 December 2022 compared with 1211 for the same quarter last year. 1045 of those were issued for the reason of low income and the majority, 841, went to single people. Local food pantries have also reported an increase in demand.

### **Food Inflation**

- 5.6. According to Which?, which has a supermarket food and drink inflation tracker which analyses inflation on over 25,000 food and drink products, the cheapest ranges of food in supermarkets are rising fastest in price. Those who rely on supermarkets basic ranges have seen prices increase by 21.6% in January 2023 compared to January 2022, while overall inflation was 15.9%. In comparison, premium ranges went up by 13.4%.
- 5.7. Which?'s findings show that while basic ranges will still generally offer lower prices, people relying on the cheapest food at the supermarket are being hit disproportionately by inflation compared to those who buy premium or branded foods.

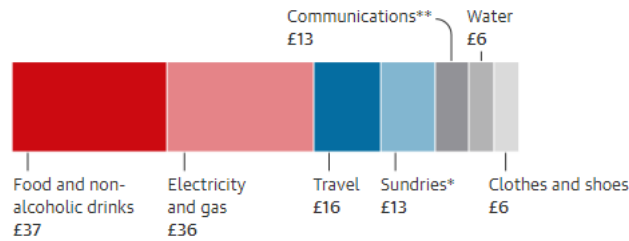
### **Income**

- 5.8. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and the Trussell Trust has shown that basic benefits given to low-income households are at least £140 a month below the real cost of food, energy and everyday basics. The two charities have calculated the weekly cost of a basic existence to be £120 for a single adult and £200 for a couple, based on a basket of goods and services including food, energy, travel, mobile phone and internet use, as well as smaller items such as toothpaste and washing-up liquid.
- 5.9. By comparison, even after April's 10.1% benefits uprating, the universal credit standard allowance – the portion of the monthly benefit payment meant to cover basic living costs – will be £85 a week for a single adult aged over 25 (£35 less than the charities' estimates) and £134 a week for a couple (a £66 gap).

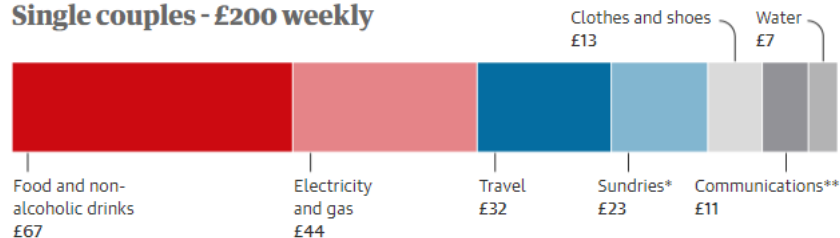


## Essential weekly living costs for UK adults

### Single adults - £120 weekly



### Single couples - £200 weekly



Guardian graphic. Source: JRF, Essentials Guarantee report. Note: Costs estimated for 2023-24. Essential core living costs excluding rent, mortgage interest and council tax which are covered by separate benefit elements. \*Including toiletries, haircuts, cleaning materials and bank charges. \*\*Including phones, internet and postage

- 5.10. As reported to the sub-committee in February, in reality, more than half of households on universal credit receive less than the basic £85 rate because of monthly caps and benefit deductions. A single adult facing deductions would typically see their basic rate allowance drop from £85 to £64 a week.

## Energy

- 5.11. The energy regulator Ofgem announced on 27 February that its quarterly Energy Price Cap on household bills for average dual-fuel direct-debit customers will fall by around 23% for the three months from 1 April, from £4,279 for the January to March quarter. This price cap on the amount suppliers in Great Britain can charge for energy will fall by around £1,000 to £3,280. Analysis firm Cornwall Insight forecasts that the Cap will fall further to £2,100 a year for a typical household from July. This is because wholesale energy prices have fallen from their summer 2022 peaks but there is a substantial lag before this feeds through to consumers.
- 5.12. What consumers, pay, however, is whatever is the lower amount – Ofgem's Energy Price Cap rate or the UK Government's Energy Price Guarantee (EPG).
- 5.13. In the Budget on 15 March, it was announced that the EPG would be held at £2,500 until the end of June, by which time it was expected that energy costs would have reduced and the Energy Price Cap would kick in.
- 5.14. No matter at which rate energy costs are capped, the £400 winter discount which was paid to all households will end. Citizens Advice point out that the withdrawal of the Energy Bill Support Scheme will still mean the average monthly bill rises by £67 from April.
- 5.15. Lower wholesale prices may lead to suppliers offering cheaper fixed tariffs, however it's likely that suppliers will be cautious in their pricing and any return of competition to the market is likely to be slow. Even if prices fall as forecast, they will still be almost 70% higher than in winter 2021/22, with the average household cost estimated at around £2,100 from July 2023.
- 5.16. It was announced in the budget on 15 March that the UK Government is taking steps to remove the premium paid by over 4 million households using pre-payment meters (PPM),

bringing their charges into line with comparable direct debit customers. According to the Treasury, prepay households will save an average of £45 per year on their bills from July 2023. as a result of this reform.

### **Winter heating payment**

- 5.17. Winter Heating Payment is a yearly payment of £50 that's paid automatically by Social Security Scotland to eligible people on low-income benefits who have extra heating and energy needs. It replaces the Cold Weather Payment from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and has the same eligibility requirements.
- 5.18. Payments for winter 2022 were based on circumstances within a qualifying week (7 November to 13 November 2022) and are expected to be made from February 2023. Recipients receive a letter from Social Security Scotland before they make the payment, which is paid into bank accounts automatically.
- 5.19. People must get a means tested benefit in order to be eligible for Winter Heating Payment, such as Universal Credit, Income based Jobseekers Allowance and Pension Credit, and particular premiums as part of those benefits during the qualifying week such as a disability premium or have a child under 5.

### **Off grid support**

- 5.20. Most households receive a £400 discount on their energy bills automatically. In some cases, the discount isn't automatically received, for example for those who:
  - pay for energy through a landlord, housing manager or site owner
  - live in a park home, houseboat or off the electricity grid
- 5.21. To support these households, the Government has opened an online portal for applications for the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding. The portal will be open until the end of May and applications may take up to six weeks to process, with the payment arriving in one lump sum. These households include those in sheltered housing, about which concerns were raised at Leadership Board in February.
- 5.22. Once an application has been made, the information will be passed to the local council for verification as necessary and payment. In addition, the Government has announced the Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP), of £200 for households that use fuels other than gas to heat their homes (doubling the £100 payable in Winter 2023).
- 5.23. The Council has received funds from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to support payments through both those schemes, with any unused funding to be returned. Arrangements are also in place to provide the additional functions associated with these payments.

### **Scottish Welfare Fund**

- 5.24. In Renfrewshire Crisis Grants from the Scottish Welfare Fund have been affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Comparison of the 12 months to 31 December 2022 with the same period the year before show an average additional 94 applications being made per month, with the average monthly figure being 842 applications. This may well have been higher, however Cost of Living payments from the UK Government were received by benefit recipients in July and November, leading to a marked reduction in applications those particular months. In some cases too, clients have been directed to Renfrewshire Council's Financial Insecurity

Winter Payment set up as a response to the cost of living crisis last February, as an alternative, when appropriate.

- 5.25. Not every application receives an award, and awards made have only increased on average 9 per month, indicating that many of those coming forward for support are not eligible. Amounts being paid for fuel and food are reviewed and increased as necessary. Any award is discretionary based on the claimant's circumstances and for how long they are without income. The Assessors use a guide calculator to work out a level of award depending on how many days the applicant has until they receive their next income. This used to average about £3/£4 per day for energy costs however in April last year this was increased to a maximum of £6.50 per day, and further increased to maximum of £9 per day in November. Amounts for food costs for sole applicants and couples used to come out at roughly at £23 and £36 per week respectively. This was updated to £30 and £50 per week in line with increased food costs in November 2022. Families receive higher amounts in line with the number of dependents in the household.

### **Discretionary Housing Payments to mitigate the Benefit Cap**

- 5.26. Originally introduced in 2013, the Benefit Cap restricts the amount of benefits a family can claim, even if the combination of benefits they receive would entitle them to a higher amount. The Benefit Cap is currently £20,000 per annum (£1,667 per month) for a couple or single parent household and £13,400 per annum (£1,117 per month) for single people.
- 5.27. The Scottish Government has announced £8.6 million in additional funding to Scottish local authorities in order to mitigate the impact of the Benefit Cap using Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) support. Of this funding, £2.6 million is to allow full mitigation for the 'backdated' period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 and Renfrewshire will receive an initial additional £40,239 for this period. The remaining £6 million will be distributed to local authorities as part of the 2023/24 annual funding allocations.
- 5.28. The most up to date DWP Benefit Cap statistics were published in December 2022, based on the those impacted by the Benefit Cap in August 2022. In Renfrewshire, a total of 108 households are impacted by the Benefit Cap: 20 who receive Housing Benefit (HB) and 88 within Universal Credit (UC) awards. Scottish Government analysts suggest that eligible households could be £2,500 better off on average per year as a result of DHP mitigating the Benefit Cap.

### **Petrol**

- 5.29. Fuel prices have continued to fall, with average fuel prices on 23 February 2023 below. At the Spring Budget, it was announced that the fuel duty would be frozen for the next 12 months, so the scheduled rise which would have led to a 12p per litre rise across petrol and diesel prices will not now take place.

## Latest UK average petrol and diesel prices

In pence per litre

Unleaded	Super unleaded	Diesel	LPG
<b>148.00</b>	<b>163.75</b>	<b>167.99</b>	<b>82.38</b>
pence per litre	pence per litre	pence per litre	pence per litre
→ No change forecast	→ No change forecast	↘ Should fall	
23/02/2023			RAC Fuel Watch

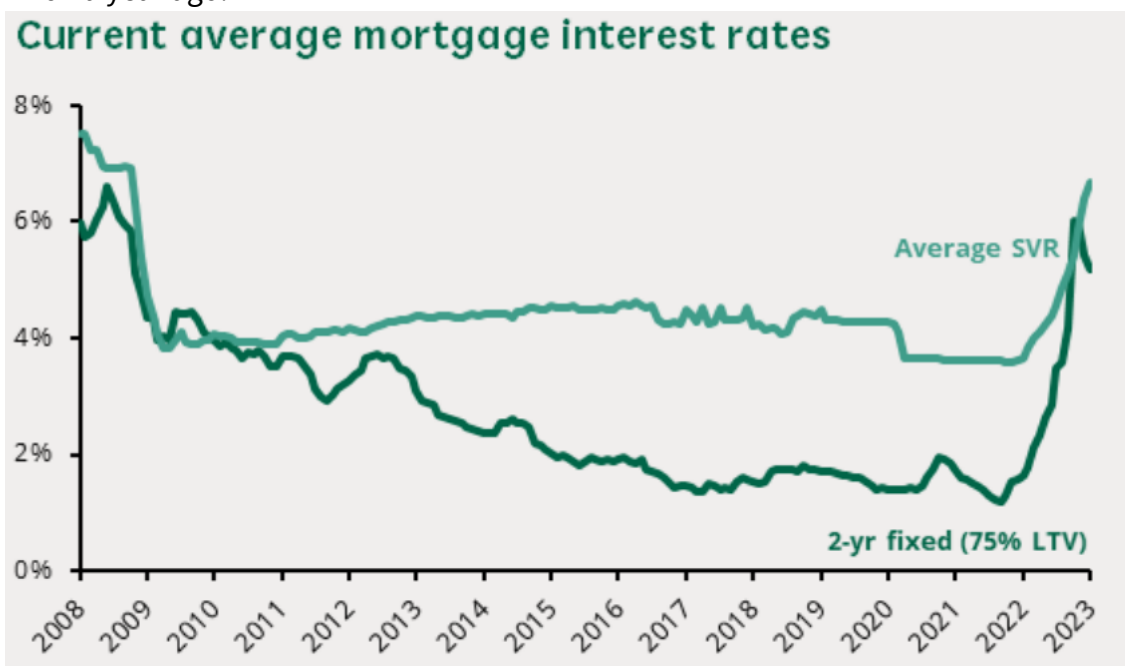
## Debt

- 5.30. Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) has warned that council tax debt is likely to soar in 2023 amid the cost-of-living crisis. Between September 2021 and September 2022, 3,717 CAS clients owed a cumulative £12.7 million to local authorities for unpaid council tax bills.
- 5.31. The average debt for a CAS client is £3,420 – almost three times the average council tax bill in 2022/23 of £1,238 and the charity is warning that the cost-of-living crisis could lead to people prioritising food, housing and energy and falling even further behind on council tax bills.
- 5.32. Previous research from CAS found a substantial increase in complex debt clients, with many having multiple arrears and one in two clients having no money to pay down their debts after covering the essential bills.

## 6. Housing

### Mortgages

- 6.1. According to the House of Commons Library, the average Standard Variable Rate mortgage (SVR) was 6.66% in January 2023, up 2.99 percentage points on a year ago, while the average 2-year fixed mortgage rate was 5.17% in January 2023, up 3.53 percentage points on a year ago.



- 6.2. More than 1.4 million households in the UK are facing the prospect of interest rate rises when they renew their fixed rate mortgages in 2023, according to the ONS. The majority of fixed rate mortgages in the UK (57%) coming up for renewal in 2023 were fixed at interest rates below 2%. When borrowers remortgage in the near future it is likely to be at a higher rate of interest. This can be seen in the Office of Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) expectations of the future path of the Bank Rate, which is expected to peak at 4.8% by the end of 2023. In its fiscal forecast, published in November 2022, the OBR predicted that the Bank Rate would rise from 1.6% in Q3 2022 to 4.8% in Q3 2023 and 4.5% in Q3 2024. The ONS' research shows that there has been a slight increase in the percentage of people surveyed who, when asked how easy or difficult it was to afford their rent or mortgage payments, said they found it somewhat difficult or very difficult, from 27% in the period 14 to 25 September 2022 to 31% in the period from 7 to 18 December 2022. Additionally, around 4 in 10 (45%) adults with mortgages reported being very or somewhat worried about the changes in mortgage interest rates during the period 7 to 18 December 2022.

## Rents

- 6.3. Average rents across the UK were up 10.8% annually in December 2022. These increases mean a single tenant on average now faces paying 35% of their income on rent, said MoneyWeek, “the highest level of rental unaffordability in over a decade”.
- 6.4. In Scotland, the Scottish Government’s proposals for the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 beyond 31 March will mean that from 1 April 2023:
- if landlords choose to increase private rents, they will be capped at 3%;
  - the safeguard for private landlords will be amended, allowing them to apply for increases of up to 6% to help cover certain increases in costs in defined and limited circumstances;
  - enforcement of evictions will continue to be prevented for all tenants except in a number of specified circumstances;
  - increased damages for unlawful evictions of up to 36 months’ worth of rent will continue to be applicable;
  - the rent cap for social sector accommodation will be expired, following a voluntary agreement being reached on an agreed approach to rent setting for 2023/24 that ensures that rents remain affordable but still support continued investment in the sector;
  - the rent cap for student accommodation will be suspended, recognising its limited impact on annual rents set based on an academic year.
- 6.5. These temporary measures are intended to be extended to 30 September 2023, provided they remain necessary, with the option to extend for another six-month period if required. As announced in December 2022, the social sector rent freeze is being replaced with agreements from landlords to keep any rent increase for 2023-24 well below inflation.
- 6.6. The measures introduced by the Act have not been well received amongst many in the private lettings sector. The Scottish Landlords Association (SAL), Scottish Land and Estates (SLE) and Propertymark have announced that they have petitioned the Court of Session to carry out a judicial review of the Act. They believe that the provisions of the Act are disproportionate and unfair to landlords and letting bodies.

- 6.7. A survey carried out over November and December 2022 amongst members of SAL found that 65% of landlords surveyed were dependent on the rental income they receive for their own day to day living, and that rent arrears as a whole had increased with average arrears now being £2,662 per landlord. The survey also found that 54% of tenants were paying rent at a rate below market value and that 87% of landlords were planning to sell up, stating the new legislation as either a factor or their sole reason for doing so.

## **7. Scottish Government Food Support**

- 7.1. As recently reported to the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub Committee, on 12 January the Scottish Government announced an additional £2.4 million in funding to help people struggling to afford food and other essentials.
- 7.2. Funding was allocated to four organisations to distribute mainly on a 'cash-first' basis to people in immediate need in the face of the cost of living crisis, with a focus on crisis payments and shopping cards to allow people to choose for themselves what they need, with the money is being allocated as follows:
- £1,000,000 to the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations for cash-first responses to food insecurity via their members
  - £1,050,000 to Corra Foundation for their Household Hardship Fund
  - £100,000 to Citizens Advice Scotland to expand their shopping card pilot, offering an alternative to a food bank referral
  - £250,000 to FareShare for regional purchasing where needed to supplement the supply from surplus and donations.
- 7.3. The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations distributed their funding via bids made by Housing Associations. This was done within a short timescale, and only one Renfrewshire Housing Association made a bid, which was not successful. Renfrewshire Housing Associations have received other funding recently, for example from the Social Housing Fuel Support, and there may have been some overlap which led to bids not being made. Ferguslie Park, Paisley, Linstone, Bridgewater and Williamsburgh Housing Associations received awards from this fund of between £20,000 and £50,000, with a total of more than £150,000 coming into Renfrewshire via this funding stream. This was for energy support, including fuel vouchers and financial support for those with credit meters.
- 7.4. £1,050,000 to Corra Foundation for their Household Hardship Fund, providing grants to organisations working to alleviate poverty with an emphasis on cash-first responses food insecurity – a number of Renfrewshire charities have received funding from this source previously and officers have promoted this funding including amongst our pantries, to the Foodbank and also to Winter Connections projects as working with people on the ground, to try and increase the number of recipients in Renfrewshire.
- 7.5. Scottish Government are treating the funding to Citizens Advice Scotland as a limited extension to their current pilot with a small number of CAB across Scotland as they establish the best way forward. Renfrewshire CAB did not bid into this current round of funding due to capacity issues, but have indicated interest should this round be undersubscribed, or for the next round of funding.
- 7.6. The funding that went to FareShare will be used to purchase ambient and tinned food to be distributed across FareShare members. This food will supplement the current surplus provision. FareShare expect that members will start to see this additional food in early to

mid-March. Previously the funding provided by the Scottish Government for ‘Brexite Food’ was used in the same way, and members received more food and an improved standard of food at that time.

- 7.7. The pantries and larders in Paisley, Johnstone, Erskine and Lochwinnoch will all benefit from this additional food.

## 8. Universal credit

- 8.1. During the Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced some changes to Universal Credit which will come into effect during 2023/24. These include increased Work Coach support and work search requirements for a greater number of Universal Credit claimants with a view to helping them move into work and onto high earnings. Claimants in work and on lower earnings and non-working or low-earning partners on Universal Credit will receive intensive Work Coach support. The government will also strengthen job support for claimants who are lead carers of young children who currently have no or limited requirements to search for and prepare for work.
- 8.2. Alongside this, the government is strengthening the way sanctions are applied, by automating parts of the process to improve efficiency and reduce error and ensuring that Work Coaches have the tools and training to implement sanctions as effectively as possible, including for failing to take up a job.
- 8.3. The current Universal Credit childcare element means that parents on Universal Credit in work can claim back 85% of their childcare costs and at present, although this is paid in monthly arrears this presents an issue for many low-income families who struggle to find the funds to pay for their childcare up front. This support for childcare costs will change to being paid in-advance and the maximum amount people can claim for childcare is also rising to £951 for one child, having been frozen at £646 a month per child for several years. The increase will be £1,630 for two children or more up from £1,108.04.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – There are no financial implications associated with this report, which provides an overview of the position and is for noting.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – This report provides a detailed summary of the current evidence relating to household income and expenditure. Wider poverty related issues are a key element of both the Council and Community Plan and the information included within this report is part of the wider Strategic Needs Assessment for these plans.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none

7. **Equality and Human Rights** – The report provides an overview of the position around household income and expenditure, and is for noting. As such there are no impacts arising from the recommendation of this paper. It is however important to note that impacts on households explored within this paper are likely to be disproportionately felt by equality groups.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** – none

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**To:** Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee

**On:** 1<sup>ST</sup> February 2023

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**Report by:** Chief Executive

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**Heading:** Fairer Renfrewshire Programme

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The Council and partners have a key focus on tackling inequality and improving wellbeing and have longstanding programmes of work and partnership arrangements in place such as the Tackling Poverty Programme and the change programme established in response to the findings of the Renfrewshire Drug and Alcohol Commission.
- 1.2. As agreed by Council on 3 March 2022, all activities will now come together to form a new Fairer Renfrewshire Programme in Renfrewshire. Officers are working with partners to develop this programme, with a more detailed programme of work being developed. Council agreed on 19 May 2022 to form the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee to facilitate more scrutiny and oversight of issues relating to poverty and inequality in Renfrewshire.
- 1.3. Further to this, at Council on 2 March 2023 members reaffirmed their commitment to the Fairer Renfrewshire programme, and outlined a number of investments including bringing together the current Fairer Renfrewshire funding alongside the Tackling Poverty and Social Renewal reserve funds into a single resource estimated at £5million.
- 1.4. Key priorities for the Fairer Renfrewshire Programme for March 2023-June 2023 are as follows:
  - Participation and Engagement
  - Developing the Local Child Poverty Action Report
  - Fairer Food Renfrewshire development
  - Winter Connections Programme Evaluation
  - Developing and delivering budget investments including holiday activities and winter school clothing grant
  - Tackling Poverty Programme Evaluation

- 1.5. This paper provides a progress update for all of the priorities listed above. As agreed at Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee, this paper will also provide a more detailed progress report on work focussed on lived experience approaches.

## **2. Recommendations**

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

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. In March 2021, Council considered the initial findings from a community impact assessment that had been undertaken across Renfrewshire, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on local people and communities. This provided strong evidence that the pandemic has impacted some people and communities more profoundly than others.
- 3.2. The starting point of local people in terms of the inequalities or challenges that they faced before the pandemic has been important, with issues such as low income, insecure employment, caring responsibilities and disabilities all being exacerbated by the pandemic and its associated restrictions. The community impact assessment process also identified a requirement to continue to listen and learn to the experiences of local people, recognising that the impacts of the pandemic may emerge over time.
- 3.3. In the report in March 2021, an initial Social Renewal Plan was approved by Council. The plan set out the high-level actions that the Council and partners will take as we move forward from the pandemic with a clear focus on tackling inequality and improving wellbeing.
- 3.4. Officers worked to bring all of these strands of activity together, and following an initial assessment have identified a number of actions which should be progressed by partners as a priority during 2021-22. Income, poverty and financial insecurity was identified as a key priority for the plan as a result of financial pressures households were facing during the pandemic, and this is likely to require a sustained focus due to the rapidly developing cost-of-living crisis.
- 3.5. The Fairer Renfrewshire Programme brings together a number of existing programmes of work focussed on achieving fairness and equity, including the Tackling Poverty Programme and Alcohol and Drugs Change Programme. These programmes are being brought together alongside the Council's Social Renewal Plan, mapping a fairer future for Renfrewshire's residents through the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the now rapidly developing cost-of-living crisis.
- 3.6. Renfrewshire Council's 2023-24 budget, agreed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023, outlined a number of investments related to the Fairer Renfrewshire programme including bringing together the

current Fairer Renfrewshire funding alongside the Tackling Poverty and Social Renewal reserve funds into a single resource estimated at £5million. Initial priorities for the allocation of this funding will include:

- £0.068m over 2 years to support the recently agreed 10% increase in delivery of advice services by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- £0.300m to support a £50 winter school clothing payment to each child eligible for school clothing grant
- £0.100m 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
- Council also agreed to top-up funding of £0.200million to the Scottish Welfare Fund, to be drawn from Welfare Reform reserve

3.7. There are four key emerging themes which are shared across all elements of the Fairer Renfrewshire programme, and these are:

- Improving financial security
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Building community capacity and resilience
- Listening to lived experience

3.8. Key priorities for the Fairer Renfrewshire Programme for March-June 2023 are as follows:

- Developing the Local Child Poverty Action Report
- Participation and Engagement
- Fairer Food Renfrewshire development
- Winter Connections Programme Evaluation
- Developing and delivering budget investments including holiday activities and winter school clothing grant
- Tackling Poverty Programme Evaluation

3.9. This paper provides a progress update for all of the priorities listed above. As agreed at Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee, this paper will also provide a more detailed progress report on work focussed on lived experience approaches.

## **4. Fairer Renfrewshire Programme**

### **Advice services in Renfrewshire**

- 4.1. At the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee in February 2023, it was reported work was underway to put into place new contract arrangements with Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau for the financial year 2023/24 and 24/25. These contract negotiations have now been concluded and agreed at Finance, Resources and Customer Services Board. The contract will be in place for a two-year period in the first instance.
- 4.2. There are also a number of additional services commissioned from Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau in addition to the general advice contract, including a dedicated welfare rights

service, employment service, energy advice and a schools advice service also in development.

- 4.3. Officers have been working alongside colleagues in Children's Services to develop the Schools Advice Service, which will provide dedicated advice provision for secondary schools across Renfrewshire. Work is also underway to develop complementary advice services across early years and primary school settings alongside Advice Works, as part of the development of the 2023/24 Tackling Poverty Programme.

### **Financial Insecurity Winter Payment**

- 4.4. The Financial Insecurity Winter Payment (FIWP) continues to be paid to those who are struggling with the cost of essentials. Late last year, this payment was widened out to referrals from the HSCP and as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 there had been 4,429 awards made, and £574,350 spent.
- 4.5. It is anticipated that the current funding allocation towards the Financial Insecurity Winter Payment will allow the fund to run until the end of April 2023.
- 4.6. Fuel costs have continued to be the most pressing issue for many clients seeking advice. Most clients contacting Advice Works, whether for a benefit check, a Foodbank voucher or any other reason mention energy costs as being an issue and for both Advice Works and Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau clients are coming forward to try to get other benefits, such as Adult Disability Payment to bolster their income against energy cost increases.
- 4.7. It is recognised that there is still demand for a flexible, cash-first response to financial insecurity in Renfrewshire, particularly due to the continued high cost of domestic energy. Funding has been agreed to extend this fund for 2023/24 using the Covid-19 Economic Recovery Funding, as agreed by the Economy and Regeneration board, and work is underway to assess current provision, needs and gaps to inform the approach for distributing this further funding in 2023/24.
- 4.8. To support clients with emergency fuel costs, the Fuel Insecurity Pilot has continued, with fuel vouchers and debt reduction support provided by Renfrewshire Foodbank and Linstone Housing Association, backed up by energy advice from Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau. To the end of October, almost £34,000 in financial supports have been issued to those struggling with energy costs. These include vouchers for credit and pre-payment meters and support with fuel debt reduction.

### **Developing Local Child Poverty Action Report**

- 4.9. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on local authorities and regional health boards in Scotland to produce annual, joint Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPARs) describing ongoing and planned action to tackle child poverty at local level. Work is now underway to compile this year's Local Child Poverty Action Report for Renfrewshire, and this is typically presented to Leadership Board in June.
- 4.10. In order to form a better picture of Child Poverty in Renfrewshire, officers are carrying out a 'deep dive' on the data we hold as well as identifying gaps in our data. This work will be used to inform our Local Child Poverty Action Report, as well as our child poverty work more generally and we hope to gather information especially around the 6 priority groups identified by Scottish Government as being most likely to be in poverty:
- Lone parent families

- Minority Ethnic families
- Large families (3+ children)
- Families where a child or adult is disabled
- Families with a younger mother (under 25)
- Families with a child under 1 year old.

4.11. Work is ongoing with colleagues in HSCP, Public Health Scotland and other council services such as Invest in Renfrewshire and we are also working with the Improvement Service to establish where data sharing can support our knowledge.

### **Fair Food Renfrewshire**

4.12. Further to an engagement session held in winter 2023, officers have been working closely with Nourish Scotland to plan the next stages of Fair Food Renfrewshire, using the Sustainable Food Places Toolkit.

4.13. Sustainable Food Places brings together partnerships from across the UK, and is a partnership programme led by the Soil Association, Food Matters and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming. The toolkit that they have developed has three key themes:

- **Building a food partnership**

Put in place an appropriate and representative partnership structure to lead on development and delivery of the food strategy.

- **Developing a food strategy**

Incorporate participatory processes to facilitate the engagement and inclusion of stakeholders across the whole food system in developing a sustainable food vision and strategy.

- **Review and refresh**

Measure impact, refresh the strategy and ensure that the partnership is working effectively.

4.14. As part of the first theme, work is underway to establish a partnership steering group for this work, and to bring the wider stakeholder group together in Spring 2023 to work on the vision and shared purpose, as well as agree partnership structures and terms of reference for the steering group. It is anticipated that the newly established steering group will meet shortly after this event, and work will begin on the next theme 'Developing a food strategy.' This will support Renfrewshire Council's upcoming duties related to the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022.

## **5. Tackling Poverty Programme evaluation**

5.1. There are eight projects currently running as part of the Tackling Poverty Programme, and most of these now represent ongoing service delivery, or additionality to existing services. All projects within the Tackling Poverty Programme are currently being evaluated in order to inform the future direction of this work. The first phase of this evaluation will focus on Energy Advocacy, Breakfast Clubs, Families First and Street Stuff, followed by Peer Health, Cost of the School Day, Skoobmobile and Healthier Wealthier Children in the second phase.

- The evaluation of the Energy Advocates project has now been completed.

- Work is underway on the evaluation of Families First, with a particular focus on the development of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.
  - The evaluation of Street Stuff is also underway as part of the wider work to look at holiday provision in Renfrewshire more broadly, which is detailed in a separate paper at this Board.
- 5.2. A paper will be brought to Leadership Board in April 2023 setting out proposed funding allocation for 2023-24. Any projects continuing as part of Fairer Renfrewshire will need to be reviewed and updated to sharpen focus as a poverty intervention and alignment to wider programme, including impact measurement and reporting.

## 6. Participation and engagement

- 6.1. The Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee has been given a number of updates relating to work to develop a panel of people with lived experience of poverty to inform the Council's policy and practice, now known as the Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel.
- 6.2. As detailed at the last Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee and Leadership Board, the Panel will continue to meet throughout early 2023, and it is hoped there will be opportunities to bring the Panel together with the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee to discuss the Panel's deliberations and recommendations in April 2023.
- 6.3. The Panel invited Cllr Jacqueline Cameron and Cllr Graeme Clark to a panel meeting in February to introduce the work of the Panel (as the Convener and Vice Convener of the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub Committee), and explore opportunities to work together moving forward.
- 6.4. Officers are now exploring options for the continuation of the panel following the completion of the test of change.

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## 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

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**To:** Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee

**On:** 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

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**Report by:** Chief Executive

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**Heading:** School Holiday Childcare and Food Provision

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## **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Survey<sup>1</sup>, based on surveys from local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales. Key findings include:

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<sup>1</sup> [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’ report<sup>2</sup> 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 Government<sup>3</sup> 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

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

<sup>3</sup> [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 2022<sup>4</sup> 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

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<sup>4</sup> [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’<sup>5</sup> programme.
- 4.19. As an example, the OneRen Spring Kids Camps run from 3<sup>rd</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup> [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.



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## 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

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