



**Local Child Poverty
Action Report
Renfrewshire
2021/2022**

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Foreword

During this year, our fourth of producing our Local Child Poverty Action Report, we have continued to respond to the immediate challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, while developing our longer term plans to support Renfrewshire’s economic and social recovery.

Too many families in Renfrewshire are facing the challenges of financial insecurity and poverty and Renfrewshire Council and its partners, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and other Community Planning Partners have worked tirelessly to protect our families and tackle child poverty right across Renfrewshire in 2021/22, the period of this report, and continue to do so.

As a Council, we continue to be ambitious for Renfrewshire. Tackling poverty sits at the heart of our strategic priorities, decisions and actions, making sure that everyone in Renfrewshire is able to access the opportunities and benefits available and no one misses out.

We know from our assessment of need and from feedback from service providers that local families are worried about the increasing cost of living, and low-income households in particular are facing difficult decisions. While this report clearly shows that the Council and our partners have a critical role in preventing and alleviating poverty and its impacts in our area, we are clear that the challenge ahead is of a scale beyond the influence of the Council and our local partners.

Looking forward, we are working on our new Council and Community Plans which set the longer-term strategic direction of our organisation and our place. These plans set the direction for Renfrewshire Council and our partners and embed our commitment to a recovery which tackles inequality across all our communities.

Alan Russell
Chief Executive,
Renfrewshire Council

Summary and Priorities

This is the fourth Local Child Poverty Action Report produced by Renfrewshire Council. The report captures the range of activity that has taken place in Renfrewshire to reduce child poverty in 2021/22 and looks forward to the actions planned for 22/23 and beyond. The report has a focus around longer-term plans, however, recent financial challenges facing our residents have precipitated an increase in immediate support, with short term actions that help families now being developed alongside our existing initiatives and longer-term plans.

This report is set out in a way that reflects the three themes of the Scottish Government child poverty delivery plan, Best Start, Bright Futures:

- Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work
- Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs, and
- Supporting the next generation to thrive

It highlights our actions and achievements throughout 2021/22 that fit into those themes, including:

- Our **Economic Recovery Plan** which focuses on job retention and creation, employability, supporting upskilling and innovation, tackling inequalities and delivering a 'green' recovery.
- Our employability service, **Invest in Renfrewshire**, which offers a wide range of tailored supports to help residents on the journey towards and into employment. Successes here include:
 - » By 1 April 2022, the level of unemployment amongst 16–24 year olds had reduced to below the pre-pandemic figure with 75 fewer young people out of work than at February 2020.
 - » 92 parents, 64 of whom were lone parents, supported this year, with 58 of these gaining employment.

- The **Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership** have continued to plan and co-commission local employability services to help Renfrewshire residents make a successful transition towards employment and reduce unemployment in the area. This partnership working has helped reduce the unemployment rate to 3.8%, now lower than the Scottish rate of 3.9%.
- A **Social Renewal Plan**, with initial funding of £665,000 to support families with children who are living in poverty. This funding has supported:
 - » £100,000 funding for Place Based responses to food insecurity, including support for Pantries and a Community Food fund. This has allowed thousands of families throughout Renfrewshire to access food in a dignified way.
 - » An initial £50,000 to provide emergency fuel support, backed by energy advice, to low-income families struggling with energy costs.
 - » £45,000 to support our affordable credit work, including employment of an Affordable Credit Officer to work in our communities, targeting priority families.
- With £1m per year invested in our **Tackling Poverty Programme** over 5 years, this continues to have a positive impact on low-income families in Renfrewshire, supporting projects such as Healthier Wealthier Children advice, Cost of the School Day, and provision of energy advice specifically to families as well as supporting young people's mental health.
- An increase in the number of accredited **living wage** employers in Renfrewshire to 82.
- Our Procurement Team has realised 198 **Community Benefits** this year, with 78 recruitment opportunities amongst these, of which 37 went to those in Priority Groups.
- Our **Energy Advocates** have saved clients over £325,000 this year including ongoing savings, write offs and Warm Home Discounts. This includes 144 families with children.
- We top up our **Cost of the School Day** funding by £75,000 each year through our Tackling Poverty Programme. Food vouchers, energy top-ups, toiletries and warm clothing have been supplied this year as well as more usual items such as stationery and school uniforms.

- **Advice** is a vitally important part of our efforts to tackle child poverty, with the Council supporting the Healthier Wealthier Children and School Support services which provide dedicated advice services to families with children. Apart from our own Advice Works service, the Council also provides funding to Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (RCAB) to provide both a general advice service and a community legal advice service. This year additional services have been funded:
 - » A Welfare Rights service based at RCAB
 - » A 'Fair Work' service which deals with issues regarding to employment.
 - » A benefit take-up campaign which has received £5,000 through the Social Renewal budget.
- Funding of £100,000 to tackle **digital exclusion** in partnership with SCVO by building a network of volunteers and staff, and capacity across local third and community organisations to support local people to access and use digital technology. This will allow us to begin to understand how place-based solutions to digital inclusion could work and to develop a model of best practice for use across Scotland.
- There is still a clear commitment and expectation within Renfrewshire to raise **attainment** for all whilst closing the poverty-related attainment gap and data has been used to target approaches and develop interventions which support schools to raise attainment and address health and wellbeing needs.
- Work around **The Promise** has progressed well with development around Promise keepers and a Promise Self-Evaluation toolkit.
- In the past year we have administered a range of funds to support families, for example using part of the Scottish Government Winter Support Funding to provide an additional £50 per child for children receiving School Clothing Grant to help with winter clothing.

Priorities

For 2022/23 our main priorities are gaining a better understanding of the needs of our families living in poverty using our Get Heard programme, ensuring we are collecting relevant data and using this to inform our policy development and actions and focusing on increasing income from employment for families, especially those in the child poverty priority groups.

We will work with Poverty Alliance on Get Heard to establish a process to allow for meaningful engagement of people with direct experience of poverty to contribute to the development and implementation of local child poverty priorities.

We will focus on collecting relevant data which will give us a better understanding of the picture of child poverty in Renfrewshire and will further our evidence-based policy making.

Through the Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership we will focus on finding out what is holding parents back from considering work as a good option and how we can change their minds as well as develop supports to meet their needs.

As we reach the end of our five year Tackling Poverty Programme at the end of 22/23, our tackling poverty and social renewal work, along with our Alcohol and Drugs programme will be brought under a **Fairer Renfrewshire Programme** as agreed as part of the Council's budget approved in March 2022, with significant funds allocated to continue our work to reduce child poverty and support families and individuals in need across Renfrewshire.

While we recognise that much has been achieved this year, we will continue to work with NHSGGC, our Health and Social Care Partnership and many other external and third sector partners, in communities and across all services to ensure our low-income families are supported and child poverty is reduced.



Introduction

This Local Child Poverty Action Report has been produced when the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on child poverty levels is still largely unknown, particularly the long-term effects on families and the economy. We do know that the impacts have been felt most acutely by the most disadvantaged in our society.

The continuing impacts of Covid alongside recent financial challenges facing residents has precipitated an increase in short term actions to provide immediate support for families, as we continue to develop our existing initiatives and longer-term plans.

This report captures the range of activity that has taken place in Renfrewshire in 2021/22 to reduce child poverty by the Council, NHSGCC, Renfrewshire HSCP, Community Planning Partners and beyond. It also looks forward to our longer-term plans. In the coming year our new Council and Community Plans will be developed, with child poverty at the heart of these.

A specific programme of work is also planned through the 'Get Heard' initiative and we will engage with a wide range of voices and experiences of poverty to inform our policies and plans. By working alongside people affected by poverty, we will find out what is working and not working in their communities and what needs to change to ensure support is available.

In Renfrewshire we are committed to addressing child poverty and ensuring all our children thrive and prosper. Besides the work to maximise the income of our families this report reflects a wealth of work which supports the mental health of our young people and provides opportunities for them to develop and gain skills for life.

Scottish Government Targets

By 2030, after housing costs

Less than 10% of children live in households that are in **relative poverty**

Less than 5% of children live in households that are in **absolute poverty**

Less than 5% of children live in households that are in **combined low income and material deprivation**

Less than 5% of children live in households that are in **persistent poverty**

In March 2022, the Scottish Government published its second child poverty delivery plan, **Best Start Bright Futures** under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

Best Start, Bright Futures sets out a vision for Scotland, the changes that are needed to achieve this, and the actions Scottish Government intend to take with partners to deliver that change for the period 2022 to 2026.

The refreshed Scottish Government child poverty delivery plan 'Best Start, Bright Futures' focusses on three key themes and this, Renfrewshire's report is set out in a way that reflects those themes:

- Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work
- Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs
- Supporting the next generation to thrive

Child Poverty Targets (above) were set by the Scottish Parliament in 2017.

The statutory income targets are ambitious and relate to the following measures of poverty:

Relative poverty: a child is in relative poverty if they live in a household where equivalised income for the financial year in question is less than 60 per cent of the median equivalised net income for that financial year.

Absolute poverty: a child is in absolute poverty if they live in a household with an income below 60 per cent of the median equivalised net income in 2010–11.

Combined low income and material deprivation: a child is in combined low income and material deprivation if they live in a household with an income below 70 per cent of the equivalised median net income for that year and are unable to afford a number of basic goods and services (material deprivation).

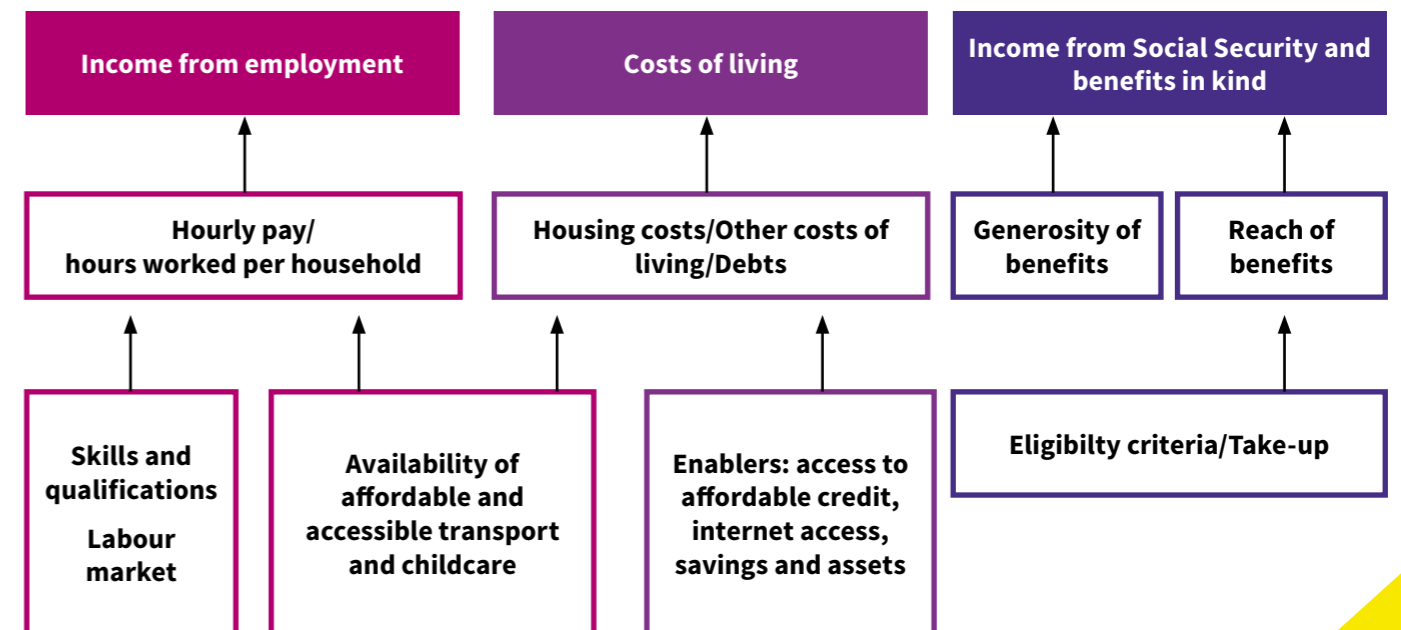
Persistent poverty: a child is in persistent poverty if they have been living in Scotland and in relative poverty for three of the past four years.

Drivers of Poverty

The three key drivers of child poverty are identified by the Scottish Government as:

- Income from employment
- Costs of living
- Income from Social Security and benefits in kind

In Renfrewshire, focusing efforts on these drivers as well as enhancing children's wellbeing, and supporting them to achieve their potential and avoid becoming parents in poverty in the future will help mitigate the consequences of poverty both in the short and longer term.

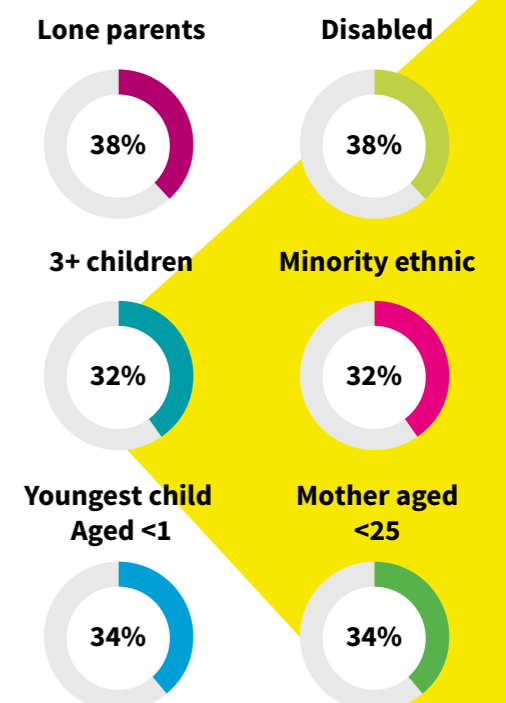


Priority Groups

'Best Start, Bright Futures' builds on action delivered through the first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 'Every Child, Every Chance'. This plan identified six priority family types that face additional barriers to moving out of poverty:

- Lone Parents
- Families that include a disabled adult or child
- Large families with 3 or more children
- Minority Ethnic families
- Youngest child is under 1 year old
- Young Mother aged under 25 years old

Focus continues on these priority families as reporting continues to show that almost 90% of all children in poverty in Scotland live within the six priority family types.



Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership

Renfrewshire HSCP Strategic Plan, **Shaping Our Future 2022–2025**, focuses on Prevention and Early Intervention under key themes. These include the Healthier Futures theme which highlights commitment to continue to work with partners in Renfrewshire to contribute to reducing child poverty locally by detailing actions we continue to work and report on. See the report [here](#) for more details of the HSCP priorities.

Renfrewshire HSCP will continue to work within the following plans and use them to influence our Poverty work going forward:

- A Fairer, Greener Scotland: the Programme for Government for 2021 to 2022
- A Scotland Where Everybody Thrives - Public Health Scotland
- Turning the Tide through Prevention The Public Health Strategy
- Covid Recovery Strategy: for a fairer future 2021
- Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2020-2023, and
- NHSGGC Public Health Directorate Remobilisation Plan 2020.

This report has a strong input from the HSCP Health Improvement Team who focus on prevention and early intervention.

Social Renewal Plan

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.

In June 2021 a range of initial priorities were identified with partners for immediate action in light of the issues being experienced across communities. A range of funding proposals were approved at that time utilising funding to support social renewal, with £665,000 allocated specifically in relation to poverty and financial insecurity, digital exclusion and community resilience and capacity amongst other areas.

Funding supports a number of supports which will help alleviate poverty in families with children. These include community food supports; £75,000 towards the development pantries where lower cost food can be purchased, a £25,000 Community Food Fund, £45,000 for an Affordable Credit project and £50,000 to support people struggling with energy costs.

Tackling Poverty Programme

2021-22 was the fourth year of our five year Tackling Poverty Programme. The Programme continues to have a positive impact on low-income families in Renfrewshire, supporting projects such as Healthier Wealthier Children advice, Cost of the School Day, and provision of energy advice specifically to families.

The initiatives support two key priorities:

- Targeting support to families that need it most (£0.7 million allocated); and
- Removing barriers to participation for children and young people (£0.4 million allocated).

Specific Tackling Poverty Programme funded activities are included within their key theme areas in this report.



How we work with people

In 2020/21 we carried out a Community Impact Assessment, finding out how our communities had been impacted by the pandemic. This helped us to develop a deeper understanding of the pandemic on local people and communities and we engaged with a range of families, including those with lived experience of poverty.

This informed the development of our Social Renewal Plan with wide-ranging priorities including targeted actions to support those disproportionately impacted with issues such as low income, insecure employment, caring responsibilities and disabilities.

To ensure our social renewal and tackling poverty plans reflect the real needs of our citizens, £75,000 has been allocated for us to develop a mechanism by which local people can continue to feed their ideas and opinions into the Council in a systematic way.

During 2022/23, we will continue to work with Poverty Alliance to help people on low incomes get their voices heard on the policies and decisions that most impact their lives and help us understand their needs, especially those in the Child Poverty Priority Groups.

These conversations will help us develop work around issues such as costs of living and how we can best support those in Priority Groups to gain or progress into well paid employment.

As stated on page 8, children with a disability are a key target group of the Child Poverty Act (Scotland) 2017. Plans to convene a Steering Group, scope out and commission research into needs of families with children and a disability across NHSGGC and with all linked local authorities will be progressed in 2022/23. This will allow us to better understand families experience and impacts of poverty for families with a child with a disability around all 3 drivers of poverty. This research will identify themes and make recommendations for progress for this particular group.



Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work

Local Employability Partnership

Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership (RLEP) is the local strategic employability partnership consisting of partner agencies from the Renfrewshire Community Planning Structure. It is chaired by Renfrewshire Council and its purpose is to support the implementation of local and national employability policy (including No One Left Behind and the Young Person's Guarantee) through collective leadership, joint planning and co-commissioning. In doing so the partnership, working closely with local delivery partners, makes best use of resources available to deliver effective needs-led employability services that help Renfrewshire residents make a successful transition towards employment and reduce unemployment in the area.

The COVID pandemic had a massive impact on the rate and number of residents out of work in Renfrewshire. At its peak in August 2021 (6.8% equating to 7,765 residents) Renfrewshire was above both the Scottish and UK levels. The very strong local partnership working during the pandemic has greatly helped the recovery process and the figure has reduced significantly to 4,365, 3.8% (Feb 2022) now below the Scottish rate of 3.9%.

RLEP is committed to reducing those inequalities that exist in relation to employment between different geographic areas and for different groups who face significant barriers to work. Success as a Partnership goes beyond reducing unemployment at a Renfrewshire level to reducing the gaps that exist for these areas and groups.

Recognising the key contribution that employability services can make to tackling child poverty, RLEP's performance framework includes a range of indicators to help measure progress in relation to increasing income from employment of parents with low income as well as other outcomes and indicators such as tackling youth unemployment and increasing the disability employment rate and increasing engagement and positive outcomes for all RLEP priority groups. RLEP's Employability Delivery Plan for 2022-25 provides more detail on this.

Renfrewshire HSCP Health Improvement Team chair the RLEP Health Conditions and Recovery Group. This Group focuses on those in Recovery from health conditions and brings together and supports services while identifying gaps to people accessing support to work or in-work support. With adults with a disability within a household being an indicator of child poverty, this group also looks at support for those with a disability and those in Recovery from Addictions and Mental Health illness.

Parental Employment Support

There has been significant effort and resources contributed by the Scottish Government and local employability partners working in partnership with local employers from the public, private and third sectors to support parental employment

In 2019, the Scottish Government launched a Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF) to target both employed and unemployed families who face barriers to progressing their careers, including help to gain qualifications, improving skills or work experience; money advice, and motivational support. This support is intended to increase annual income, lifting families out of poverty. PESF provides person-centred help for parents to address their barriers to work, which might include a lack of skills or work experience, health support, money advice, or motivational support.

Renfrewshire Council's Employability Service *Invest in Renfrewshire* is the key delivery partner for PESF working closely in partnership with RLEP members and other local organisations.

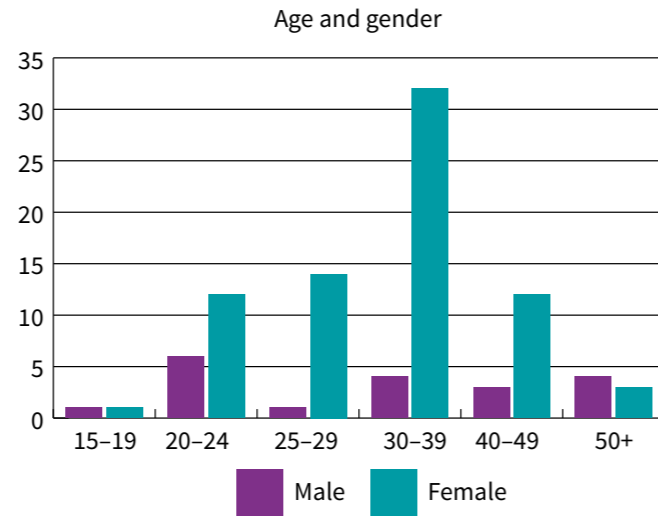
PESF provides the flexible and user-based model of delivery that supports parents into work as well as helping those already in work to increase their household income.

The programme provides:

- Person-centred help for parents to address their barriers to work, which might include a lack of skills or work experience, health support, money advice, confidence building or motivational support; childcare advice and assistance.
- Targeted support to tackle the increased challenge of in-work poverty by helping parents already in work through the provision of training and employability support to remain active in the workplace and gain progression through a rewarding career.
- Confidential income and money advice which includes: Benefit checks and help with any claim processes; Better off in work calculations; Help with debts as these can be a barrier to work; Creation of a bespoke budget for the family; Budgeting skills support to ensure long lasting effect.

Parents are supported to gain new skills, qualifications and assist with job applications and compiling a CV and frequency of support is based on individual need. For the majority of the reporting year, due to Covid-19, contact was carried out remotely by telephone and on-line however face to face support was gradually introduced as restrictions eased early 2022.

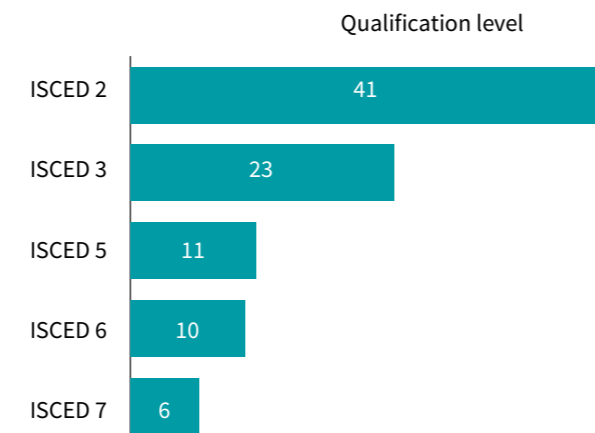
92 parents (64 of these lone parents) were supported during 2021/22 and the majority were female and within the 30–39 age bracket.



When registering with the service clients identify with several different barriers that they feel hold them back when trying to enter employment. The main types of barriers to employment that were raised were:

Living in a jobless household with dependent children (56) and Living in a single parent household (55), with from an employment deprived area being the next most identified barrier (41). 9 clients identified themselves as under employed. The barriers identified show the importance of support around childcare and specific advice for unemployed parents.

As can be seen from the graph below over half of the clients registered with the service also identify as having no advanced qualifications.



Key for ISCED Levels

- ISCED 2: National 4/Standard Grades
- ISCED 3: National 5/ Higher/Advanced Higher
- ISCED 4: no direct match to Scottish qualifications
- ISCED 5: HNC/HND
- ISCED 6: Degree
- ISCED 7: Masters

Increasing the qualifications of current parents who are unemployed, combined with the benefits of improved attainment for our children will help more of our families of the future live free from poverty.

Over and above the 92 parents who engaged with employability support in the reporting period, advisors were also supporting parents who had registered the previous year. This support has resulted in 37 parents gaining a qualification; 23 starting part time employment and 35 starting full time employment.

A key challenge which has not reduced significantly in the reporting period has been services' ability to engage parents. Whilst online support had been readily available, it doesn't suit all. Home schooling has had a significant impact on parents and the target groups for PESF are amongst the hardest hit i.e. lone parents and parents with 3+ children. One of our main areas of focus in the coming year will be finding out what is holding people back from considering work as a good option for them and what messages could we use to help change mind sets and behaviours and increase the number of Renfrewshire residents who are currently economically inactive or unemployed coming forward for advice and help. Focus groups will take place with residents early in 2022/23.



The Young Person's Guarantee and Child Poverty

There is a clear link between youth employment and child poverty. The Young Person's Guarantee is a commitment to bring together employers, partners and young people. It aims to connect every 16 to 24 year old in Scotland to an opportunity. This could be a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering. Successful delivery of the Scottish Government's Young Person's Guarantee in Renfrewshire is evidenced by achievement of the overarching key objective to reduce unemployment to pre Covid 19 levels. As at 1st April 2022, there are 680 young people claiming out of work benefits—at the height of the pandemic this had risen to 1585. There are now 75 fewer young people claiming out of work benefits than in February 2020 (pre Covid).

Renfrewshire's Youth Employment rate (now 67.4%) has seen the biggest growth across all 32 local authority areas over the last 10 years and is the 2nd highest in Scotland.

Details of Renfrewshire's successful work across youth unemployment is at [Appendix A](#).

In addition, NHSGGC has created Kickstart opportunities within its Facilities Team, which it will evaluate in 2022/23 and is supporting the ongoing recruitment and support of modern apprentices aligned to its Workforce Plan.

Within the recently published Scottish Government's [Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#) there is a stronger focus on parental employment than in previous versions with significant levels of resource being allocated to support this. Full detail on local allocations of funding and expectations on the LEP and local partners is awaited and actions will be outlined within the LEP Delivery Plan.

It commits to providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work. Renfrewshire LEP will play a key role in managing delivery in Renfrewshire and ensuring a coordinated approach that best meets the needs of local families. Renfrewshire already has a strong track record in supporting parents into and within work and new activity will build on what has worked best.

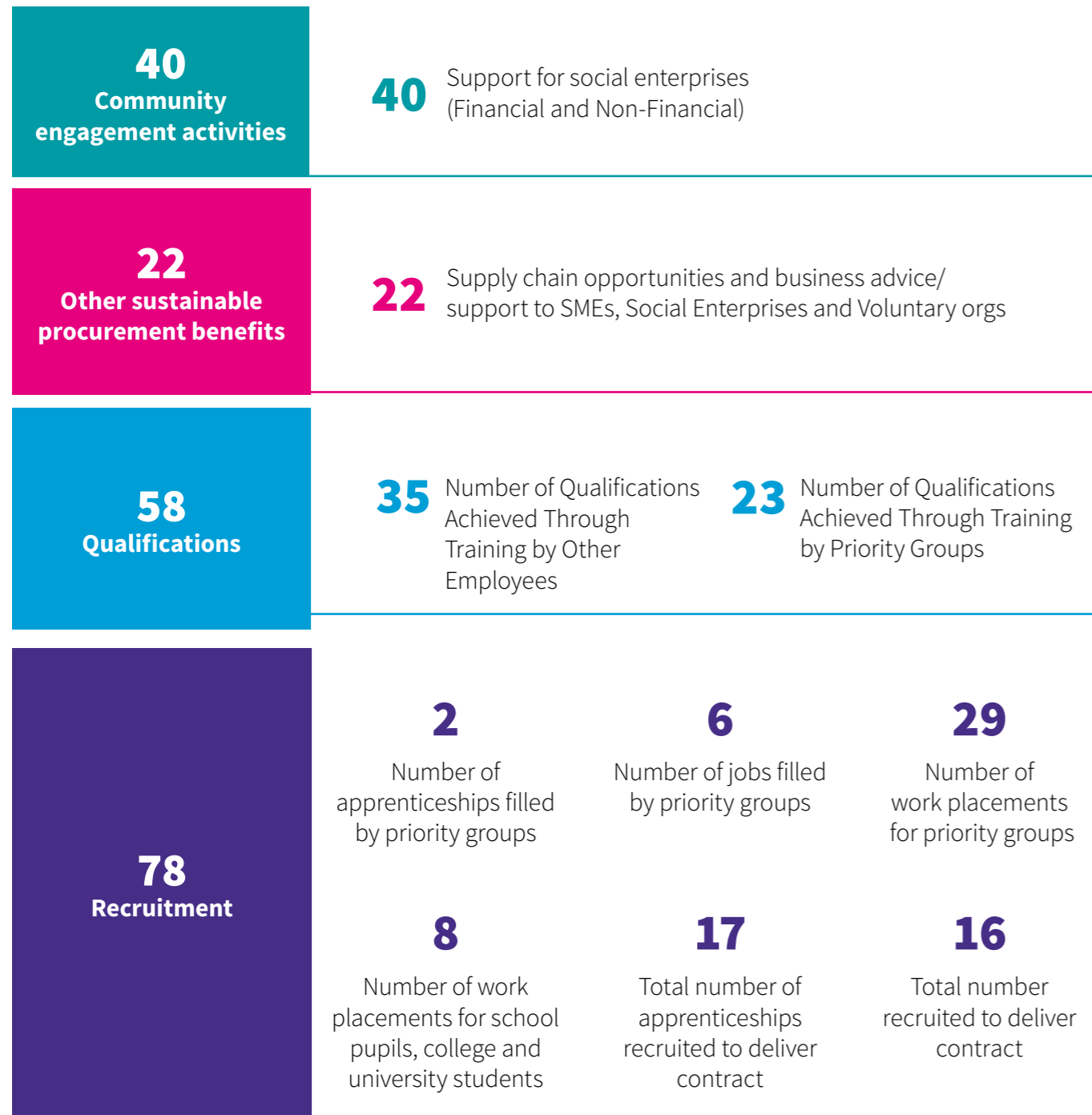
Procurement

Renfrewshire Council is committed to maximising Community Benefits through its procurement activities by including specific Community Benefit Clauses and targets within procurement contracts. These cover payment of the Living Wage as well as targeted employment and training opportunities. Fair work

practices in areas such as zero hour contracts and worker representation are also scored.

Community Benefits are targeted to child poverty priority groups and evaluated as part of the tendering process and monitored on a quarterly basis.

198 Community Benefits were realised from Council contracts in 2021/22.



NHSGGC is also working to increase community benefits as part of its Community Wealth Building approach. The Health Board has initiated work with Public Health colleagues on the Health Anchors Learning Network (HALN) Project to encourage more local SMEs to become suppliers to the Board and focus on increasing diversity. Current NHSGGC spend across the Health Board is £77m and in 20-21 it was £13,866,596 in Renfrewshire alone. In the coming year they will continue work on the HALN Project and look to increase their local spend above 12%.

Economic Recovery Plan

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the UK, Scottish and Renfrewshire economies. It has impacted upon numerous key economic sectors, including those which are important to Renfrewshire residents and businesses, such as manufacturing, aviation and hospitality. In response last year an Economic Recovery Plan for Renfrewshire for the period December 2020 to December 2022 ([here](#)) was prepared in conjunction with and approved by Renfrewshire's Economic Leadership Panel.

The Plan promoted actions under 6 themes: Supporting Our Young People, Supporting Business and their Workforce, Economic Well Being, Skills and Employability, Capital Investment and Green Recovery. These themes link with the key outcomes of the recently published Scottish Government's Covid Recovery Strategy, which looks to achieve financial security for low-income households, promote wellbeing of children and young people and create good, green jobs and fair work.

From these overarching themes, 14 priority actions were included in the Plan (which were thought would make the largest difference to the local economy and would specifically address the economic challenges arising from the pandemic) and progress against these is being monitored. The Council's Children's Services work with colleagues via the Renfrewshire Economic Recovery Group to deliver the priority work around 'Supporting Our Young People' detailed in the Economic Recovery Plan. This work focusses on youth employment, promoting enterprise and entrepreneurial activity in Renfrewshire's high schools and supporting the most vulnerable to move into positive destinations post school.

Economic Recovery Funding

In February 2022, the Scottish Government provided £80m to Local Authorities to provide support to businesses and low-income households. The purpose of this funding is to support business recovery and cost of living impacts on low-income households. Renfrewshire has received £2.654m to support a number of initiatives and deliver interventions that best meet that local need. Levels of funding and numbers supported will be changed according to demand.

Through grant support to businesses, estimates of outcomes are as follows:

- **230** businesses financially supported to grow and develop
- **80** young people secure additional 6 months employment through a Kickstart Plus programme
- **250** UC claimants supported to get skills/qualifications
- **600** UC claimants financially supported to work/search for work through free travel for 3 months
- **200** families in receipt of benefits financially supported to move into work
- **1000** people experiencing financial insecurity as a result of the cost of living crisis to receive hardship payments of £100

Fair Work Renfrewshire

The Social Renewal Plan funded Fair Work Renfrewshire service was launched in October by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau. This £100,000, two-year project provides employment advice to support clients to retain employment wherever possible and where this is not possible, ensure they are supported to obtain their full redundancy entitlement as well as access the correct benefits.

137 clients have used the service in the first 6 months and the issues the service has supported clients with include pay and entitlements, dismissal and terms and conditions of employment.

Childcare

Excellent progress has been made in relation to the implementation of 1140 hours of high-quality early learning and childcare for all eligible children across Renfrewshire, which helps support families into work. Since August 2021, all children aged 3-5 years and eligible 2-year-olds are in receipt of this provision, in accordance with Scottish Government legislation. This success was achieved despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and consequential impact on necessary infrastructure development.

Community Learning and Development

The Renfrewshire Community Learning and Development Strategy for 2021–24 was developed in collaboration with a wide range of partner organisations, third sector groups and individual service users across Renfrewshire. The Strategy ([here](#)) recognises the impacts of the pandemic on disadvantaged learners and communities, including people with low incomes or who are in more insecure employment. It also highlights particular concerns around the health and wellbeing of local people, particularly in relation to loneliness and isolation and the impact that this can have on mental health and wellbeing.

Through engagement with members and workers from community groups, projects and services information was gathered on how the lockdown and restrictions were impacting on children, adults, and families. Insights were gained through these community conversations around the challenges ahead, shaping the CLD Strategy and identifying the key actions that will be taken to support individuals and communities impacted by COVID-19.

The key priorities identified were: Social isolation and loneliness, Interruption of learning, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Loss, Bereavement, Poverty, low income, food insecurity, fuel poverty, and Digital Exclusion

The Scottish Government recognises that Community Learning and Development practitioners have a vital role to play in rebuilding from the pandemic and responding to the new challenges ahead, and that CLD support is made available to assist disadvantaged communities to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. In Renfrewshire the CLD Partnership took a pro-active approach to re-engage communities and reach out to individuals and targeted groups and communities.

The Community Based Adult Learning Fund provided an opportunity for the Renfrewshire CLD Partnership to enter a phase of delivering recovery and response to our communities, focusing particularly on targeted groups who are identified as being vulnerable to and most impacted by the pandemic (i.e. women, carers, the BAME community, families with Additional Support Needs (ASN), adults and families experiencing hardship).

Through an outreach Programme with a number of partners learners identified an overall improvement in their wellbeing and a reduction in feelings of isolation as a result meeting, being active and learning together. The groups have decided to continue exploring further adult learning opportunities together.

Renfrewshire HSCP supports local members of the community furthest from the labour market to access volunteering opportunities within NHS settings and to seek further opportunities using Engage Renfrewshire

supports. Local people from Renfrewshire are part of core volunteering team within NHSGGC increasing their confidence and skills and supporting them along the employability pipeline.

Free Bus Travel—NEC

More fully detailed under 'Maximising the Support Available for families to Lead Dignified Lives and meet Their Basic Needs', entitlement to free bus travel can also assist with transport costs for young people attending work. Through our Youth Services team, support is offered to those older young people through increasing the number of appropriate trusted verifiers for that group. These include our employability service, Invest in Renfrewshire, social work and residential units and information has been provided to West College and University of West Scotland to highlight the application process to students. Those who can't follow the standard processes have the option of getting in touch with Youth Services who will offer alternative solutions based on their need.

Renfrewshire has received praise for its network of trusted verifiers and taking the approach of setting up an easy access point for organisations working with young who experience barriers to access. In the 19-21 year old age bracket, 5,851 young people in Renfrewshire are eligible and we will continue to support access to the scheme.

Transport Strategy

Our refreshed transport strategy will be published during 2022/23. This refresh gives us an opportunity to focus on maximising sustainable transport opportunities to deliver an inclusive, reliable, affordable transport system that provides choice for all. This will include a focus on eliminating transport poverty and ensuring everyone has safe and affordable transportation to access services and social activities as well as employment.



Maximising the support available for families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs

In Renfrewshire, we support families to make the most of their money, working to ensure their income is maximised and outgoings are minimised. Both our longer-term Tackling Poverty Programme and our more recent Social Renewal Plan include projects and activities which help families living in poverty. These, combined with our Housing plans, work on digital and other actions across the Council contribute to reducing poverty and financial insecurity, digital exclusion and increasing community resilience.

Our Advice Partnership continues, with advice providers across Council Services, the 3rd sector, Scottish Social Security and most recently NHSGGC coming together to share information and work to reduce gaps and coordinate services.

Our ongoing commitment to advice provision and our innovative affordable credit work; our digital initiatives, and housing strategies alongside our work to bolster administered funds and maximise their benefits for families help make families' money go further and help them avoid financial crises. Throughout Renfrewshire, across Council services, and with a variety of partners, our actions help families reduce their cost of living and lead dignified lives.

Social Renewal

Much of our work to tackle inequalities and maximise support for families in Renfrewshire is underpinned by our Social Renewal Plan.

During Summer 2021, officers worked with partners to identify actions in relation to income, financial insecurity and poverty theme as a key focus, in recognition of the end of the furlough scheme and rising food and energy costs being experienced and which were anticipated to worsen over Winter 2021.

The initial range of initial priorities and actions developed under the plan include a number which support families to lead dignified lives. These include:

- The development of a benefit take up campaign, underpinned by **£5,000** funding;
- Allocation of **£45,000** funding to Engage Renfrewshire to lead an affordable credit initiative;
- **£75,000** funding allocated to three local partner organisations to establish or develop community pantries and promote dignified access to food;
- Development of a £25,000 Community Food Fund; and

- Development of a **£50,000** fuel insecurity pilot to work with low-income households struggling to meet immediate fuel costs linked to the provision of energy advice in partnership with Renfrewshire Foodbank, Linstone Housing Association and Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

Tackling Poverty Programme

Projects under our Tackling Poverty Programme provide supports that help families lead dignified lives. Targeting support to families that need it most initiatives are:

- **Families First/School Support** which continues to offer targeted financial advice across Renfrewshire's schools
- The **Healthier, Wealthier Children** service which continues to provide targeted advice and support to new and expectant parents on managing changes to finances and supporting them to claim benefits they are entitled to.
- Specialist **Energy Advice** continues to be offered to families who need support to reduce their energy bills, manage fuel debt and improve the energy efficiency in their homes.

Support with Food

- **Pantries:** £75,000 funding allocated to three local partner organisations to establish or develop community pantries and promote dignified access to food. The organisations provided with funding, STAR Project, Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH) and Active Communities were selected as already well established in their communities and offering a number of support services for families already. This will allow families to access holistic support along with low-cost food.
- **Community Food Fund:** £25,000 of funding was allocated to provide small awards to organisations to develop community food offerings which move from emergency response to promote dignified, localised, access to food and community resilience. An initial allocation of £8940 was made to three local groups to alleviate some of the pressures of food insecurity in their areas by providing ongoing and accessible support to families.
- **Support for Renfrewshire Foodbank:** £10,000 has been provided to Renfrewshire Foodbank to help sustain their service. A Renfrewshire Council advice worker is attached to the Foodbank on a full time basis to provide advice to clients attending.

Support with Energy

- **Fuel Insecurity Pilot:** Development of a £50,000 fuel insecurity pilot to work with low-income households struggling to meet immediate fuel costs linked to the provision of energy advice in partnership with Renfrewshire Foodbank, Linstone Housing Association and Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau. The Foodbank and Linstone Housing Association provide fuel vouchers for both pre-payment and credit meters to provide emergency assistance to families, and this is supported by advice from Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau Energy Advisors.
- **Energy Management Unit:** Our Energy Management Unit comprises a team of three who provide advice to anyone struggling with energy costs and advocate for clients with energy companies. The advisers can also access available funds to support clients reduce bills/ access emergency fuel. Overall, client financial gain for this service in 21/22 was £325,376. Clients supported included 144 families with children under 16.
- **Information sessions:** In the latter part of 2021 and early 2022, energy bills became the issue most families reported being concerned with. To assist practitioners working with low-income families, either in the 3rd sector or within Council Services a ‘Spotlight Session’ was organised to clarify where those worried about energy costs could seek help and financial support within Renfrewshire. A further ‘Ren Talk’ session was arranged for Council, HSCP and OneRen staff.
- In addition, NHSGGC ran a series of online information sessions for their staff in partnership with Home Energy Scotland. The Health Board also include messages around advice on their payslips.



Income maximisation through advice

Throughout 2021-22, income maximisation through advice has been a focus for the Council and partners.

The Council’s Advice Works service continues to provide advice with regards to money, debt and benefits as well as providing advice and representation at benefit appeals. Overall the financial gain for clients this year was over £9.25 million. Advice Works provides the Healthier Wealthier Children advice, as well as that offered to all schools in Renfrewshire.

The predominantly Council funded Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau’s (RCAB) general service has gained over £2 million for the people of Renfrewshire this year. This is in addition to the Legal Service, Fair Work and Welfare Rights services, all funded by Renfrewshire Council.

This year, Advice Works and RCAB have worked closely with each other to ensure people are getting the benefits they are entitled to and the best money advice. They worked together on development of a **benefit take up campaign**, developed with partners and successfully launched during November 2021, with the aim of maximising income for low-income households. 60 clients of all ages were seen during the launch week, with support given around a number of benefits. A further 50 clients were seen in January 2022 when a similar campaign was run around **debt and money advice**. These campaigns have been very successful and it is intended to run them at regular intervals each year.

We have continued to work closely with Social Security Scotland to ensure that referral between our clients and theirs is as simple as possible to maximise income for parents and parents to be. With both the Local Delivery Lead and Client Support Adviser Team leader being part of our Advice Partnership, we can ensure relevant information is shared.

In our benefits take up work, we have specifically designed marketing materials around benefits for parents, including Best Start Grants and Scottish Child Payment to maximise numbers coming forward to claim these benefits.

Healthier Wealthier Children

The Healthier Wealthier Children (HWC) service works closely with antenatal and community child health services to target pregnant women and families with young children experiencing, or at risk of, child poverty as costs increase and employment patterns change around the birth of a child. The project offers income maximisation advice and aims to prevent families from falling into child poverty by working with health and early years services to identify families at risk at an early stage.

The service has helped families with 528 matters this year, with client financial gain of £417,319.15. Of these 132 fitted into the Child Poverty Priority Groups, with lone parents being the largest group receiving advice. The service is now collecting postcode information for the Priority Groups which will allow us to better plan services.

HWC data is reported into NHSGGC Financial Inequalities Group, the NHSGGC Child Poverty Group and as part of HSCP Strategic Planning.

School Support Service

Our School Support service offers advice to parents and carers via all schools and Early Learning Centres. This year 514 clients were assisted with advice with associated financial gain of £620,140.40.

Improving the Cancer Journey

The Improving the Cancer Journey service, in partnership with Macmillan, has continued to offer holistic advice for those with a cancer diagnosis, with a growth in referrals from Renfrewshire HSCP. With money worries highlighted as the main issue for service users, in the last 2 years, **£793,174.13** has been gained for **800** clients. Although this is a universal service, many parents have gained from the service. Next year, the service will grow to cover long-term health conditions as well as cancer.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde— Advice in Hospitals

Although the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) in Paisley is attended by patients from the West of Scotland, it sees most of those in need of hospital care from Renfrewshire. The Support and Information Service aims to be the first port of call for all non-clinical health & social care enquiries. The information Hub in the RAH provides information about money and benefits, income maximisation support and help with energy bills as well as information and support for carers and patients. It also provides a food supply on discharge for those who need it, in partnership with Renfrewshire Foodbank.

Late in 2021/22 their Health Improvement Lead with responsibility for the service, joined Renfrewshire’s Advice Partnership.

In the Royal Hospital for Children, which supports Renfrewshire families, the Money Advice service continues to support parents, carers and families. It provides an embedded and co-located Money and Debt advice with advocacy service to ensure that families access all benefits and entitlements and supports with debt issues, budgeting, energy costs, housing or eviction issues, employment, grants, white goods and applies a whole family holistic approach. **16** families

from Renfrewshire were supported in 2021/22. The Raising Money Worries in Maternity services also had **15** referrals from Renfrewshire families.

In addition, research carried out with BAME women including women in persistent poverty, highlighted barriers to service access (including use of interpreting) and ways in which the experience could be improved. Initial actions to address structural barriers in the maternity pathway include piloting video interpreting in the early pregnancy pathway and improving access to the Maternity Booking Line through use of a patient interpreting code.

Looking forward, a pilot to support patients or staff with Universal Credit issues is in development at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. This will involve telephone access for direct support to a dedicated DWP staff member which aims to prevent sanctions.

NHSGGC Health Visiting and Special Needs in Pregnancy Service (SNIPs)

There has been a detailed pilot and review in NHSGGC for those accessing SNIPs and receiving Money Matters supports in the Glasgow area. This service is a Specialist Maternity Service that supports people who are pregnant with drug/alcohol misuse, domestic violence issues, who may be a teenage pregnancy and those with mental health issues. The learning from this will be rolled out across Renfrewshire for all families accessing SNIPs support.

The updated Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan covering the period of 2022–26 highlights that the Health Visiting Universal Pathway promoting support to families with money worries. This reinforces that section of the pathway and plans for NHSGGC refreshing this process are being reviewed by the NHSGGC Financial Inequalities Group.

Our Healthier Wealthier Children Service has helped families with **528** matters this year, with client financial gain of **£417,319.15**.

This year, **514** clients were assisted by our School Support Service with associated financial gain of **£620,140.40**.

Affordable Credit

£45,000 funding was provided to Engage Renfrewshire, our Third Sector Interface to lead an affordable credit initiative under the existing banner of Renfrewshire Affordable Credit Alliance (RACA – www.RACA.org.uk). An Affordable Credit Officer (AFO) was employed in October 2021 with two priority areas; promotion of affordable credit options in Renfrewshire, and the prevention/reduction of people using illegal money lenders.

The AFO has carried out sessions with a number of community groups, including money management sessions with young people and local ethnically diverse communities, tailoring messages to their needs. This includes 'Tea and Tech' sessions working with Barclays Bank and local Credit Unions, Fair For You and Scotcash as well as our local Citizens Advice Bureau to help people engage with financial services safely online.

In addition, joint sessions have been run with Renfrewshire HSCP's Financial Insecurity team and presentations given to both Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire HSCP staff both as practitioners and consumers.

[Work around illegal money lending has led to RACA being awarded the Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit Charter Mark.](#)

Looking forward to the year ahead, the AFO will continue to work with organisations targeting Child Poverty Priority groups, such as Barnardos and Pachedu and continue to build connections in Renfrewshire communities.



Digital

Within the community impact assessment undertaken in late 2020, the positive benefits that digital access has brought to many households across Renfrewshire were recognised, however for specific groups of people there remain real barriers to access which exacerbate existing inequalities. Digital exclusion can broadly be considered in terms of connectivity, access to a device, skills and positive and accessible online experiences.

Renfrewshire has a strong reputation nationally in relation to the partnership approach to tackling digital exclusion. The pandemic has fundamentally changed the way in which people across communities have used technology, and has also widened existing inequalities around access and skills. Renfrewshire Council has participated in the Connecting Scotland programme to ensure that local people are able to gain access to devices and connectivity to support their wellbeing, and just under 2000 devices have been allocated to date. In addition, City Fibre are investing in a 700km network providing Renfrewshire residents and businesses with access to the fastest, most reliable gigabit speed connectivity.

The Council will continue to develop this approach through the development of a Digital Champions network in partnership with OneRen and £80,000 has been allocated to this project from the £100,000 allocated to tackle digital exclusion. This will be an initiative with SCVO and will build a network of volunteers and staff, and capacity across local third and community organisations, so that more local people can be supported to access and use digital technology. This will allow us to begin to understand how place-based solutions to digital inclusion could work and to develop a model of best practice for use across Scotland.

A new focus group has been created called 'Citizen Voice'. The group is made up of 23 members across public and the third sector representing the needs of citizens with regard to digital. This group is working collectively to identify local barriers to digital participation and how these can be overcome.



Free Bus Travel—NEC

11,060 young people in Renfrewshire have signed up for an NEC card with free bus travel.

Support has been provided by our Youth Services team, who worked with a number of organisations who supported young people were likely to face barriers to applying to get the card. These organisations are known as Trusted Verifiers—we have an agreement in place that staff act as referees for the young people and can confirm their personal information to the degree required by the scheme, removing the need for the young person to do it.

Services who supported young people with the process include: Renfrewshire Council Social Work (Fostering Service, Throughcare, Kinship Care, Area Teams, Unaccompanied Young People, Supported Carers, Care Experienced Team, SPACE Team), Renfrewshire Women's Aid, Who Cares? Scotland in Renfrewshire and Kibble

We adapted processes for take up of the Junior card (for 5 – 10 year olds), adding an application process through ParentPay (which is popular in Renfrewshire). Schools can also provide paper applications. Those applying for the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (the card for those aged 11+) have always been able to apply at any local library in Renfrewshire. This way they can be supported by a member of staff if they need it. One Ren Libraries and Youth Services support this process.

We were also aware that some families could not access the required proof documents for the scheme or faced paying £15 for a birth certificate. We decided to simplify the form so that those in school could simply include their school on the form and we would verify their details using SEEMIS or other back of house systems where possible. This has made accessing the scheme easier and more inclusive.

Looking forward, each year Youth Services manages the primary 7 bulk process for Young Scot cards. This gives every primary 7 pupil the chance to apply for a card and typically takes place between March and May. It involves a photographer visiting every school to photograph the P7 pupils for their card and a bulk data exercise for those who provide consent.

During the summer holidays we will be looking at uptake at certain schools and where this is low, will include a sign-up availability at Summer activity camps for parents. These tend to have a higher uptake from families experiencing poverty and so information and easy sign up may assist those who haven't used the methods already available.

Winter Support Funding

In the past year Renfrewshire Council has administered a range of funds to support families.

It was announced in late 2021 that £848,000 additional funding would be allocated to the Council from Scottish Government, to support people experiencing financial insecurity over the immediate winter period.

In developing options in relation to this additional Scottish Government funding, officers worked with partners and across services to map financial payments / support arrangements that have been allocated through local authorities during the pandemic, and to undertake an initial assessment of specific groups that could be targeted through this funding.

In response to the local needs assessment undertaken and in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on the utilisation of this funding, the £848,000 of additional Scottish Government has been initially allocated as follows:

- **£230,000** to provide individual grants of £100 for people facing financial insecurity/hardship
- **£325,000** to provide a £50 payment per child for winter clothing for children in receipt of School Clothing Grant.
- **£160,000** to top up the Scottish Welfare Fund to maintain payments at the current rate.
- **£90,000** to top up Discretionary Housing Payments which will assist clients in maintaining their tenancy and prevent homelessness.
- **£38,000** for an additional Improving the Cancer Journey Coordinator for one year to support individuals who have a long-term condition. This will allow clients to be seen quicker and provided with appropriate advice.

Administering other support funds

There has been a Tenant Support Fund funded by Scottish Government and administered by local authorities to people renting in social or private sectors who are struggling with rent arrears directly caused by COVID-19 or at risk of repossession or homelessness.

A one-off Low Income Pandemic Payment of £130 was made in Autumn 2021 to help towards increased costs and potential lost income during the pandemic. This was paid to people who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction as well as some people who are exempt from Council Tax.

There have been a number of Scottish Government funded payments throughout the pandemic focused on low-income households with children. These will be sustained throughout 2022 as four payments throughout the year (known as Scottish Child Bridging Payment), when they will be replaced by the full-roll

out of the Scottish Child Payment by Social Security Scotland. These payments are £130 per child eligible for free school meals due to low-income, and will be made at Easter, Summer, October and Christmas in line with the start of the school holidays. These payments are for children 6 and over, as those under 6 will receive Scottish Child Payment.

In addition, cash payments of £2.25 per day, per child are made for free school meals for the periods of times children have been on school holidays. The payment is made at a flat rate regardless of age.

Locally, we continue to administer both the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) throughout the pandemic. While these supports are 'business-as-usual', since the beginning of the pandemic they have been topped up by both local and national funding to meet demand. In 2021/22 DHP was topped up by **£190,000** and Scottish Welfare Fund by **£160,000** (including additional Scottish Government funding).

In February 2022, Finance Secretary Kate Forbes announced a further £290 million in financial support to help address the rising cost of living. New measures announced included £280 million to provide £150 to every household in receipt of Council Tax Reduction in any Band and to provide £150 to all other occupied households in Bands A to D. In Renfrewshire, the households affected received £150 credit towards their Council tax bill.

Period Poverty

As well as our general provision of sanitary products in libraries, leisure centres and town halls and our ordering service for individuals, we have focused on provision to community groups who work with families with young children, especially those with young children such as Home-Start and have also provided products to Early Learning Centres in areas of high deprivation, for mothers and other carers and family members to pick up what they need.

We have also worked with a number of our pantries and Renfrewshire Foodbank to provide reusable products to establish if those types of products work well for people with lower incomes.

Our consultation on free sanitary products was carried out in May 2022 and the results will be the basis for our longer-term strategy with regard to period products.

Housing

Renfrewshire Local Housing Strategy 2022–2027

At the time of writing this Local Child Poverty Action Report, the Council's Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 is in draft form and out for consultation within the area. The draft Local Housing Strategy builds on the previous housing strategy and supports the regeneration of existing neighbourhoods and the delivery of high quality, well designed, energy efficient and sustainable places.

The draft strategy proposes five Strategic Priorities for Renfrewshire, which the Council and partners will seek to deliver over the next five years.

- Strategic Priority 1: The supply and delivery of housing is increased across all tenures to meet the housing needs of different groups and create attractive and sustainable places;
- Strategic Priority 2: People live in high quality, well managed homes in sustainable neighbourhoods;
- Strategic Priority 3: Address the challenges of the climate emergency, delivering homes that are warm, energy efficient and fuel poverty is minimised;
- Strategic Priority 4: Preventing and addressing Homelessness with vulnerable people getting the advice and support they need; and,
- Strategic Priority 5: People can live independently for as long as possible in their own home and the different housing needs of people across Renfrewshire are being met.

Data released by Energy Action Scotland in January 2022 showed that just over one in 5 people in Renfrewshire are living in fuel poverty. As part of Strategic priority 3, a distinct Fuel Poverty strategy is being developed for Renfrewshire.



Housing Led Regeneration and Renewal Programme

Renfrewshire Council's Housing Led Regeneration and Renewal Programme will deliver modern, high quality, energy efficient, affordable Council housing that will not only significantly enhance the Council's housing stock but will also contribute to the wider transformation of Renfrewshire as a place and will be central to the economic and social recovery of Renfrewshire. This ambitious programme will be taken forward as a key Council priority, designed to deliver maximum benefits for local communities, with the active involvement of services across the Council. Phase 1 of the £100m, ten-year Programme covers eight areas which have been identified as being in particular need of investment and which contain a total of 1,648 properties; 1,147 of which are in Council ownership.

The programme will see a mix of investment to improve existing buildings and the common areas around them, with potential demolition and new-build in some areas, improving the wider neighbourhoods as places to live and contributing to the area's recovery from the pandemic. It is anticipated that, along with refurbishment of existing properties, around 400 new affordable social rent houses will be built.

A package of enhanced improvement works will be developed which may include external improvement works such as thermal render, roofs, rainwater goods and energy-efficient doors and windows to properties along with environmental improvements to the surrounding area. Fabric works will be tailored to the buildings in each area and will adopt a whole house retrofit approach with measures to improve energy efficiency and help reduce energy costs for tenants and residents.

During summer and autumn 2021, an in-depth survey was conducted with residents to establish views on the initial proposals being made and collect information on household demographics to assist planning.



Renfrewshire Housing First

The Renfrewshire Housing First Service, initially set up as a one year pilot in 2013 continues to grow. The service provides outreach support to individuals aged 18 or over who are homeless, have an active addiction and live in the Renfrewshire area. Renfrewshire Housing First service supports people to access a permanent tenancy within the local authority. The service also employs Peer Support Practitioners who have been through their own addiction and in recovery and staff who offer a wide range of support to individuals with complex needs.

As well as providing support with the practical aspects of maintaining a tenancy, service users also receive support to access services relating to mental health, addictions and social opportunities and are offered support to find something in their life which is meaningful to them, through leisure activities, voluntary work, education or employment. The emphasis is always on what the individual wishes to have in their life, at a time when they are ready for it. Support is not time limited and can be in place for as long as the person requires it. Service users have access to an on-call service out with service hours.

The number of individuals being supported via the Housing First approach, which provides wraparound support for those in housing need to move to (and sustain) settled accommodation, has increased from 20 to up to 43 at any one time.

Rent Collection

Our approach to rent collection ensures that officers have continued to proactively contact tenants where there has been missed rent payments or changes to rent payment patterns to offer advice on accessing benefits and other support services as appropriate.



Supporting the next generation to thrive

Tackling Poverty

Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty Programme (see page 6) supports a number of projects which help our young people thrive and help break down some of the barriers to attainment.

The programme:

- Augments **Cost of the School Day** funding by £75,000 a year
- Provides funding for **Breakfast Clubs** in some of our most deprived areas relieving financial pressure on low-income families, but most importantly, makes sure that children start the school day ready to learn.
- Funds the **Peer Health** project in partnership with Active Communities, working with young people in secondary schools across Renfrewshire to identify key health priorities in their school and developing young people to lead their own activities to improve health and wellbeing, with a focus on mental health.
- Supports **Street Stuff** out of school activities during the holidays and at weekends, along with the provision of free healthy meals.
- Ensures the **Skoobmobile** continues to provide a mobile public library service directly to children and families in communities.

Breakfast Clubs are part of a number of schools, some of which are funded through the Tackling Poverty Programme and others through other means or organised by individual schools. An evaluation of our breakfast clubs was carried out this year. Pupils and their parents/carers were asked a number of questions about the Clubs.

Response to the Clubs was very positive. 95% of children thought the Clubs helped them get ready to learn and 92% said the Breakfast Clubs helped them concentrate throughout the day. 95% enjoyed socialising with their friends.

Over 80% of parents used the Club to help with their working schedule, with almost 30% saying it helped with the family budget. Parents with more than one child were more likely to use the Clubs to help with working arrangements and 36% of these parents advised the Club helped with family budget. One parent with 3 or more children said, 'It's allowed me to take up employment couple of days a week, without it I'd never be able to make my work on time'.

Breakfast Clubs were also found to have an impact on children's learning, with teaching practitioners recognising impacts, such as children being ready to learn and improved concentration and focus in those attending breakfast clubs.

Street Stuff provide free activities for children in the evenings, during the holidays and at weekends. A free healthy meal is provided and the Street Stuff buses also have free wifi to ensure young people aren't digitally excluded.

Street Stuff activities took place this year in local communities. This was a change from previous years where activities were located within St Mirren FC. Over the Christmas break period, 258 young people attended, with 225 healthy meals bought, with children feeding into the menu choice. At Christmas gift vouchers were purchased for the young people from stores selected based on conversation and feedback from staff and young people.

Over the spring holiday period, there were 540 attendances over the 2 week period, again, with lunch provided. Our Street Stuff buses were used during spring break.

Looking ahead, Street Stuff will be providing their offer to children age 5 and over through the Scottish Government Summer Holiday Food and Childcare Programme funding. Although currently activities are focused in areas of multiple deprivation, working with partners will allow the service to be extended and Child Poverty Priority Groups to be better targeted.

Skoobmobile

The Skoobmobile provides a mobile public library service directly to children and families in communities. This service aims to help improve children's life chances by encouraging a lasting interest in reading, literacy, physical activity and learning. After the pandemic restrictions, Skoobmobile has returned to communities this year, providing a limited service. **3449** primary school pupils, **327** pre-5 children and **306** adults were reached in approximately 500 sessions. **2573** books were borrowed and **694** children became members of Renfrewshire libraries. The Team has been showing the older children some of the online resources available through the libraries, and how to download audio books.

Looking forward, over the summer period, Skoobmobile will support the summer reading challenge through a programme of weekly stops throughout the summer holidays. These include stops in schools within areas of multiple deprivation. As the reading challenge this year is linked to STEM, the bus team have received training to support this.

Scottish Attainment Challenge

In response to our equity audit, which has been ongoing throughout the pandemic and attainment data, targeted approaches and interventions were developed to support schools with raising attainment and addressing health and wellbeing needs. Some examples are outlined below:

Our team of numeracy Modelling and Coaching Officers (MCOs) engaged with 12 target schools, offering bespoke, in-class support and professional learning activities to develop teachers' knowledge and skills in effective teaching in numeracy and mathematics. The officers are having a direct impact on children as well as staff:

"The MCO has had a noticeable impact on the way numeracy and maths is being taught...Staff confidence has developed as well as skills...staff are more willing to try out some tasks and activities. [Children] talk more positively about numeracy and maths and what they have learned. In the stages the MCO is focusing on attainment has increased as November results demonstrated."

The pandemic meant that many children and young people missed out on vital transition visits to their primary or secondary schools. Transition teachers from primary schools supported **90** children ensuring their move to secondary was as seamless as possible. 86% agreed that their transition teacher had helped them settle into high school learning and gave them curricular support when needed.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. A digital mental health and wellbeing policy for schools was developed and implemented helping schools set out their aims and approaches as well as identifying training needs to support the outcomes of children and young people.



Partnership working has allowed us to strengthen and add value to the work of schools following the pandemic. Active Schools are working with 11 schools to support learning through an after-school physical activity programme. **257** children have participated and benefited by engaging in a variety sport and physical activities which include literacy and numeracy content to support learning:

"In the Active Schools Reading Club we have been focusing on inciting pleasure of reading though implementing Dive into Reading strategies. We worked on comprehension... we discussed vocabulary and how it fits the purpose of the text; we made connections to what we know about the world. But most importantly, we tried to have fun with the text we have been reading."

The Place2Be service is supporting improvements in the emotional wellbeing of children, young people, staff and families. Since August 2021, Place2Be have supported **314** children and young people in targeted schools through 455 drop-in sessions, 191 one-to-one therapeutic counselling sessions, 35 parent partnership sessions and 178 staff Place2Think sessions.

"I like Place2Be because I am able to share my opinions and they don't judge you and they respect it."

Child

"I have been feeling so overwhelmed and felt helpless about how to get help for my son. I am really grateful to Place2Be for supporting him"

Mother

Cost of the School Day (COSD), which was topped up by the Tackling Poverty Programme, was also used flexibly to directly support families. The majority of COSD funding was used to purchase uniforms and winter / outdoor clothing for children. This was particularly important due to increased ventilation and outdoor play requirements in schools throughout the pandemic. Families also received food vouchers and financial support with utility bills to help alleviate food and fuel poverty.

Through COSD funding, 9 schools took part in a Participatory Budgeting (PB) pilot.

Schools were encouraged to work in collaboration with each other and include wider community partners. Projects focused on gender equality, food poverty, outdoor learning, nurture and family learning. As a result, children have developed a range of skills in decision making, negotiating, planning and leadership. Senior pupils have been able to gain experience of working with younger children which has supported their applications to further and higher education.

Looking ahead, the Scottish Government published a revised mission statement for the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and all local authorities will receive funding to close the poverty related attainment gap. The refreshed mission is cognisant of the role that partners play in closing the gap ensuring that all children are able to learn, achieve and attain. This also includes an enhanced focus on collaborative working with local poverty action groups and community planning partners. The SAC offer in Renfrewshire will include targeted and universal support to enhance learning and teaching, health and wellbeing, families and communities and leadership. This will be delivered in partnership with schools and wider partners to ensure that there is no poverty of ambition for children and young people in Renfrewshire.



Peer Health

The Peer Health Project, in partnership with Active Communities, continues to work across all Renfrewshire secondaries, including our ASN secondary school. Peer educators are recruited and trained and workshops provided so teachers can support this work. In addition, a community drop-in takes place once a week. Older pupils, who are providing support can use this as to contribute toward Saltire and Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Activities are decided within individual schools and based on their priorities. Examples of the work taking place are:

- Cooking sessions delivered by a restaurant aimed at pupils leaving/moving out and for young carers across the school
- LGBTQ+ lessons delivered to all S3 pupils
- Wellbeing Homework Club to be started with online input from teachers to help through the homework
- Random acts of Kindness across the school
- Mental Health First Aid training
- Pupils volunteering within the community

Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services Partnership

Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services Partnership Plan 2021/22–2023-24 ([here](#)) sets out our vision, that Renfrewshire’s children and young people are happy, healthy, safe and thriving.

The Partnership is responsible for a range of universal, targeted and specialist services which promote the safety and security of children, young people and their families. It supports a range of activities around health, safety, young people’s rights and ensuring children and young people make positive contributions to their communities.

The plan for the next three years outlines actions and outcomes and will be monitored by a monitoring and evaluation sub-group which prepares a progress report for each meeting of the Partnership Board.



The Partnership board will be responsible for decision making on appropriate local spend for the **Whole Family Wellbeing Fund** which is being distributed by Scottish Government and is intended to scale up and drive the delivery of holistic whole family support services. Spending criteria have been developed, with input from stakeholders, to guide decision making by Children’s Services Partnerships, reflecting consistent stakeholder input that flexibility will allow optimisation of approaches which best meet local need.

This funding forms a key part of Scottish Government’s commitment to Keep the Promise, recognising the importance of early intervention in reducing need for formal care.

The Promise

Renfrewshire has a Promise Strategic Oversight group with 5 subgroups sitting beneath replicating the 5 pillars of the Promise. More than 50 individuals are involved in this workstream from 9 different agencies. This includes all key strategic partners, frontline staff and care experienced people. Throughout 2021, Renfrewshire’s Promise Strategic Oversight Group and Promise Sub groups met regularly.

Work around The Promise has progressed this year, with development in a number of key areas, including **Promise Keepers** where we have developed a set of values for what is required to be a Promise Keeper for individual staff to ensure that staff are considering the Promise in their day to day working lives. As a Council it is important that we all recognise that we all play an important role in ensuring that the promise is kept across Renfrewshire, and also what that means and looks like for our individual job roles. Promise Keepers will be responsible for championing The Promise in their services or organisations to ensure that The Promise is at the forefront of service delivery and design. Promise Keepers will be formally recruited through an application form and will receive relevant training and development opportunities to ensure that they are fully supported in their roles.

A **Promise Self-Evaluation toolkit** has also been created in line with the key recommendations of The Independent Care Review and Plan 21-24 of The Promise. This tool aims to allow services and staff teams across the local authority to evaluate and measure their progress in implementing The Promise across these key areas. This will allow elements of best practice to be identified and celebrated, providing key learning opportunities across a wide range of services. This document will also allow us to gain an improved understanding of areas where improvement is needed so support can be provided to ensure that these gaps in provision are addressed.

In addition, a successful bid was made to the Life Changes Trust Legacy Fund and £400,000 granted for

Digital Skills for People with Care Experience 2022-2025. This consortium bid with YMCA Scotland, YMCA Paisley, Youthlink Scotland, Barnardo’s, Scottish Tech Army and Mhor Collective will support The Promise.

Community Learning and Development - Youth Services

Community Learning and Development reaches out to children, young people, adults and families, including those who face barriers and experience disadvantage, and takes a preventative and asset-building approach to working with people, families and communities.

For work with young people, this includes universal and targeted actions such as community-based youth work to build strength and capacity amongst young people, delivery of an extensive Youth Voice programme to ensure young people have every opportunity to be fully engaged in local and national decision-making structures and to raise awareness and participation in democracy and citizenship opportunities – actively removing barriers to participation. Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme and other wider achievement programmes are supported and delivered in schools and communities. Digital development opportunities and Education Recovery learning programmes ensure no young person is left behind, with a particular focus on reducing the educational poverty attainment gap. Universal youth engagement programmes will be maintained and developed that will reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour on communities – promoting safer communities and providing opportunities for participation, volunteering, employment and building – as well as addressing known issues of poverty and holiday hunger in targeted communities.





Supporting the education recovery of young people, the collaborative working partnership Renfrewshire Youth Work Network, has developed community-based Academies which offer thematic learning activities.

There are four Academies:

- the Culture Academy (led by [Create Paisley](#));
- the Digital Academy (led by [Paisley YMCA](#)),
- the Outdoor Academy (led by [Renfrew YMCA](#)); and
- the Community Empowerment Academy (led by [Renfrewshire Council's Youth Services](#))

In each of the Academies, young people not only engage and learn new skills, but are able to produce and create material and resources that will benefit others, peers and communities. This programme seeks to strengthen the youth work and schools partnership, focusing on reducing the poverty attainment gap.

The Academies were formed as part of the [Youth Work Educational Recovery Programme](#), supported by the Scottish Government and focus much of their work on some of the more deprived areas in Renfrewshire, although are open to all young people across the local authority area. Feedback for each academy has been excellent. Young people said they loved learning new skills, looking forward to new experiences each week, and enjoying meeting up with new friends.

More information on Community Learning and Development plans and activities can be found in their [Strategy](#).

Appendix 1

Youth Unemployment Achievements

67.4%

Renfrewshire's Youth Employment rate (now 67.4%) has seen the biggest growth across all 32 local authority areas over the last 10 years and is the 2nd highest in Scotland.

93%

An increasing % (93%) of young people aged 16-19 years are participating in work/learning/study (Aug 21 Annual Participation measure). The gap in this participation rate (12% at Feb 22) between Renfrewshire's most and least deprived areas is fluctuating (84.2% participating in most deprived areas and 96.2% in least.)

96.5%

A record percentage of pupils across Renfrewshire were in a 'positive destination' within three months of leaving school last year.

730

Kickstart opportunities were created with 430 being filled with 18-24 year olds (at 25.3.22)

101

Young People participated in West College Scotland's YPG funded Skills Boost College Provision (2020/21 Academic Year)

99

young people gaining skills and experience through volunteering since November 2020. There have also been 120 young people awarded their Saltire Award during this period.

411

Young people participating in specific YPG and NOLB funded employability programmes in 21/22

71.7%

The Modern Apprenticeship achievement rate in Renfrewshire.

62

Graduate Apprenticeships were registered, with 50 registered with employers in Renfrewshire (2020-21)

416

young people started a Modern Apprenticeship (1 April to 31 December 2021)

45

pupils started Foundation Apprenticeships in schools at SCQF Level 4-6 (2020-21)

14 local employers have formally signed up to the YPG pledging support and have to date provided **305** opportunities for local young people (2 mentoring; 67 work experience placements; 67 Modern Apprenticeships; 25 Foundation Apprenticeships; 4 Adopt an Apprentice; 49 volunteering and 91 paid internships)

Many more employers have created employment and work experience opportunities for young people.

