



# SCOTTISH BORDERS ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY 2024-2029





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# FOREWORD

Welcome to the Scottish Borders Anti-Poverty Strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29 which replaces the previous 2021 Strategy. This new Strategy builds upon the good work already done by partners to tackle poverty in the Scottish Borders and sets out our commitment to drive forward further efforts.

In June 2023, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Scottish Government agreed a new Partnership Agreement (known as the Verity House Agreement). This set out three shared priorities, one of which is **tackling poverty**. The agreement is a high-level statement of intent to build upon existing activity both nationally and locally and to work together more effectively to improve the lives of people in Scotland.

The importance of tackling poverty is already a high priority for Scottish Borders Council and partners. The [Council Plan](#) sets out a strategic framework for Council decision-making and operations, highlighting 'poverty' as a priority, while poverty is one of four themes at the heart of the [Scottish Borders Community Plan](#). This strategy augments and focuses these efforts towards a common vision for the next 5 years, recognising that we must adapt our approach during that period as circumstances change.

We face a specific combination of challenges in the Scottish Borders due to rurality and geography. An ageing demographic, income deprivation, fuel deprivation, digital access, broadband issues, and food security reinforce poverty as a complex, multi-dimensional and constantly evolving issue. Add Covid 19 and the Cost of Living Crisis, and the need to refresh our strategy is clear. The recent announcement about the withdrawal of the universal pension age winter heating payment is clearly another important consideration. We must focus anew on the main drivers of poverty (income from employment, income from social security and benefits in kind, and the cost of living) and work with partners to increase the life chances and experiences of all, alleviate financial pressures, and enable people to make a full contribution within their community.

As well as providing support and opportunities, we also recognise the need to take a poverty informed approach to planning and delivery of services to reduce the stigma of poverty and provide dignified and sustainable pathways out of poverty.

We believe that the combined knowledge, expertise and experience of Scottish Borders Council and our partners, as well as open and honest engagement with people experiencing poverty, will help us to tackle poverty and improve lives.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of the Strategy, and we look forward to continuing our work over the next five years towards reducing the impacts of poverty in the Scottish Borders.

**Councillor Robin Tatler**  
**Chair of the Anti-Poverty Members Reference Group**

# INTRODUCTION

Almost one in four of our children in the Scottish Borders live in poverty (after housing costs)

Unclaimed pension credit is estimated at £3.6M in the Scottish Borders

The rate of Universal Credit Claimants in the Scottish Borders is at its highest level ever

The average level of fuel poverty in the Scottish Borders is around 35%

The Scottish Borders Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) helped approx. 4,000 clients to claim £3.6m in 2023 by offering free support and advice for benefits entitlement, debt and consumer issues, an average of £932 per client.

## Too many people in Scotland are still trapped in poverty.

- 1 in 4 children in Scotland (24%) were living in poverty in 2020-23.
- 1 in 5 working age people (21%) in Scotland were living in poverty in 2020-23.
- 15% of pensioners in Scotland were living in poverty in 2020-23.
- 60% of working age adults in poverty and 70% of children in poverty lived in a household where someone was in paid work in 2020-23.

(source: [Scottish Government poverty statistics](#))

In June 2023 we published a [Progress Report](#) for our 2021 Strategy. The report set out significant progress in activities undertaken within 6 themes and against 11 outcomes to tackle poverty in the Scottish Borders and demonstrated our commitment to making a difference to those experiencing poverty.

We have reflected on our progress. We consider our vision, themes and outcomes remain relevant, therefore we will continue to pursue them in this updated strategy, while extending the strategy to provide a framework for activity over the next 5 years.

We will tackle poverty in the following areas:

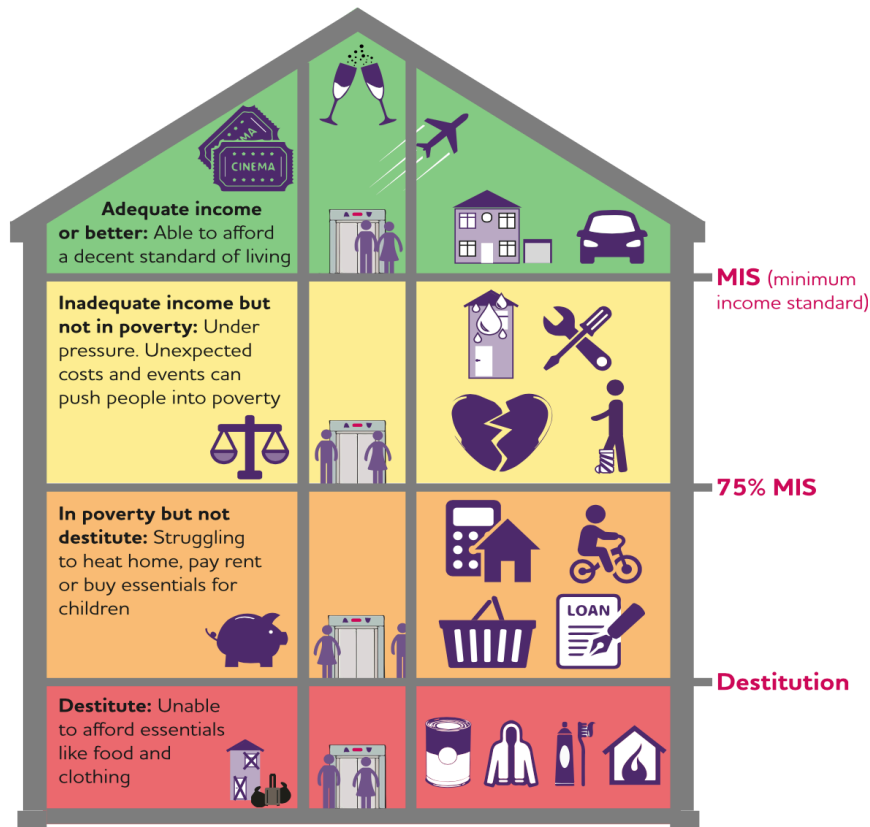


# WHAT IS POVERTY?

Poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) define [poverty](#) in the UK as “not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.”

The [Minimum Income Standard \(MIS\)](#), developed by Loughborough University and used by JRF, “provides a vision of the living standards that we as a society agree everyone in the UK should be able to achieve”. The graphic below shows how JRF the different levels of poverty based on the MIS.





# OUR VISION

**We want a Scottish Borders where no-one lives in poverty and where everyone is able to achieve their full potential.**

**We want the Scottish Borders to be a place where everyone can play their part in understanding that tackling poverty is everyone's responsibility.**

**We believe that if we act locally, and in partnership, we can make a real difference.**

**We want this Scottish Borders Anti-Poverty Strategy to be pro-active, evidenced by real experience and directed by need.**

**Working with the people of the Scottish Borders, we aim to find solutions to poverty challenges which support them in a way that works best for them.**

Over the next five years we aim to –

- Meet our vision and deliver our strategy
- Work in partnership to create accessible services
- Tackle stigma
- Create opportunities in education, employment and financial sustainability

The following principles support our approach:

1. **Respect:** Treating everyone with dignity and valuing every contribution.
2. **Resilience:** Helping individuals and households to manage their own affairs and make informed choices and decisions about their lifestyle and prevent them falling into poverty; building resilience in people and communities.
3. **Person Focused:** Tailoring services and support to the different types and places of poverty and the different needs and characteristics of all our communities and identities, acknowledging that one solution does not suit all.
4. **Fairness:** Removing barriers that prevent some people from taking part in life, socially and economically. Promoting a society in which individuals and groups are treated fairly and receive a just share of the opportunities that our region has to offer.
5. **Sustainable:** Plan our actions for the long term, in an ongoing discussion with our residents. Designing and building services, infrastructure and organisations that are affordable and accessible.
6. **Shared:** Making sure there is a joint understanding of the issues around poverty in our region and working together in partnership.
7. **Communication:** Listening to and involving our residents, understanding their experiences, and using their advice.



# TIMELINE OF EVENTS INFLUENCING POVERTY SINCE 2021

Late 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of the “cost of living crisis”.</li> <li>End of the £20 weekly uplift to Universal Credit, pushing 6.2 million families across the UK into an overnight loss of income.</li> </ul>
October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of the “energy crisis”.</li> <li>A “typical” household spends £1,277 per annum on fuel.</li> </ul>
November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crisis Grant demand increased in the Scottish Borders, initially linked to the removal of the £20 uplift in Universal Credit and increases in energy charges.</li> </ul>
February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ukraine war leads to a rapid increase in energy costs triggered by the phasing out of Russian oil.</li> <li>1.8 million households across the UK experienced destitution in 2022, a 64% increase since 2019. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)</li> </ul>
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working-age benefits and State Pension are uprated by 3.1% in line with the inflation rate the previous September, but this is quickly outstripped by continuing rapid inflation.</li> </ul>
June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trussell Trust estimated that 11.3 million people in the UK (14% of all adults or their households) had experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months.</li> </ul>
September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average rents for 1-bedroom properties in Scotland increased by an estimated 6.3% between 2021 and 2022, to reach £580 in 2022.</li> </ul>
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inflation peaked at 11.1%.</li> </ul>
April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working-age benefits and state pension are uprated by 10.1%, in line with the new inflation rate.</li> <li>There is a rise in food bank usage, with the Trussell Trust reporting a record high of 1.5 million emergency food parcels provided across the UK between April and September 2023, a 16% increase from the same period in 2022.</li> </ul>
September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average rents increased at a Scotland level in the year to September 2023 across all property size categories between 11.7% and 15.1%.</li> </ul>
December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bank interest rate in December 2021 was 0.25%</li> <li>The bank interest rate in December 2023 was 5.25%</li> <li>This placed significant pressure on homeowners with mortgages who were not tied into fixed rates and increased the demand in the rental market and contributed to rent increases.</li> </ul>
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inflation is expected to return to the 2% target and may dip to 1% until 2026, giving some respite to consumers.</li> </ul>
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency</li> </ul>
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Energy Action estimates that 6 million people in the UK are living in fuel poverty. A typical UK household spends £1,690 per annum on fuel.</li> </ul>
April – September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have started to issue migration notices to over 400,000 claimants of benefits such as Housing Benefit, Tax Credits, Employment Support Allowance and Jobseekers Allowance. Claimants have up to three months to apply for Universal Credit, which is paid monthly.</li> </ul>
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Withdrawal of universal pension age winter heating payment</li> </ul>
2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Institute For Government</a> estimates that household incomes will finally catch up with living costs and RHDl (Real Household Disposable Income) is expected to return to 2021 levels, signalling the end of the “cost of living crisis”.</li> </ul>

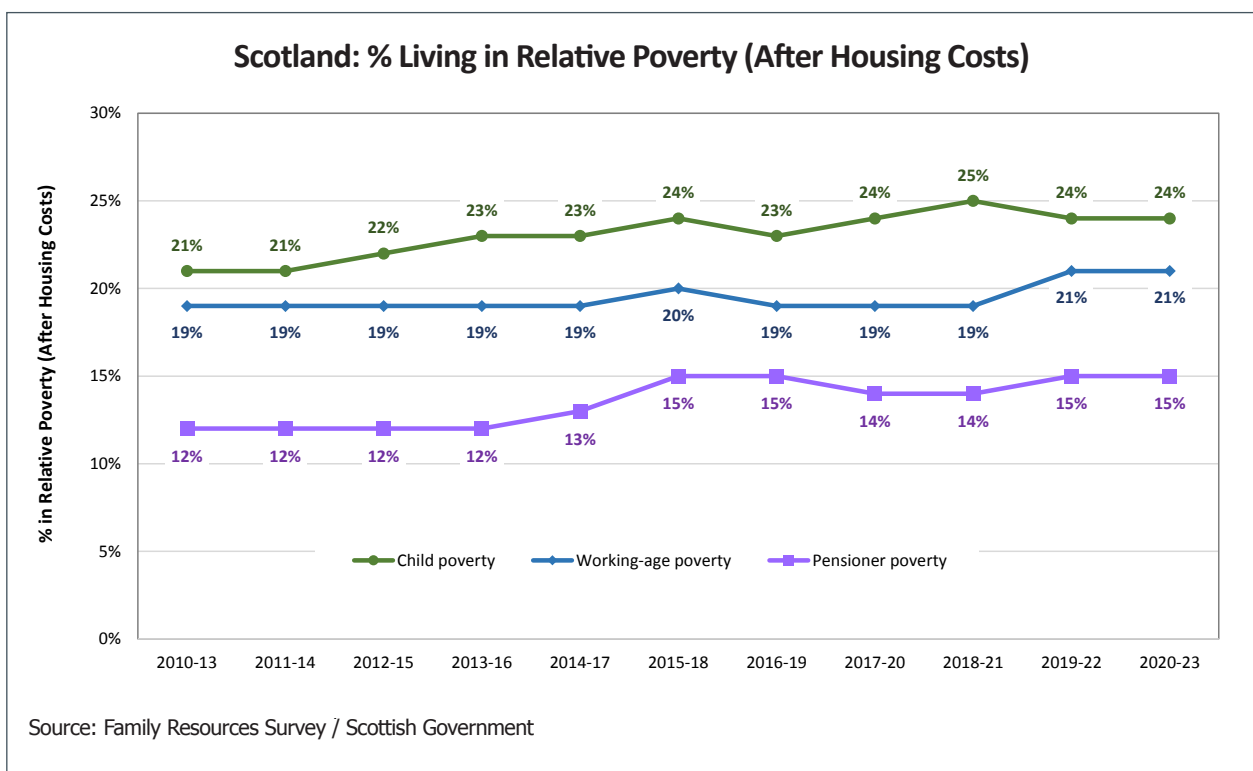
# NATIONAL POVERTY

The most recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) "[Poverty in Scotland](#)" from October 2023 shows the main findings (for Scotland, including the Scottish Borders) as:

- Over one million people still live in poverty in Scotland, with nearly half of those (490,000) living in very deep poverty.
- The statutory child poverty reduction targets are unlikely to be met without significant additional Scottish Government action.
- While the Scottish Child Payment is likely to reduce child poverty, the growth of in-work poverty is holding back further progress.
- Just over 10% of workers in Scotland are locked in persistent low-pay i.e. they are paid below the real Living Wage – 72% of them are women.
- Five high-priority industries play a key role in maintaining in-work poverty – retail, hospitality, manufacturing, health and social work and the administration and support services.

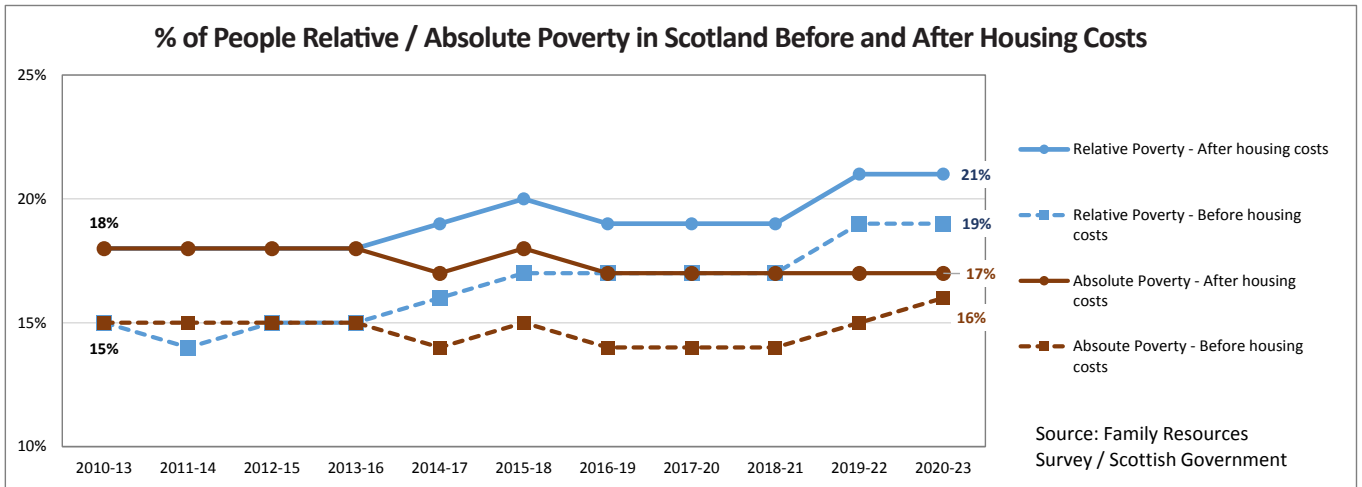
The "[Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland](#)" dashboard presents estimates of the proportion of people, children, working-age adults and pensioners in Scotland living in poverty, and other statistics on household income and income inequality.

Since 2010, the proportion of people living in relative poverty after housing costs in Scotland has increased for children, working-age adults and pensioners.



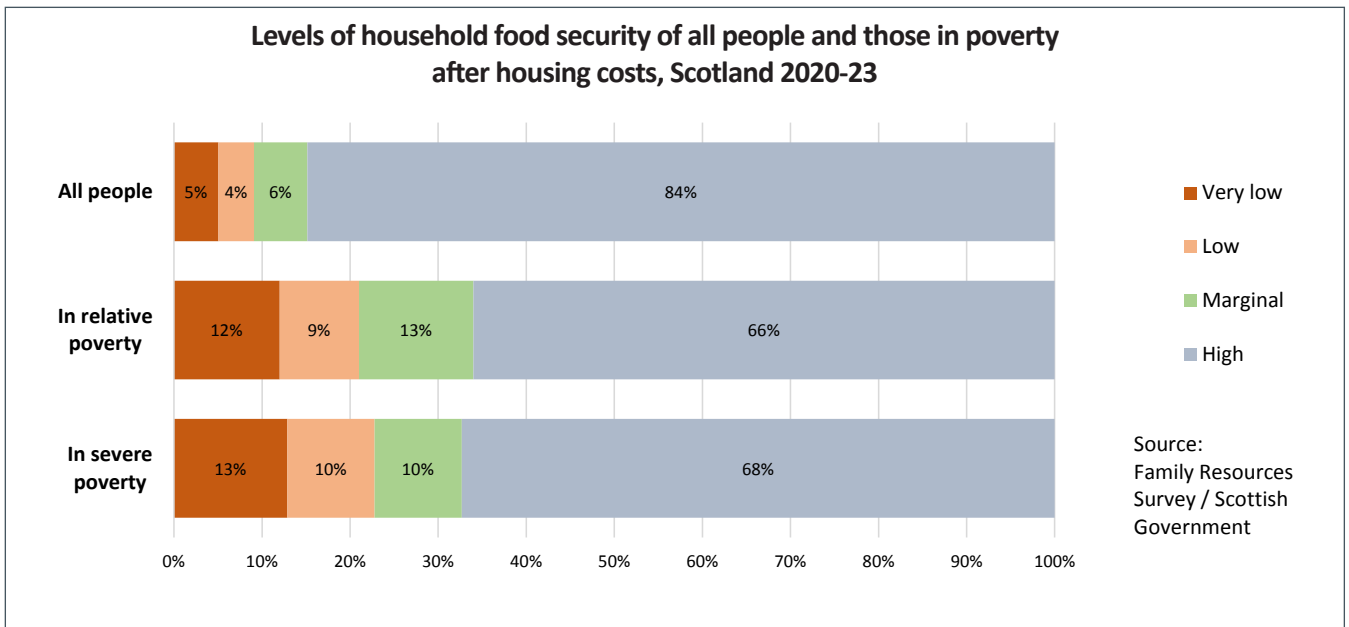


Since 2010, the proportion of people living in relative poverty in Scotland has increased for both before and after housing costs. Whereas the proportion of people living in absolute poverty has remained relatively stable, as seen in the graph below.



The Family Resources Survey added food security questions in 2019/20. They ask about whether people were worried about running out of food, had to reduce meal sizes or skip meals.

The graph below shows, in 2020-23, 84% of the population lived in a household with high food security but in households experiencing poverty, just 66% lived in high food security households.



# LOCAL POVERTY

[“A Picture of Poverty”](#) sets out data and statistics relating to the Scottish Borders and is used to inform the actions we take towards tackling poverty. However, there is also potentially hidden poverty within a Borders context, such as rural deprivation, which will also need to be recognised.

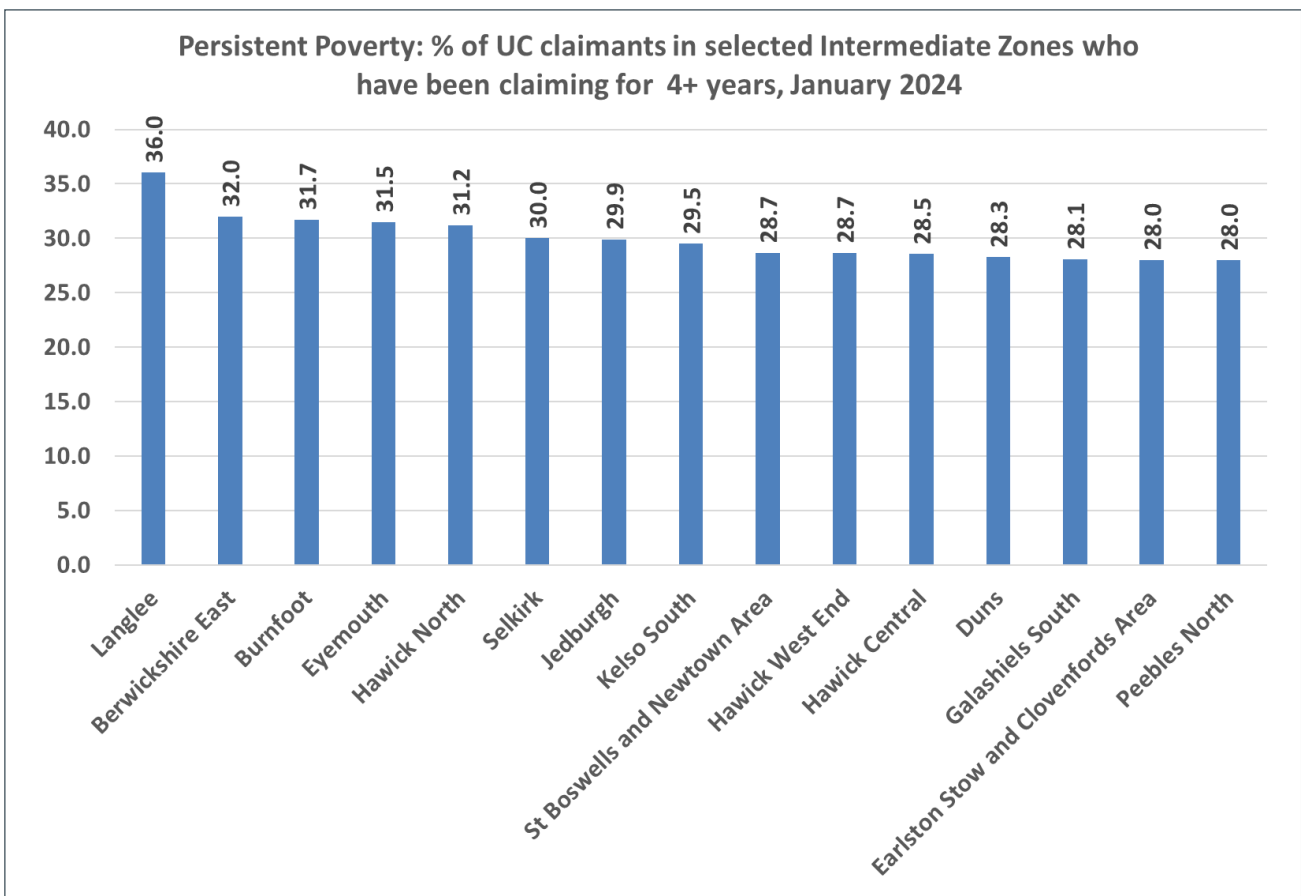
Specific highlights include:

## Areas of Persistent Poverty within the Scottish Borders

**154,701** people in Scotland have been claiming Universal Credit for more than 4 years, which is **4.4%** of the entire working age population.

**2,442** people in Scottish Borders have been claiming Universal Credit for 4 or more years, which is **3.6%** of the entire working age population.

The graph below shows the Intermediate Datazones where the proportion of Universal Credit claimants who have been claiming for more than 4 years is above the Scottish Borders average of **27.9%**. Six areas are above the Scottish average of **29.9%**.



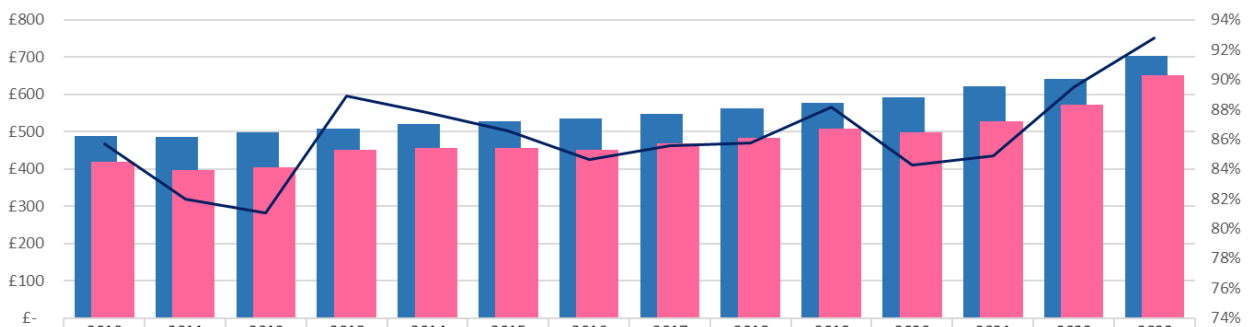
## Wages

The median gross weekly pay (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders has consistently been below the level for Scotland. “Workplace based” refers to workers who work in the Scottish Borders, regardless of where they live.

Since 2020 the median workplace-based wages in the Scottish Borders have been getting closer to the Scottish level, from **84%** in 2020 to **93%** in 2023. This shows that the situation for people who work in local jobs is improving.

However, the gap still represents more than £50 less per week for local workers in the Scottish Borders than for local workers in other regions of Scotland, on average.

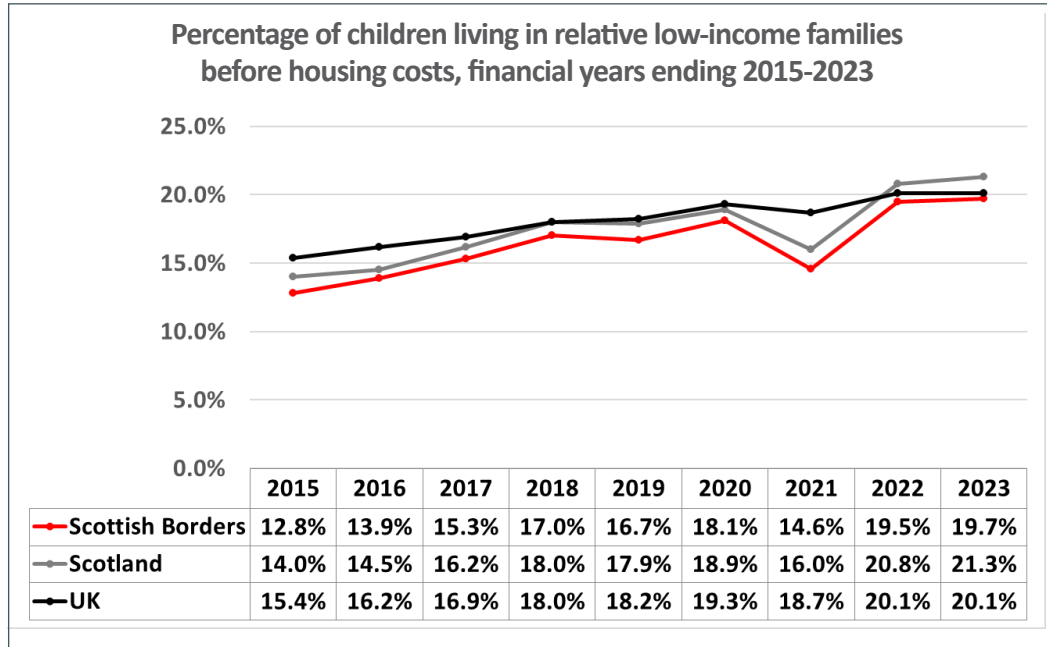
**Median Gross Weekly Pay for Full Time Worker (Workplace based), Scottish Borders vs. Scotland (2010 to 2023)**



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Scotland	£488	£485	£498	£509	£520	£527	£535	£547	£563	£577	£592	£621	£641	£703
Scottish Borders	£418	£398	£403	£452	£456	£456	£452	£468	£483	£509	£499	£527	£573	£652
% Difference	86%	82%	81%	89%	88%	87%	85%	86%	86%	88%	84%	85%	90%	93%

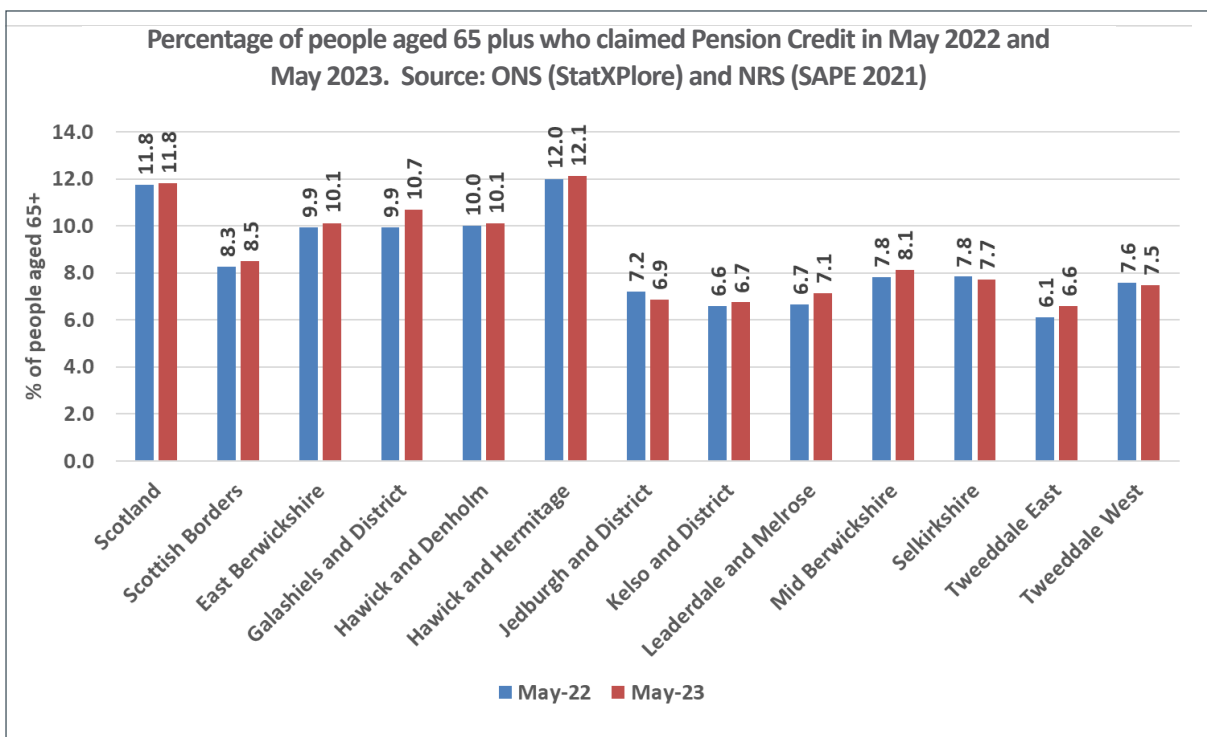
## Children in Low-income households over time, FYEs 2015 to 2023 before housing costs

**19.7%** of children aged 0-15 in the Scottish Borders lived in relative low-income households in 2022-23. This is below the Scottish average of 21.3%. The line graph below shows the timeline of this measure since FYE 2015.



## Proportion of the population claiming Pension Credit

Overall, around **8.5%** of the population aged 65+ in the Scottish Borders claimed Pension Credit in May 2023, equivalent to 2,523 people. This is lower than the Scottish average of **11.8%**.



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Theme	Outcome	Challenge	Opportunity
Pockets	Maximising income	Crisis grant applications continue to rise	<p>The Multiply programme designs courses to help people use numeracy to manage money eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• budgeting your bread and butter (Burnfoot)</li> <li>• financial wellbeing (Burnfoot)</li> <li>• money for life skills (Tweedbank)</li> <li>• cooking and budgeting (Burnfoot)</li> </ul> <p>Pension Credit Campaigns continue to encourage take up</p> <p>A credit union is available in the Scottish Borders. Caledonian Credit Union promotes ethical savings and affordable loans to everyone living or working within the Scottish Borders.</p> <p>Funding from the Scottish Government Child Poverty Accelerator Fund will be used to provide money advice and budgeting support for families in the Scottish Borders. Partners will work together to deliver a service to families on low income across the Borders, in a variety of locations.</p> <p>Scottish Borders Council is proud to be an accredited real Living Wage employer (current rate £12 per hour) and they remain committed to encouraging the wider adoption of the real Living Wage by partners, local employers, and suppliers. The Council has adopted the <i>Scottish Government Best Practice Guidance on Addressing Fair Work Practices</i>, including the Real Living Wage in Procurement for relevant contracts.</p>
Prospects	Education and training	The overall school attendance rate 2023/24 in the Scottish Borders was 91.7%. The Scottish average was 90.2%.	A new SBC <a href="#">attendance policy</a> is in operation – Schools work with this policy to encourage attendance. #EverySchoolDayCounts
Prospects	Employment	The availability and cost of childcare creates problems for parents who wish to access training opportunities.	The Parental Employability Support (PES) uses a holistic keyworker approach to upskill and/or re-train, increasing family income, lifting themselves and their family out of poverty. PES workers provide personalised support for parents who face barriers to progressing in their careers. PES are currently supporting 135 parents within the Scottish Borders. From July 2023, 19 new parents moved into employment with 15 sustaining this opportunity.
Prospects	Health and wellbeing	'Health deprivation' is the cycle of poverty and multiple deprivation that is triggered by the ill-health of an individual or someone they care for, which makes them unable to change their circumstances or improve their wellbeing themselves.	<p>The early learning centre at Bannerfield (one of the lowest SIMD areas in the Scottish Borders) offers a range of programmes from walking groups, stay and play, to a food and clothing pantry. They are currently engaging with 57 families.</p> <p>Breakfast clubs are in place across a number of Scottish Borders schools. These provide a healthy breakfast for students which improves their ability to learn.</p> <p>NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council continue to explore opportunities to participate in national initiatives to tackle health and wellbeing.</p>

Theme	Outcome	Challenge	Opportunity
Places	Housing	5,554 households (9.3%) of households in the Scottish Borders currently claim the housing entitlement of Housing Benefit.	The Affordable Warmth and Home Energy Efficiency Strategy (AWHEES) is a multi-agency strategy designed to support the provision of warm, energy efficient homes for everyone in the Scottish Borders. The Strategy involves key partners within SBC, as well as a wide array of stakeholders spanning the full breadth of the energy efficiency and fuel poverty agenda.
Places	Transport connectivity	Families living in rural poverty are disadvantaged. Rural areas, such as the Scottish Borders, experience limited public transportation options which can isolate them further. This lack of mobility hinders access to jobs, education, and essential services, as well as healthcare, education, and social support.	<a href="#">Free bus travel for under 22's</a>
Places	Transport connectivity	Travel expenses can mean the difference between accessing vital services or going without. Budgeting for transportation often comes at the expense of other necessities, making it a challenging choice for those already facing financial hardships.	The Scottish Borders Intensive Family Support Service is tailored to meet the needs of families experiencing rural poverty – it was found that there was a lack of accessible whole family support provision for these families, especially when families reside far from the nearest town.
Places	Digital connectivity	Neighbourhoods with less than 75% coverage are mostly remote rural communities, which already have the highest Access Deprivation in Scotland.	Access to fixed Broadband is an essential prerequisite to measuring uptake, in order to enumerate “digital inclusion.” 90% of premises in the Scottish Borders were able to receive Superfast Broadband in September 2023.
People	Community	People’s voice - hearing from different people and supporting different voices around the community they live in.	Place Making – communities are involved in determining priorities within their local place and to develop community led place plans Community conversations – there is an opportunity for members of the public to contribute to conversations on the Council's Plan and wider topics.
People	Poverty awareness and responsibility	Partnership working needs to be strengthened to ensure that everyone is working towards the same local outcomes of reducing poverty.	Working in partnership with DYW (Developing the Young Workforce), SDS (Skills Development Scotland), Scottish Borders Council Employability Service, Foodbanks and more to ensure we work towards our local outcomes.

Theme	Outcome	Challenge	Opportunity
Partnership	Working collaboratively	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The cost-of-living crisis is pushing more people into poverty</li> <li>2. We have poor job density and a declining workforce</li> <li>3. Some groups face greater challenges getting the health and care support they need</li> <li>4. Many communities, particularly those in rural locations, have poor access to the services they need</li> </ol> <p>The creation of a partnership plan is required in response to the Good Food Nation Act 2025. The plan should address food poverty as well as other issues such as net zero.</p>	<p>The Scottish Borders Community Plan supports partnership working to tackle poverty working towards 4 themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poverty</li> <li>2. Learning, Skills and Economy</li> <li>3. Good Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>4. Place, Community and Connectivity</li> </ol> <p>The four themes are all linked not only through reducing inequality but by impacting on each other. Improving one outcome has a knock-on effect on others, e.g. reducing the number of people living in poverty will have a positive impact on people's health.</p> <p>Partners are working together to ensure that the plan is reflective of needs in the Scottish Borders.</p>
Pathways	Signposting and support	<p>SBC needs to work with partners to ensure that information and support is available to people experiencing poverty in a consistent and timeous manner.</p> <p>SBC needs to work with partners to raise awareness of benefits available to residents</p>	<p>The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) comprises of Community Care Grants – which help people to live independently – and Crisis Grants, which provide a safety net in a disaster or emergency. SWF awards are made by the Local Authority to adults of any age who receive certain benefits.</p> <p>Participation in Challenge Poverty Week enables us to highlight the wide range of information, advice and support available to help people experiencing hardship through a partnership social media campaign.</p>



# SPOTLIGHT ON SPECIFIC ACTIONS

## Child Poverty

Significant child poverty challenges continue to exist in the Scottish Borders with 19.7% of our children living in low-income families (before housing costs), rising to 23% after housing costs.

We remain focused on the three direct drivers of poverty (income from employment, costs of living, income from social security and benefits in kind) in our work to tackle child poverty. We also focus on actions to help the six nationally identified priority family types (lone parents, families where a member of the household is disabled, families with 3 or more children, minority ethnic families, families where the youngest child is under 1, and mothers aged under 25).

**Partnership priorities in 2024/25 are around:**

- developing our shared understanding of local need so that we can use resources most effectively
- developing our work with people with direct experience
- strategic engagement with services and partners to design a whole systems approach to poverty reduction and prevention
- ensuring that our pathways are simple and intuitive so that families are supported in a timely and dignified way
- increase our focus on engagement in the early years so that low-income families receive the wrap-around whole family support they need



## Whole Family Support

The Whole Family Support Service is a new service for the Scottish Borders which aims to work with families who have multiple needs, on an intensive and holistic basis. The service will use a strength-based approach with families at the centre.

Family workers will work with families on their own terms, addressing issues that are live and important for the family by building strong and persistent relationships between professionals and families, supporting them to work with services and realise the strengths already present within the family.

Workers within the team will work intensively and creatively with a small caseload of families by offering interventions and strategies to build resilience, change negative behaviours, live successfully within the community and achieve sustained positive outcomes.

The team will work in partnership and collaboratively with a range of key partners including Children's Services, Education, Health, Housing, Domestic Abuse/Sexual Abuse Team and Third Sector/Voluntary organisations.

**Some of the outcomes the service aims to achieve include:**

- income maximisation
- reduction in housing related issues
- improvement in parenting skills
- reduction in children being subject to child protection measures
- support to get into training, employment and education

## Older People

Around **8.5%** of the population aged 65+ in the Scottish Borders claimed Pension Credit in May 2023, equivalent to 2,523 people. This is lower than the Scottish average of 11.8%. Unclaimed pension credit amounts to an estimated £3.6M in the Scottish Borders.

A recent change in the eligibility rules for the Winter Fuel Payment has raised the importance of older people signing up for Pension Credit if they meet the criteria.

**A local campaign to raise Pension Credit take-up is planned. We will:**

- work with partners eg. housing associations, CABx, to understand what can be done
- tailor our approach to ensure that we make an impact where it is needed
- communicate our campaign in a way that focuses on the advantages of claiming pension credit
- ensure that our campaign is in both digital and non-digital formats so that the messages are clear and accessible
- plan our resources so that we can support claimants through the process



## Team Around Cluster: A Community-Focused Approach to Supporting Children and Families

Scottish Borders Council education service has implemented an innovative approach called “Team Around the Cluster” to better support children and families, including those affected by poverty. This model, now in its second year, is showing promising results and has great potential to make a positive impact on our communities.

Team Around the Cluster is a collaborative approach that brings together school leaders, council services, and community partners to make decisions and allocate resources at a local level. This method recognises that each community has unique needs and that solutions are often best developed by those closest to the issues.

### Key Benefits

<b>1. Local Decision-Making</b>	<b>2. Increased Collaboration</b>	<b>3. Targeted Support</b>
Decisions about services and resources are made at the community level, ensuring they are tailored to local needs.	The approach encourages teamwork between schools, Council Services, and other community organisations.	Resources are directed to where they're needed most, particularly to help children and families impacted by poverty.

### Early Impacts

- Empowered School Leaders: School headteachers report feeling more valued and involved in decision-making processes.
- Community-Focused Solutions: Resources are being used more effectively to address specific local needs.
- Improved Support for Families: New initiatives have been launched to help families overcome barriers to education and access wider support services.



### Example: Supporting Families in the Teviot Area

In the Teviot cluster, funding has been used to create a Family Wellbeing Hub. This hub helps families:

- Overcome barriers to engaging with education
- Access support for employability
- Maximize their financial resources

#### Looking Ahead

As the Team Around the Cluster approach continues to develop, we anticipate seeing more positive outcomes for children and families across the Scottish Borders, particularly those facing economic challenges. This model demonstrates our commitment to creating a more responsive, community-focused system of support.

## LIFE EXPERIENCES

In order for us to understand poverty in the Scottish Borders, and address it more fully, we need to listen to, and involve those who live with its reality. Statistics can highlight the scale of poverty but do not necessarily show the impact on real people within our community. It is important that we recognise this and take action through our strategy.

We are in the process of developing specific locality plans for Burnfoot, Langlee and Bannerfield to support communities and reduce inequalities. Strategic partners will work with local residents to determine what is needed to tackle poverty in these areas. Along with our [Community Plan](#) these plans enable us to keep in touch with Scottish Borders residents who experience poverty. We can sometimes shape services to meet their needs, according to what they tell us.

We will also use our [engagement strategy](#), our [Youth Engagement Listen to Learn Strategy](#), and our current Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for children to inform our approach and actions.

Place making conversations and Community Conversations also play a part in hearing from Scottish Borders residents, and feedback from these is also valuable to us.

Finally, staff and services that work with groups, families and communities can advocate views and thoughts of people with lived experience of poverty too.

Direct life experience quotes and case studies set out below give a flavour of what people tell us and how we can help them.

- Borders Community Action created a community-led response to keep people well in the Scottish Borders in the winter of 2023 – **Warm Welcome Spaces across the Borders**. The main beneficiaries were largely older adults and children and families, with middle aged people, veterans, armed forces, emergency services and low-income individuals all using the service too. The project was delivered mainly by volunteers.

*Feedback from participants –*

*'It helped me make new friends within our village'*

*'Things like this make a big difference to me'*

*'Can we come along just for food?'*  
(boy aged 14, family now connected to a foodbank)

*'It's hard for my mum at home, free food on Friday evenings is a real help'*  
(girl aged 15)

- **English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)** provides opportunities for learners to help integrate them more into living in Scotland. Classes held in the Scottish Borders have helped to reduce isolation and enabled participation in society, and so by default helped to reduce poverty.

*"Very interesting to learning about cost of food for recipes and cooking together".*  
ESOL learner, Female, 67 Years old from Ukraine.

- **The 'Your Family Your Voice: Whole Family Support' programme** have carried out parental and practitioner engagement along with the delivery of a number of events with young people. From these conversations, the following areas were identified where services could work differently to support their needs:

- o advice around budgeting
- o help with fuel debt
- o support with parenting techniques
- o employability skills taster sessions
- o funding and technology to access online learning
- o funded out of school club places
- o flexible learning opportunities



- **Transport:**

*"Better bus service/community bus for rural areas outside the town I currently live in a village 4 miles outside Jedburgh with no public transport" -*

quote from Consultation on food provision in the Scottish Borders.

*"Public transport to/from my location is gradually being reduced every year with respect to days and times. If I didn't have access to a car, I would find it very difficult to get my shopping (2-3 mile walk to nearest town). I would be dependent on deliveries."-*

quote from Consultation on food provision in the Scottish Borders.

- Support provided by the **Financial Inclusion Team** at Scottish Borders Council together with the **NHS Pathway Initiative** can significantly increase the income of families. A single disabled mother with two disabled children was living in a very rural area in the Borders. A Health Visitor immediately recognised that the family were living in extreme poverty and had never claimed any benefits so contacted the Early Years Financial Inclusion team. A full benefits package was immediately arranged including many disability elements for both the mother and the children. In the end this amounted to an increase in income of over **£20,000** a year and the family were able to enjoy a much more fulfilling life.
- **Scottish Borders Employability Service** - offer a wide range of support that has a person-centred approach. This helps to empower individuals to reach their full potential and supports them in making decisions within employability that will build their confidence. Workers support individuals to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to take the next steps into employment or training.

*'My worker is easy to talk to and happy to listen to me talking and gives good advice. I am really happy just now and grateful for his support'.*

*'I feel so much more confident and able to try new things'.*



## DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

We will work collaboratively with partners towards the delivery of our outcomes over the five-year lifespan of the strategy. This will include the development of a living action plan that will be updated in line with emerging opportunities and challenges.

We will use the challenges and opportunities set out to reflect on how we can ensure that our outcomes are met, and we will adapt our approach to address any emerging issues affecting poverty in the Scottish Borders.

We will monitor and report on our progress periodically using identified performance indicators as well as economic indicators which give good insight into the poverty position of the Scottish Borders. This will be our primary method of keeping track of actions taken to deliver the strategy.

We recognise that various partner key plans and strategies contribute to reducing poverty. Many of them are supported by action plans and these are considered in our monitoring and evaluation approach. Our locality plans will play a part in this approach.

We will use our clear structure of reporting and accountability to steer the strategy and keep our response relevant. Our Anti-Poverty Members Reference Group are responsible for this important task.

We are determined to play our part by using our combined resources to achieve the best outcomes to tackle poverty, remove the stigma attached, and create opportunities for positive change.



# KEY PLANS AND STRATEGIES

National and local plans and strategies contributing to reducing poverty are set out below. These are considered key documents which help us to deliver our strategy.

<b>The Scottish Borders Council Plan</b>	The <a href="#">Council Plan</a> from April 2024 sets out a strategic framework for Council decision-making and operations.
<b>Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan 2024/25 including progress in 2023/24</b>	This <a href="#">report</a> covers progress made in tackling child poverty in the Scottish Borders in 2023/24 and sets out planned actions for 2024/25. It sets out our strategic approach and commitment to undertake priority areas of work and key actions to alleviate child poverty.
<b>Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026</b>	This <a href="#">report</a> outlines Scottish Government's actions for the period 2022 to 2026 under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. It sets out how they will work to deliver on Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty.
<b>Children &amp; Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026</b>	Child Poverty features as a priority within the <a href="#">Children &amp; Young People's Services Plan 2023-26</a> .
<b>The Promise</b>	<a href="#">Plan 24-30</a> is Scotland's route map to #KeepThePromise by 2030. It is organised around the five foundations of the promise: voice, family, care, people, and scaffolding.
<b>Scottish Borders Community Plan</b>	The <a href="#">Scottish Borders Community Plan</a> works with four priority themes to support communities. These themes support our poverty agenda.
<b>T.H.I.S Borders (Tackling Health Inequalities in the Scottish Borders 2024-2030)</b>	<a href="#">This report</a> describes systemic differences in people's health that are thought to be avoidable and unjust and outlines how these can be tackled in practice.
<b>Children's Rights</b>	Our <a href="#">Children's Rights Report 23-26</a> reports on the steps we have taken to fulfil the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
<b>Equity Strategy</b>	Our <a href="#">Education Equity Strategy 2021-2026</a> has been developed to ensure increased excellence, accelerated progress and embedded equity in our schools and settings to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people (CECYP).
<b>Local Housing Strategy</b>	The <a href="#">Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028</a> is the key strategic document for housing in the region. The LHS sets out how we and our partners plan to address housing and housing related opportunities and challenges in all tenures over the five-year period.
<b>Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal</b>	The <a href="#">Borderlands Inclusive Growth</a> Deal will ensure a fair distribution of opportunities across our communities, now and in the future. It will unlock the potential for sustainable and economic growth across the South of Scotland and North of England.
<b>Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region</b>	This <a href="#">deal</a> drives productivity and growth whilst reducing inequalities and deprivation. It accelerates growth by pulling in significant government investment.

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