



## **Summarised Clackmannanshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2024/25**

The Clackmannanshire Tackling Poverty Partnership set 6 key objectives for action to tackle child poverty from 2024 – 2030. These priorities are:

- **Voice led transformation is prioritised**
- **All parts of the system that cause and /or alleviate poverty are working together**
- **Income is maximised through employment**
- **Income from Social Security and benefits in kind is maximised**
- **Costs of living are minimised**
- **Health and wellbeing inequalities linked to poverty are mitigated.**

During 2024/25, a suite of actions and projects have been delivered to tackle child poverty, in line with the above objectives. The latest published statistics indicate a reduction in the number of children in low-income households in Clackmannanshire, from 22.5% in 2022/23 to 20.8% in 2023/24, according to latest Scottish Government published statistics.

## Reducing Child Poverty in Clackmannanshire 2024/25

**Tackling  
Poverty**

**PARTNERSHIP**

During 2024/25, a suite of actions and projects have been delivered to tackle child poverty and inequality across Clackmannanshire. The most recently published statistics indicate a **reduction in the number of children in low-income households** in Clackmannanshire, from 22.5% in 2022/23 to **20.8% in 2023/24.**

A new **£1m transformation fund** has been established to develop cross-cutting solutions to longstanding local issues. People from across Clackmannanshire will form a **Citizen's Panel** to decide on how the funds are spent, **putting decision-making power directly in the hands of local people.**

Clackmannanshire Citizen's Advice Bureau has supported over 2400 individuals to maximise their income this year. This has resulted in

**£2.77m in increased social security income for local people.**

**191**

local people have been supported to gain employment this year.

A further 167 people were supported to gain a qualification, and 46 secured a place in further or higher education.

**233  
families**

have accessed free school-age childcare through the Child Wellbeing Partnership, enabling these families to access work, training. A further **128 families** have been supported by free **early-years childcare.** In addition, **76% of parents** supported by this partnership have noticed an **improvement in their overall wellbeing.**

## Reducing Child Poverty in Clackmannanshire 2024/25

### Tackling Poverty

PARTNERSHIP

### Over 1000 households

had their energy costs reduced through support from the Council's Home Energy Advice Team.

### £70,000

of energy vouchers were issued to people facing financial hardship, helping families to manage the cost of essentials

The **THRIVE To Keep Well** programme continues to support supporting those with mild to moderate mental wellbeing challenges, including anxiety and depression.

This year, **100% of participants marked an improvement in their mental wellbeing and confidence** as a result of the course.

We are **improving child nutrition and tackling food insecurity** by supporting local organisations and families to gain skills in cooking and eating well on a budget. The NHS Public Health Nutrition Team has delivered **accredited food and nutrition training** to staff and volunteers with third-sector services that support families and young people. Monday Night Cooking sessions held at Alloa Academy have supported up to 20 families a week with **cooking skills and free meals**.

### 96%

of young people leaving school in Clackmannanshire went on to a positive destination including work, training, college and university, up from 94.6% last year.

The number of young people aged 11-25 from Clackmannanshire being admitted to hospital for drug and alcohol related conditions is steadily reducing year-on-year.

### **Voice led transformation is prioritised.**

Clackmannanshire Council, with the support of Foundation Scotland, have established a Community Voice Citizen's Panel, which will give local people the power to determine solutions to longstanding local issues, and decide on how a new £1million transformation fund should be spent. This model will enable the development of cross-cutting solutions that transcend funding silos to deliver the change that local people believe will make the biggest difference. The Panel is due to be operational in August 2025, supported by Foundation Scotland.

What Matters to You and Clackmannanshire Council have worked collaboratively to establish a Make It Happen Fund, with decision making led by local people. The work of WM2U has community voice at its centre, seeking to empower local individuals and groups to make the changes they want to see for their communities. Five Clackmannanshire projects are currently match funded by Clackmannanshire Council & WM2U.

Both of these projects are currently recruiting local people to join their respective panels, with training to be delivered to all who choose to take part.

Services within the Tackling Poverty Partnership have also been embedding community voice within their service design and delivery. Through the implementation of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Clackmannanshire LEP Action Plan, the Local Employability Partnership has established a Community Voice subgroup to scope the level of community engagement currently present across LEP services, with a view to developing a partnership wide approach to community engagement and co-design.

Understanding family needs is an iterative process embedded in Child Wellbeing Partnership's (CWP) operational approach across all childcare services. Focus groups and feedback surveys provide insights into what works best for children and how they feel about the services they access. A peer research model with children in Clackmannan is being tested in collaboration with the Children's Parliament.

The Fostering and Adoption Service of Clackmannanshire Council recently received praise from the Care Inspectorate in September 2024 in relation to the work undertaken to embed community voice and co-production within the service.

Overall, there has been a concerted effort across all key local stakeholders to ensure that the voice of the local community in Clackmannanshire is central to decision-making. In 2025/26, we look forward to building on the successes of this work, by welcoming the decisions made by the Citizen Panel, and further exploring ways to embed community voice and co-design across more services.

**All parts of the system that cause and /or alleviate poverty are working together.**

Partnership working to tackle poverty in Clackmannanshire is succeeding in breaking down siloed working, producing cross-cutting solutions to local drivers of poverty, and ultimately reaching more local people with advice and support.

Through the Tackling Poverty Partnership, there is strengthened communication between local organisations, and this is driving greater awareness of support services and opportunities for joint working. This collaborative work has led to the establishment of One Stop Support drop-ins which bring together various services that support with family needs, money advice, employability and skills, mental wellbeing, childcare and more, enabling local people to access same-day advice from multiple agencies, wrapping around their individual and familial needs.

There has been strong strategic collaboration between Clackmannanshire Council and NHS Forth Valley to scope approaches to embedding a framework of Whole Family Support in Clackmannanshire, building on the pathways already in place.

The Childcare Pathway project, which was established in 2023 as a collaboration between the Council's Employability Service and the Family Wellbeing Partnership, continues to see success for parents interested in securing employment in childcare. In 2024/25, five parents completed an 8-week voluntary work experience placement in a local ELC, and a further six parents completed a 6-month paid work experience placement. All participants completed safeguarding children, paediatric first aid, and food hygiene training prior to their placement.

The Positive Destinations group is made up of representatives from all secondary schools, Skills Development Scotland and Council's Employability service. There has been a concerted effort during 2024/25 to work more collaboratively to increase our positive destination figures and ensure that all our young people secure sustainable destinations that meet their needs and aspirations. This group met regularly, allowing information on all available supports to be shared and understood by all partners and increase the opportunities available for young people through the NOLB Provision. The group were able to identify individuals who needed additional support and find solutions for all. We saw a significant increase in positive destinations this year, moving from 94.6% in the previous year to 96.0% this year.

In 2025/26, we plan to further enhance partnership working across the tackling poverty landscape and wider across more service areas in Clackmannanshire, including exploring partnership opportunities to enhance school to college transitions, to improve outcomes for young people.

### **Income is maximised through employment.**

The number of people claiming out-of-work benefits has seen a slight decrease in the last year, and this is showing a steady reduction since 2021 after peaking at around 2250 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people claiming out-of-work benefits is now lower than pre-pandemic levels, with 990 people claiming as of April 2025.

In this year, employability services, including both internal Council provision and externally commissioned programmes, supported 638 unique participants from Clackmannanshire. Of these, 191 moved into employment, 167 gained a qualification and 46 moved into FE/HE.

The LEP administered a small grant scheme to allow local providers to provide pre-employability and employability support for people of all ages. We awarded funding to 8 projects who supported 89 participants over a duration of 6 months. 37 participants achieved a qualification, 14 started structured volunteering, 6 entered FE/HE, 9 accessed a guaranteed interview with 3 of those progressing into the recruitment process, and an additional 6 entered employment. These programmes all successfully moved participants onto further support through a range of local providers.

In 2024/25, there were 92% of young people who achieved a positive destination that sustained a positive destination over 12 months, up from 89.1% last year.

Paid placements continue to provide secure employment opportunities for unemployed people. In addition to the six ELC placements for parents mentioned earlier, the NHS and Clackmannanshire Council provided four paid placements through the NHS Demonstrator Programme, with two of those participants securing ongoing employment with the NHS and the remaining two progressing on to a supported employment programme with the tools and work assessments to help them in future employment.

Eight local people were offered short 6-week paid work experience placements, which resulted in six participants being offered employment with the host employer, using the Fair Work Incentive. The Fair Work incentive ensures that participants are offered a minimum of 12 months employment with fair working practices including, where possible, being paid the National Living Wage.

Clackmannanshire Works Job Brokers continued their work with employers this year to create ring fenced work experience or job vacancies for Clackmannanshire Works participants. The Job Brokers engaged with 162 employers in this year and secured 43 job and 10 work experience placements for employability participants. Job Brokers are now working more closely in partnership with the local DWP Employer Engagement

team, to maximise the opportunities available for local people and streamline support for employers.

In 2025/26, we plan to build on these successes by commissioning projects for additional target groups, including a supported employment service for adults who identify mental health as their main barrier to employment, and commissioning a pilot project for individuals with experience of the justice system.

### **Income from Social Security and benefits in kind is maximised.**

This year there has been targeted work to support local people to maximise their income through social security benefits, and benefits in kind. Clackmannanshire Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) have supported 2423 individuals across Clackmannanshire to access additional benefits and payments to maximise their income in 2024/25. This equates to approximately 4.66% of the local population having been supported accessed additional income in a single year. This has delivered total financial gains of approximately £2.77million for these individuals. The bulk of this financial gain is attributed to new claims for Adult Disability Payment (£698k), Universal Credit (£542k), and Attendance Allowance (£522k).

The Council's Employability Service Clackmannanshire Works, have a bespoke contract for money advice with Clackmannanshire Citizen's Advice Bureau, to provide benefit checks, debt advice and management, budgeting advice, access to cheaper internet packages, energy vouchers schemes, Better Off In Work calculations and support with benefit appeals/ tribunals. In 2024/25, 91 participants were supported by money advice services providing a financial gain of £31,247 for employability participants. The majority of referrals required multiple appointments to resolve complex debt cases. Referrals to CAB from the NHS for Income Maximisation this year supported 68 individuals with a combined financial gain to clients of £7955. These financial gains demonstrate the direct impact of improved partnership working and streamlined referring for individuals and families.

Social Security Scotland data for Clackmannanshire in 2024/25 shows a further increase in social security payments to local people. Best Start Grants supported local families by delivering £2.1million in payments across their Pregnancy & Baby, Early Learning, School Age, and Best Start Foods grants. Free school meals benefited 1587 young people in 2024/25, through breakfast clubs, school lunches, free milk for primary school pupils, and holiday lunch payments. This is an increase of 47% from 2023/24, when 1074 young people were supported. Forth Valley College provide three free meals per day for students, by providing a healthy breakfast and lunch, and packaging leftover foods to be taken home by students at the end of each day. Over 100 students at the Alloa campus access this support every week.

Further detail on the increase in people accessing Social Security Scotland benefits in Clackmannanshire can be found below:

Benefit	No. of Applications	No. of Approved Applications	Total No. of Payments Made	Total Value of Payments Made
<b>Adult Disability Payment</b>	3375	1505	127,70235	£31.3m
<b>Carer Support Payment*</b>	135	45	9675	£1m
<b>Young Carer Grant</b>	270	185	175	£59.5k
<b>Child Disability Payment</b>	925	610	56,575	£12.3m
<b>Scottish Child Payment</b>	4525	3725	83,045	£12.7m

\*New Social Security Scotland benefit introduced in 2024



### **Costs of living are minimised.**

The Child Wellbeing Partnership (CWP) is testing and delivering a system of all age childcare targeted at communities in need. The CWP has supported a total of 233 families to access school-age childcare at no cost, with 419 children supported. A further 138 children have accessed early-age childcare. The support offer expanded in 2024/25 to encompass almost all areas in Clackmannanshire. Survey data indicates that families accessing this support see improved parental and child wellbeing. Further survey insights can be seen below:

<b>75% of parents indicated they had either maintained or improved their overall wellbeing</b>
<b>67% of parents indicated an overall improvement in their eldest or only child's wellbeing.</b>
<b>45% of parents indicated they felt more supported</b>
<b>36% noted improvement in how they manage financially</b>
<b>17% of parents report an increase in annual household income.</b>
<b>7% increase in parents reporting they are in full time employment.</b>

One Stop Support drop-ins have supported a total of 52 families to access additional benefits, crisis payments, employability support, and advice on health and family related matters.

Pre-loved shops in schools continue to provide clothing, personal hygiene items and stationery: in one school, 150 items of clothing were provided in one school term. In addition, the Council's Community Learning and Development team have held successful Take What You Need events at a local community centre in Alloa South & East to provide free access to clothing, jackets and shoes, will also hosting a range of support organisations to offer advice and signposting to attendees.

The Council's Home Energy Team has worked with partners to reach over 1000 homes in Clackmannanshire in 2024/25, supporting them with their energy costs. 1,001 first visits were conducted, as well as a further 1,080 follow-up visits. A total of 1,908 vouchers were issued, totalling £69,873 in support to families to manage their energy bills. The team attended 23 events to reach communities and promote their support. The Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme delivered improvements to 31 properties in Clackmannanshire, delivering £748,730 of funding to improve the energy efficiency of homes and reduce energy costs for residents.

There has been an increase, year-on-year, to the number of Child Winter Heating payments being delivered in Clackmannanshire, with 440 payments being made in 2024/25, up from 365 in the year before.

Local foodbank The Gate, continue to offer support to people across Clackmannanshire facing financial crisis and food insecurity. The Gate also continues to provide infant

formula to families in crisis who are referred by health visitors and the Family Nurse Partnership, supporting the integrated pathway for infant food security commitment by the Scottish Government. Further to this, The Gate supports people to gain skills for cooking and eating well on a budget, by offering cooking classes tailored around energy-efficient cooking methods such as slow cookers and air fryers. In addition, Community Around the School at Alloa Academy provide Monday Night Cooking sessions for between 15-20 families per week. These classes provide a free meal for attendees, while empowering them to cook and eat well at home.

In 2025/26, we plan to support more families who are dealing with debt. Clackmannanshire Council and Clackmannanshire CAB will work in partnership with children's charity Aberlour and other third-sector partners to develop fairer ways of supporting families who owe money to public bodies. This work will build on the success of Aberlour's pilot programmes in several other local authority areas. In addition, our Clacks Good Food Partnership will further develop its programmes for dignified food access, awareness raising and food growing programmes, aligning with the impending Good Food Nation duty.

### **Health and wellbeing inequalities linked to poverty are mitigated.**

The Clackmannanshire Planet Youth project focussed on reducing drug and alcohol related harm among young people and promoting positive physical and mental wellbeing. The Clackmannanshire Planet Youth Coalition has a membership of 34 organisations from across Clackmannanshire Council, the local third sector, Police and the Alcohol & Drugs Partnership working together to support wellbeing. Over the past year, Safety Mapping work has been completed, and coalition members are involved in the NSPCC youth-led campaign to raise awareness of mental wellbeing and promote resilience.

The number of alcohol-related hospital admissions among young people aged 11 - 25 years shows a steadily reducing trend year-on-year, with most recent data from 2021/22 - 2023/24 105.3 admissions per 100,000 people –lower in comparison to the Scottish average of 182.6 per 100,000. The number of drug-related hospital admissions in the same age group also shows a slight reduction, having fallen steadily from its peak at 205.2 per 100,000 people in 2017/18 – 2019/20. Current rates are slightly above the Scottish average at 133.2 admissions per 100,000. This data indicates that work undertaken locally to prevent alcohol and drug related harm among young people is yielding success.

This year, the NHS Public Health Nutrition Team has delivered a variety of free accredited and non-accredited training to organisations across Clackmannanshire for voluntary and third sector who support families and young people in their communities. These include programmes outlined above, at The Gate and Alloa Academy. This has had direct impacts in improving attitudes towards cooking at home and healthier eating, as well as for increased skills and a greater understanding of how to access help and support with nutrition and food security. These sessions have supported 26 individuals to gain an accredited qualification.

The THRIVE To Keep Well programme, delivered by Clackmannanshire Council in partnership with NHS Forth Valley, continues to support those with mild to moderate mental wellbeing challenges, including anxiety and depression. In 2024/25, 15 individuals completed the programme. Evaluation of our second cohort of 2024/25 is underway, and details from the evaluation of our first cohort show that 100% of participants marked an increase in their confidence, self-esteem and motivation. After the course, 87.5% reported ‘feeling able to make up my own mind’ most or all of the time, compared with 0% prior to completing the programme. 87.5% reported ‘feeling loved’ most or all of the time, compared with just 25% prior to programme completion. Following the programme, all participants have secured a positive destination, including structured volunteering, further or higher education, and employment.

Forth Valley College is progressing through its journey towards becoming a trauma-informed college. Working in partnership with the College Development Network, staff

training is continuing alongside a trauma-informed diagnostic audit being undertaken to review all aspects of college life through a trauma-informed lens. Mental health & wellbeing support remains available for all students, providing a variety of supports and signposting to external agencies. Furthermore, free access to gyms, mental health services and a wide variety of on campus and online support is provided for students, and there are increased numbers of students are accessing these services in Clackmannanshire year-on-year.

The Community Link Worker Team who are based in 5 GP Practices throughout Clackmannanshire were recently voted as National Team of the Year have further developed their community support, reach and partnership approach by recruiting five volunteer community health champions. These community health champions are based within local organisations and provide a recognised friendly warm reception for patients who are referred or signposted on to a new activity or session. Many of the patients have experienced poor mental health, anxiety or loneliness and the community health champion's role is to ensure the patients feel welcome when attending a session for the first time and will provide ongoing support for continued attendance and participation. The Community Health Champions have received personal boundaries training and will receive ongoing support for further identified training with the NHS Health Improvement/Promotion teams. There are plans to expand this service by recruiting further community health champions to grow the community reach of Community Link Worker programme.

As part of The Promise, all young people who have been identified as care experienced will be invited to attend an annual health review. Work in 2022 established an NHSFV referral pathway for Care Experienced young people to receive a health assessment. This review may be carried out by a Health Visitor, School Nurse, Family Nurse or at a Keep Well Clinic. The Keep well assessment supports young people aged 19-26 yrs or 16 + yrs if they have no other service involved e.g. School Nursing. In addition, all first-time pregnant young women will be offered the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP). The FNP is an intense parenting programme that begins in early pregnancy and continues until the child reaches two years of age. It provides tailored support to help young parents build strong relationships with their children and improve health, wellbeing, and life outcomes.

Recognising the rising impact of poor mental wellbeing on individual's readiness for work, local employability services commissioned a 6-month supported employment programme with SAMH through the Small Grant Scheme. This programme supported 20 individuals with mental wellbeing challenges to improve their employability skills. This programme has been extended into 2025/26 to allow for a continuity of service for this group and account for the time required to secure positive outcomes.