

This document highlights a number of case studies from across our partnership for each of the main drivers of poverty.

## **Drivers of Poverty - Income from Employment**

### **CASE STUDY – Long Term Unemployed Programme**

The Long Term Unemployed programme supports people into paid work placements (Real Living Wage) for approximately six months for people who are aged over 25 and unemployed longer than 12 months or aged 20 to 24 and unemployed for at least six months. Participants are not in employment, training or education and can often face one or more barriers to employment.

The participant is a 54-year-old female who suffered from depression and anxiety. Having received support for her mental health her employment goal was to work in the mental health field supporting people who were going through similar issues. She had no formal qualifications or experience in this type of role. Previously she had been employed as a checkout operator and pharmacy assistant.

The participant had suffered from mental health issues and had received treatment from a psychologist. She also had no qualifications.

The client was keen to secure employment supporting individuals with poor mental health as she had lived experience and had benefitted from the support she received during her recovery.

The Long Term Unemployed Programme offered her the opportunity to work 30 hours per week in a community mental health team as a support worker. With support from her supervisor, colleagues and keyworker her confidence increased, her anxiety decreased, and she loved the work that she undertook during her placement.

The participant demonstrated a real commitment to supporting others with poor mental health. She has embraced the opportunity to learn, both through shadowing colleagues and also undertaking training.

Here's what the participant said about the programme.

*"The support I have had as a part of the LTU programme has been amazing. Getting chosen to be a part of the programme, has been the best experience, and has completely changed my life for the better. Everyone has been super supportive. The job I am doing now, is what I should have been doing years ago. I very much feel I am where I was always meant to be".*

## Drivers of Poverty – Cost of Living

### CASE STUDY – Fuel Poverty

SCARF have been working in partnership with the Council using their skills and industry relationships to access key funding streams for households in the area, as well as acting as a local advice centre for households offering them the support, they need to develop better living conditions.

A significant portion of the Angus LACER funding was used to provide fuel vouchers to households on the lowest incomes. The £400,000 funding supported around 1,558 households for which there were around 1,484 children resident. The funding helped curb the impact of the fuel price rises, enabling residents to spend their money on other items such as food and clothing.

The Angus Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) offers tailored advice and practical support, visiting homes where necessary to guide households as to how they can save energy and manage their home. Operating for a number of years they have obtained some positive results for local households.

Type of Assistance	Volume of Support/Outcomes
<b>Home Visits</b>	181
<b>Enquiries</b>	681
<b>HEAT Events (talks and sessions)</b>	14
<b>Estimated reduction in fuel bills (annual)</b>	£51,803
<b>Savings via Behavioural Advice</b>	£72,152
<b>Savings via Measures Installed (annual)</b>	£32,486
<b>Debt Write-Off (Home Heating Support Fund)</b>	£20,803

Angus residents have also benefitted from advice and information from Home Energy Scotland and Scarf, with around 6,380 referrals made during 2022/23. Of these, around 1,225 (19.2%) were referred on for further support, including grant and loan assistance to improve the energy efficiency of their home, referral to priority assistance registers, landlord loans, and various support funds that offer a range of energy efficiency measures, such as the Warm Homes Fund.

During 2022/23, 386 Angus households were referred to the Warm Homes Scotland Fund, meaning that over the past 5 years over 2,500 Angus households have benefitted from the fund. The fund helps people in need make their homes warmer and cost less to heat by changing homes to use energy more efficiently. The scheme is one the main funds to which SCARF/HES will refer eligible households. It is open to private sector housing and households must also meet qualifying criteria in order to qualify for assistance worth up to around £5,000 to make their home warmer and more energy efficient. Some of the measures include boilers; room thermostats;

radiators; wall insulation; heat pumps; light bulbs; loft/floor insulation. The 386 Angus referrals had around 743 measures installed in their homes.

The Angus Council area also participates in the Eco Flex 4 scheme, which targets private sector households with poor energy efficiency and occupiers with either low income or a health condition that makes them vulnerable to the cold. In the first 10 months of operation, around £750,000 of Eco funding has been leveraged into the area, helping around 30 households significantly improve the energy efficiency of their home, reducing energy bills and the carbon impact. The scheme runs until 2026 and it anticipated to assist many more local households.

### **CASE STUDY – Cost-of-Living Roadshows**

In response to the cost of living crisis, a need was identified to support communities across Angus with direct access to information and advice from various services. Challenge Poverty Week 2022 was used as a platform to launch a series of 6 Angus Cost-of-Living Roadshow events.

These roadshows gave communities an opportunity to access a substantial number of support agencies in an informal manner in a location close to them. The Cost-of-Living Roadshows were a collaborative way to support people to access help and support and involved volunteers and local groups. The project was designed to support low-income households who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and the cost of living crisis.

Utilising established, community-based venues, and offering various services, it was possible to create a non-stigmatising, open and welcoming approach to tackling poverty and its associated issues.

Partners, agencies and service providers were invited to come together to provide information, reach and support the most vulnerable people, and communities impacted by the cost of living crisis. The objectives of this work were:

- To coordinate our response to ensure the best use of resources and collective decision-making.
- To consider the implications of the cost of living crisis on all partners through evaluations and feedback from individuals and communities attending the road shows.
- The development and creation of positive pathways through partnership networking at events for individuals
- To mitigate the risk of duplication of services provided

In total, six roadshows were held across Angus during a five month period (Oct 2022 – February 2023). A small budget from the Angus LACER fund allowed these events to happen and included the cost of slow cookers, fresh foods, and hall rentals.

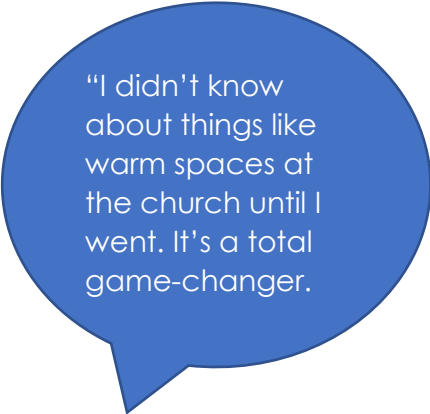
Members of the public were personally welcomed at the events and signposted to relevant partners. This helped to create a warm and friendly environment, putting

people at ease on entry to ensure a non-stigmatising approach. Community Café volunteers, supported by the Council's Vibrant Community staff, offered free-of-charge refreshments to all event attendees.

Those who attended were provided with cookery demonstrations, access to fresh fruit and vegetables, 'Grab a Bag' ingredients and healthy recipes to take away. Staff offered guidance on using affordable and healthy cooking methods, and attendees were offered a free slow cooker. All recipients were contacted for a follow up call to gather feedback on impact. The most common lifestyle changes included food changes; buying reduced essential own brand, shopping around, using subsidised organisations; food banks etc. They also reported they were using less fuel, heating on less; thermostat turned down; using blankets and layering; turning off lights; washing machine used less.

Attendees were able to access advice and support tailored to their individual needs. Partners in attendance also took the opportunity to network, collaborating to improve provision.

Approximately 500 people attended the roadshows from a wide demographic range. Staff met their overall aims by providing face-to-face contact with services and organisations that offer information, support, and advice. Through the planning team and partners, staff enabled practical support to alleviate the impacts of poverty and the cost of living crisis.



"I didn't know about things like warm spaces at the church until I went. It's a total game-changer.



"My daughter has Autism & ADHD. I spoke to Welfare Rights, and I wasn't receiving a part of Universal Credit. I fought for it and finally got the payment and backdated."

Providers have evidenced a high uptake of information and advice, with some reporting an increase in the number of families with young children and those in employment using their services. All organisations reported the need to buy in fresh food and other stock to subsidise the amount received from Fare Share. There has been a consistent growth in social supermarket membership which may indicate that more people are seeing the benefit of maximising their income.

Feedback has highlighted the success of delivering the cost-of-living roadshow, where people had direct access to supportive organisations who were able to offer

advice, resources and pathways that enabled people to access the support they needed at the right time discreetly.

100% of the 80 individuals who received slow cookers reported that the roadshow was extremely helpful, with 8% still receiving support from specific agencies.

## Drivers of Poverty - Income from Social Security Benefits and Benefits in Kind

### CASE STUDY - Maximise Angus

Maximise Angus is a joint project between the Council's Welfare Rights Team and the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate. The project is managed within the Welfare Rights Team.

Two Financial Wellbeing Practitioners work with schools to provide advice, support and financial assistance to families. Services include:

- Income maximisation including assistance with claims
- Benefit appeals and challenges
- Charitable applications (vouchers for heating, supermarket vouchers, etc)
- Advice in financial crisis (head teachers often get approach by families in financial crisis and then get referred to the Maximise Angus Team)
- Comprehensive debt advice including all statutory debt options
- housing debt/eviction

Since the start of the project in August 2022 to year end 31 March 2023 Financial Wellbeing Practitioners have achieved the following:



Staff have attended school events such as parent's evenings, induction meetings and learning cafes and were available during school holiday activity sessions. The staff provide advice to all school staff regarding available services and how to support financially vulnerable families. Referral pathways have also been developed to allow school staff to refer families for advice with benefits and debts as well as self-referral through an online platform. Head Teachers reported improved outcomes for families because of this intervention, relationships have become less strained, and parents are more willing to engage with the school and their child's education.

In addition, the Maximise Angus! staff have been able to support families in financial crisis by having access to the Welfare Rights discretionary fund brought about by Covid recovery/LACER funding. This led to financial assistance of £3,755 being distributed to families during the same period. This has helped alleviate immediate financial pressure for many families and allowed longer term work to be carried out to stabilise a family's financial situation.

### **CASE STUDY - Collaboration with Welfare Rights and NHS Tayside Midwives, Health Visitors and Family Nurse Practitioners**

This collaboration between Angus Council's Welfare Rights Team and NHS Tayside originally started at the end of 2019. Bringing together, initially, midwifery services in the Angus area and the Welfare Rights service in order to establish robust referral pathways and develop closer working relationships between the services. The original aim was to ensure that every pregnant woman entering ante natal services in Angus would be offered a referral to the Welfare Rights team in order to support them by providing advice and assistance around entitlements and income maximisation. Such was the success of this venture that it was agreed to expand this service during 2021 to include referrals from Health Visitors and Family Nurse Practitioners.

This collaboration continues to strengthen and develop and during financial year 2022/23 the following outcomes were achieved:



In addition to the financial benefits of this collaboration the Welfare Rights Team are building relationships with women referred as they are provided with a projection of key times during pregnancy and subsequent birth of when they may become eligible to further entitlements and encouraged to return to the service for further assistance and support as required in the future. This helps normalise financial health checks and can avert financial crisis during changing times ahead.

### **CASE STUDY – Service Design – Free School Meals**

A need was identified to increase the uptake of free school meals (FSM) across Angus. This situation was particularly noticeable within secondary schools with many young people choosing to leave the school at lunch time instead of accessing a free school meal. Young people who do not receive the right nutrition or hydration during the school day are more likely to have problems in concentration or be lacking in energy, which can result in reduced attainment and achievement.

A project team was set up to look at a service design approach including representatives from Education & Lifelong Learning, Vibrant Communities and Tayside Contracts.

The project group carried out research by surveying and interviewing young people, teachers, and parent/carers to ascertain the reasons for the low FSM uptake. The research was then analysed on a thematic basis to draw out common issues and consider solutions. The project group found that some parent/carers were not aware of FSM eligibility, some young people preferred to leave school at lunch time and some respondents found queuing times too long. There was also a perception that school meals were of an inferior quality in comparison to options available from local shops.

The project group identified several key actions to take forward, including improved communication with parent/carers about FSM eligibility, and improved communication about the Scottish Government nutritional guidelines and school meals menu. Further engagement with young people was planned to design services that align more closely to demand.

Meal uptake, both for FSM and non- FSM entitled pupils increased in 2022-23. With a pre-ordering facility providing young people with a quicker and easier way to order their meals and allow them to see what meals/snacks are on offer that day or week.