

Poverty Action Strategy and Action Plan – Progress Update

13 May 2024



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Poverty Action Strategy and Plan

The overarching vision of our Poverty Action Strategy and Plan is ‘to work together so fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation in the county.’

We know that tackling poverty takes time so the action plan not only sets out the short-to-medium term initiatives and investments we will take, but the longer-term action that we hope will manifest into a changed and improved situation, helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Objective 1 Use intelligence and data to target support to low-income households

Objective 2 Reduce the financial pressures on people facing or in poverty

Objective 3 Increase individual, household and community resilience to poverty

Objective 4 Reduce barriers to accessing services for those experiencing financial insecurity



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Objective 1: Use intelligence and data to target support to low-income households

Multiple Social Vulnerabilities dataset now includes Gas and Electric Priority Services Register Data

Completion of Durham Index of Need

Poverty dashboard and Cost of Living dashboard developed for Durham Insight

Development of an evidence based approach to ensure food inequality initiatives follow the Eatwell Guide

Identification of areas at most risk financially identified to target support with data dashboard requirements being considered in line with the corporate business intelligence programme.

DWP permission granted to support re-use of data for the purpose of benefit maximisation and take up activity.

Baseline review of welfare advice and guidance services delivered and funded by DCC underway.



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Objective 2: Reduce the financial pressures on people facing or in poverty

Continued provision of effective support to vulnerable households through CTR, housing payments and partnership support arrangements

Funding an additional TBBT van has increased food hubs to 15 (1200 residents a week)

Financial support (e.g. benefits advice) now part of TBBT provision

Debt Review complete – will inform wider review of advice services

Landlord incentive scheme developed (Homes for Ukraine)

Employability Fair delivered to introduce Ukrainian guests to potential employers

Work being delivered with private and social landlords to understand issues in the housing market

Review of support available to tenants in the private rented sector who are struggling to pay their rent underway in line with wider strategy review re. homelessness)

Pilots of the revised 'Cutting Cost of the School Day' programmes underway



Objective 3: increase individual, household and community resilience to poverty

Introduction of financial support initiatives to people who are homeless, leaving care or veterans

Dedicated Welfare Rights Officer aligned to the Kinship Care and Support Team

Ongoing support to Children Looked After (CLA) aged 17.5 years and transitioning to independent living

Financial literacy and budgeting training sessions delivered to frontline staff working with children and young people.

Mental Health Awareness Training delivered to staff and volunteers working with those experiencing poverty

Development of Making Every Contact County (MECC) within the financial wellbeing programme

Awareness sessions highlighting financial abuse as a form of domestic abuse and the support available within communities

Pilot to expand the Mental Health Hospital Discharge Scheme to assist people requiring financial support



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Objective 4: reduce barriers to accessing services for those experiencing financial insecurity

Implementation of a first point of contact offer at the CAPs with a focus on digital inclusion and self-serve

Exploration of opportunities to remove barriers to becoming more physically active through the launch of new pricing options and new products.

Digital Durham website updates with digital inclusion information, e.g. where to get free internet access and cheaper deals available to those on low-incomes (an online postcode checker is being developed to further enhance)

Availability of mobile call and data social tariffs communicated to stakeholders, customer touch points and support organisations.

Digital Inclusion workstream established within County Durham Together Programme to support a partnership and community-based intervention approach to successfully tackle digital exclusion.



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Next steps



Continued monitoring of action plan delivery via Poverty Action Steering Group



Continue to work with partners and communities to promote the Poverty Strategy and Action Plan vision and objectives



Develop and implement opportunities for place and locality-based working.



Prioritise protecting our most vulnerable communities whilst delivering regeneration and skills, education, health, and housing programmes.



Ongoing review and evaluation of the Strategy and Action Plan (2022-26)