

Falkirk Poverty Strategy

Fairer Money, *Fairer Access, Fairer Culture*

Outline Draft

Outline Draft, September 2018

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Foreword

Needs to be ambitious, owned and grasped by all

A Working Document

This outline draft is a working document developed to share and encourage discussion with partners and stakeholders, families and the community.

Signatures

Council Leader/chief executive

Chair of FFP /head of service/Fiona/Sally

DRAFT

Introduction

A fairer and more equal Falkirk was agreed in August 2017 as one of the outcomes of the Falkirk Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022. The plan sets out the Council's vision for Falkirk and priorities, against the backdrop of a shrinking public budget.

The Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery (SOLD) Plan sets out in detail how the Council will meet this particular priority, and contained in the Fairer Falkirk Poverty Strategy 2011- 2021. Faced with resource challenge, the council has committed to protecting our most vulnerable citizens, and to work with partners and communities to shape services, and help find insight-driven solutions for the future.

This document reviews the Fairer Falkirk Poverty Strategy, and sets out clearly three priority areas where the Council will focus its resources and activities over the next 3 years.

Strategic Context – the need for a new approach

The themes of this review, fairer money, fairer access, and fairer culture are consistent with the package of policy and strategies, which drive the work of all public sector agencies in the country, including:

- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- Education (Scotland) Act 2016

- Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017
- The Fairer Scotland Action Plan (2016)
- The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, and
- The new Socio-Economic Duty, which requires all public bodies to put reduction of poverty and inequality at the heart of their decision making.

Falkirk response

Fairer Falkirk (2011 – 2021) anti-poverty strategy was Falkirk Council response to rising poverty and inequality in the council area. It sets out actions by Council and community planning partners towards mitigating the impact of poverty on individuals and families, and provides a series of practical, deliverable, and achievable programmes to drive the strategy. This mid term refresh of the strategy will ensure that it is focused and builds on our experiences over the first half of its lifespan. It will provide clarity and direction for our poverty work going forward. The strategy is led by engagement and involvement of communities and partners.

Strategic Fit

This strategy and its accompanying workplan does not stand alone, but rather is part of a developing policy and strategy framework designed to improve multi-agency collaboration, and deliver improved outcomes for citizens, families, and communities in Falkirk.

The framework incorporates a number of components with which this strategy is designed to complement and align, including: the Falkirk Council Area Community

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Planning Partnership Strategic Outcomes and Local Delivery (SOLD) Plan 2016-2020, which is Falkirk Council equivalent of Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Delivering the strategy

The remainder of this document sets our vision, evidence base, approach, and practical actions towards delivering the refreshed strategy.

Evidence Base

Definition - What is Poverty?

Poverty is a contested concept, the particular meaning of which depends on the ideological and political context within which it is used. However, in the broadest sense, "People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living acceptable in the society in which they live."¹

In the UK, there are currently three definitions of poverty in common usage: absolute poverty, relative poverty, and social exclusion.

- **Absolute poverty** – people are in absolute poverty if they are living in households with income below 60% of the 2010/2011 median, adjusted for inflation. This gives a measure of poverty that is constant over time.
- **Relative poverty** - people are in relative poverty if they are living in a household with income below 60% of median household income in the current year.

Vision and Impact

A Fairer Falkirk is at the heart of everything we do, both in our decision-making, and the way we deliver our services. Our vision is for an inclusive Falkirk, with equality and equity of opportunity for everyone. We will work closely with partners and communities to achieve this vision, to reduce the impact of poverty on individuals, children, and families in our area.

- **Social exclusion** is a descriptor for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown².

Piachaud³ argues that the definition of poverty is a moral question, and refers to it as a 'hardship', which is unacceptable. He points out three conditions that underpin poverty, namely:

- material conditions - needing goods and services, multiple deprivation, or a low standard of living;
- economic position - low income, limited resources, inequality or low social class; and
- social position of the poor, through lack of entitlement, dependency or social exclusion⁴.

For the purposes of this strategy, when the term 'poverty' is used, it will usually be referring to relative poverty. That is, living in a household with income below

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60% of median household income in the current year. This measure essentially looks at inequality between low- and middle-income households.

The impact of poverty

While the above definition emphasizes income levels, we know, however, that poverty is more than the scarcity or lack of certain amount of material possessions, or even employment. For example, official statistics shows that as much as 60% of people in poverty in UK live in households, where someone is in work.⁵

Hence, the impact of poverty goes beyond starving and material deprivation, to people not being able to afford things that are somewhat “essential” in modern everyday life. For example:

- to be able to face unexpected financial expenses
- to afford a telephone, mobile or smart phone
- to afford a colour television
- to afford a washing machine
- to not have arrears on mortgage or rent payments
- to afford a 1-week annual holiday away from home
- to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or a vegetarian equivalent every other day
- to afford a car, and
- to afford to keep the home adequately warm

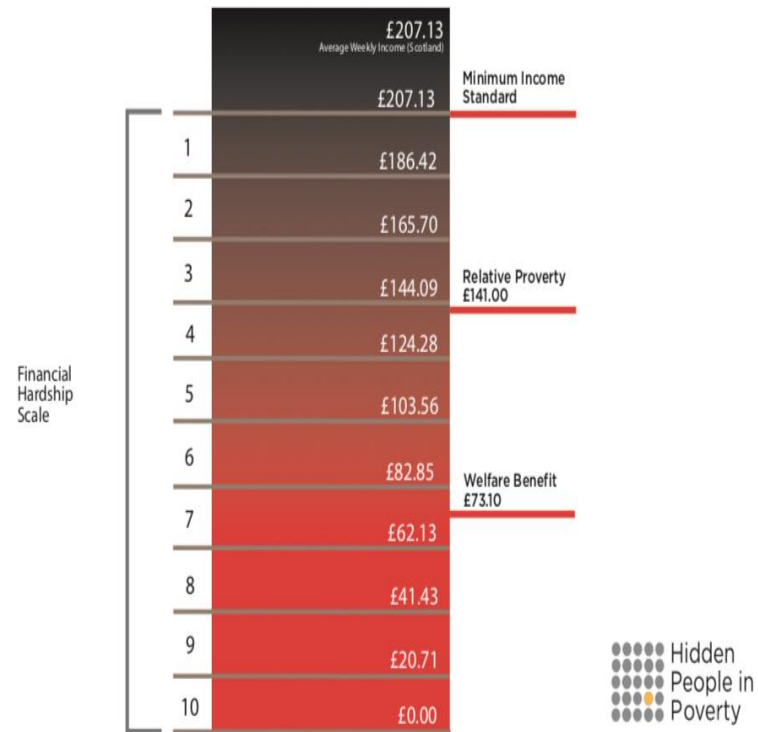
To enable better understanding of the impact of poverty on peoples’ everyday life, we have developed a financial hardship scale (FHS). The scale takes into account weekly household earnings, for welfare benefit claimants, relative poverty levels, compared t the Minimum Income Standard (MIS).

- **Welfare benefit** or out of work benefits are unemployment related benefit claims, including employment and support allowance and other incapacity benefits, income support, and pension credit.
- **Minimum income standard (MIS)** – different households need different amounts of money to live comfortably, depending on their size and shape. For example, a household with one person in it needs less money to live comfortably than a household consisting of a couple and two children. The MIS is the UK public view of what income levels different types of households require to reach a socially acceptable living standard⁶.
- **The financial hardship scale (FHS)** helps our understanding of the impact of poverty, and what it means to live in poverty for different households, based on income available to them. For example, it shows that households, who receive welfare benefit, are living way below the relative poverty threshold. And, while poverty in the UK tends not to be absolute, the experience of people living does not reflect this.

Impact of Poverty



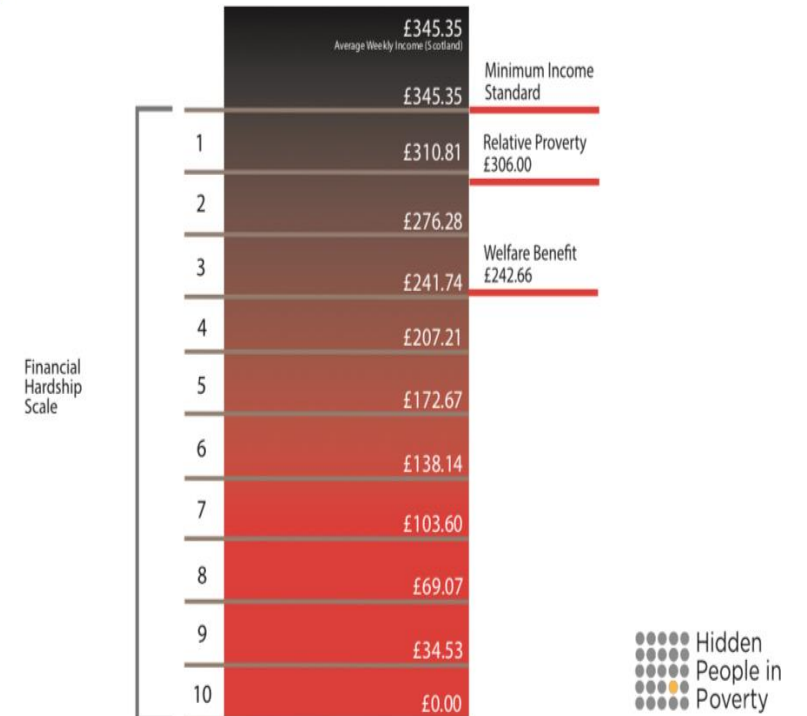
Single Adult Minimum Income Standards (MIS)



Impact of Poverty



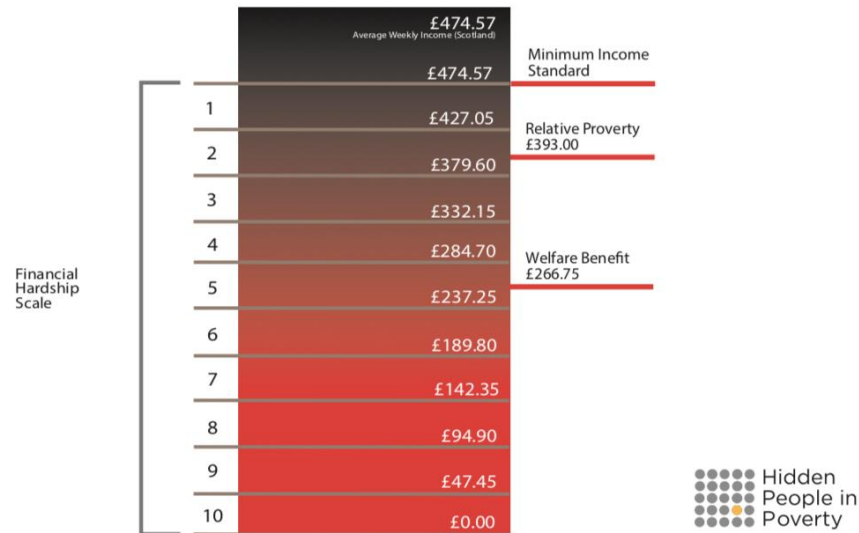
Single Parent with Child Minimum Income Standards (MIS)











Impact of Poverty



Couple with Two Children
Minimum Income Standards (MIS)



143,340 in 1997 to 160,130 in 2017. Overall, Falkirk population has increased at more than double the national rate. Despite growth, we know there are a number of groups within the population who have a significantly greater risk of entering or remaining in poverty:

-  **24,458**
Households affected by long term health problems or disability
-  **8,602**
Single pensioners (household with one person aged 65+)
-  **4,942**
Lone parents with dependent children
-  **1,200**
Benefits claimants with two or more children
-  **388**
Children who are looked after at home and away from home.
-  **1,102**
People submitted full homeless applications
-  **1,700**
People affected by drug and alcohol use
-  **15,165**
Offenders and ex-offenders

The evidence gives a clear message that poverty is not a lifestyle choice and that people experiencing poverty struggle to get by each day.

Poverty in Falkirk

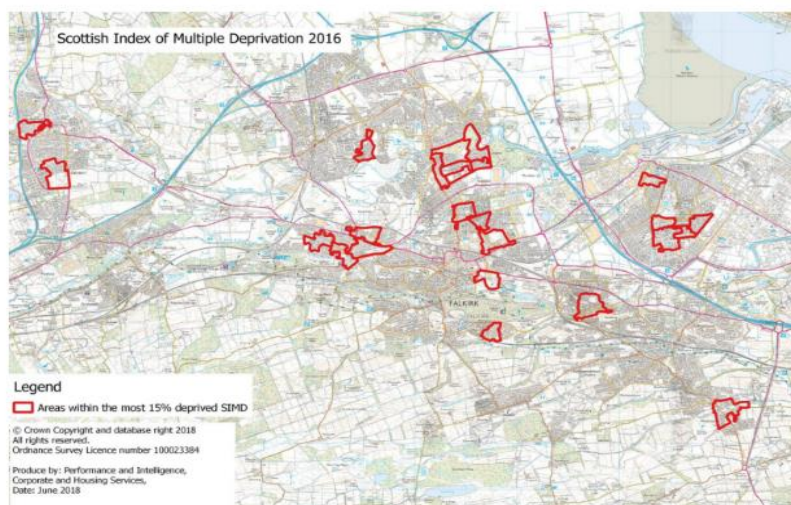
Falkirk is a thriving place, and has been among the fastest growing local authorities in Scotland. In the last 20 years, Falkirk's population has grown from

falkirk council, scottish government, census 2011, dwp

Poverty in Falkirk

We know that there are areas within the Falkirk Council area that are areas of persistent poverty;

Bainsford & Langlees **Denny** **Maddiston**
Camelon **Grangemouth** **Westquarter**



In addition, a number of areas have been identified as being 'at risk' of multiple deprivation. These areas are not consistently identified as experiencing multiple deprivations according to statistical definition, but fall below the line in some years and rise above it in other years. Some of the areas that fall into this category of being 'at risk' are;

Bo'ness (Deanfield) **Falkirk** (Thornhill, Westfield) **Stenhousemuir** (Valley)
Callendar Park High **Hallglen**
Flats

source: scottish index of multiple deprivation 2016

This strategy will be subject to the use of equality impact assessments by partners, and assessed to meet the new Fairer Scotland Duty, which requires all public bodies to put reduction of poverty and inequality at the heart of their decision making. Its accompanying action plan will be progressed from partners' strategies, to ensure that all of our efforts are targeted on the groups and areas most at risk of poverty.

The Whole Family Approach

- Given the evidence that poverty is both about families struggling to survive, and our children being haunted in their life course by its consequences, the design and delivery of this strategy will lend itself to the whole family approach.
- The whole family approach is an intervention principle, which takes into account the need of the whole family, when providing support to both the individual and the family.
- We know that while individual family members have, and can meet their own needs within the family, these needs can also be met through relationships with other family members. For example, children's needs are usually largely met through their parents' resources, or a couple can share some of their resources to better meet their needs.
- In order to mitigate the impact of poverty, the whole family approach recognises the need for each adult, in a multi-family arrangement, to have access to and power over, resources sufficient to meet their needs.

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It cannot be assumed that resources are shared evenly within the family.

For example, evidence suggests that women can get less than a fair share in a multi-family arrangement, while children's needs are often prioritised.⁷

- The aims of the whole family approach are:
 - i. to identify families with the greatest need
 - ii. to provide the right support at the earliest opportunity;
 - iii. to address the range of needs within a family through accurate identification and co-ordination of a family wide response; and
 - iv. to strengthen the capacity of family members to support each other

- As a minimum a whole family approach requires an understanding of the key 'family' structure and composition as well as being alert to wider family issues.

- Services that take a whole family approach can benefit from establishing how the needs of other family members affect their principal 'client' and how meeting those needs might benefit their client.

- It is essential that the family is engaged in and consents to any intervention that seeks to meet wider family needs. And as a key objective, the whole family approach involves enabling families to find and implement their own solutions when appropriate.

Our Approach

Three workstream areas:

This strategy is built around three interconnected and mutually reinforcing work programmes: Fairer Money, Fairer Access, and Fairer Culture.

Theme 1: Fairer Money – Income maximization and Financial Capability

More people in Falkirk are now in work than during the worst of the recession, however, more now earn less than the income needed to afford an acceptable standard of living. This is caused by a combination of rise in part-time and low paid work. Current levels of in-work poverty means that more families in Falkirk will need income maximisation and financial capability related support to mitigate the impact of poverty.

The goal of fairer money is to help people understand how much they can get in their circumstance, and how to make the most of the money they have. Particularly, making sure individuals and households in Falkirk are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to, and providing targeted financial advice and capability support to people at risk of poverty.

Theme 2: Fairer Access – making access to services and opportunities seamless

In Falkirk, majority of those identified to be significantly in greater risk of entering or remaining in poverty are from low-income families. The purpose for fairer access is to encourage partners and services to take a whole-family approach in designing and delivering services, targeting people at risk of poverty.

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In the case of children, we recognize that poverty does not only damage childhood, it can also damage life chances. Therefore, ensuring that children in Falkirk have access to opportunities that will support their welfare, wellbeing, and development is a vital element of the whole-family approach.

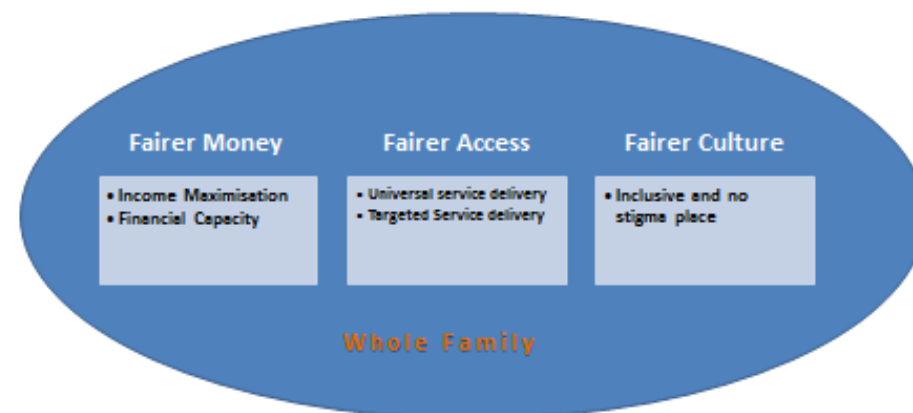
Theme 3: Fairer Culture – an inclusive and no stigma place

The stigma against poverty is a serious problem. It has implications for the sorts of support people receive how they are viewed and treated by professionals, and the wider public, and how those experiencing poverty see themselves.

Fairer culture recognises the stigma against poverty, making sure services are aware of societal influences that can create barriers to participation; including the often unconscious and unintended consequences of service delivery, which may reinforce the stigma of poverty.

It encourages services and partners to consider those factors that may over-burden or put undue pressure on children and families, particularly, those from low income families. This is vital to achieving an inclusive and no stigma Falkirk.

3 Priority areas



Insert picture/infographics summarising our three programme areas (Money, Access, and Culture) Details of themes to develop from public engagement feedback

Theme 1: Money

(Fairer Money Working Group – Gemma)

Theme 2: Access

(Access Group include hub managers/others)

Theme 3: Culture

(children services, education, etc - follow up with Children Commission (anti-poverty event; cost of school days, Uniform, poverty awareness (Jude and Anne Stewart)

Comment: Some of the new service delivery models, including the Advice Hubs, and the evolving commissioning models are tailored around the needs of our citizens, families and communities – emphasises the whole family approach.

Contacts and Further Information

Make it work

Action Plan against 3 work streams

Our commitments

Our commitments -, partners will provide information for this section. Should be part of workshop

We will not knowingly exclude people from accessing service due to lack of money

We will not make school burdensome

As an organisation we will be as fair as we can

We will give opportunity to all Children, and ensure they are not excluded

For more information or to share your comments on this draft strategy please contact us at.

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Others

¹ European Commission, Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004

² Bradshaw, J. and Gordon D., Levitas R., Middleton S., Pantazis C., Payne S., and Townsend T. (1998), *Perceptions of Poverty and Social Exclusion: Report on Preparatory Research*, Bristol: Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bristol

³ D Piachaud, 1981, Peter Townsend and the Holy Grail, *New Society* (Sept.) 421

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2>

⁶ JRF 2017 - This is the 2017 update of the Minimum Income Standard for the UK, based on what the public think people need for an acceptable minimum standard of living.

⁷ Goulden C, D'Aray C 2014. *A Definition of Poverty*. London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.