**Dundee Fairness and Local Child Poverty Report 2024/2025: Case Studies Supplement**

**Introduction**

The Dundee Fairness and Local Child Poverty Report 2024/2025: Case Studies Supplement highlights the real-life impact of local initiatives aimed at reducing child poverty and promoting fairness across Dundee. These case studies showcase the collaborative work of schools, health services, employability programmes, advice services, and community organisations. Each story reflects the lived experiences of individuals and families, and the tangible difference made by targeted, compassionate, and coordinated support.

The supplement is structured around six key themes:

1. Social Inclusion and Stigma
2. Work and Wages
3. Benefits and Advice
4. Attainment and Child Poverty
5. Health Inequalities
6. Housing and Communities

These themes reflect the multifaceted nature of poverty and the importance of holistic, person-centred approaches to tackling it. The case studies demonstrate how local services are working together to remove barriers, build resilience, and create opportunities for children and families to thrive.

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**Theme A) SOCIAL INCLUSION AND STIGMA**

**Case Study 1: Strengthening family support through volunteering – DVVA Programme**

In 2023, the first year of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, the Dundee Children and Families Executive Board awarded multi-year funding to sixteen programmes to build transformation capacity within the local Children’s Services Planning Partnership. Dundee Volunteer and Voluntary Action (DVVA), on behalf of the Dundee Alliance, successfully bid to lead a Children and Families Volunteer Programme.

Starting in June 2024 and grounded in the principles of The Promise, DVVA has worked with cross-sector partners, volunteers, and the wider community to re-develop a volunteer strategy that enhances service provision for children and families. They co-designed a volunteer passport to facilitate access to multiple volunteering opportunities and better recognise volunteer contributions.

Led by the voices of children, young people, and families, the team engages with families who have had volunteer support to fully appreciate its value and inform wider practice and developments. The programme strives for improvements in volunteer engagement, organisational governance, and resource maximisation. Through key priority areas, the project identifies and reduces gaps in inclusion and diversity of volunteers and roles, widens access to disadvantaged communities and demographics less likely to engage, and supports local priorities around attainment, employability, and reducing inequalities.

Aiming to enable better outcomes for children, families and volunteers, the project collaborates with cross-sector partners to build service capacity by streamlining volunteer involvement processes and bolstering volunteer training and learning opportunities.

Other developments include the creation of a Volunteer Passport prototype, shaped by the views of existing service provision, current and potential volunteers, and a commissioned online platform offering faster and smoother methods of viewing volunteer positions and communicating with children and families' organisations. Volunteers gain easy access to mandatory training and development resources, and organisations connect and communicate safely and efficiently with volunteers.

**Case Study 2: Building confidence and belonging through creative community groups – ScrapAntics Collective**

‘C’ recently moved into an assisted living flat. Although she had previously enjoyed attending various social sessions and clubs, access to these ended when she was reclassified as an adult. As a result, C felt isolated, and her long-standing mental health challenges worsened.

Since joining The Collective at ScrapAntics, C has experienced a significant boost in confidence. She now actively participates in a range of activities and feels more self-assured. As she proudly shared: “It’s the first time I’ve managed to go to an adult group where not everyone has a disability.”

One of the sessions was delivered by Engender, a women’s rights organisation. C played a key role, engaging fully and speaking passionately as an advocate. Her support workers have observed a clear transformation in her confidence. Notably, she has begun travelling independently by bus to the community centre — a major milestone, given her previous fear of public transport due to years of bullying. This step has supported both her independence and her mental and physical wellbeing. “I look forward to my group every week,” she says. “I’m trying new things.”

C’s mother has also noticed the positive impact: “It’s the very first club she’s attended as a young adult where everybody understands her.”

The group has become an important emotional support network. During a recent session when C was struggling, the other women rallied around her with comfort and encouragement. That support made the difference between her staying engaged or withdrawing. “Without my ladies’ collective, I’d be lonely and stuck at home.”

**Case Study 3: Empowering a young New Scot through leadership and creativity**

‘R’, a young woman from a refugee background, had been known to ScrapAntics for some time, but her involvement in activities was initially limited due to low confidence. She eventually approached the team with a request to start a book group for young people her age. Her motivation stemmed from her experience at school, where assumptions were often made that all pupils shared the same cultural and historical knowledge. As someone whose family came to Scotland from Libya, R felt excluded and wanted to create a space for others with similar experiences.

Although setting up the book group proved challenging, R remained engaged and resilient. She redirected her energy into volunteering with ScrapAntics, using her artistic talents to support weekly drop-in sessions. She now plays a key role in planning and delivering creative activities for both children and adults.

R also became involved in climate justice work through Changemakers, Dundee’s Climate Hub. She participated in a youth journalism programme, using poetry and visual art to raise awareness of the climate crisis and inspire community action.

She was later selected to join a national youth panel for the Access All Arts Awards, led by Children in Scotland. Travelling to Glasgow for the panel meeting marked a major personal milestone — her first visit to the city. Despite heightened anxiety due to recent unrest in the UK, she made the journey and reflected positively on the experience: “I am proud that I did it, and also the ScrapAntics volunteers made the experience really good actually — I felt very safe.”

R continues to be a dedicated volunteer and creative leader, contributing to key events such as the Refugee Festival family day at Camperdown Park. Her journey highlights the importance of inclusive, culturally responsive spaces that empower young people from diverse backgrounds to lead, create, and thrive.

**Case Study 4: Reducing isolation and promoting wellbeing – Lochee Friendship Group**

In 2024, DVVA’s Social Inclusion Team, in collaboration with the Community Empowerment team and local stakeholders, launched the Lochee Friendship Group following community consultations. Older residents in the area expressed a strong desire for activity-based groups to help reduce social isolation and improve wellbeing. Two taster sessions were held to further explore local interest, confirming the need for a regular, welcoming social space.

The Lochee Friendship Group officially began on 6 August 2024. It offers a warm, safe, and inclusive environment for people aged 55 and over to meet, enjoy refreshments, and take part in meaningful activities. The group meets weekly at the Lochee Community Hub, with 12 to 15 regular participants.

Activities are shaped by the interests of group members and include sessions delivered by organisations such as HOPE, Citizens Advice Bureau, Fire Safety at Home, Energy Saving Trust, Library Services, and digital support providers. Other sessions have included crafts, mindfulness, local history talks, seated yoga and exercise, and informal social chats. Plans are underway to introduce intergenerational sessions involving young people and families later in the year.

The group also provides access to practical advice and information, including support with cost-of-living issues such as energy bills. This holistic approach helps improve both the social and financial wellbeing of attendees.

At an evaluation session in April, participants shared the personal impact of attending the group:

“Met new friends, learned new subjects and pursuits.”
 “Look forward to the company, gives me a nice feeling.”
 “It gives me a reason to get dressed and go out.”
 “I feel more sociable and tolerant.”
 “It’s been a fantastic experience — more confident and more relaxed.”
 “I enjoy chatting and hearing the news — a reason to get out of bed.”

The Lochee Friendship Group demonstrates how community-led, inclusive initiatives can reduce isolation, promote wellbeing, and foster a sense of belonging among older adults.

**Case Study 5: What Matters To You – Targeted Group Work**

Some of the young people attending evening youth work sessions at the DISC Target Project were facing significant barriers to participation in mainstream education. These included literacy difficulties, poor peer relationships, challenges with self-regulation, and low confidence and self-esteem, all of which contributed to low school attendance and engagement.

Youth work staff recognised that these young people had leadership potential and a desire to improve services for others. Ten participants took part in team-building sessions before progressing to a Values-Based Leadership Experience (VBLE) with Columba 1400, funded by the What Matters to You (WM2U) initiative. Over four days, the group explored their strengths, developed leadership skills, and identified shared issues they wanted to address.

Following the VBLE in December 2024, the group expressed a strong interest in improving the DISC space for other young people. They noted that the portacabin at the site, often used for shelter during cold or wet evenings, was not fit for purpose. Previously used for storage, it had become damp, overcrowded, and unwelcoming.

With support from the Youth Diversionary Fund, the portacabin was refurbished and furnished to create a warm, safe, and comfortable drop-in space. The young people led the design process, identifying key resources they felt would make the space feel like a “home away from home.” These included lighting, wall décor, mirrors, hair straighteners, a Bluetooth speaker, cushions, and warm blankets.

The transformation has had a powerful impact. One young person shared: “If you don’t have a nice home out there, then at least you’ll have one when you come here.”

Another commented: “I can’t believe it! It’s so different! This gives me so much… joy! …this place being like this! I love it!”

All participants benefited from the experience, developing friendships, communication skills, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose. The project has not only improved the physical environment but also empowered young people to shape the services they use and support their peers in meaningful ways.

**Case Study 6: Connecting new parents through Douglas Pram Pushing Walk & Talk**

In April 2024, the Douglas Pram Pushing Walk and Talk Group was launched in response to parents attending Douglas Community Centre who were seeking opportunities to connect with others, reduce the isolation of early parenthood, and increase their physical activity. The group quickly became a valued weekly fixture, bringing parents together to share experiences and support one another while improving their physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

Parents have shared how much they enjoy the walks, the conversations, and the relationships that have developed over time. The informal setting has encouraged open and honest discussions about parenting, helping to build confidence and trust. One participant has even progressed to become a volunteer walk leader. The group has also helped parents explore new areas of the city — for some, it was their first time visiting Dawson Park.

The relaxed, non-threatening nature of the group has allowed Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff to build stronger, more trusting relationships with parents. This trust has enabled deeper conversations around sensitive issues and encouraged parents to develop their own knowledge and skills.

Three partner organisations have joined the walks to offer informal support based on the group’s needs:

* The Health Inclusion Nursing Team (HINT) provided health checks and shared health information.
* A Parent Development Officer engaged with the group to gather insights into local parenting needs, helping to inform future service provision.
* The Speech Language Communication Company (SLCo) was invited following discussions around children’s sensitivities and sleep issues. This led to the development of a new project, Thriving Parents, which uses the Together to Thrive values to deliver workshops that support parents in sharing challenges and working together on solutions.

The Douglas Pram Pushing group has become more than just a walk — it’s a supportive, empowering space where parents can connect, grow in confidence, and access the help they need in a way that feels natural and community-led.

**Case Study 7: Promoting community-led suicide prevention – Dundee Creating Hope Awards Pilot**

A new suicide prevention initiative, the Dundee Creating Hope Awards, was developed during 2024/25 and is set to be piloted in Lochee, with plans for a city-wide rollout from Spring 2026.

The initiative aims to increase the visibility of support for individuals at risk of suicide, as well as for those who have been affected by suicide in any way. It seeks to build a network of informal support within local communities by recognising and celebrating people, groups, and organisations that offer hope and connection to others.

The Creating Hope Awards emerged in response to stakeholder feedback gathered during the development of Creating Hope Together in Dundee, the city’s Suicide Prevention Delivery Plan. The awards are designed to reflect the plan’s core values of compassion, connection, and community-led action.

A community engagement phase is scheduled to begin in June 2025. This will involve local residents, community groups, organisations, businesses, and individuals with lived experience of suicide in shaping the design and delivery of the initiative. By co-producing the awards with the community, the project aims to ensure that it is meaningful, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.

The pilot in Lochee will inform the development of a sustainable model that can be adapted and implemented across Dundee, helping to foster a culture of hope and support throughout the city.

**Theme B) WORK AND WAGES**

**Case Study 1: Supporting young people into employment – Employability Pathfinder (LFI Linlathen)**

A mother was contacted as part of the Child Poverty Pathfinder engagement process. Although the mother did not require support herself, she mentioned that her 17-year-old daughter was struggling to search and apply for work. The daughter and a Keyworker exchanged details and arranged an appointment to discuss support the following day.

At the first appointment, the Keyworker identified the main barriers preventing the daughter from gaining employment. These included a lack of support with her CV and application forms, as well as anxiety about potential interviews.

Once the barriers were identified, the Keyworker and the daughter worked together to formulate a plan to support her into employment. The daughter did not have a CV and was unfamiliar with covering letters. During their appointments, the Keyworker helped create a CV that detailed all her qualifications and employment history in a clear and concise manner. Additionally, they created a covering letter that highlighted her past work experience.

The daughter possessed many skills that she did not initially recognise as strengths. Throughout their meetings, the Keyworker helped her identify these strengths, enabling her to highlight her skills and abilities when independently searching for jobs.

Through one-to-one, person-centred support, the Keyworker assisted the daughter in applying for jobs. Shortly after, she received an interview and was informed that she had been successful and was offered a full-time role.

If the mother had not been contacted, the daughter would not have received the support provided by the Child Poverty Pathfinder. Consequently, she would not have had a suitable CV or covering letter and would likely not have entered employment without the support given.

**Case Study 2: Overcoming Barriers to Work – Employability Pathways**

An individual arrived in Scotland on a spouse visa, accompanying their partner while she completed studies at a local university. Despite having a background in construction, they found it extremely difficult to gain employment in the sector without UK-recognised qualifications. After a period working in a frozen goods factory, they had to leave due to the cold environment aggravating their disability.

Through Enable Works, they received comprehensive support, including CV building, cover letter writing, job searching, and interview preparation. The individual also received funding for training in forklift operation and the CSCS construction course. With continued support from their Employment Coordinator, the individual secured long-term labouring work. This support has placed the individual in a much more stable position, allowing them to financially support their partner and children. They now feel hopeful about their future in the Scottish workforce, demonstrating how targeted employability support can significantly improve work opportunities and economic stability.

The key outcomes of this support included the development of a UK-style CV and cover letter tailored to their experience and goals, regular job searching assistance and access to local and national job boards, funding support for training courses including CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) and forklift operation, interview preparation and guidance to build confidence and present skills effectively, and ongoing encouragement and motivation.

The individual is now in a much more stable position, proud to be financially supporting their family and optimistic about their future in the workforce.

**Case Study 3: Safe Housing Enabling Employment – Housing & Communities Team**

Complaints from neighbours about a tenant not picking up after their dog led to a meeting where the tenant disclosed being abused by their partner. The tenant lived in a 1-bed flat with their partner and their dogs. Desperate to escape, the tenant was referred to Women’s Aid and secretly met with them. The tenant reported physical and sexual abuse and completed a housing application for a management transfer. The tenant was moved closer to their foster parents, providing a safer and more stable living environment, which significantly improved their mental health and wellbeing. As a result, the tenant was able to secure employment, demonstrating how stable housing can lead to improved work opportunities and economic stability. The tenant successfully cut ties with their ex-partner and is now very happy.

**Case Study 4: Inclusive Careers in Healthcare – NHS Tayside Healthcare Academy**

The Healthcare Academy, a partnership between NHS Tayside, Dundee & Angus College, and Discover Work partners, celebrated the graduation of its 50th cohort in March 2025. The programme supports individuals facing barriers to employment by providing tailored training and work-based learning opportunities in the healthcare sector.

Established in 2006, the Academy was designed to address local workforce needs while creating accessible pathways into employment for people from diverse backgrounds. Participants receive support to build confidence, develop practical skills, and gain experience that prepares them for roles within NHS Tayside and the wider care sector.

Many graduates are parents or carers, and their progression into employment has had a direct impact on reducing child poverty in their households. The programme also contributes to a more inclusive and resilient local workforce.

A celebration event brought together past and present graduates, highlighting the programme’s long-term impact on individuals and the community.

NHS Tayside Chief Executive, Nicky Connor, said:

“Reaching this milestone is testament to the power of partnership working. This programme exemplifies our commitment to strengthening our healthcare workforce from within our community. We are incredibly proud of each and every graduate—they have worked incredibly hard to gain the skills they need to pursue successful careers in healthcare.”

The Healthcare Academy continues to demonstrate how collaborative, person-centred employability programmes can break down barriers, support inclusive recruitment, and improve long-term outcomes for families across Dundee.

**Theme C) BENEFITS AND ADVICE**

**Case Study 1: Income Maximisation for a Young Family – Connect Team**

A Connect Officer met with a young mum referred by her midwife. She was a single parent of a 6-year-old son and a 5-year-old daughter and was 11 weeks pregnant with her third child. Living in a damp-affected 2-bedroom private let, her housing costs were covered by Universal Credit and paid directly to the landlord. She received £1,546 per month from Universal Credit, including housing costs. With Autism Spectrum Disorder and learning difficulties, she relied heavily on her mum for support. She also received Personal Independence Payment of £737.20 every 4 weeks, £549 every 4 weeks from Child Disability Payment for her son, Child Benefit of £42.55 per week, and Scottish Child Payment of £53.40 every 4 weeks.

The Connect Officer reviewed her Universal Credit claim and noticed the absence of the disabled child or carer element. The officer advised that while she wouldn’t receive an additional payment for the baby, she should still add the child to her claim for bedroom/housing cost purposes. Additionally, when she reached 25 weeks of pregnancy, she could apply for the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, providing a one-off payment of £377.35 and a weekly payment of £10.60. She would also receive Child Benefit for her third child (£16.95 per week) and Scottish Child Payment (£26.70 per week), subject to change in the new financial year.

A face-to-face appointment was arranged at a community clinic to assist with updating her Universal Credit claim to include the disabled child and carer elements. Attending with her mum for support, the officer contacted Social Security Scotland, confirming her son was awarded Child Disability Payment high care and low mobility from 13/07/2023, with the decision made on 19/12/2023. Changes were made to her Universal Credit claim to include the carer element, with a note explaining the delay due to her Autism Spectrum Disorder and learning difficulties.

The following week, the officer received a call from the client's mum. Her Universal Credit had been updated to include the higher disabled child and carer elements, backdated to the beginning of the claim, resulting in a backdated payment of £12,600. This was timely as she was at the top of the Dundee City Council housing list to move closer to her mum for full support. The backdated payment allowed her to replace furniture and soft furnishings damaged by damp. Her weekly income increased by £158.28 with the added elements. Although she didn’t have the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity element, it was explained that if awarded, she would receive an extra £416.19 per month but lose the carer element of £198.31 per month. She submitted a 3-month sick line to Universal Credit for further assessment.

**Case Study 2: Unlocking Support for Working Parents – School-Based Advice**

A widowed dad working full-time was referred to the in-house school-based advisor by the school. He had never claimed benefits before and didn’t think he was entitled as he worked full-time. Based on his current income, he was able to receive Universal Credit of £61.88 a week (this amount will increase as his award was based on his wages having a lot of overtime) and Scottish Child Payment of £25 per week, equating to £376.48 per month.

Due to this support, he advised that he will not need to work overtime and will be able to spend more time with his son. Since seeing the client in August, the school’s attainment officer has confirmed an upturn in the child’s attendance in school from the end of September to November.

**Case Study 3: Preventing housing insecurity through school-based advice**

A client was referred from Rent Recovery due to significant rent arrears. He was 17 and in his 5th year at school. With the assistance of Social Work, he took on his own tenancy to provide security, given concerns over his mother and previous abandonment of tenancies.

His mother, who was living with him, was claiming Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit, and Child Benefit, but was not named on the tenancy. For him to receive assistance with his rent, he would have had to claim Universal Credit. However, 16/17-year-olds cannot normally claim Universal Credit, and none of the exceptions applied to him. Additionally, claiming would affect his mother's benefits as he was still a dependant.

Since his mother intended to remain in the property, the team explored ways for his rent to be covered. By reviewing the Universal Credit Regulations, they identified two options for his mother to claim the Housing Costs element of Universal Credit despite not being on the tenancy.

The team worked with the family and assisted his mother in claiming Universal Credit, which was awarded along with the Housing Costs element going forward. They also helped them claim a Discretionary Housing Payment to address the accrued rent arrears, thereby removing the threat of eviction.

**Case Study 4: Supporting expectant parents to access financial entitlements**

A 35-year-old woman was referred by her midwife to see if she would be entitled to any benefits as she was pregnant with her fourth child and was concerned about finances. She worked around 8 hours per week, self-employed, earning a maximum gross income of £100.00 per week, and her husband was also self-employed, earning a maximum gross income of £500.00 per week. They live in a private let tenancy costing £650 per calendar month. She was claiming £55.80 per week in Child Benefit.

The team completed a benefit check based on her current circumstances, and they were entitled to approximately £168.43 per week in Universal Credit. Because they have Universal Credit entitlement, this means they also qualify for £25.00 per week, per child, Scottish Child Payment, and have entitlement to the Best Start Grant one-off payment of £353.65 and Best Start Food payment of £4.95 per week.

Prior to the referral, they were receiving only £55.80 in Child Benefit along with their wages. Following the advice and assistance, they are now receiving £168.43 per week in Universal Credit, £75 per week in Scottish Child Payment, in addition to the Best Start Foods weekly. This equates to a financial gain of £299.23 per week.

Once their new child is born, this will increase further to £340.13 per week as they will have entitlement to Child Benefit and Scottish Child Payment for a fourth child.

**Case Study 5: Improving financial stability for kinship carers**

A parent took custody of their son in February this year through social work. Initially, they were not advised of any support they might be entitled to. Only after discussing with their Family Support Worker was a referral made to Council Advice Services. The parent was already in receipt of Pension Credit.

Due to having custody of a child, they were entitled to an increase of £72.31 per week. The team helped them claim this. They also assisted in applying for Child Benefit of £24.00 per week and Scottish Child Payment of £25.00 per week. Additionally, they helped claim Free School Meals and the School Clothing Grant.

Regarding rent costs, due to being on Pension Credit, full rent was already covered. However, there was a shortfall of £60 due to the landlord increasing the rent. Council Advice Services asked the parent to provide the letter from the landlord and passed it onto the Housing Benefit team to recalculate the Housing Benefit award.

As a result of these claims and awards, the parent is now better off by £633.31 a month. The son attends a summer club at the school twice a week. As the parent was struggling to keep his son occupied the other three days, the Council Advice Services Advisor suggested going to Boomerang between 1-3 pm. This case study highlights the importance of comprehensive and holistic advice and support in ensuring that individuals receive all the benefits they are entitled to, thereby improving their financial stability and overall well-being.

**Case Study 6: Securing backdated benefits for an older resident**

An older customer was contacted through the Pension Credit Take-up campaign. Her State Retirement Pension was below the amount the law says she needs to live on. Her husband is in permanent residential care, and as 50% of his private pension is disregarded for charging purposes, she was advised by the DWP’s Pension Service that she was not eligible for Pension Credit (PC).

Council Advice Services looked into his and discussed the case with colleagues at Child Poverty Action Group. They applied for PC on her behalf, arguing that this income should not have been counted as hers. They also wrote a covering letter to the PC section, requesting compensation for three years of backdated payments due to incorrect advice. Additionally, she had missed out on Cost-of-Living Payments.

As her care needs had increased, a Disability Living Allowance (DLA) review was requested, with medical evidence added to the review. This was obtained with her consent as she is a patient at one of the co-located practices. DLA High-Rate Care was awarded, which also increased her PC due to the inclusion of the Severe Disability Premium.

Previously worried about her finances, as her mortgage payments had increased from £99 to over £400 per calendar month due to rising interest rates, she is now £210 per week better off. This mitigates the effect of the mortgage increase, and she now advises she will be able to get a cleaner due to not managing housework herself. Overall, including backdated payments, this resulted in a financial gain of £13,000.

**Theme D) ATTAINMENT AND CHILD POVERTY**

**Case Study 1: Tackling poverty and increasing attainment in Longhaugh and St Francis’ Primary Schools**

Both schools, situated in Dundee’s North-East Campus, serve areas of significant socio-economic deprivation. Over 50% of Longhaugh pupils and two-thirds of St Francis pupils come from the most deprived areas, contrasting sharply with the Scottish national average. To address these challenges, both schools have implemented comprehensive, community-focused support systems to ensure that no child’s education is hindered by poverty.

Poverty affects children’s ability to focus, participate, and thrive in school. Basic needs such as food, clothing, and household essentials are often unmet at home, leading to hunger, poor attendance, and social stigma. Families struggle to access resources like foodbanks due to lack of transport and financial constraints. School-related costs (uniforms, trips, special events) further burden already stretched household budgets.

The schools developed a holistic support model led by dedicated School and Family Development Officers. This approach combines practical assistance with relationship-building to remove barriers to learning and participation.

Key initiatives include daily breakfast and snack provision to ensure pupils are nourished and ready to learn; uniform and essentials supply with rails of school uniforms and cupboards stocked with hygiene items; food support and delivery with emergency food supplies available on-site and staff collecting and delivering foodbank parcels when families cannot access them; cost reduction measures such as cheaper uniforms, subsidised trips, and simplified special events to avoid costly dress-up days; and community partnerships with local organisations providing ongoing donations of food, clothing, and supplies.

This integrated support model has significantly reduced barriers to education. Pupils arrive fed, clothed, and less anxious, improving focus and participation. Families benefit from practical relief on household costs, and the discreet, relationship-based approach reduces stigma and encourages engagement with school services. The schools’ efforts align with Dundee City Council’s commitment to ensure every child starts their school day with breakfast and to develop Cost of the School Day action plans citywide.

Holistic, discreet support improves both educational and social outcomes for pupils. Strong relationships between schools and families are central to effective support delivery. Universal offerings reduce stigma associated with targeted assistance. Flexibility and community partnerships enhance the schools’ capacity to respond to varied and evolving family needs.

Longhaugh and St Francis’ Primary Schools exemplify how educational establishments can act as vital community hubs, supporting not just learning but overall family well-being. Their proactive, compassionate approach offers a model for addressing child poverty in schools across Scotland and beyond.

**Case Study 2: Closing the attainment gap through the Strategic Equity Fund**

In 2025, Dundee City Council received £1.3 million through the Scottish Attainment Challenge’s Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) to support targeted interventions aimed at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The funding was allocated to schools across the city to address barriers to learning for children and young people most effected by poverty.

Schools use SEF to implement a range of approaches focused to improving literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. These included providing targeted classroom support for pupils who needed extra help with reading and numeracy and enhancing pastoral care and mental health provision to improve attendance and engagement. Schools also introduced family learning programmes to strengthen home-school links and encourage parental involvement, while breakfast clubs and nurture spaces ensured that pupils started the day nourished, calm, and ready to learn.

The Education Department reported an improvement in attainment figures compared to the previous year. Particularly in primary literacy and secondary engagement. Feedback from schools highlighted the value of flexible funding in allowing them to tailor support to the specific need of their pupils and communities.

This demonstrates how strategic investment, when aligned with local priorities and delivered through trusted school relationships, makes a measurable difference in educational outcomes for children living in poverty.

**Theme E) HEALTH INEQUALITIES**

**Case Study 1: Promoting wellbeing and resilience in schools – S2 Health & Wellbeing Group**

In January 2025, a targeted Health and Wellbeing group was launched at St Paul’s Academy for S2 pupils identified as needing additional support. Facilitated by the school’s Health and Wellbeing Worker in partnership with the West Youth Team, the group aimed to address challenges such as low confidence, poor peer relationships, and difficulties with self-regulation.

The programme was co-designed with the young people and focused on key areas including the qualities of healthy friendships, mental health awareness, confidence building, and core communication skills. Weekly sessions encouraged participation in wider youth work activities and created a safe space for open discussion.

Over time, the group members became more confident and vocal, actively engaging in discussions and listening to one another’s perspectives. They began to reflect on their own behaviours and relationships, recognising how they could contribute positively and seek support when needed. Notably, some of the boys who were initially reluctant to speak began sharing their thoughts on school, friendships, and personal challenges.

Several participants have since signed up for the Peer Education programme at St Paul’s, where they will support new P7 pupils transitioning into secondary school. The group will continue into the next academic year, offering the same opportunity to other young people who would benefit from targeted wellbeing support.

This partnership between the school and youth work staff has strengthened over time, with the school recognising the positive impact on pupils’ confidence, engagement, and learning.

**Case Study 2: Supporting mental health through community-led events – Hilltown Community Centre**

In Coldside, many residents face poor mental health, limited awareness of available support, and financial barriers to accessing wellbeing activities. In response, the Hilltown Community Centre Management Group (HMG) developed a pilot programme for Mental Health Awareness Week, shaped by community input and delivered in partnership with local organisations.

A new member of HMG proposed the initiative, which aimed to provide free, accessible activities that promote mental wellbeing. The programme included events such as a Dryve night, a “Time for You” pampering session, Reiki, and a Wellbeing Tree, alongside outreach activities at other venues. One of the key aims was to consult with the community about what they would like to see offered locally.

The project brought together a wide range of partners, including Haven, Just Bee, North End Community Trust, the Community Health Team, Fresh Vibes, Fairfield Sports Hub, Dundee Recovery Network, School and Family Development Workers, and the Dundee Humanitarian Team.

The pilot revealed that local people value community-based wellbeing activities and are more likely to open up about personal challenges in these informal settings. A CLD Worker will continue to support HMG to build their skills and confidence, enabling them to independently organise future wellbeing events for the community.

**Case Study 3: Increasing access to wellbeing activities – Coldside’s Wellbeing Wednesdays**

In Coldside, many residents reported feeling isolated and unaware of local activities that could support their wellbeing. In response, the Coldside Community Health Worker collaborated with the Coldside Empowerment Team, Maxwell Centre, and Hilltown Activities Group to launch Wellbeing Wednesdays — a coordinated, place-based approach to promoting health and wellbeing.

Each Wednesday, eight free or low-cost activities are offered across the area, including access to information, support, and free food at the café and cosy corner. The initiative was developed following conversations with local residents, who expressed a desire for more structured and accessible opportunities to connect and improve their wellbeing.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Attendance at activities has significantly increased, particularly at the Walk and Talk and Time For Me groups. The latter grew from seven to over 20 regular attendees, with many participants also visiting the community café afterwards. Volunteers from the Hilltown Activities Group reported increased engagement and visibility for their services.

One participant shared: “The groups on a Wednesday in Coldside are great. I do the Walk and Talk Group and the Time For Me Group. Being part of these groups has helped my confidence and my depression. I used to stay at home most days, but now I look forward to Wednesdays — it’s helping me feel more confident and happier.”

A high percentage of men now attend the Walk and Talk group, and seven Walk Leaders have been trained through Paths for All to ensure its sustainability. The collaborative approach has reduced duplication, improved coordination, and made better use of local resources. Plans are underway to expand the model to other days of the week, such as Mindful Mondays and Thinking Thursdays, further embedding wellbeing into community life.

**Case Study 4: Promoting Inclusive Employment Through Workplace Training**

Access to fair and inclusive employment is a key determinant of health and wellbeing. In 2024–25, NHS Tayside’s Health and Work Team partnered with Enable Works to deliver a series of training sessions aimed at supporting local employers to create more inclusive workplaces. The initiative was developed in response to findings from NHS Tayside’s annual employer survey, which highlighted a need for greater awareness and support around inclusive recruitment and workplace wellbeing.

With funding from Public Health Scotland, the Health and Work Team commissioned Enable Works to deliver five online training sessions across Tayside. These included three sessions on Neurodiversity Awareness, one session on Inclusive Recruitment and one session on Creating a Flexible Working Environment.

The sessions were promoted through NHS Tayside’s Health and Work Team networks and Eventbrite page. Demand was high - the first Neurodiversity Awareness session was fully booked within 30 minutes, prompting the addition of two more sessions, including one specifically for NHS staff. In total, 64 individuals from a range of workplaces attended, with many more placed on waiting lists.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive:

“*Very informative and thoroughly enjoyed all of the videos and discussions.”*
*“Offered some different perspectives to what I had before.”*
*“I’ve found this really interesting and a huge eye opener.”*

The partnership between NHS Tayside and Enable Works was central to the success of the programme. Both organisations shared responsibility for planning, promotion, and delivery, ensuring a collaborative and values-driven approach. While there were some challenges around evaluation methods, the experience highlighted the importance of clear planning and shared goals.

Brodie Paterson, Performance Manager at Enable Works, reflected:

“*Working alongside the Health and Work Team has been nothing short of brilliant… It’s been fantastic to see such enthusiasm for creating more inclusive, understanding, and accessible workplaces across the region*.”

This initiative demonstrates how targeted training and partnership working can support employers to foster inclusive environments, contributing to better health outcomes and greater equity in the workplace.

**Theme F) HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**

**Case Study 1: Supporting kinship carers with housing and advice**

Relatives (grandparents) are looking after three of their grandchildren (two sisters and their younger cousin). Both adults are in low wage employment, with the aunt's hours being variable, meaning her benefit entitlement is continually changing. Before the children moved in, basic furnishings for the children's bedrooms were purchased, and funding was obtained for floor coverings, as the main area of the house had no floor coverings due to financial constraints.

The family is supported by a welfare rights officer regarding their changing benefit claims. Currently, they are in overcrowded housing, and the kinship worker is in contact with housing agencies (local council and housing associations) to address this issue. Additional housing points have been awarded, and the kinship carers are being supported to explore other options, such as a housing transfer.

**Case Study 2: Adapting homes for children with disabilities**

A family living in an adapted property in Linlathen due to a severely disabled son who needed round-the-clock care and a hoist. The parents had split up, and the mother had full care of the children. However, due to her behaviour, social work decided she was no longer capable of looking after the children, and full-time custody was given to the father. The father's property did not have the necessary facilities, so he was advised to apply to take over the adapted property. Although he was not eligible for an assignation, it was in the family's best interests for him to take over the house. The property was cleaned, all repairs logged, and the garden cleared. The mother moved to England.

**Case Study 3: Helping a mother achieve housing stability**

A family in a 3-bed semi on Pitkerro Road had been living there for 10 years. Social work visited and were unhappy about the conditions the children were living in, with multiple repairs needed and rubbish at the back and front of the house. The single mother was overwhelmed with the house and children, particularly due to one son's behavioural issues causing damage to the house. Urgent repairs were logged, and a free uplift of rubbish was arranged. The mother feared the cost of repairs, but it was assured that the family would not be charged as the damage was due to her son's behaviour. Social work was satisfied with the improvements, and the children remained in her care.

**Case Study 4: Helping a young person build independence through housing support**

A young man in Barnhill had been living with a friend due to severe antisocial issues in his own flat in the west of the city. After his friend died while on holiday, Universal Credit stopped paying the rent. He was advised he could not take over the tenancy in Barnhill as he had his own flat. Fearing homelessness, an exception was made due to his history. Advice from Shelter and the rent team allowed him to claim rent for the property despite not being the named tenant. He has now been living there for two years and is doing well.

**Case Study 5: Providing coordinated housing and community support**

In December 2024, a referral was received from Dundee Assist for a family in the Kirkton Area. The referral sought support for the home conditions of the family, as well as the trauma caused by domestic abuse, which was affecting the children's attendance at school. The two younger children have additional needs, and there is also a teenager in the home.

This was a high-risk domestic abuse case, with the ex-partner causing multiple damages to the property and frequently passing by the house to intimidate and harass the family. The tenant struggled to leave the house and found it difficult to maintain the condition of the property. There was an endless list of repairs needing attention, adding to feelings of being overwhelmed.

It took many attempts to get into the property due to poor mental health. Communication was mainly by telephone and text message. Liaison with the referrer from Dundee Assist was necessary due to difficulties in making face-to-face contact. The referrer spoke with the tenant and encouraged engagement with housing support, reminding that the family's circumstances would not change unless this happened. A meeting was finally arranged at the property on 27th January 2025.

During the visit, the tenant expressed not feeling like a good parent, not getting out of the house at all, and being overwhelmed by household rubbish and correspondence. A severe panic attack occurred during the first visit when a call from a private number was received.

Priorities were discussed, and the tenant stated the goal was to feel better and be the best version of themselves for the children. It was believed that a house move would help. Together, a housing application and medical form were completed. Following the Domestic Abuse procedure, 70 Social Needs Points were awarded along with 40 medical points.

Multiple repairs were logged, including replacing most of the pass doors, addressing damp within the property, fixing plumbing issues, repairing the extractor fan in the bathroom, and replacing cracked and unsafe air vents. There was also a large hole on one of the internal staircase steps, which was unsafe for the children. The garden was in poor condition with household rubbish bags and broken furniture lying around. A one-off uplift of all items was organised, significantly improving the garden's condition.

The tenant has since expressed feeling more positive as home conditions improve. Time has been spent in the garden with the children, and they have been moved to a school closer to home, improving their attendance. The tenant has noticed the children appear much happier.

The tenant still desires a fresh start in terms of moving home but feels happy knowing they are in a good position on the housing list. There has been independent contact with the Lettings team to review the application, something that could not have been managed a few months ago. Engagement with housing support has improved, mental health has improved, and the family's living conditions continue to improve, with the children happier and in a better routine for attending school.

The children are supported by Armistead and CAMHS.