

North East Fife Rural Poverty Action Group

Rural Poverty Plan 2026 - 2029



Introduction

The NE Fife RPAG has worked closely with the Rural Voice Panel to develop the new three-year plan, drawing on insights from the recent Cash First Evaluation and feedback from the Rural Poverty Conference to shape its direction.

This Rural Poverty Plan takes a preventative and dignified approach, drawing on data and lived experience to empower local people to improve their opportunities and enhance their wellbeing. At its core is a unifying theme of connection, which is woven throughout every aspect of the plan.

An action plan will be created from this three-year plan which will be the responsibility of the Area Policy Officer to progress, monitor and evaluate.



Partnership Working

By building greater understanding of each other, we can provide more effective support to those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

What we aim to do	What this looks like	What difference will this make
Organisations and agencies know what each other do and how to access their services.	Every RPAG meeting to have a networking element and have several inputs from organisations and agencies about the support they provide	Increasing more effective referrals will mean more people get the right support quicker.
Prioritise outreach work	More staff to be out in community settings, where capacity allows, to build trust and make connections with the local community	People will be able to access essential support without having to travel far which will lower costs and hopefully increase people using services.
Partnerships with shared targets and goals	Joint projects with same aims	Organisations and agencies will be working together without duplication of services. Joint working means people would be able to access the others within the partnership more smoothly.
	Projects will be created from data and community voices evidencing need	Projects will be targeted in places which has the most need which will utilise staff more efficiently.

Connection between organisations and agencies is vital for effective and coordinated support in the area.

Reach

To expand the reach of information and support so that all NE Fife residents can access help at the right time and in the right place.

What we aim to do	What this looks like	What difference will this make
Target those who do not typically know about support services	Link in with employers in the area to make them aware of support	Employees who may need this support will know how to access this when they need to
	Raise awareness of services in more remote areas through pop-ups in villages	More people who are hard to reach will know how to access the services
Use different mediums to share information	Using social media, village newsletters, community Facebook pages, newspapers	Increase the number of people who know how to access services
	Use clear, easy to understand language with simple messaging	Understanding and impact of information will increase
Community hubs/key groups to be knowledgeable in anti-poverty minimum offer	Staff and volunteers within the community centres and key community groups will have knowledge about an agreed minimum level of support/signposting	More people will be able to access information when and where they need it

Connection with the wider community - especially through community centres and key local groups - helps people know where to seek future support and is vital for reducing isolation, fostering integration, and building trust.

Cash First

To promote dignified work that empowers people with choice and is underpinned by essential wraparound support.

What we aim to do	What this looks like	What difference will this make
Embed Cash First principles into wraparound support	Offer cash/vouchers/bus tickets when accessing wraparound support to alleviate immediate crisis while working on long-term goals	Gives people dignity and choice when in a crisis instead of foodbank parcels in the first instance
		Gives people headspace to focus on longer term goals without having to worry about how they are going to feed and heat their households
Increase the number of organisations and agencies working in this way	More staff members, who already give wraparound support, to hold vouchers/bus tickets	Adding the Cash First element to a worker who already gives wraparound support will hopefully increase the effectiveness of the long-term support

Connection grounded in dignity will deepen trust between workers and those they support, encouraging more meaningful engagement

Pressure Points

Recognise critical pressure points and work with partners to provide targeted support that reduces hardship.

What we aim to do	What this looks like	What difference will this make
Have coordinated approach to help available around these pressure points to prevent people moving further into hardship	Target pressure points by using RPAG insights to identify the critical times that people have highlighted as particularly challenging	Having lived experience feeding into where services should be concentrated makes this more effective and community led
	Identify services which need to work together at these points	Prevents duplication and/or missed opportunities to make sure people at these points get all the help they need
	Different levels of support will be available	Staff will focus on those with the greatest need, making better use of available capacity Information and support will empower people to deal with issues themselves where they can
	Have an agreed mechanism/process at each pressure point	Operational staff have a clear understanding of what their responsibilities are, so support is coordinated
	Have a lead organisation/named person to navigate the journey during the pressure point	Prevents people having to repeat their stories multiple times and only have one person to contact regarding their case

Connection between organisations and agencies is vital to ensure better coordination around critical pressure points.

Gaps

Identify and target gaps to reduce the number of people who may fall through them.

What we aim to do	What this looks like	What difference will this make
Report cases to influence social policy and campaigns	Ask RPAG members to submit relevant case studies	Unfair policies will be highlighted and added to other evidence which may lead to change
Have opportunities for community voices to be heard	Listening to the community in a number of settings and providing feedback on how their input has shaped services	Community will feel included and valued which will build more trust in organisations and agencies
RPAG members to raise gaps/issues at each meeting	At each RPAG meeting there will be an agenda item for members to report gaps/issues they are experiencing	Gaps/issues from lived experience of people RPAG members support will be tackled
Have a Rural Voice Panel to raise awareness of gaps/issues	Continued support and growth of the panel, meeting every 4-6 weeks	Supporting and developing panel members will help show them that their voices and involvement are truly valued
	Increase members of the panel	More diverse views feeding into RPAG
Have a financial safety net for those who fall through	Continue with NE Fife Discretionary Fund as a safety net for the area.	If no other funding can be found to provide an item which would push someone into poverty, then this fund can provide it Prevents people becoming destitute
Use data and statistics to identify gaps and target groups	Using LIFT and other data sources to identify target groups for specific support	Proactively targets support before people reach a crisis

Connection between the RPAG and lived experience is essential for a community led response.

Education

Learning about life skills to help prevent or reduce crisis in the future.

What we aim to do	What this looks like	What difference will this make
Work with Education colleagues to make sure pupils and their families have the tools they need to prevent them falling further into poverty	Closer working relationships and promotion of organisations and agencies in schools	More families in need will be effectively referred to the correct support before they get to a crisis point
Target adults who have missed out on learning life skills	Specialist support agencies to be referred to when someone presents with a lack of life skills	A person will be able to manage their households more independently
Tackling stigma on reuse/second-hand items	Reframe reuse as combatting climate change rather than poverty	This universal promotion will reduce the stigma of having to wear or have second-hand items
Connect community growing spaces with education	Have community gardens, with the knowledge of their volunteers, a place where other groups can come and learn about growing food	Increase the number of people who know how to grow food which reduces the household costs of food
	Have equipment needed for growing more available to the community	Reducing the barrier of the costs of equipment needed to grow food

Connection with life skills and climate issues empowers people.

Employability

Support people to access employment opportunities through partnership working.

What we aim to do	What this looks like	What difference will this make
Make sure people have basic employability qualifications	RPAG understanding and working more closely with ABE/ESOL to ensure numeracy, literacy and IT levels are attained	Expand opportunities for individuals who left school with no qualifications by enabling them to develop the skills or qualifications needed to progress
Know and understand which agencies support those along the employability pathway	RPAG members and stakeholders have an overview of programmes, services and referral pathways across the NE Fife area	More effective referrals so people get the employability help they need
Work more closely with Employability Team	Where gaps have been identified work in partnership to put in place programmes or employer engagement to address skills gaps	Training, courses and jobs will be more targeted to NE Fife residents

Connection throughout the pathway is essential to keep the person moving forward and achieving their goal.