

North East Fife Rural Poverty Action Plan 2019 - 2021

Section 1 – Partnership working to address rural inequality issues

Section 2 – New ways of addressing fuel poverty

Section 3 – New solutions to the cost of transport

Section 4 – Support for communities to find local solutions to addressing poverty

Section 5 – Food Insecurity



Introduction

Understanding the complexities of rural poverty are crucial for the development of an effective anti-poverty policy. A conference was held in Cupar in June 2018 which contributed to gathering evidence to help us to better understand the nature and extent of poverty in North East Fife. Several factors contribute to higher living costs such as the cost of housing, fuel, transport and food and these issues were considered in workshops. Those living in rural areas typically need to spend 10-20% more on everyday requirements than those in urban areas – and it goes without saying that benefits don't stretch as far in rural areas. Seasonal, temporary or part-time employment as a result of a dependence on tourism and primary production means that low pay is also a key concern within rural NEF. A TUC study a few years ago reported that 34% of employees in NEF earned less than the Living Wage. Affordable housing can be in short supply with lower levels of social housing available. The prevalence of older, hard to heat houses together with higher fuel costs through not being connected to the mains gas supply and lower disposable income combine to push people into fuel poverty. Food costs too are higher with no access to discount supermarkets.

Add to this issues with the availability and costs of public transport and for some the absolute necessity to keep a car on the road and the reason why poverty remains an important dimension of rural life become apparent. However as we know rural poverty is often hidden and poorly addressed by policy makers. The Conference and this Action Plan shine a light on these issues and consider how collectively we can address some of the causes of rural poverty and, importantly, feed in to the policy debate.

1. Outcome - Partnership working to address rural inequality issues

Outcome - There is improved understanding and sharing of knowledge and evidence of rural poverty issues. These are being raised with relevant services, organisations and campaigning groups and issues are seen through to conclusion.

Actions –

- Collect case studies across services/agencies and use these to identify issues to be addressed and a way to highlight key rural poverty issues.
- Use the Anti-Poverty partnership meetings to invest time in a cross sector approach to addressing rural poverty issues.
- Working with Fife Council analysts collate and disseminate data on NEF to relevant groups and partnerships through a quarterly briefing. This will inform practice locally and help staff and residents to understand what is going on in their area.
- Fife Council case studies from Welfare Support Workers and CARF.
- Continue to build credibility and social capital both within the Council and between the Council and local agencies and the wider community.

Progress –

- Data has been collected on housing / building of new homes and what tenure for NEF.
- Data has been collected on Affordable Housing.
- Issues of rural poverty raised at the Strategic Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty Partnership and Communities and Wellbeing Partnership.
- Case Studies from Job Clubs sent quarterly to elected members and Head of Benefits & Revenues.
- Factors relating to universal credit and its impact on rural areas reported to Operational Delivery Group for Welfare Reform.

2. Outcome – New ways of addressing fuel poverty are explored

Actions –

- Mapping exercise to gather and share activity currently done in the area.
- Work with Home Energy Scotland to gather evidence of impact of working within GP surgeries and in Sports and Leisure Centres as venues to reach those needing support.
- Modelling of evidence to ensure more effective strategies used.
- Clear outcomes set for current work on fuel poverty funded from Anti-Poverty budget.
- Marketing and information leaflet evaluated.

Progress –

- Work with Home Energy Scotland to bring evidence and lessons back to group on GP surgery flu vaccination sessions approach.
- Meeting with Cosy Kingdom to learn lessons from Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth regarding new ways of reaching those in fuel poverty.
- St Monans Campaign planned targeting one community.

3. Outcome – New solutions to the cost of transport issues		
Actions – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DWP managers to ensure best use of current schemes for those using job centres and Stagecoach scheme for those looking for work. • Research into current bus travel concessionary schemes. • Identify gaps in geography locations and demographics. 	Progress – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axiom Consultancy engaged to undertake rural bus travel costs for unemployed research with a focus on mapping existing concessionary schemes and identifying groups and geographic communities particularly disadvantaged. • 24th June 2019 initial finding to be presented to NEF Anti-Poverty Group. • Work currently being undertaken working up cost models on implementing further concessionary schemes. 	
4. Outcome– Support for community groups to find local solutions to addressing poverty and inequality		
Outcome – Easily accessible information and direction to support for community groups; improved opportunities for supporting groups		
Actions - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure groups/partners are aware of the offer from Fife Council CLD Team, FVA and DTAS in terms of support for community development. • Develop and promote NEF Social Media Page and Let’s Talk community planning page. • Ensure groups have up to date information on poverty and inequality issues in NEF – through involvement of these groups in 2nd tier cascading of visioning / strategic assessment sessions. • Clear SLA’s for those who have recurring grants to ensure link to Plan for Fife on poverty/ social isolation and inequality. • Recruit a further group of local learners to be trained in research skills and undertake community research to feed into a theme/ themes of local community plan. • Coordinate communication with community development trusts and community councils in relation to rural poverty. • Promote the use of the Place Standard in community council areas. 	Progress – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations on NEF Local Community Plan. • Sessions held with Community Councils and Development Trusts. • Recruit and train new group of researchers. • SLA’s for those in receipt of recurring grants all have outcomes relating to addressing poverty. 	

5. Outcome – Food Insecurity

Outcome –Communities addressing food hunger with dignity and using new sustained approaches

Actions –

- Work with existing community bodies to highlight the issue of food hunger and the reasons for the increase in the number of individuals and families impacted.

Progress -

- Easter 2019 three geographic areas, Cupar , Newburgh and Anstruther offered meals as part of children, young people and family work 500 meals provided over two weeks with all those participating also being part of sports and family learning events.
- Summer 2019 school meals provision for children and families in Tayport, Leuchars, St Andrews, Anstruther, St Monans, Cupar and Newburgh to be provided. Areas based on highest numbers entitled to free school meals in each school.
- £20,000 funding secured to provide 6000 meals and packed lunches combination.