



Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership

Note of Meeting Held on Wednesday 11 June
at 2.00pm
The Bridge, Glasgow Road, Dumfries, DG2 9AW

Present:

Nick Hopkins (NH)
Jeanette Byers (JBy)

Kate Glendye (KG) (*Substitute*)
Wendy Jesson (WJ)

Jo Kopela (JK)

Pamela Lough (PM)
Isabel McKnight (IM)

Liz Manson (EJM)

Mark Molloy (MM)

Philip Stewart (PS) (*Substitute*)

Partnership Chair
Tackling Poverty Reference Group
Chair
Dumfries and Galloway College
Poverty & Inequalities Development
Officer, Dumfries & Galloway Council
(Chair of Sub-Group 3)
Public Health Improvement Manager,
D&G HSCP
Tackling Poverty Reference Group
Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway
(Chair of Sub-Group 1)
Community Planning and
Engagement Manager, Dumfries &
Galloway Council
Dumfries & Galloway Council,
Service Manager for Poverty &
Inequalities and Youth Work
Services
Chief Executive, Dumfries and
Galloway Citizens Advice Service
(DAGCAS)

In attendance:

Jennifer Burns (JB)

Secretariat

Apologies:

Lynne Burgess

Scott Irving
Caroline Scott
Phil Storrier
Christine Sinclair
Valerie White

Employability Skills and Partnership
Manager, Dumfries & Galloway
Council (Chair of Sub Group 4)
SFRS
Social Security Scotland
Dumfries & Galloway College
DAGCAS and Chair of Sub- Group 2
NHS Dumfries and Galloway
(NHSD&G)



1.WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 The Chair **WELCOMED** everyone to the meeting.

1.2 **NOTED** apologies as above.

2. DRAFT MINUTES OF LAST MEETING ON 2 APRIL 2025 AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 APPROVED note of the meeting on 2 April 2025 as a correct record.

2.2 HIGHLIGHTED that at 4e - the report on organisations active in the Sub-Groups, which would map out gaps and be the basis for proactively re-engaging and approaching partners, was still to be actioned, and that the issue would be on the agenda for a future meeting.

3. PRESENTATION ON COST OF LIVING REPORT

3.1 RECEIVED a detailed presentation on the Cost of Living in Dumfries and Galloway 2024 Report from Phil Stewart, DAGCAS CEO, which covered its key findings.

3.2 HIGHLIGHTED that:

- The 2024 report used comparison to the cost of the basket of food bought in 2017.
- Prices are going up across all 4 areas of our Region.
- The report should not be seen as being critical of small shops, which often provide social value; picking up prescriptions, delivering to those with accessibility or mobility issues, and often functioning as community hubs.
- The supermarkets have a real stranglehold on provision and therefore price setting, for example Booker Cash and Carry is owned by one of the larger supermarkets.
- Prices of the same basket of goods were different in Tesco's in Annan, Dumfries and Stranraer.
- There are costs attached to travelling to shop, public transport may not be accessible in every community or on every route, and fuel costs vary greatly within the Region.
- Dumfries and Galloway's economy is impacted by a lack of connection, lower than national median incomes and the rural premium.
- The findings in the report have been acknowledged by UK and Scottish Governments and Elected Members, but there has been no commitment at a national level to tackling the problem.



3.3 DISCUSSED the presentation and comments **NOTED** included:

- The report is tangible evidence which can be a stimulus for action, and for the Partnership using its voice.
- Page 10 of the report explains the poverty premium very clearly and in real detail.
- The inclusion of travel costs within the report is a real positive; a car is a necessity not a luxury to get to work and children to school in rural areas, and it is important to include the impacts of fuel costs on household budgets.
- Citizens' Advice Scotland could use the report to lobby supermarkets to change pricing policies.
- The need collectively and through Community Planning to take forward action on the issues.
- The issues highlighted in the report have an impact on economic development.
- Car ownership will be the only viable transport solution for many families, thinking should be done about how to offer car loans to lower income households, perhaps through credit unions.
- Social enterprises and social retailers may be part of the solution to issues of food insecurity and access to food touched on in the report.
- SOSE have been approached to further that discussion.
- The NHS should consider the issues highlighted in the report a priority given the impacts on physical and mental health of restricted access to fresh food, and to hygiene products, particularly for women and children.

ACTION: CS

4. D AND G POVERTY & INEQUALITIES PARTNERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS SUB-GROUP REPORT – CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK 2025

4.1 NOTED the summary report for work across the Partnership for 'Challenge Poverty Week' 2024 and update on the Cost of Living website.

4.2 HIGHLIGHTED that since the report was completed, food and fuel prices will have changed and acknowledged the helpful level of data & recommendations contained within it.

4.3 NOTED the short life working group set up for Challenge Poverty Week 2025 for which themes are set nationally by The Poverty Alliance; and **AGREED** to ask the short life working group whether local themes of equality and diversity issues and experience of children and young people could be included.



5. REPORT ON PORTAL PROJECT

5.1 NOTED previous agreement for a twin track approach to development with more involvement with the Council and commitment from others to funding; and that a meeting had been arranged with Stephen Morgan, Service Director Social Work Services (Chief Social Work Officer), Social Work Services, Dumfries & Galloway Council to discuss the FORT system.

5.2 HIGHLIGHTED that other portals are being investigated but will require sustainable public sector funding not limited to council funding; and **AGREED** that a funding group to be set up to investigate accessing such.

5.3 AGREED to explore NHS Strategic Funding; to resend FORT presentation to JK; that JK and WJ be part of the funding Sub Group; and to make sure that a report on strategic funding from D & G Council about poverty is included in consideration.

ACTION: JK/WJ/MM

6. SUB GROUP CHAIRS REPORTS

6.1 SUB GROUP 1

6.1.1 HIGHLIGHTED:

- WJ and IM had held a detailed handover meeting on 10th of June 2025.
- Sandra Harkness, Community Protection Manager, D & G Council will join as a new Member following MM's presentation earlier this year.
- Plan for the next Sub-Group Meeting which is being held on Wednesday 18th June 2025 will look at distributing the allocated tasks of the 4 new priority projects between all SG 1 Members.
- SG1 Meeting Dates & Times for the remainder of the year will be sent onto all Team Members.

6.1.2 AGREED to send the link for the Worrying About Money Leaflet published by Food Network Scotland to all Partnership Members for onward distribution.

ACTION: WJ/IM/JB

6.2 SUB GROUP 2

HIGHLIGHTED:

- Next meeting scheduled for 23 June 2025.
- Carol Broll, Service Lead Catering Services, D & G Council who has a passion for free school meals & supporting families in poverty will join as a new Sub-Group Member.
- The Share Foundation information on how to claim Child Trust Funds to be shared onwards.
- DAGCAS have developed an additional four surgeries/drop ins across the Region.
- All projects are continuing to plan

ACTION: CS



6.3 SUB GROUP 3

6.3.1 HIGHLIGHTED:

- DAGCAS Cost of Living Report 2024 is one of the successfully completed Projects for SG3.
- Dumfries & Galloway Wind Farm Trusts Networking Event successfully completed on 29 May 2025 in Castle Douglas Town Hall. There was good coverage; 5 Wind Farm Trusts attended with 6 more unable to attend on the day; organisations present included – DAGCAS, Lemon Aid, SHAX, Lochside and Summerhill Community Centres, All the Airts and Chairs of Sub Group 1 and 4; although numbers lower than anticipated there was a very high level of interaction; will not know value of funding applications which have resulted from the Event as yet and this will be captured in an Event Evaluation and reported back to the main Partnership at a later date.
- First Project Meeting on the Winter Warmth Campaign for 2025/2026 is due to be held on 17th June 2025 and will agree on new Key Messages for Winter Warmth for the next Campaign along with Events & all Social Media and TV Coverage.
- All other SG3 Priority Projects continuing to be delivered.

ACTION: WJ

6.3.2 NOTED James Parker, Developer Contributions Officer, Dumfries & Galloway Council has been mapping community empowerment activity, including where wind farm funding is available and where it has not been taken up; if there is a lack of community capacity then Ward Officers will go and speak to communities to make them aware of funding.

6.4 SUB-GROUP 4

HIGHLIGHTED:

- There has not yet been follow up meeting to that of February 2025.
- LB has been invited to bid for £200,000 Fairer Future Partnership funding from the Scottish Government to develop child poverty related activity in this financial year; and will provide and update at the next meeting.

ACTION: LB

7. UPDATE FROM PARTNERS

HIGHLIGHTED:

- The Partnership will receive an update on the Dumfries & Galloway Council Poverty, Inequalities and Housing Sub Committee in September
- It is still hoped to hold a seminar for Elected Members in the Autumn, which would involve Sub-Group members.

ACTION: MM



- Paper and discussion on the Good Food Nation Strategy and Action Plan to be brought to a future meeting; any work/ involvement from the Partnership needs to link with existing structures working on food.

ACTION: VW/JK

- Dumfries and Galloway College is working with their Student Association to come up with new support for students; they already have free period poverty products, free soups, breakfast, meal vouchers for local supermarket and referrals for foodbanks; Douglas Dickson is the new Principal; and **NOTED** would be interesting to discuss whether poverty training offered to frontline staff in the region could be accredited.

ACTION: KG/PS

8. CHAIR PROGRESS REPORT HIGHLIGHTED:

- He had attended EDWG on 2 June 2025 which resulted in 2 follow up contacts with Scottish Prison Service and DG Voice; there is a need for members of P&I P, Sub Groups and EDWG to focus on where joint working could occur e.g., during Challenge Poverty Week 2025.
- Poverty audit on Social Work Services could get funded by the end of the year through the Fairer Future Partnership
- He had attended the LEP and discussed ideas for joint working.
- Met Alan Hall from TSDG to discuss the idea as identified in Sub Group 5 Action Plan of a Dumfries and Galloway landing page for poverty and inequalities; and **AGREED** before progressing further would need to bring a report to P&I P.

ACTION: NH

9. FUTURE WORK OF THE PARTNERSHIP

9.1 NH HIGHLIGHTED in the context of his role concluding:

- The importance of the Partnership and sub groups having a role in the Good Food Nation Strategy.
- Some key priorities for each of the sub groups
 - Sub Group 1 should articulate what basic humanitarian support offer should be available to people in every community in the region, and work to consider how each community can be supported, locally and centrally, to guarantee this level of support.
 - Sub Group 2 – Delivering the portal project and developing a consistent approach to promoting advice services right across the NHS.



- Sub Group 3 – continue work with Credit Unions and to extend the work of the Winter Warmth Project to reach more households, especially older people so that they do not fear turning their heating on during the approaching winter months.
- Sub Group 4- identify a set of unique actions focused on child related benefits and partnership with schools, nurseries, the College, and family settings in the community.
- That he hasn't been able to progress his ambition to make data on poverty collated by the council publicly available for use of organisations, partners and elected members, and that this should be a priority going forward,
- There would be a need to imbed new representatives people in P&I P e.g. Dumfries and Galloway College, RSL Housing and SOSE.
- That he felt that he should have convened the Sub Group chairs more frequently.
- That there is a lack of capacity to support the work of the partnership, and that too much falls on MM and in particular, WJ
- If Council won't employ further people to support the work of the Partnership consideration will need to be given to whether TSIDG might be supported to access funding to provide some additional capacity.
- That he fears that if it is not possible to find a volunteer Chair the work of the group will be greatly impacted.

9.2 NH STATED that he was very sad to be leaving when he had been involved from the beginning of the revised strategy, thanked everyone and wished them the best. He singled out WJ as the one of the most committed people, and the kindest and most good-hearted person he had ever worked with and noted his particular thanks to her for all her support.

9.3 EJM on behalf of the P&I P **THANKED** NH for all he had done for and with us; he had brought insight and passion and said that she was confident our paths will cross again.