

Child Poverty in Glasgow 2025



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Child Poverty in Glasgow 2025

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Foreword



Councillor Richard Bell
**Depute Leader &
City Treasurer**
Glasgow City Council

Child poverty remains one of the most urgent challenges facing our city and I remain passionate about the collaboration with partners to help reduce poverty in Glasgow.

The sixth Child Poverty in Glasgow report brings into focus the lived experiences of families who are struggling to provide the basics for their children—food, warmth, security, and opportunity. These are not just statistics; they are real stories from our communities, and they demand our attention, compassion, and action. Behind every project or process there is a person - we must never lose sight of this.

Highlights this year include a focus on providing early support for a family, rather than just the child, to address needs and prevent crises and how this approach is having an impact.

This year's report is especially powerful because it amplifies the voices of those most affected. Through case studies, we hear directly from organisations supporting parents and carers about the barriers they face and the resilience they show. Their insights are invaluable. They remind us that effective policy must be rooted in lived experience and local knowledge and that real change comes when we listen, learn, and work together.

Helping to eradicating child poverty in Glasgow is not a task for one department, organisation, or sector. It requires collaboration across the council, health services, the third sector, and —most importantly— our citizens.

We must build solutions with communities, not for them - co-designing services, investing in prevention, and ensuring that every child has the chance to thrive regardless of their postcode or background. However we cant achieve this on our own and not all the leavers are within Glasgow's control. Tackling child poverty also requires effectively lobbying the Scottish and UK Government's for improved funding and legislative change. Devolved polices such as the Scottish Child Payment have contributed to overall lower levels of poverty, as compared to the rest of the UK, although too many children remain in poverty.

Hopes that the Two Child Benefit Cap the Council has consistently spoken out against would be removed were dashed a few weeks after the new UK government was formed. The Scottish Government has committed to mitigating this highlighting the importance of investing in families through the social security system as a key way to reduce child poverty. The 2024 Autumn budget further compounded poverty for families especially those with disabilities. In addition, the National Insurance Contributions hike has had a negative impact not only on the Council but wider public and third sectors in the city jeopardising the provision of essential services and supports to the people of this city.

As Depute Leader and City Treasurer, I am committed to ensuring that our and other level of government's financial decisions reflect our values. Tackling child poverty is not just a moral imperative—it is an economic one. A city where all children can flourish is a city that will prosper.

Let this report be a call to action - by listening and working in partnership, we can all make a difference - delivering in the present means hope for the future.

Child Poverty in Glasgow 2025

This report is our sixth annual report providing an understanding of child poverty in Glasgow. Each year we look at how we can improve our understanding, present data and the perspectives of the people we are working with. This year's report features a change in the way that the poverty statistics are calculated, which means that the data won't be comparable to previous years. However, these changes will provide us a better understanding of how poverty trends in Glasgow year on year.

This year the Scottish Government published Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy — Delivering for Scotland. This informs our work and identifies that, "public services are critical to delivering a fairer future and the Government's priorities of eradicating child poverty, growing the economy and tackling the climate crisis." (The Scottish Government, 2025, p.5)

This report aims to provide those working to alleviate child poverty the insight they need to make decisions and make the best use of their resources. Alongside the Child Poverty Dashboard, this report is widely used to direct activity undertaken by Glasgow's Child Poverty Programme, a multi-agency team undertaking targeted action to drive systemic change across the city.

This year's report spotlights four key themes, employability, language and literacy, disability and the complexity of people's lives. These themes have been highlighted repeatedly in our work around child poverty over the past year and are explored further in this document through conversations with experts. You will also find detail on some of the ongoing work associated with these key themes to better understand and tackle Child Poverty in Glasgow.

Why we use Council Tax Reduction Data (CTR)

In this report, we're primarily referring to Council Tax Reduction data. We use the data on those receiving this benefit as it's targeted towards people on low incomes. The benefits of using Council Tax Reduction data are:

Timeliness — we gather this data on the 10th of every month and it is quickly processed and displayed within the Child Poverty Dashboard.

Granularity — this data tells us the number of adults and children in a family, their household income and details relevant to their council tax, providing us with a detailed picture of their household.

Poverty Depth — financial information in this data tells us how much more families would need to earn per week to be above the poverty line. There is evidence that on a case by case basis these may not always be entirely accurate, but it provides us with a reasonable understanding of the average depth of poverty.



Susanne Millar
Chief Executive
Glasgow City Council

"Glasgow City Council has embarked on the delivery of radical Public Service Reform, focusing on tackling child poverty the city's key issue. The council and its community planning partners have acknowledged that poverty is the problem that holds back too many of our families.

Families are our greatest asset, and to have the biggest impact, our focus is in local communities on early intervention and prevention work. This work requires the tactical alignment of social and economic regeneration across partners, culture change, collaborative leadership, data and evidence, funding flexibility and the embedding of families' experiences."

Our Methodology

Since 2019 we have been using Council Tax Reduction data provided by the DWP to Corporate Finance to understand the picture of child poverty in the city. Whilst it doesn't cover everyone that is in poverty, it shows us what families look like at a household level. Not a model, a real snapshot of families in the area using administrative data.

For example:

In Govan, there are **231 families** with a child aged 0–5 experiencing poverty. Together they have:

490
children

and are per week on average:

£130
below the
poverty line

Each year we look for ways to improve our understanding of child poverty in Glasgow. This year we want to share a new and more accurate way of looking at poverty year-on-year. Up until now, we have used a snapshot taken from July to report on Child Poverty annually. However, this method has risks. If we were to select April instead, we would see a completely different picture.

If we used monthly snapshots to describe child poverty throughout the year, we would see misleading trends due to the seasonality of the data. For example, when children leave school in the summer, they will no longer be counted as children for the purposes of calculating benefits.

Instead, if we take the number of children in poverty each month and create an average over 12 months, we will have a much clearer picture of poverty trends. When we repeat this once a month we are able to clearly see how poverty is changing over time.

Phrases We Use

This report uses many phrases and ideas that aren't always easy to understand. We have outlined some of the common phrases to ensure that everyone has a shared understanding of what we mean when we talk about poverty.

Poverty thresholds, also known as "the poverty line"

If the total income of a family falls below the poverty threshold, 60% of the UK median income, then that family is considered to be in relative poverty. The poverty threshold is adjusted based on the number of adults and children that live in the household. The poverty thresholds we use are before housing costs.

In-work poverty

A family is considered to be in in-work poverty if there is an adult within their household who receives some level of income from employment but is still experiencing poverty.

Relative Poverty

A family is considered to be in relative poverty if their total weekly income is below the poverty threshold. For a family with 1 adult, 1 child under 14 years old and 1 child over 14 years old, the poverty threshold is £448.56 per week.

Deep Poverty

A family is considered to be in deep poverty if their total weekly income is below 40% of the UK median income. For a family with 1 adult 1 child over 14 years old and 1 child under 14 years old, the poverty threshold is £299.04 per week.

Priority Groups

The term priority group comes from the Scottish Government's Every Child, Every Chance (2018) Delivery Plan and refers to families who have certain characteristics which mean they are more likely to experience poverty.

Booster Wards

Booster wards refer to 10 areas in the city experiencing high levels of child poverty where the council is piloting new solutions aimed at families with children aged 0 to 5.



DWP Statistics

The DWP updated the way they calculate child poverty in their latest release (2023/24) of the Children in Low Income Families. The most substantial changes are that they have access to the Scottish Child Payment income data and that they now report on a year by year basis rather than a 3 year average.

From the latest DWP official statistics we see

25,690

children in Glasgow are living in relative poverty.

That is

26%



of children in Glasgow.

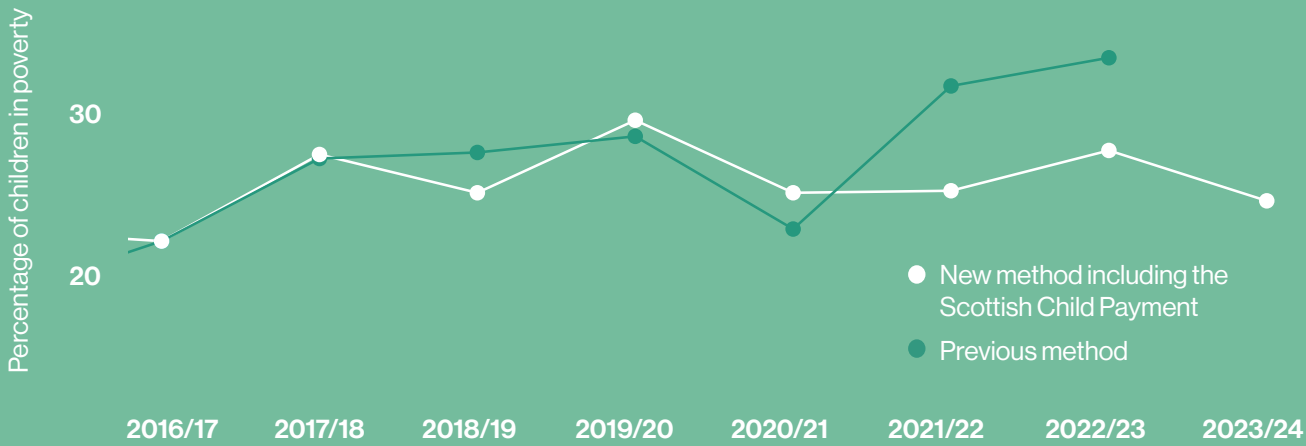
The data that we have from the Council Tax Reduction system only includes Universal Credit data where there is also a CTR element, and it also does not include incomes from the Scottish Child Payment. If we were to receive this data, it would improve our understanding of poverty in Glasgow.

The Impact of The Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Child Payment launched in February 2021 at £10 a week per child under 6 for families on qualifying benefits such as Universal Credit. It was recognised that to further mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis, more was needed. To improve this, it was then increased to £20 a week in April 2022. From November 2022, eligibility expanded to under 16s, and the payment increased to £25 a week. Subsequently, in 2024 and 2025 it was increased and now sits at £27.15 a week.

The DWP now have access to income data from the Scottish Child Payment, and have been able to backdate their methodology changes right the way back to 2014/15. We are now able to compare this against the old methods to gain an understanding of the impact that the Scottish Child Payment has had in Glasgow.

DWP Data on Children on Low Income Families



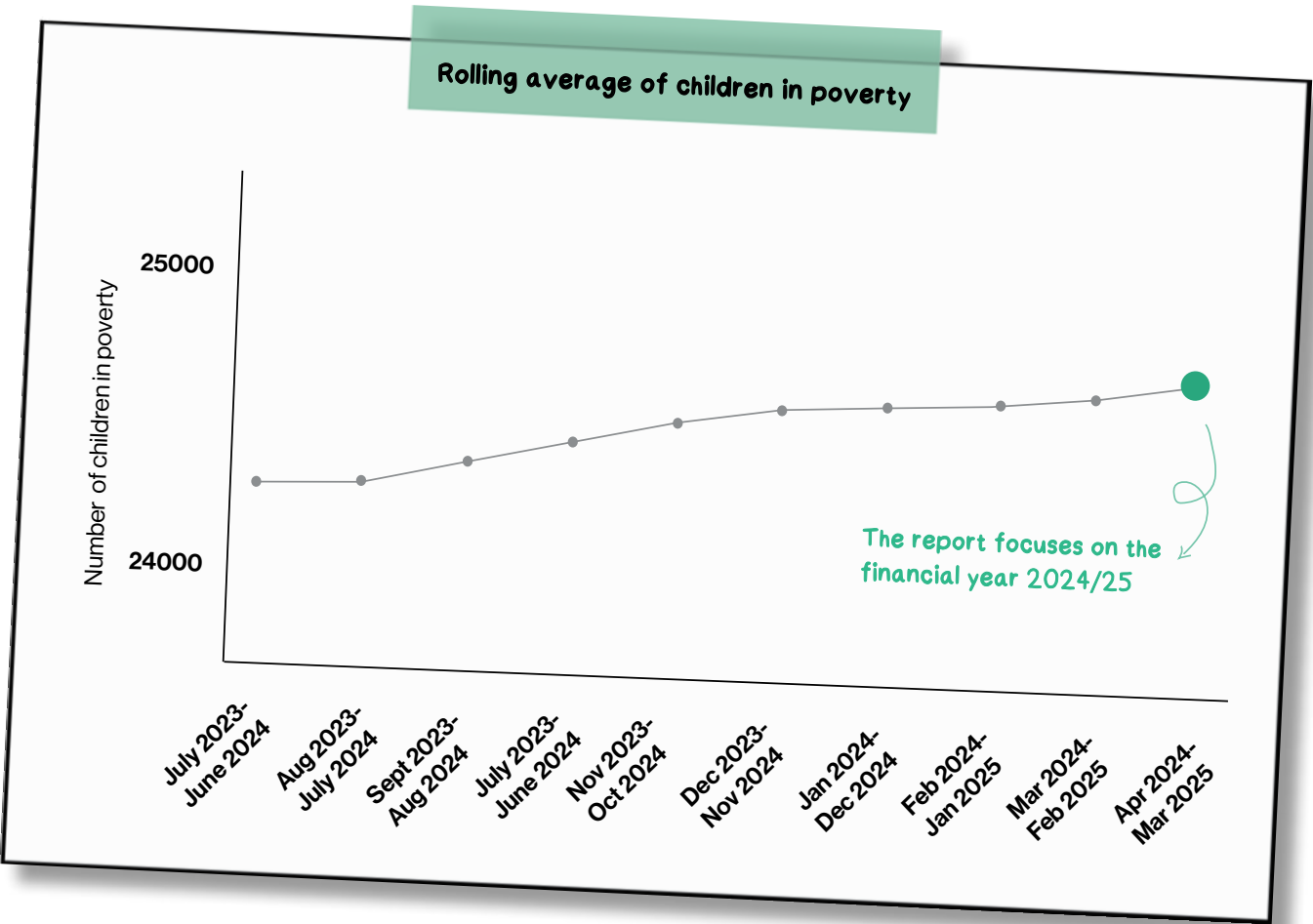
This graph shows how the DWP's rate of child poverty in Glasgow has changed from year to year for both the new methodology and the old. Any difference prior to 2020/21 is due to the change from a 3 year average to a single year average. However from 2021/22 onwards a very noticeable divergence occurs. This coincides with the implementation of the Scottish Child Payment and is evident due to the fact that this was the key update in the methodology. For the Financial year 2022/23 the DWP estimated that 33,508 children in Glasgow were experiencing poverty, which was 33.5%.

However, when the Scottish Child Payment was introduced this was revised to 27,841 children, which was 29%. This reduction of 5,667 children shows that the Scottish child payment is having a significant impact on the levels of poverty in the city.

Council Tax Reduction Data

This is our sixth annual Child Poverty Report, meaning this is the sixth year that we've been able to present Glasgow's progress in meeting the Scottish Government's 2030 child poverty targets.

This year, due to the change in our methodology for calculating poverty in Glasgow, we have a much clearer understanding of how poverty is trending in the city. This shows us that since July 2023, poverty has been on a slight upward trajectory.



We now can look at a rolling 12 month average of the number of children in Glasgow that are in poverty. This shows there is a small but steady upwards trend.

Between the period of July 2023 to June 2024 and April 2024 to March 2025, using our new methods, there was an increase of 446 children in poverty.

This upward trend is likely due to a number of factors such as an increase in the number of children in the city, or the increase of in-work poverty. However from the data that we have, we are unable to definitively outline why the increase has occurred.

We can see that for the financial year 2024/25 that

25%

of children in Glasgow were experiencing relative poverty. This is 24,727 children in 13,117 families.

On average, families in poverty in Glasgow were

£126

per week below the poverty line.

Deep Poverty

A family is considered to be in deep poverty if their total weekly income is below 40% of the UK median income.

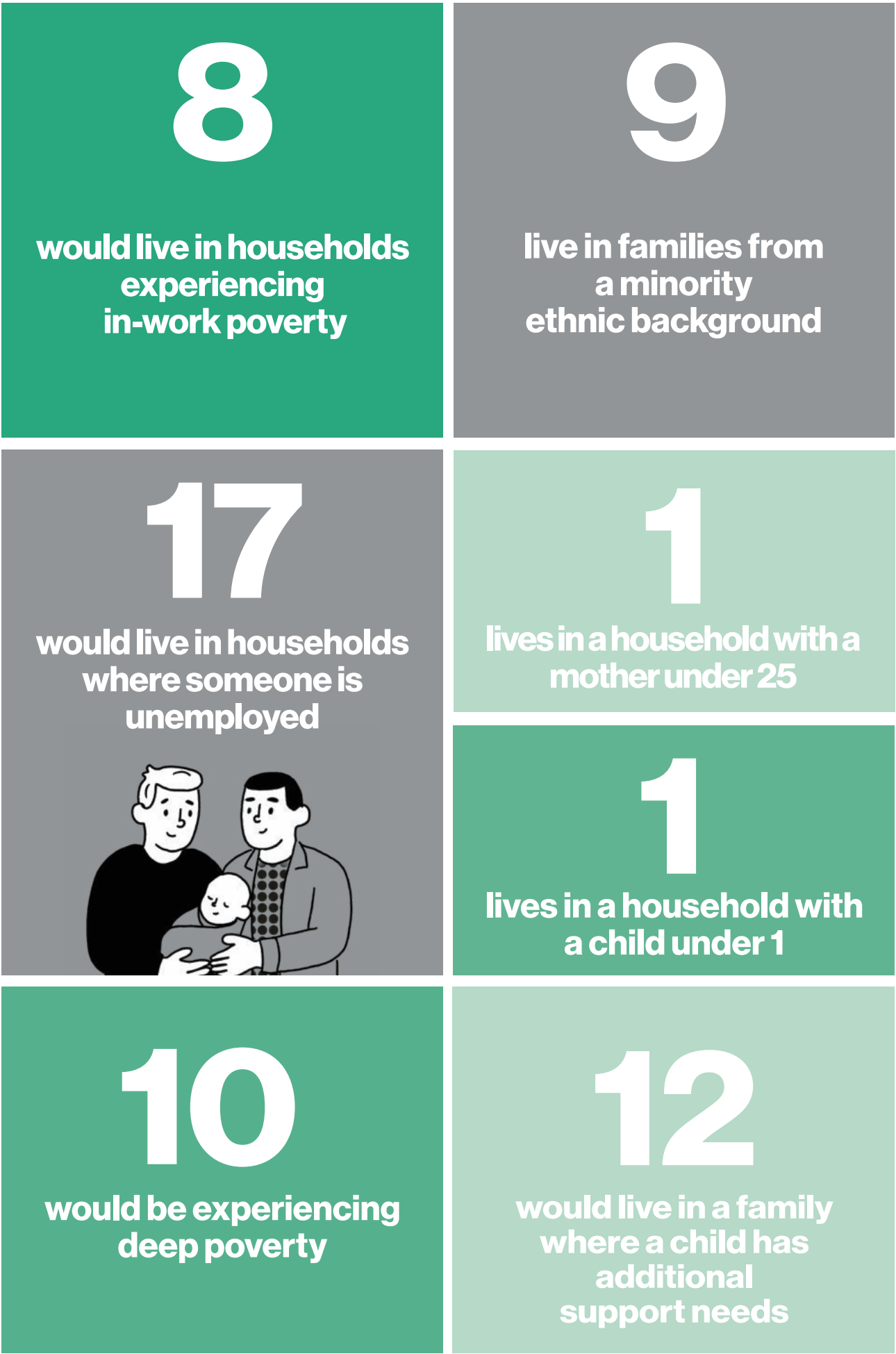
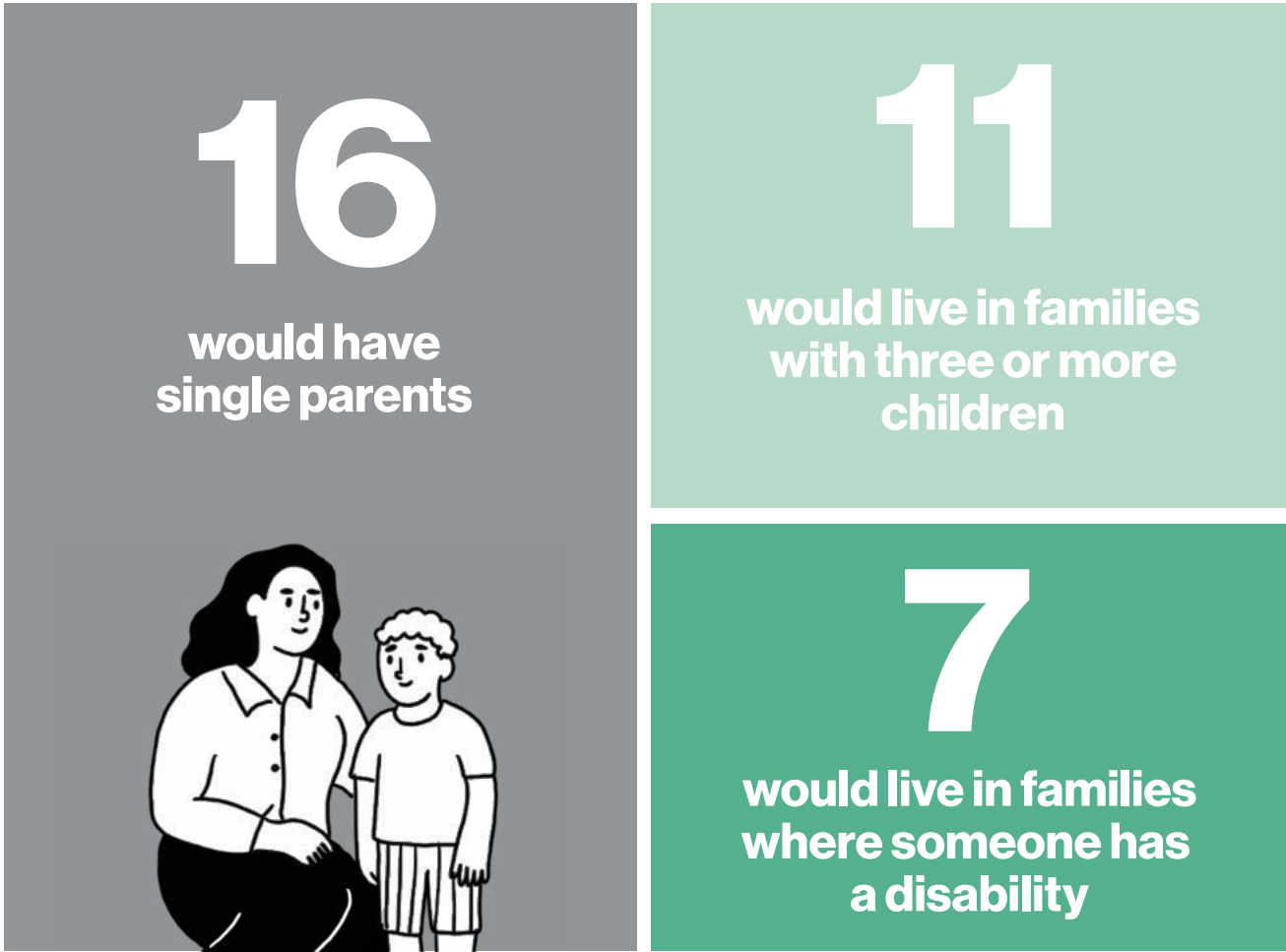


1 in 10 children in Glasgow are experiencing deep poverty





Of those 25 children...





Understanding the challenges

Key Themes

For this edition of the Understanding Child Poverty in Glasgow report, we focused on four key themes that are intertwined with the challenges of child poverty. The themes are:

- + Employability
- + Language & Literacy
- + Disability
- + The Complexity of People's Lives

To gain a deeper understanding of these key topics and add further insight to the data we've gathered, we spoke to service providers and members of organisations with expertise in these areas, to learn about the challenges associated with our four key themes and the impact they are having on people living in the city.

In alphabetical order, we've spoken to:

Alyson Gregor, Development Officer, Glasgow City Council, Employability Team

GCC's Employability team are working on the Child Poverty programme, funding projects that align with the Priority Groups identified by the Scottish Government. Alyson engages with the project teams to evaluate the progress and look for funding opportunities.

Alyson is featured in the Employability story.

Amber Culley, Project Manager, Financially Included GEMAP

GEMAP is an independent money advice charity based in the East End of Glasgow. Amber Cully project manages the 'Financially Included' project, which is a partnership project with Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership, and offers specialist support to women experiencing gender-based violence and economic abuse.

Amber has contributed to the stories about Employability, Language and Literacy and the Complexity of People's Lives.

Fiona McLean, Project Manager for Business & Community, Clyde Gateway

Clyde Gateway is an urban regeneration company which exists to drive inward investment and improvement for the people and communities across

the east end of Glasgow. Fiona works to support residents and businesses to grow and thrive.

Fiona is featured in the Employability, Language and Literacy and Complexity of People's Lives stories.

Jonathan Active, Project Leader, The Lennox Partnership

The Lennox Partnership is an employability service that provides comprehensive skills development programmes that pave the way to meaningful employment opportunities. Jonathan engages with stakeholders and manages a team to ensure participants are getting access to the services they need.

Jonathan is featured in the Employability story.

Jonathan Aitken, Project Coordinator, Scottish Union for Supported Employment (SUSE)

SUSE is the national representative body for supported employment providers, ensuring that disabled people have the opportunity of a working life. Jonathan works with employers to offer training and consultancy services such as Digital Recruitment Reviews to build their capacity with disabled people and employ them.

Jonathan is featured in the Employability story.

Karen Wylie, Policy and Participation Manager, Glasgow Disability Alliance

Glasgow Disability Alliance has nearly 6,000 disabled members, the largest disabled people-led organisation (DPO) of its kind in Europe. Karen supports those members to amplify their voices and influence policy and services design and implementation, as well as to participate in wider society.

Karen has contributed to the stories about Disability and Complexity of People's Lives.

Roisin Deville, Family Support Co-ordinator, Indigo Childcare Group

Indigo delivers childcare services alongside family support and learning opportunities for families. Roisin leads on the Family Matters programme, which focuses on family support through one to one & peer support, funded childcare options for children aged up to 16 years, inclusive family activities and speech, language and communication support.

Roisin has contributed to the stories about Disability, Language and Literacy and Complexity of People's Lives.

Understanding the Challenges

Employability

What We Know

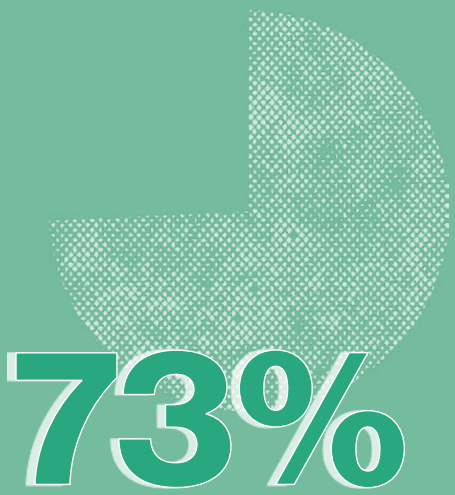
Employability is viewed as one of the key pathways out of poverty and a major factor influencing families wellbeing. As such, a deep dive has been taken into the data held around employability and in-work poverty to understand the scale of this within Glasgow.

We found that the majority of children experiencing poverty in Glasgow are living in households where no one is in employment.

This year, the number of families with children experiencing in-work poverty has begun to stabilise. In-work poverty increased by 1% since the period of July 2023 – June 2024. This increase represents 36 families and 131 children.

Although employability is a route out of poverty, we also know that wrap around care, building relationships and understanding what families need has better long-term outcomes and a wider impact on community wellbeing.

Building these relationships means families are more likely to engage in enriching employability opportunities, meet their goals and find jobs that suit their circumstances and enable them to do and achieve more.



of families with children experiencing poverty in Glasgow have no adults in employment.

9,623

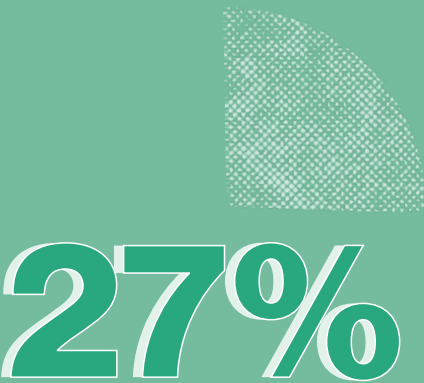
families are experiencing poverty where no adults are in employment.

In these households,

17,169

children are in poverty.

However, it's recognised that being employed isn't always enough to keep families with children out of experiencing poverty. Over the course of the financial year 2024/25.



of all families with children experiencing poverty in Glasgow are experiencing in-work poverty.

3,495

families were experiencing in-work poverty.

In these households,

7,558

children are in poverty.

Glasgow City Council Funded Employability Programmes

Glasgow City Council funds a number of Employability programmes aimed to support people who are looking to find work. Data is regularly collected about these programmes and the people who are accessing them, allowing us to understand the case load over the course of the financial year 2024/25. Through the process of a data match between the employability data and the Council Tax Reduction data, we are able to understand how many of the participants with children are also experiencing poverty.

Over the financial year 2024/25 there were 5728 people taking part in council-funded employability services.

Of those,

1,791

have children which is 31% of people taking part in council-funded employability services.

We are able to match this data to our CTR data to understand how many are in poverty.

641

of the families we know are in poverty, had at least one family member involved in a council-funded employability programme. This is 11% of people taking part in council-funded employability services.

“We’re now looking for our projects to reach people who wouldn’t have previously been considered ready for an employability service.”

— Alyson Gregor, Development Officer, Glasgow City Council, Employability Team



What We are Hearing

Alyson from Glasgow City Council’s Employability team explained the shift in approach since the introduction of the Scottish Government’s national strategy for employability support called “No One Left Behind.” “Since the beginning of the No One Left Behind funding, we’ve seen a shift and we’re now looking for our projects to reach people who wouldn’t have previously been considered ready for an employability service. In the past, the focus would’ve been on people who were considered to be closer to finding work, who maybe needed help with their CV, or only needed a couple of sessions where support workers would have an input. Now the focus has shifted towards working with people for as long as they require support. This was reflected through our recent employability evaluation too; the amount of time we spend with people, going at their own pace rather than rushing them into a job is really vital.”

Through our conversations, we learned about the challenges that single parents encounter, the complex nature of the employability sector and how the sector has shifted towards a wellbeing, person centred approach to prepare people for work and find meaningful employment.

“Navigating employability is like navigating the London subway without a map”

– Expert from the Employability Re-design project, 2025.

Alyson shared some more details on the landscape of employability in Glasgow and the change in approach. “Some people have been through really challenging situations. So, it’s about working through those challenges and making sure that the person is ready for work that they will then be able to sustain. It’s not about having a target of three hundred people a month going into work because that’s just not realistic for the groups we are targeting. Without adequate time and resources, what you tend to find is, people get left behind because their challenges are not properly identified, so they can’t be helped to overcome these, so are then not in a position to even think about work. Or you get lots of people into any available work, but they don’t sustain the jobs as the quality of the job isn’t great, or they may not have the skills, resilience or support to sustain work at that time.”

Barriers Faced by Single Parents

Single parents are among the most likely to be left behind, while also being particularly vulnerable and having to navigate complex life situations when trying to find or sustain employment.

47%

of families experiencing in-work poverty are single parent families.

78%

of unemployed families in poverty are single parent families.

Jonathan, a Project Leader for employability at the Lennox Partnership shared some of the frequent challenges they encounter with the families they support: “If we can’t find work for people during the school day that allows them to drop off and pick up their child, we need to find them a role that will allow them to cover the cost of child care, which can be a real challenge.”

This is a general challenge across the employability sector, showing that it’s not just about finding any job; it has to be the right job, one that aligns with the participant’s personal circumstances. Otherwise, the employment isn’t sustainable.

33%

of families experiencing in-work poverty have 3 or more children, which could result in increased child care costs



We also learned that finding employment is often the final step in the employability journey for many people. To truly understand someone's needs and find a suitable role for them, service providers have shifted to a person-centred approach. This can be as straightforward as understanding the days and times people can work, or be a process that lasts years.

A person-centred approach includes building trust, having difficult conversations to overcome obstacles or gaining qualifications in an area they're interested in to gain employment. "We've always said that within employability work, we're not only employability key workers, we're unofficial counsellors, therapists and everything else in between because those are the kinds of conversations we have with people. We look at holistic methods to help people."
— Jonathan, Lennox Partnership

Holistic and Trauma-informed Support for People

To prepare people for work, employability services need to establish strong relationships with participants to provide emotional and practical support.

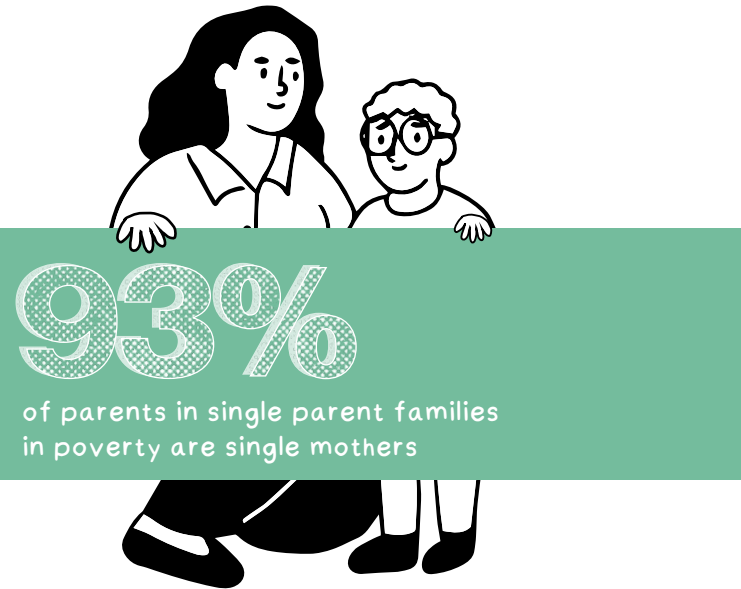
By prioritising peoples' wellbeing and taking time at the beginning to focus on their welfare, mental health, understand physical disabilities, and work collaboratively, services can better support people's journey into meaningful and sustainable employment.

Trauma is a significant factor. Amber, a Project Manager at Financially Included GEMAP, explains the particular challenges faced by women who have experienced domestic abuse. Amber recalls a time when an employability organisation approached her and asked her if her organisation worked with women looking for employability support. She had to turn the opportunity down, as there was still a long way to go in stabilising women's situations as they recovered from the trauma of their abuse.

"Women who started on our caseloads maybe two years ago have now got new houses, got their children settled in their homes, started to pay off their debt, and are now able to have that headspace to think about themselves and their future."

Amber told us, "They have now trained three Glasgow Life members of staff in economic abuse so that when they do provide employability support, they do so in a trauma-informed manner."

"We're still at quite early stages, but we've had some amazing outcomes for women who have been able to go in and increase their household income because they've been able to access better opportunities."



Working in Collaboration

With the expanding remit of employability's role in supporting people to improve their life circumstances, services have adopted a more collaborative approach, working with the third sector and local organisations to offer flexibility to participants and provide the support they need.

By working in partnership, services can expand their network and offer multifaceted support for individuals and the local community. For example, getting people access to cheaper gym memberships to improve both their physical and mental health, or providing warm referrals to different types of support.

Jonathan from the Lennox Partnership explains, "We've built up strong relationships with third sector organisations that can offer different support to our participants, which is so helpful. We work with organisations that have a sound bath, which is a room with relaxing chairs or relaxing bean bags with low lighting or candles, with relaxing music, and it helps people to decompress and think clearly."

We also have walk and talk groups, which gives people the opportunity to speak to their employability officer in a relaxed setting or to be part of a group so they can interact with other people, just to help them build those connections. We'll always try new holistic methods and try to form more partnerships to do that."

As well as having good relationships with the third sector and local organisations, it's also important for these services to have good relationships with employers.

"The employer engagement landscape is so complex that it can be hard for employers to navigate. At present, there's a lot of competition for the employers' attention, which can make it very difficult, and this can be frustrating for employers. I'm confident that this will change moving forward, due to the partnership work that's currently taking place between organisations who engage with employers in Calton as part of a collaborative project between the Child Poverty Programme and Clyde Gateway."
— Fiona McLean, Clyde Gateway, Project Manager for Business & Community

With this shift toward a more wellbeing-focused approach, there is a growing recognition that parents and other individuals may face significant barriers. These barriers must be identified and addressed before traditional employability work can begin.

The next stage in this journey is to create a more joined-up approach between employers, employability services, and participants, ensuring that everyone's needs are met and that individuals can access meaningful, sustainable employment.

"It's important that employability services and employers continue to have healthy discussions about inclusivity and barriers and we're keen for that to keep moving."
— Jonathan Active, Lennox Partnership



An inside look...

Shaping Employability

in the City

What We Are Doing

Two years ago, the council's Employability Team asked the Centre for Civic Innovation how might employability provision better join-up to improve outcomes for people? To deliver this strategic project we worked with 455 people to identify 14 opportunities to that would improve employability provision in Glasgow. We were asked to explore a further two opportunities around embedding lived-experience in decision-making and better engaging with employers.

146
people



From October 2024 to April 2025, we worked with: service providers, key workers, employers, and staff from the Employability Team, City Region, and Chamber of Commerce to explore how we might:

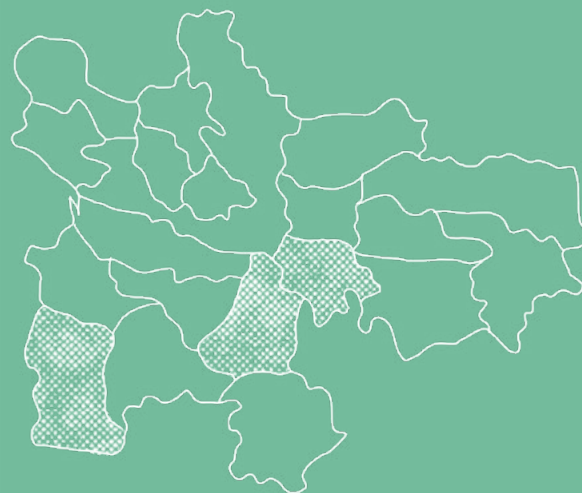
- + **Better understand the needs of people, services and employers so we can improve decision making and shape effective employability offers**
- + **Develop collaboration mechanisms with employers to understand their needs and co-design support.**

Why We Are Doing It

To understand where this work could make the biggest difference in Glasgow, we analysed data to identify areas in the city where families are most affected by poverty, in-work poverty, and unemployment. We then mapped these against existing Council projects, including the Child Poverty Programme, to avoid duplication and build on current efforts.

We also focused on areas where our team already had strong local relationships so we can build on existing relationships and work closely with partners in the community. This highlighted Calton, Greater Pollok, Southside Central and Govan as key areas.

As we identified opportunities, we supported the Employability team in prioritising ideas that addressed challenges experienced across the system by individuals, key workers, service providers, and internal staff.



Our main focus was on enhancing and streamlining existing systems and tools rather than developing entirely new, elaborate ones. A core aspect of our approach is working collaboratively and facilitating connections. We ensured stakeholders had opportunities to connect, access support and learn from one another.



What We Are Learning

We brought together diverse voices, service providers, key workers, and employers, to share their experiences, challenges, and ideas for change. Creative tools helped people tell their stories and develop bold, practical solutions.

Over this period, we ran:

- + 8 interviews.
- + 2 challenge-framing workshops with the Employability Team.
- + 1 citywide employer survey.
- + 4 co-design workshops.
- + 3 recommendation sessions.
- + 15+ internal team meetings.

Throughout the process we identified 132 challenges and 45 opportunities to do things differently. Together, participants explored how we might:

- + Reach and communicate with every employer.
- + Make it easier for employers to access support.
- + Collaborate with employers to shape what's offered.
- + Understand and share people's experiences to shape services.
- + Co-design services, redefine success, and learn from challenges.
- + Work together to improve continuously and provide the right support.

These sessions were a real highlight. People made new connections, shared insights, and even found support they'd been looking for. Many said it was the first time such a broad mix of people had come together to listen and learn from one another.

Afterwards, we reviewed over

100
ideas



and refined them down to 45 key ideas. The Employability Team helped prioritise these into key concepts. Through this, we developed two practical systems to embed lived-experience into decision-making and to strengthen how we work with employers.

Each idea may be small on its own, but together, they point to meaningful, long-term change with people's voices at the centre.

Finally, in three recommendation sessions, four ideas were prioritised to be prototyped, ones that support both systems and benefit all stakeholders. The rest will continue to be explored by the Employability Team.

The Four Ideas Moving Forward:

- + Re-design common tools such as needs assessment tools, current feedback channels and case studies to improve service delivery and better capture people's experiences.
- + Create collaborative forums to learn and shape decision-making with providers and key workers and employers.
- + Develop collaborative regular analysis, data intelligence and visualisation process.
- + Reach employers through new registrations and Non-Domestic rates data to provide support and collaborate.

Next Steps

We are currently bringing these ideas to life by taking them from paper to prototype. Working creatively and physically with the Employability Team to test concepts in iterative cycles, adapting them to learn what should be kept and what is missing in a low-risk, simple and quick way.

By deliberately putting ideas through a variety of scenarios of use, we will uncover weaknesses, unexpected outcomes, and areas for improvement.

By testing ideas with people who will use them as well as people involved in making them happen, we are making sure ideas reflect the variety of experiences, needs, and contexts our solutions will encounter. In this case, we will test our ideas with internal staff, service providers, key workers, and participants.

"We've collectively started to make that shift from being focused on the solution to focusing on the process and the outcomes that come from the process. We had to gain a deeper understanding of the faults or challenges and I don't think anything we found was that surprising, but now everything has been collated, the picture is a lot clearer and we have more focused objectives."

— Alyson Gregor, Development Officer within Glasgow City Council's Employability Team



Understanding the Challenges

Language and Literacy

What We Know

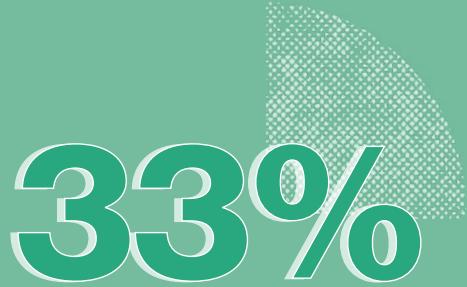
Language and Literacy has been outlined as a key barrier preventing people from accessing and engaging independently and meaningfully with support services or employability opportunities. These barriers hinder people from achieving their goals and get in the way of leading a rich, fulfilled life.

From engaging with services in Southside Central it became apparent that people across the city face challenges when it comes to accessing Language and Literacy classes and that services are struggling to meet the increasing demand for developing language and literacy skills. These services can range from informal conversation cafes to formal college courses.

Whilst this challenge isn't limited to families from an ethnic minority background, this group are another priority group outlined by the Scottish Government as disproportionately affected by poverty. Using data recorded in the SEEMiS school roll, we are able to understand the ethnicity of **80% of the families living in poverty in Glasgow.**



of families living in poverty are from ethnic minority backgrounds. **This is 3,384 families.**



of children living in poverty are from ethnic minority backgrounds. **This is 8,060 children.**



different languages are spoken at home other than English.

This clearly shows the cultural diversity of people in Glasgow and the need for services to adapt to families' specific ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Based on education data, we can also see that children who come from an ethnic minority background are more likely to experience poverty.



of all children from an ethnic minority background experience poverty while only **19% of all White British children experience poverty.**

Families who come from an ethnic minority background experiencing poverty are also more likely to have two parents (46%).

In contrast, the majority of White British families experiencing poverty are single parent families (87%).

This is quite a large difference and potentially explains why families from an ethnic minority background are more likely to also be in in-work poverty:

Because ethnic minority families are more likely to have two parents, it's easier for one parent to access employment. However, their income from employment alone is still too low to support their family.

15% of families from a White British background experience in-work poverty while 38% of families from an ethnic minority background experience in-work poverty.

What We Are Hearing

Research and data highlight that there are numerous services across Glasgow offering language and literacy support, both formally and informally. However, uptake of these services is inconsistent. Work in Southside Central, for example, has revealed that some services were not aware of each other's existence, while at the same time struggling to meet growing demand and increasingly diverse needs.

Many families depend on developing these skills simply to survive and access essential services. Yet current provision is not always accessible, does not fully meet learners' needs, and lacks joined-up pathways to help individuals achieve their goals. This, in turn, deepens inequalities and worsens the impacts of poverty.

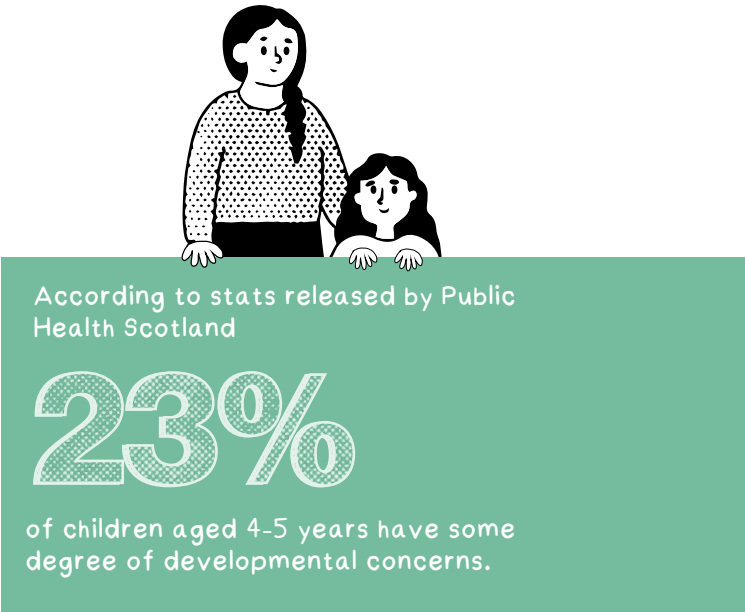
"Language and literacy are impacting families that are often falling through the net and not getting the support they need. So, you know, that might be access to services, benefits or employment. Sometimes the need for support is glaringly obvious, but sometimes people's circumstances are unknown, and they are maybe just getting by, they're not in a serious crisis. So there's no reason that organisations or public services would identify them as families that need support." — Roisin, Indigo

Developmental Effects for Children

We've seen in recent years after the COVID-19 pandemic that children have missed out on key developmental stages for communication, leading to a need for more services at organisations like Indigo. Roisin has been supporting families with these challenges:

"I think, particularly with COVID, where families were essentially home-schooling or children were missing out on the early years of nursery and seeing the impact that had on speech and language for the children and the disparity in milestones from the previous years, things like this did show the need for extra support to be put in place." — Roisin, Indigo

Roisin continued talking about the complexity of language and literacy across the city and that the developmental concerns existed prior to the pandemic. "It is a huge area and, in my view, there are likely 3 significant areas to be considered, Adult Language and Literacy, Child Language and Literacy Development and Child Language and Literacy in areas of Deprivation. The approach to address the challenges faced in each of these areas are different but all can have significant negative long-term life outcomes, if not addressed."



By speaking to Amber at GEMAP, a money advice service for women who have been affected by gender-based violence, we also learned about the effect that domestic violence can have on the development of children. The effect can be traumatic and have long term consequences.

"I think about 60 to 70% of our caseload at any one time are lone parent women with children. That tells you that the number of children across the city who are being affected by gender-based violence is high, and these children are suffering the aftermath of the abuse."

"Imagine being a young child, whisked away from your community, your home, your bedroom. Your safe space, where you had lots of toys and bed you were used to. Then suddenly you're in a strange place. You don't know anybody, and you're in a stark room where nothing is your own with nobody you know."

Reaching New Members of The Community

To reach individuals who might be more isolated or speak English as a second language, community organisations are trying to expand their networks by working in partnership to provide more holistic support in their communities. Fiona from Clyde Gateway said, "If people are new to the community, or new to the country, they need that community engagement. This can help them to be a part of the community or even start the process of getting them into employment. It could be a long process, but I think community engagement is the starting point."

"Adding to this, there's also got to be an understanding that it isn't a one size fits all approach, communities are different, and each one has different needs. These processes to understand what a community needs cannot happen without the expertise of organisations anchored in communities that understand the people who live there. Fiona goes on to say, "What is needed in Bridgeton might not be what's needed in Dalmarnock, even though they're right beside each other. So it's acknowledging and working with the community partners to recognise what your residents need. We may think we know, but we're not the delivery organisation."

This is reflected in the Council Tax Reduction data when looking at a ward level. In Southside Central, 48% of families in poverty are from a minority ethnic background, compared to 28% of families in Calton. Whereas, 49% of families in poverty in Southside Central are single parent families compared to 70% in Calton. This shows the importance of understanding the needs and challenges of each area so that we can understand the best potential solutions.

Flexibility

To serve communities and help them find support, services need to work around families and be flexible in how they provide help as every family has different needs. Amber from Financially Included GEMAP tells us about the different ways they make their services available to their participants.

"Nearly all of the 600 women in Glasgow who have come across our books over the last three and a half years require flexibility. Some more than others, it just depends on their family situations. Some women may be moving or fleeing their homes, seeking temporary accommodation or refuge, only to be relocated repeatedly. So, we meet them where they're at."

Roisin at Indigo explains how being primarily a childcare service has helped them shape the services they offer to families and the community and reach families that weren't accessing support anywhere else. "As a childcare organisation, it can be a bit of a sweet spot for identifying families that maybe wouldn't engage with a community organisation or wouldn't go to their GP with an issue. So I think it kind of stemmed from that, they were seeing families that weren't engaged anywhere else and potentially wouldn't agree to engage in another service."

The evidence gathered across Glasgow shows that while there is no shortage of organisations offering language, literacy, and broader community support, gaps in awareness, accessibility, and coordination between different services mean that

too many families still miss out on the help they need. Challenges are exacerbated for families who speak English as a second language or come from an ethnic minority background.

Successful services have shown that solutions must be rooted in local knowledge, flexibility, and strong partnerships that recognise the distinct needs of different communities. By fostering more connected, responsive, and inclusive services, Glasgow can not only bridge the gaps in provision but also help break the cycles of inequality that keep families from thriving.



An inside look...

Exploring the Barriers Around Language and Literacy

What We Are Doing

Families in Southside Central who are experiencing poverty and speak English as a second language often struggle to access or fully engage with support, services, employment or community life.

The area is home to a rich diversity of spoken languages and a number of dedicated language and literacy services. However, uptake of these services is inconsistent, meaning some families still face barriers to the support and opportunities they need.

This project focuses on understanding how language and literacy services in Southside Central can work better for families who speak English as a second language. We aim to identify the barriers they face, understand local priorities, and develop ideas to improve both access to, and experiences of, these services so that families can meet their needs and aspirations.

So far, we've carried out research and hosted sessions with:

27  **local organisations**

which support people who speak English as a second language in Southside Central and across the city. This has given us an early picture of the challenges in delivering services and the obstacles families encounter when trying to access them.

Why We Are Doing It

Our Approach to Tackling Child Poverty in Glasgow Through Public Service Reform

This project is a 'Demonstration of Change'; a series of place-based projects in 'Booster Wards', the areas of the city most affected by child poverty and who would benefit most from innovative solutions to tackle child poverty. These projects take a local, people-centred approach to understanding the needs of families, especially those with children aged 0–5. The aim is to learn, test, and develop new ideas that create lasting change and help break the cycle of crisis support in Glasgow.

We put people's experiences at the heart of everything we do, while also drawing on the expertise and knowledge of organisations to better understand the barriers families face.

Our approach builds on the strengths already in Southside Central, working in partnership with local organisations to share learning, tackle challenges, and co-create solutions with families. By taking a place-based approach, we're not only improving support at a community level but also shaping how public services across Glasgow can work more collaboratively, flexibly, and effectively for the people who need them most.



What We Are Learning

Services in our sessions highlighted that the three most common groups of people accessing services were...

- + Parents, carers, guardians and families.
- + Adult women especially from ethnic minorities.
- + And unemployed people looking for employment, new opportunities or skills.

We noticed young and older men from the Asian community are completely under represented in language and literacy services but we know this is also the case in Employability Services where the provision doesn't cater to their needs.

About Understanding People's Goals...

Council Staff identified hundreds of people on the waiting list for ESOL classes and tried to understand why people were signing up to classes around the city. By doing this, they realised this information, along with any other need or goal, isn't recorded in the assessment forms for ESOL classes. Services highlighted that primary motivations for people accessing languages and literacy were...

- + To access jobs or better job opportunities.
- + To go onto further education for their existing qualifications.
- + To access local services such as health or benefits independently.
- + To support their families and join local events.



Other motivations were due to external pressures such as Universal Credit, Job Centres and legal requirements like Visas and Citizenship tests. On the other hand, personal motivations for people were pretty consistent. They included gaining independence, problem solving, socialising, connecting with other people and building confidence.



Understanding the challenges in delivering services...

During sessions, organisations identified:

89 challenges

20 main challenges

7 opportunities



About people's experiences and needs...

- + Creating the conditions for people to learn and address their needs first.
- + Offering fully accessible learning opportunities.
- + Managing different cultural backgrounds to provide safe and constructive environment for all.

About the service and the provision...

- + Reaching, accessing and engaging learners, and managing drop-off.
- + Addressing gaps in pathways and provision for vocational and different levels classes.

About Organisational challenges...

- + Managing funding inconsistency and resources.
- + Better understanding the landscape and collaboration with other organisations.

We noticed local organisations have the skills and expertise needed to create the right conditions for learning and to provide accessible opportunities for everyone.

The main barriers are limited resources and time to offer opportunities consistently and to a high standard. While there is a wide range of provision available locally, services are not always aware of one another. As a result, opportunities for referrals or filling classes are sometimes missed.

Finding a Design Opportunity

Using a framework of citizen experience, provider insights and strategic objectives, we identify opportunities where a design process can provide the maximum impact for a common goal.

Based on data, research, strategic priorities and engagement we learned that we should work with...



Adult women with children, especially single parents, from ethnic minority backgrounds looking for education, skills development or employment opportunities.

When we design with people who are the most disadvantaged, we can reduce barriers for many others:

“What we see in the support and services we provide is that if it works for single parents, it will likely work for other types of families.” Lee Anthony, One Parent Family Scotland

What Should We Focus On?

We should focus on addressing the gaps in joined-up pathways and provision for vocational and different levels of classes connecting people to opportunities and services. Through this lens, we can also address other challenges that have been identified.

This opportunity is about co-designing ideas that help people build confidence in their ability to learn, define their own goals, and receive guidance as they work towards achieving them. It's not about pushing people into jobs or employability programmes, but about creating the right conditions for personal growth and choice.

Next Steps

We are currently working to ground our opportunities in existing local work. In the mean time, research programme with local families, services, and strategic stakeholders to better understand the challenges within this focus area and to co-design potential solutions.





Understanding the Challenges

Disability

What We Know

Families where someone is living with a disability are one of the six priority groups outlined by the Scottish Government. In last year's report we outlined that the number of families in poverty where someone has a disability was increasing. This trend has continued on to this year.

3,950

families are experiencing poverty where someone is disabled.

In these families

6,888

children are in poverty.

We are also able to determine that the majority of this increase within our data has been amongst disabled adults, increasing from 2,773 (July 2023 – June 2024) to 3,591 (April 2024 – March 2025)

Whilst our data only show that there are now 613 children classified as disabled and living in poverty, we know that this number is likely higher.

Through an exercise undertaken with the DWP earlier this year we discovered that child disability in particular is likely to be under reported within the Council Tax Reduction data.

To add to this, within the SEEMiS school roll data, we can see the number of children who have additional support needs. Whilst being recorded as having additional support needs doesn't necessarily mean that support is required or received, it does indicate a similar need for families.

There is an extensive list of reasons as to why a child might have an additional support need, ranging from a disability such as deafness to challenges with home life such as being a young carer.



52%

of children attending a Glasgow school are recorded as having additional support needs.

This is...

42%

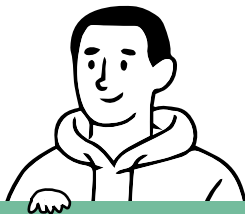
of all families experiencing poverty in Glasgow.
This is 5,570 families.

What We Are Hearing

We spoke with Karen, at Glasgow Disability Alliance. Our conversation with Karen helped us understand the challenges faced by their participants and why we are seeing increasing links between poverty and disability.

“Structural, underlying inequalities, especially those affecting health outcomes, have always existed, but they’ve been made worse in recent years by austerity and now the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, disability rates are rising, and there’s a clear overlap between disability and poverty. The most recent census showed a sharp increase in people reporting mental health issues or stating that they have additional support needs. When it comes to child poverty, children aren’t isolated individuals; they live in households. As disability levels and severity increase, the impact inevitably extends to families, creating a knock-on effect on their wellbeing and stability.”
— Karen, GDA

According to the 2022 Census almost...



1 in 10

children under the age of 16 in Glasgow have a disability.

As we were pulling together this year’s report, we spoke to several organisations in Glasgow about their experience providing services to adults and children who have a disability, and a key point of each conversation regarded the rise in additional support needs.

We wanted to gain a better understanding of the issues that this could cause and the opportunities currently available.

Additional Support Needs

“The predominant thing we’re seeing with conditions or disabilities is that while children are going through some kind of neurodivergent assessment, families are often hesitant to go through the process for the Child Disability Payment for different reasons. For example, whether it’s worth the time; they don’t feel like they have an authentic case to demand support for their child without diagnosis, or they feel like their requests for support aren’t acknowledged, and that can lead to a whole host of issues including exacerbating poverty.” — Rosin, Indigo

This was echoed by Karen, who told us about a wellbeing service within the Glasgow Disability Alliance, that was set up to check in with members during the COVID-19 pandemic, when people were isolating and needed some support. This service has continued after the pandemic but now serves a completely different purpose.

“We’ve maintained that service after the pandemic, but the wellbeing service now deals with people who are in an absolute crisis. That service has completely evolved just because the need has become so apparent and there are so many gaps that people are falling through whilst they are on waiting lists or because they are isolated.”

The period between referral and diagnosis can often take years and can impact children at a vital period of their development as well as leaving parents to feel uncertain or unsure of how to support their children during this period of assessment. A common obstacle for children who are looking for a referral is that they are often part of a family where a parent or a guardian has a disability or a long-term health condition. From the experience of Indigo, Roisin told us: “There’s a multi-layered impact for families. Because of the delays and long referral times the threshold for receiving support seems to have increased, not just interns of disability but in general, or for social work it’s increased massively.”

This can then become a challenge within schools as the time taken for a diagnosis means that schools might not be able to provide support. Roisin from Indigo told us. “People who’ve spoken to us have told us there are quite a lot of children who don’t have the support that they need during the school day, so are largely absent. That’s probably why we see a bit of an increase in home schooling, the child just doesn’t feel able to cope within that environment. There’s less capacity for schools to deal in a tailored way with individual children’s needs and I think that really impacts people’s ability to settle within a day.”

Because of these unknown circumstances or lack of support, this can have a negative effect on parents who are employed or are looking to find employment. There’s an unknown quantity, and until there’s a diagnosis, people will feel very uncertain, uncomfortable or hesitant to find employment. “People who have approached Indigo have told us they feel uncertain or uncomfortable in regards to finding employment that is flexible and suits their circumstances.”

Positive Destinations After School

Jonathan from SUSE describes the difficulties faced by young people with a disability when they leave school. “Something that we’ve seen through some of our members and kids that are leaving school with additional support needs, is that they’re either not getting a positive destination or the positive destination is college rather than employment.”

It’s great that young people are going into further education, but once they reach the end of their courses, the options for employment can be really limited. SUSE are working with employers across Glasgow to build an understanding of the support disabled people need and create an environment for sustainable employment. “We’re working with employers to improve their ability to hire and sustain disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. A lot of our work is focused on training and interventions with these employers. We want to understand ‘How employers are attracting disabled people to apply for roles? How are they recruiting them and how are they supporting those staff in the workplace?’ Because in each of those strands we’ve identified major barriers that disabled people face”

“With almost every organisation we’ve worked with, employee satisfaction has grown, and their desire to hire more disabled people has grown as well. There’s now an expectation that they will be trying to hire more disabled people, which is great to see. We want to be able to do more and see more change across the city so that when young people with additional support needs leave school or college, they have far more options for employment.”

From the 2022 Census, when considering only those aged over 16 and excluding economically inactive groups such as students, there is a clear employment gap in Glasgow between people who are disabled or not

Among those with a disability, 27% were employed or self-employed, while 73% were economically inactive. The pattern is almost exactly reversed for people without a disability, with 72% in employment or self-employment and 28% economically inactive.

Representation for Disabled People

Moving forward, as well as looking to improve systems and services for disabled people, we must do this in collaboration with people who have lived-experience. By working in partnership with people who are disabled people, we can avoid creating new barriers, increase accessibility and empower individuals.

Karen from the Glasgow Disability Alliance explained, “So often we hear that these people are hard to reach but is it that they are hard to reach or easy to ignore? We want to make sure their voices are in the room and being heard. So, a lot of it’s about capacity building peer support and building confidence and making the connections for people, to be campaigning and speaking out, for their rights and making sure that they’re being heard.”

What We Are Doing

Co-designing with the Disabled Community

Across our work, the Centre for Civic Innovation has been working with organisations providing disability services to ensure our projects are accessible. It is pivotal to have the perspective of the disabled community in the designing of services in the future to ensure we prevent the creation of more barriers and the services we co-design are inclusive.

“We worked with the Centre for Civic Innovation around the Govan Neighbourhood Improvement Fund. So, we ran a session to make sure that disabled people were able to participate in that project.”
— Karen, Glasgow Disability Alliance

Through our collaboration with GDA, we were able to understand barriers which often prevent disabled people’s participation. We also learned the methods of engagement that were best suited to their members, the ways that they would like to get involved and are most accessible for them. Through using engagement methods that best suit people, we can work in collaboration to understand the barriers and tackle them together.

“So often we hear that these people are hard to reach but is it that they are hard to reach or easy to ignore? We want to make sure their voices are in the room and being heard.”
— Karen, Glasgow Disability Alliance

An inside look...

Caring for Children with Additional Support Needs

What We Are Doing

This year we worked with Govan HELP, a family support organisation, to understand the main challenges families face in Govan. One of the first things we were asked to investigate was caring for children with additional support needs. We hosted a session with twelve parents to build a better picture of what this looks like for parents and carers and in which ways they are affected by how children with additional support needs are supported in their community.

Early Intervention

This project was undertaken as a part of the Child Poverty Programme in which early intervention is a core principle. The best time to improve someone's opportunities throughout their life is in their first 5 years. Research shows that ensuring that children are supported in early years gives them the best chance to be happy and fulfilled later in life.

To help us understand what children need at an early age, we invited twelve parents, eight of which had children aged 0–5. The parents who didn't currently have children aged 0–5 were also able to share their experience of having brought up their children, the challenges they had and how they overcame them.

Hearing from families who are unheard

As Govan HELP provide a range of support including play therapy, counselling, a food pantry and connecting people to other services, they have a good grounding in what families need. Using their expertise and connections, it allowed us to connect to parents who often go unheard and we made it as easy as possible to participate by providing creche facilities and hosting just after the school run to make it easier.



What We Heard

We heard from mothers who feel under so much pressure to be everything to everyone in their family. We also heard from fathers who were struggling with mental health difficulties and felt dismissed by professionals who they went to for help. They spoke about how much effort they put into supporting their children and the futility they feel when trying to find support.

The stress of providing their children with additional support is compounded by a lack of support in other areas like finding suitable housing, support for their family's mental health and fulfilling their responsibilities as a parent with all these additional difficulties.

We heard about four main areas that families struggled with: school, home, local community and support services.

Their worries at school mainly centred around the transition from primary to high school, teacher training for supporting children with additional support needs, difficulty with attendance and making sure that there are opportunities for their children to socialise with others in an environment that suits their needs.

At home, we heard about difficulties with home maintenance as a risk to their children's health, overcrowding and stress related to budgeting.

Within the local community we discussed feelings of judgement from other families and finding play spaces that are suitable for children with additional needs. They also spoke about how supported they felt by their peers and the importance of a feeling of shared community responsibility when it comes to things like safe driving and looking after their area.

When seeking support, we heard about the difficulties families have in finding information about support, often wrapped up in feelings of discrimination and a lack of commitment from professionals who do not follow through on promises. This was mixed in with positive, supportive experiences with people and services who have helped over the years.

Many families had found the diagnosis journey for their children very difficult as they had to navigate a new set of professionals and departments. This is compounded by the phrase "additional support needs" which encompasses a wide range of needs and challenges that cannot necessarily be supported by one department or team.

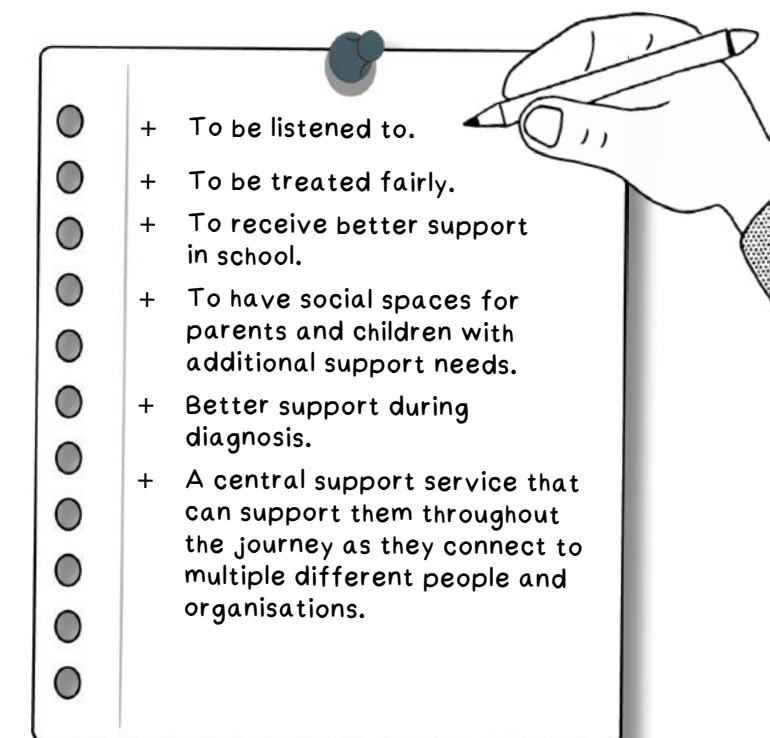
As they need to interact with so many different people, they find themselves having to tell their story over and over while some of these stories contain traumatic experiences that they don't want to have to retell to receive support.

"Don't wait for a diagnosis before putting support in place" — Co-design Participant

The most important thing families would like to change...

As a final note to the session, we asked: if you could change one thing, what would it be?

Families told us they want:



Understanding the Challenges

The Complexity of People's Lives

What We Know

From extensive engagement with both service providers and people, we know that those experiencing poverty face a broad range of challenges and barriers that extend far beyond a lack of income. Whilst many of these challenges are faced by individuals, each family's circumstances will be different.

Due to the nature of the way that relative poverty is measured, only taking into account income, employability is seen as a core route out of poverty. Based on our data, we created a scenario to understand the different circumstances affecting the income of a single parent family with two children, based on part-time and full-time hours at the real living wage.

Single parent 2 children (6&15)

Real living wage

Hourly rate: = £12.60

Hours worked= 16

Annual Salary = £10,483.20

NET weekly salary = £201.60
(After tax and NI)

Welfare Benefits

Universal credit = £241.07

Scottish Child Payment = £54.30

Child Benefit = £43.30

Total weekly Income = £513.27

This scenario assumes that the family only sits in the single parent priority group, and not additional circumstances such as disability and assumes eligibility to standard benefits. At 16 hours a week on the real living wage, this family would be below the relative poverty line without additional benefits topping them up. With the addition of benefits, they are £64.71 per week above the poverty line.

Single parent 2 children (6&15)

Real living wage

Hourly rate: = £12.60

Hours worked= 35

Annual Salary = £22,932.00

NET weekly salary = £385.78
(After tax and NI)

Wellfare Benefits

Universal credit = £112.77

Scottish Child Payment = £54.30

Child Benefit = £43.30

Total weekly Income = £596.15



The only difference between these two scenarios, is that this one is working 35 hours a week rather than 16. Again, without additional benefits this family would still be £62.78 per week below the poverty threshold.

The additional 19 hours working full time, equates to just under an additional £83 per week in the families pocket, which works out at £4.37 an hour. In Scotland, the average cost per week for an afterschool club is £72.97 and £79.99 for a childminder until 6pm. This cost almost negates the additional income of working an additional 19 hours a week. This doesn't however factor in the type of work that someone in this situation may be taking on. If for example they are working in a hospitality setting and are required to work well into evenings and weekends, childcare costs may be higher or completely unavailable.

The above scenario assumes that there are no barriers or challenges for this family to access employment. If you were to factor in caring for a child with additional support needs, or challenges with language and literacy the incentive to work is then significantly reduced.

All of this goes to show that employment at the real living wage alone isn't enough to support people out of poverty.

What We Are Hearing

This year, we decided to focus on key themes that are directly linked to child poverty in Glasgow. Whilst each of these themes has its own unique challenges, we understand that they don't exist in isolation, they cross over into each other, as the scenarios on the previous pages show, and the conversations we had whilst pulling this report together only emphasised this.

“Quarterly or every six months, I submit a tally of the common themes or issues that families raise. On average, families identify about seven barriers that they're facing. So that can be anything from waiting for an assessment to a benefit error. So, the issues are really broad” — Roisin, Indigo

Accessing Support

Across our conversations with different services and service providers, we learned about the challenges people faced when accessing support and how this can have an impact on children within families. For example, when we spoke to Karen from Glasgow Disability Alliance, she told us about the difficulty families can encounter if they can't get access to the right social care.

“Social care is a massive issue. When people aren't able to access social care or care that meets their needs, it has a huge impact on their lives. For example, there will be people who are able and want to work who won't be able to because they aren't getting the right support for that to happen. This of course, also impacts families and their wellbeing: when a disabled parent is not able to access social care, then other family members are having to plug this gap.”

This then impacts employment as family members may have to work fewer hours or not work at all to provide support for their loved ones.



1 in 10

families experiencing in-work poverty also have someone in their household who is disabled.

Alongside social care, another complex challenge for families looking to improve their living situation is homelessness. In our conversation with Jonathan from the Lennox Partnership, we learned about the challenges people can encounter if they want to access services, but don't have a place to call home. “There's definitely a gap for people who are looking for employment who are homeless. It can be difficult following up with people as they may be couch surfing, and it can take months for them to get access to temporary or permanent accommodation. Which is a key step in terms of getting someone settled and ready for meaningful employment. So people can fall through the gap.”

This ties in with what we heard from Amber, who shared the difficulties women fleeing from an abusive relationship can encounter and the impact this can have on children when they might not have a place to go.

“One of the most difficult parts of the job for our advisors is seeing the trauma and impact that poverty and gender-based violence have on the children. Gender-based violence impacts children in several ways; the things they might witness, as well as the frequent house and school moves, and the unsafe environment of temporary accommodation.”

From this conversation with Amber, we discovered that debt is often a form of abuse inflicted on women by abusive partners. “For a lot of women, debt is part of the abuse. The perpetrator might have taken credit out in their name, or they may have had no other option due to the perpetrator restricting their access to their bank account or money, forcing them to resort to taking credit to put food on the table.”

Taking a Holistic Approach

Across our conversations, every one of our interviewees expressed the need for a more joined up approach to put an end to people falling through the gaps that exist in the current system.

“In situations where support is available, services may not have been thought about holistically. We will have situations where, even if people have the social care they need, they may then have barriers relating to transport. So, we have to understand that everything has to work together, there has to be holistic support.” - Karen, Glasgow Disability Alliance

To get people the support they need, public services have to be less fragmented and as accessible as possible for people to get the support they need.

Through more collaborative working, services in communities can expand their networks to reach more people within their communities. We can also understand the gaps in the services available to local residents and work in partnership to design new services. “Working in partnership is the key to community work. These people need multi-agency support, and one organisation's network or services won't serve the entirety of an area.” — Fiona, Clyde Gateway

Person-centred Approach

Whilst there is a need for systems to be better connected in order for services to provide support for families in poverty, it's important that these systems are not rigid and there is an understanding of the different circumstances that lead to the complexity in people's lives.

As Roisin from Indigo explains, “People can often think the solutions to people's problems are easily managed and there's a tendency to jump to the closest solution, but it's so often complex and multi-layered what people are dealing with.”

It might be immediately obvious to understand the support people require, but it can also be a longer process to learn what people need. To ensure that people get access to the support they need, a relationship-based approach is required. Service providers have to develop trust with participants to truly understand their circumstances and the barriers they face. By favouring a relationship based approach, we can meet people where they are and get them immediate support if there is a need for it, whilst also looking towards the future, focusing on long-term preventative measures that will help to lift people out of poverty.

“We will have situations where, even if people have the social care they need, they may then have barriers relating to transport. So, we have to understand that everything has to work together, there has to be holistic support.”
— Karen, Glasgow Disability Alliance

An inside look...

Co-designing Holistic Support

What We Are Doing

When asking for help from local support organisations like family support, financial support or other community organisations, sharing your story can be complex and asks you to share vulnerable details.

We brought together the “No Wrong Door” group which consists of a wide range of third and public sector organisations who provide help with finances, employment support and helping women and girls escape violence.

These organisations provide support and expertise within the local communities meaning that they hear from people who are often ignored.

Tell Your Story followed the Glasgow Promise Partnership, a project undertaken by Glasgow's Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS) to explore alternatives to traditional procurement and establish tests of change co-designed with children, young people and families. This consisted of a consultation of 387 children, young people, parents and carers and had the engagement of 24 third sector organisations. 25 young people, parents and carers were then invited to co-design this model for change.

Bringing Together a Team of Experts

The Tell Your Story project was initiated by the No Wrong Door lead as a collaboration between their partner organisations. We brought together a steering group of

10
people



who each represented a member of the No Wrong Door network. Between us, we had a wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience about providing care and support for parents, children and carers.

“Together we identified two main aims: ensuring seamless access to comprehensive support services regardless of the point of contact and providing a relationship-based process that enables providers to connect people to the right support when they need it. This was rooted in the findings from the Glasgow Promise Partnership and allowed us to identify a range of opportunities.”

Outlining How Joined-up Services Should be Delivered

We brought together a group of 12 parents and carers to better understand each stage of connecting with a supporting service. We learned how to best find out about a service, what helps parents make contact, how they'd like to share their story, how it's used and how they maintain contact with the service.

As a group, we also looked at how families would like their story to be shared between organisations to ensure they have control over their story while also allowing services to connect them to the right services at the right time.

“Behind every project or process, there's a person.”
— Hiba, Co-Design Participant

“Being involved has allowed me the opportunity to listen to citizen's opinions on how engaging with services would best suit them. This has allowed us to begin introducing some of the things that were identified that would allow parents to feel like they have autonomy over how they access services.”
— Elizabeth McKechnie, Glasgow Helps

Building Confidence, Skills, Relationships and Resilience

We outlined early in the project that we wanted to hear from those who are often unheard. To make this possible, we looked at what makes it easier for parents to take part. To increase our chances of hearing from those who are unheard, we provided creche facilities, transport and lunch, allowing busy parents to think about the challenges within the project rather than the barriers that could prevent them from attending. We also rewarded participants with pre-paid vouchers. Their time as service delivery experts was fairly compensated and we made sure their input is valued as much as other skills or knowledge.

We finished the project with certificates in recognition of what each participant brought to the project, recognising their skills in: generating and sketching new ideas, evaluating and selecting ideas, visual communication, presenting ideas, creative problem solving, sharing knowledge and experience, and group collaboration. By the end of the project, several relationships had been built between parents and service providers and everyone showed more confidence in taking part, expressing new ideas and recognising that their lived experience is important.

We often think of co-design as a way of producing a new idea, product or service but this way of working also builds community resilience, relationships and confidence at a local level.

“It was a great experience to consider myself as a co-designer among different people who are so intelligent as well. It was a very high privilege, because I have never done this before. So, for me to keep in my mind for a long time and it's very important for our society as well.” — Iqra, Co-Design Participant

Project Benefits

- + **2 families received specialised support due to the ongoing relationships built between service providers.**
- + **21 key workers received training around recognising and acting on violence against women and girls due to the relationships built between service providers.**
- + **1 citizen co-designer secured a job.**
- + **1 citizen co-designer secured a placement.**
- + **2 organisations collaborated to fund a new post.**





Priority Groups

There are six priority groups outlined by the Scottish Governments Every Child, Every Chance (2018) Delivery plan as groups that are disproportionately affected by child poverty. Two of these groups were explored in-depth in the previous chapters, families where someone has a disability, and families from an ethnic minority background.

The Remaining Priority Groups Are

Single parents

Large families

Mothers under 25

Families with a child under 1

Each year we provide data about families who have these characteristics so that those who are designing services and policy have a better understanding of the types of families they are designing for.

Single Parents



Single Parent families in Relative Poverty: Earning 60% of the median income

The majority of children in poverty come from single parent families, making it the largest priority group. This means that when developing new or existing solutions to support those in poverty understanding how it might affect this group is incredibly important. In Glasgow...

69%



of families living in poverty are single parents.
This is 9,099 families.

63%



of children living in poverty come from single parent families.
This is 15,570 children.

Single Parent families in Deep Poverty: Earning 40% of the median income

43%



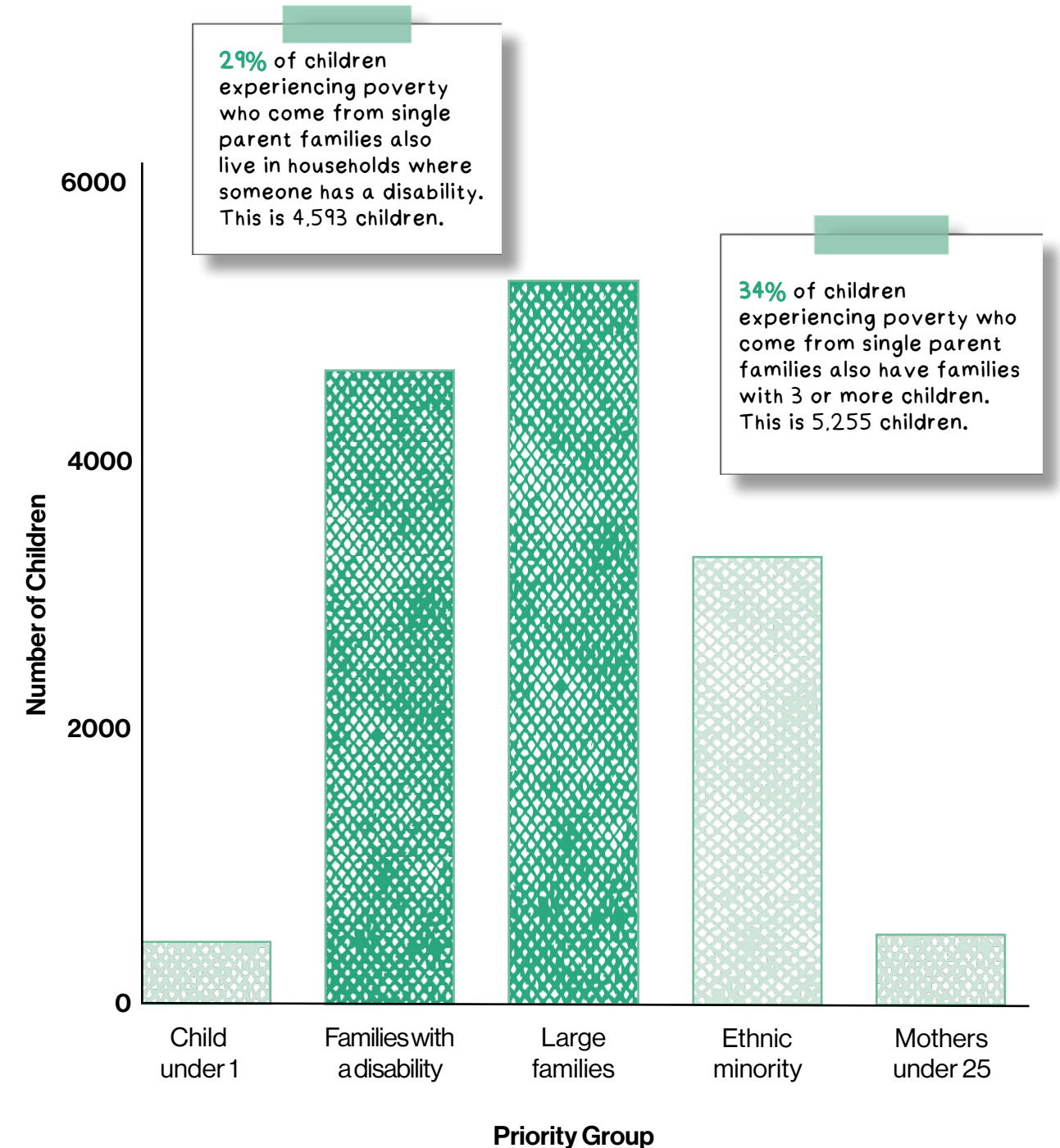
of single parent families in poverty are experiencing deep poverty.
This is 6,413 children.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, there were...

- **118 fewer children** living in these families experiencing relative poverty than there are currently.
- **497 more children** living in these families experiencing deep poverty than there are currently.

Single Parent Families Who Fall Under Other Priority Groups

Often we find families fall into more than one priority group. Since each group comes with its own set of challenges, being a part of multiple priority groups will have a significant impact on families. Understanding how these characteristics intersect can help us understand what families need and who we need to learn from.



Large Families



Large families in Relative Poverty: Earning 60% of the median income

Families with 3 or more children are more likely to be feeling the effects of the cost of living crisis. Many of these families, if they had a child born after 2017 will be impacted by the 2-child benefit cap.

23%



of large families living in poverty.
This is 3,052 families.

43%



of children living in poverty come from large families.
This is 10,596 children.

Large families in Deep Poverty: Earning 40% of the median income

40%



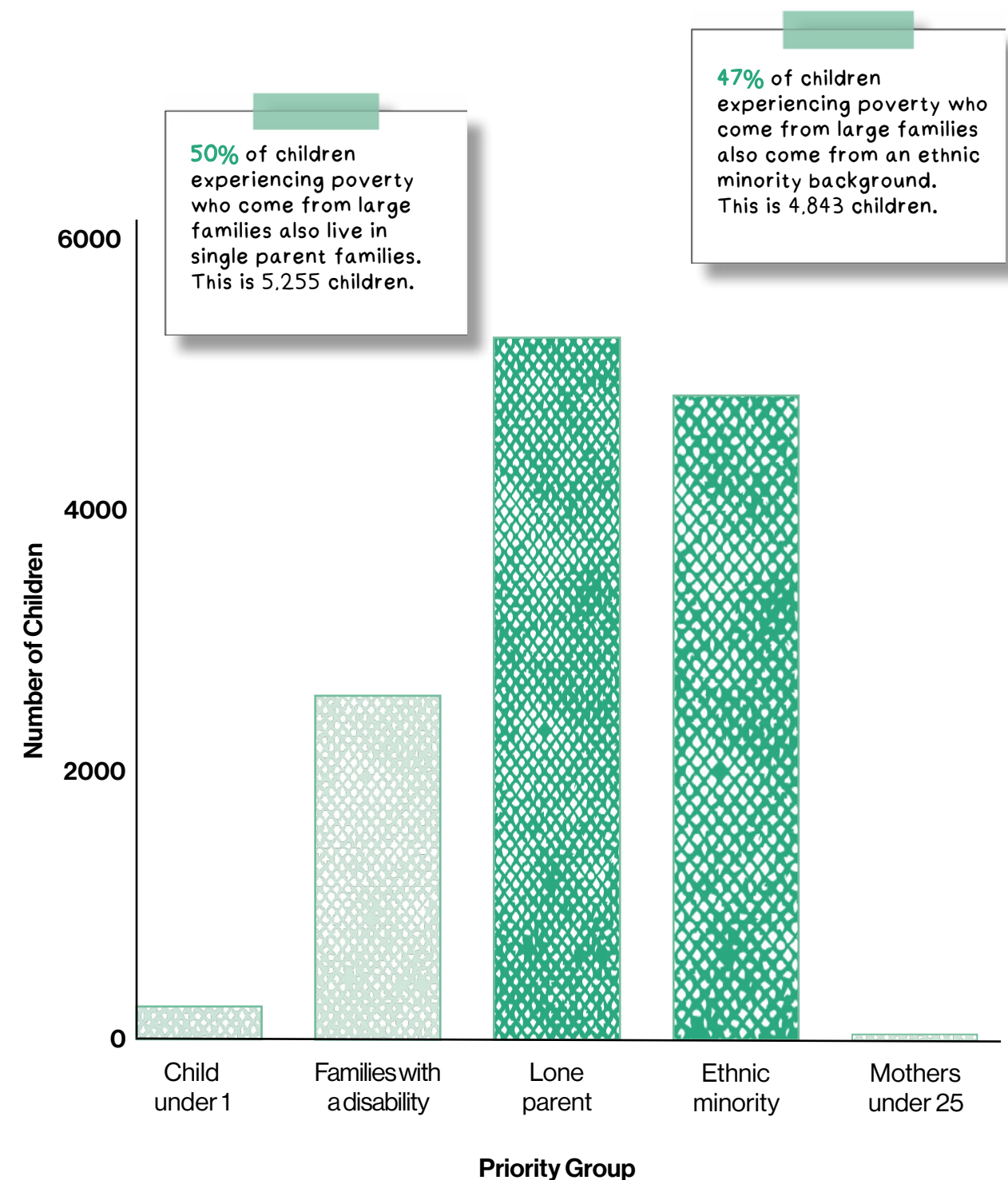
of large families in poverty are experiencing deep poverty.
This is 6,413 children.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, there were...

- 358 more children living in these families experiencing relative poverty than there are currently.
- 76 less children living in these families experiencing deep poverty than there are currently.

Large Families Who Fall Under Other Priority Groups

Often we find families fall into more than one priority group. Since each group comes with its own set of challenges, being a part of multiple priority groups will have a significant impact on families. Understanding how these characteristics intersect can help us understand what families need and who we need to learn from.



Mothers Under 25



Families with mothers under 25 in Relative Poverty: Earning 60% of the median income

Families with a mother under 25 are often disadvantaged by the simple fact of their age. For example, if they are single, or their partner is also under the age of 25, then the money that they receive from Universal Credit is reduced. This used to also be true for the national living wage, but now that only has an impact on those under the age of 21.

4%



of families living in poverty have a mother under 25.
This is 581 families.

3%



of children living in poverty have mothers under 25.
This is 736 children.

Families with mothers under 25 in Deep Poverty: Earning 40% of the median income

61%



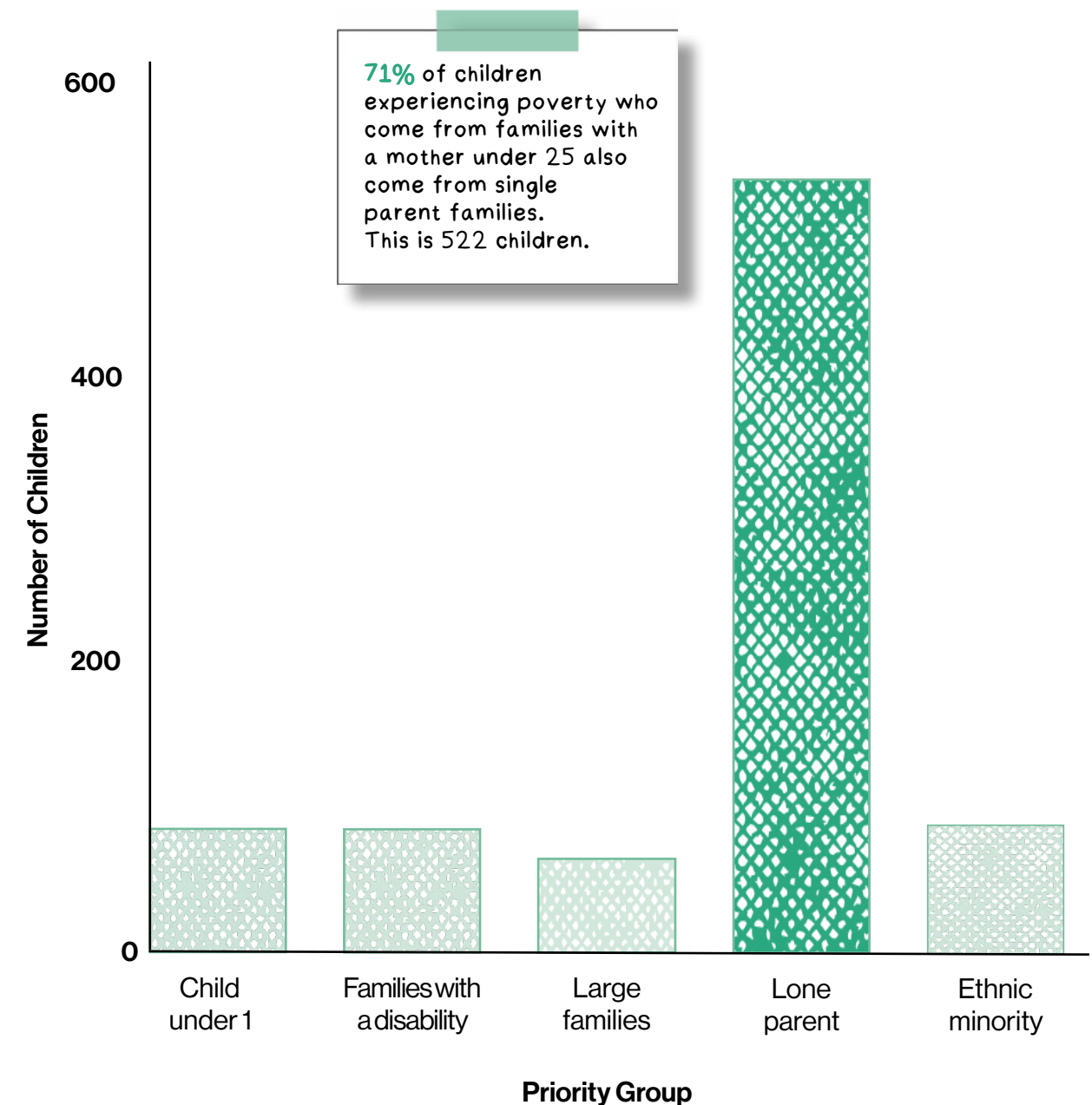
of families with mothers under 25 in poverty are experiencing deep poverty.
This is 445 children.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, there were...

- **15 more children** living in these families experiencing relative poverty than there are currently.
- **9 fewer children** living in these families experiencing deep poverty than there are currently.

Families With Mothers Under 25 Who Fall Under Other Priority Groups

Often we find families fall into more than one priority group. Since each group comes with its own set of challenges, being a part of multiple priority groups will have a significant impact on families. Understanding how these characteristics intersect can help us understand what families need and who we need to learn from.



Child Under 1



Families with a child under 1 in Relative Poverty: Earning 60% of the median income

According to research undertaken by Smart Cells (Smart Cells, 20/02/2025, The Cost of Having a Baby in the UK 2025) the cost of raising a child in the UK is £7,850 in the first year. For those that are already struggling financially, this will stretch things even further. Due to the nature of the way someone's benefit information is updated, it can take a while before information on recently born children are included. As a result of this, the data that we have on this group is likely under-reported.

2%



of families living in poverty
have a child under 1.
This is 282 families.

2%



of children living in poverty
have a child under 1.
This is 544 children.

Families with a child under 1 in Deep Poverty: Earning 40% of the median income

53%



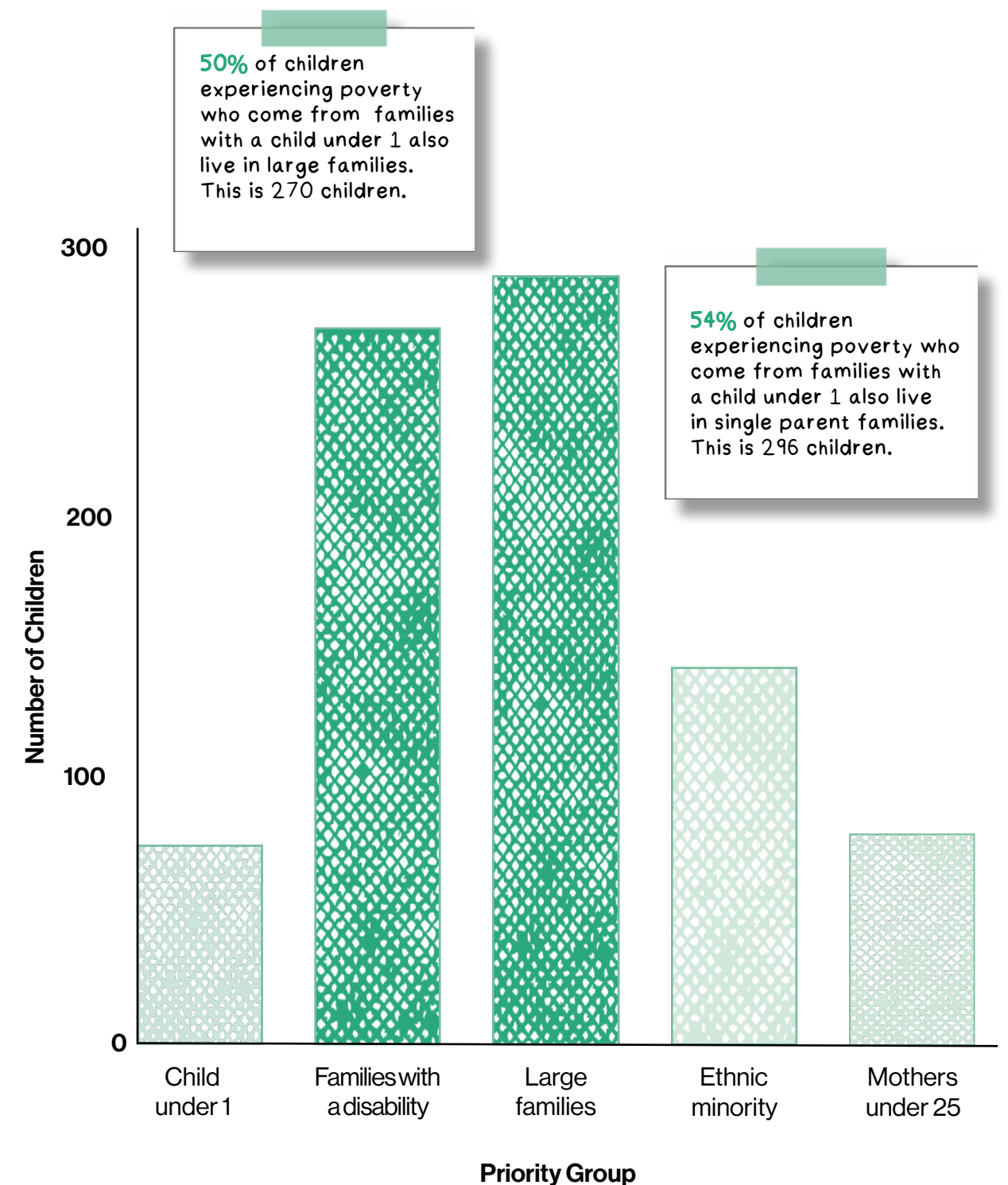
of families with a child under 1
in poverty are experiencing
deep poverty.
This is 267 children.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, there were...

- **126 more children** living in these families experiencing relative poverty than there are currently.
- **54 more children** living in these families experiencing deep poverty than there are currently.

Families With a Child Under 1 Who Fall Under Other Priority Groups

Often we find families fall into more than one priority group. Since each group comes with its own set of challenges, being a part of multiple priority groups will have a significant impact on families. Understanding how these characteristics intersect can help us understand what families need and who we need to learn from.



Child Aged 0-5



Families with a child aged 0-5 in Relative Poverty: Earning 60% of the median income

Families with a child aged 0-5 have been made a priority by Glasgow City Council's Child Poverty Programme. The aim is that by intervening early in a child's life, the overall impact that poverty has on them will be reduced and this will lead to better outcomes in later life.

36%



of families living in poverty have a child aged 0-5.
This is 4,784 families.

42%



of children living in poverty have a child aged 0-5.
This is 10,289 children.

Families with a child aged 0-5 in Deep Poverty: Earning 40% of the median income

46%

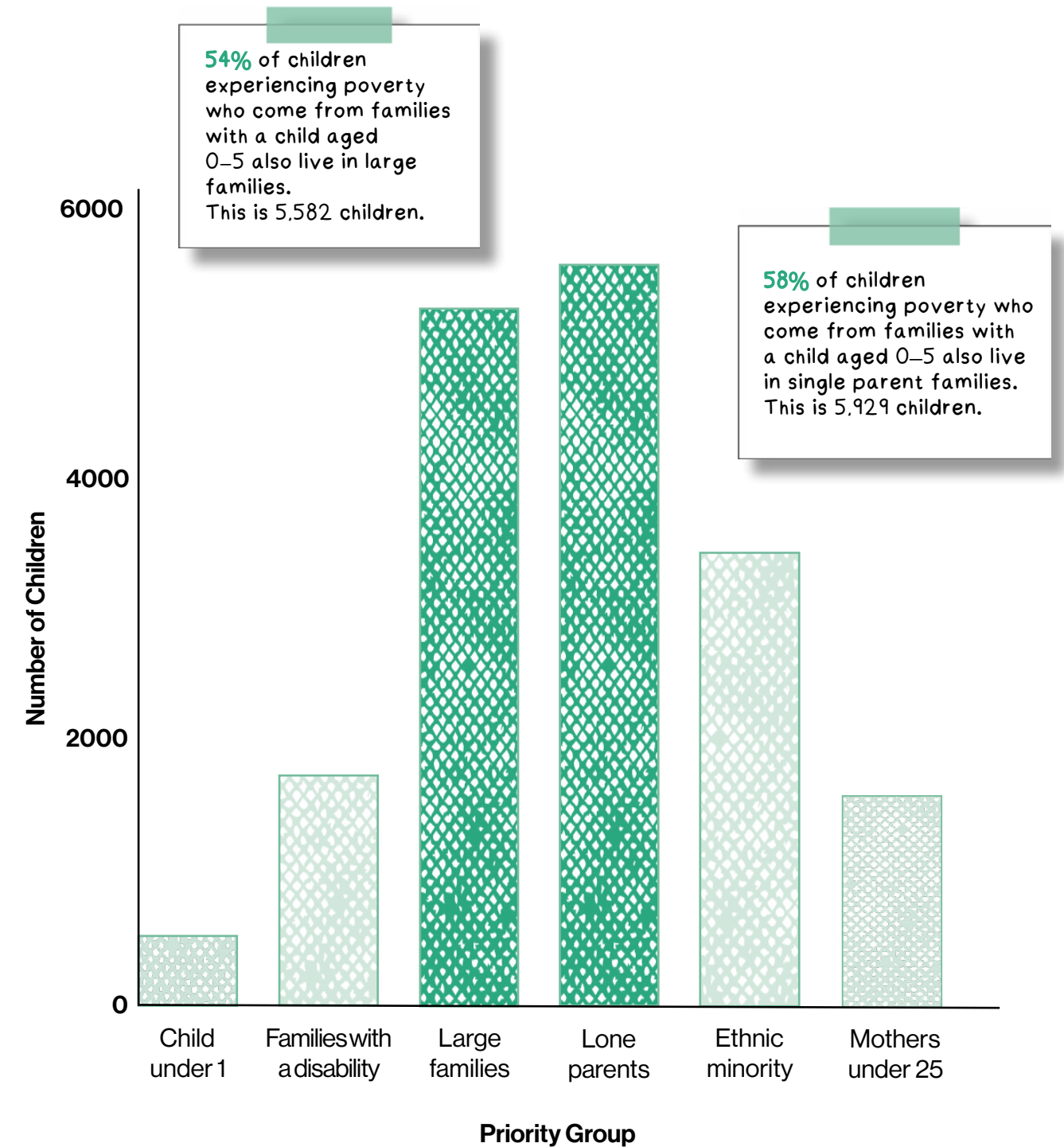


of families with a child aged 0-5 in poverty are experiencing deep poverty.
This is 4,576 children.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, there were...

- **97 more children** living in these families experiencing relative poverty than there are currently.
- **170 more children** living in these families experiencing deep poverty than there are currently.

Families With a Child Aged 0-5 Who Fall Under Other Priority Groups



Where Does the Data Come From?

Poverty Thresholds

Poverty thresholds are calculated based on the equivalised UK household median income, which is the definition used by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Scottish Government provides the poverty thresholds on only two household compositions.

There are currently 60 different household compositions identified in the Housing Benefit data. In order to ensure our measurements are as accurate as possible, the Financial Inclusion and Transformation Team calculated a complete set of poverty thresholds to match each individual housing composition.

Ethnicity Data

To understand ethnicity, we used data gathered from the SEEMIS database held within Education. This database is used by all local authorities across Scotland to maintain school pupil records.

This data provides us with information on Ethnicity for all children attending school in Glasgow. There is no unique identifier that can be used to join this with the Council Tax Reduction data, so a data match exercise was undertaken.

Capita One Revenues & Benefits

Capita One Revenues and Benefits is the database that holds all of Glasgow City Council's Council Tax Reduction (CTR) information. The data we received from this database was taken on the 10th of July 2024.

The Council Tax Reduction data forms the backbone of this piece of analysis. It contains information on the address of each household, who lives there and the income each household receives. In addition to this we also received new data in the form of the income breakdown for households in receipt of Universal Credit.

City and Ward Populations

The Ward and city populations come from the Scottish Government and are based on their statistics on the number of households with children in receipt of Child Benefit.

Caveats

As we only have Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction data, we don't have information on every household with children living in poverty. Households with children that are in receipt of Universal Credit and are not claiming Council Tax Reduction will not be included.

However, the data that we have provides information on a sufficient number of families that it can highlight specific problem areas and show that it will likely be an issue for those we don't know about.

One important point to note is that we do not have access to any household level data that includes the Scottish Child Payment, so we are unable to include this in any income calculations.

The data that we hold also doesn't include families with No Recourse To Public Funds. This group will be those with leave to remain conditions or who have been denied asylum. They will not currently have the right to claim benefits from the DWP or other public bodies. This presents another gap, however this is also excluded from the DWP's Children in Low Income Families publication.

To see the data in further detail, please visit our child poverty dashboard at:
<https://cciglasgow.org/child-poverty-dashboard/>



Reflection

Our report uses internal data recorded by the Council Tax Reduction system to better understand child poverty. Whilst we know that this data doesn't capture everyone, it gives us a far more detailed understanding than we can get from official statistics. This year, we've made it even more accurate by taking the average number of children in poverty over a 12-month period to see how it is trending. Our data shows that for families claiming council tax reduction, poverty has been on a small but steady upward trend.

By continuing to combine data with stories in this year's report, we are able to give a detailed overview of the number of children and families who are in poverty, but also gain a greater perspective on the challenges families in poverty face in the city. By focussing on key themes, we learned how complex people's individual circumstances can be.

The obstacles people face often overlap, as we emphasised in this year's key themes. We learned that developmental issues and disabilities often overlap with challenges around language and literacy. Finding support with these compounding issues can be difficult when you are only struggling with one of them—if you have to contend with several, it can be difficult to even identify what the challenge is.

By having these conversations with experts regarding the key themes it became clear that when people do access support, services can offer specialised help in one or two areas but are often having to find ways to support issues in which they are not specialists. People who access these services often require wide-ranging, holistic support which one community organisation alone cannot offer.

In the Scottish Government's Strategy for Public Service Reform, it's outlined that we need to collaborate and make the best of our collective resources to better tackle challenges like child poverty.

We're seeing this happen successfully in areas of the city, with disability services working with local employers to become more accessible. Through our conversations that shaped this report this was echoed by all of the participants, who agreed that using a more collaborative approach was the best way forward and each of their respective organisations shared some of their successes by adopting this way of working. Where positive action is being taken, we need to make sure we connect support services through overarching systems, so that people reach destinations that give them the opportunity to untangle complex challenges and live fuller, enriching lives.

The strategy also expresses the importance of empowering people, places and communities and allowing decisions to be made as close as possible to the where they will have an effect. As well as identifying the need for enabling overarching systems, we have also heard that we need to make room within these for a place-based approach. From our research which includes the Child Poverty dashboards, we know that each area has its own unique challenges. We have to work with local organisations and experts in communities to understand what's needed and work in collaboration to co-design potential interventions.

By including case studies for the first time in this year's report, we were able to highlight some of the work that has been undertaken. Using a design-led approach, we've learned about the intricacies of communities and some of the barriers we face to reducing child poverty. However, through collaborating we have also created opportunities and want to continue to adopt this approach and co-design solutions that will help citizens and communities thrive.

What's Next?

The Scottish Government has expressed the importance of public services in reducing child poverty in Scotland. In Glasgow, we believe this report is an important resource to show the progress that is being made and look for more opportunities to produce insights that will help us to find solutions.

We'll continue to adopt a collaborative approach and to support this we are working on an Innovation Framework that will provide a clear structure for the Child Poverty Programme to assess, prioritise and manage potential innovations based on their strategic alignment, feasibility, impact and resource requirements.

This framework will provide a consistent methodology to evaluate new ideas, ensuring that we prioritise opportunities that align with the needs of families in poverty.

By ensuring the right mix of expertise is involved at each stage—drawing on multi-skilled teams, lived experience, and cross-sector collaboration—the framework will support the programme in understanding and addressing the challenges needed to affect the systemic change required to better support all families in poverty, especially families in Booster Wards with children aged 0 to 5 years old.

The framework embeds continuous learning and evaluation throughout the innovation process, enabling us to capture insights, measure impact, and adapt our approach where required. These insights will help inform future decisions, scale what works, and influence broader policy and practice.

We will look to further develop the storytelling in the report to provide insight into the challenges people face as well as sharing the big picture data and how this is broken down into priority groups. As we start looking ahead to next year's report, we're looking to increase the number of stories featured in the report. One of the sections we think would benefit from fresh perspectives is the priority groups. We believe that through speaking to organisations and citizens with expertise will help us to find new ways to provide support and prevent more people from falling into poverty.

Another element of the storytelling in the report that we're keen to evolve is adding citizen feedback to the case studies. Citizens are at the heart of everything that we do are embedded in the project teams in each of this year's case studies and other pieces of work. As we work with them to co-design solutions in communities, we want to share their experiences and expertise within the report to add fresh perspectives and provide personal and strategic insights that will provide decision makers with the tools to make the most informed decisions to date to reduce child poverty in Glasgow.



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