

# Development of a Strategic Re-commissioning Plan for Children's Services

## Introduction

Fife Councils Monitoring & Evaluation Framework sets out the parameters for grant funded applications and key processes for ongoing evaluation. The strategic commissioning paper established in 2017 sets out the priorities for Education & Children's Services within the context of wider demographic information. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 Committee approval was given to progress with a review of grant and contract funded Third sector organisations and more specifically the development of a commissioning strategy for Fife. This decision was informed by an independent review and previous thematic reviews undertaken by Fife Council. Efficiency savings were agreed in the budget review 2018/19 for both Council and Third sector services. A £410,000 reduction was confirmed for the Third Sector, this has been postponed until April 2021. The commissioning work that will be undertaken is within the priorities outlined in the Children & Families Strategy 2020-23, Education and Children's Services Directorate Plan and wider Children's Services Plan.

## Scope – Phase 1

Whilst a final commissioning strategy will be developed to cover all aspect of Children services the scope of this work includes current commissioned services listed in appendix 1. The list is extensive and covers services ranging from family support; mental health and counselling services; domestic abuse services; support to children and young people affected by a disability etc. As part of a review process and potential re- commissioning it will be necessary over time not only to consider current providers but new providers. This is likely to lead to changes in the market place depending on assessment of need and current impact data.

This initial phase focuses on the priorities within the Children & Family Strategy with the aim of developing a coherent and coordinated model which enhances statutory services; delivering community and family facing services in the 7 localities in Fife.

An initial session took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January with Third sector providers in scope and a paper was presented, some of the detail is included in this paper. A further session was planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April however due to the covid-19 pandemic this was postponed, and further consideration has been given in this paper to the timetable of events. A survey has been sent out to all commissioned services and consideration is being given to the feedback to assist with planning associated with the 4 stages of the route map. A meeting of the Strategic Commissioning group will be held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 and this will focus on the implementation plan and key steps outline in this paper.

## Commissioning

In the medium-term strategic commissioning of Children's Services in Fife will be developed within the context of national guidance and policy connected to other local relevant commissioning approaches e.g. Health & Social Care Partnership. All Commissioning in Fife is bound by Fife Councils Monitoring & Evaluation Framework.

The objectives of this commissioning work will include;

- Identify the total resources available for services and relate this information to the needs within the C&F strategy
- Agree the desired outcomes set out within the strategy and link investment to these
- Ensure sound governance of resources is established
- Use a coherent approach to selecting and prioritising investment and disinvestment decisions linking these to budgetary and planning processes
- Create a clear reviewing and evaluation framework to assess outcomes are being achieved
- Reflect closely the needs and plans at a locality level and with a shift of focus towards additional need based on an early intervention model

The commissioning work will consider previous activity over the last year and include a wide range of strategic activities such as;

- Agreeing strategic outcomes and priorities
- Understanding and forecasting need
- Analysis of factors which influence supply and demand
- Appraisal of all options
- Adopting a long-term view on the supports and services which will deliver best outcomes
- Taking strategic actions on how needs will be best met in terms of preferred models, early intervention and intensive supports
- Agreeing a balance between earlier intervention and more intensive supports considering the wider offer from the partnership
- Developing financial frameworks and systems
- Developing positive relationships with providers who are involved in informing decisions about services
- Future proofing which is innovative, agile and responsive to changes in need

The commissioning cycle below will be applied;



This work during 2020 will focus initially on the analysis, planning and implementing stages of the cycle considering previous data and information collated from independent and thematic reviews referred to earlier. The timeframe for change and review is short due to budgetary decisions and has been affected by the pandemic. However, this is also an opportunity to refocus services as part of the transition to a recovery stage within the context of covid-19.

### Analysis Stage

This is a crucial aspect of the work in evaluating the existing performance of services and matching this to a comprehensive assessment of needs and outcomes. By the end of this stage we will have;

- a shared understanding of outcomes
- a comprehensive assessment of needs, preferences and intended outcomes
- mapped and reviewed service provision
- analysed the range of options to achieve the agreed outcomes for this group

- developed a sound analysis of resources needed to support future commissioning
- analyse the risks involved in implementing change or continuing with existing models of service

Some of the work in these stages has already been completed because of previous reviews, consultation and ongoing monitoring as part of the existing framework.

### Planning Stage

This is the second stage in commissioning which will be informed by the findings from the analysis undertaken in the first stage and will focus on how well we have developed strategic partnerships to work collaboratively with all partners and stakeholders. By the end of this stage we will have;

- strong strategic partnerships to drive strategic commissioning
- clear policies to guide strategic commissioning services
- developed written commissioning strategies for this area of work

### Implementing the Commissioning strategy (Do)

This involves putting in place effective delivery plans to meet the strategic objectives and includes effective commissioning and de- commissioning. This will include financial and workforce arrangements as well as service design and redesign (i.e. service specifications). By the end of this stage we will have;

- established effective leadership and management arrangements to oversee implementation the strategy
- the necessary workforce and planning arrangements to support the implementation of the plan
- commissioning work is translated into effective delivery plans which support and guide implementation
- clear policies and procedures to effectively govern financial arrangements
- Ongoing development of positive relationships with existing and potential providers to achieve the outcomes defined in the commissioning plan

### Review Stage

This is the final stage of any commissioning cycle to assess the impact of strategy implementation and make the necessary adjustments to keep strategic objectives on target. By the end of this stage we will have;

- evidence based approaches to monitoring the implementation of commissioning work and related financial activity
- systematically monitor and review services
- frequency and level of review is proportionate to our risk analysis
- review the impact of our commissioning work and make any necessary adjustments

It is recognised that already significant work has been undertaken within the commissioning cycle to date and one of the first tasks of the strategic group will be to critically analyse what we have already achieved.

### Governance

The Strategic Commissioning group is the group with strategic responsibility for this commissioning work which reports to the Children in Fife group which has leadership responsibility for delivering the Children's Services Plan. The strategic commissioning group has a remit to develop the commissioning work in conjunction with Third sector partners and to describe arrangements across the partnership. This group going forward will also take responsibility to develop a children services providers forum comprising representatives of the Third and independent sector and statutory organisations who provide children services in this area of work.

The strategic commissioning group currently comprises representatives as follows;

- Head of Education & Children's Services (CSWO)
- Elected member representation
- Head of Strategic Planning, Performance & Commissioning
- Service Manager/s – E&CS
- Education Manager/s – E&CS
- Senior Manager- Children's Services (Health)
- Team Manager- Social Work Contracts
- CEO – Fife Voluntary Action
- Third sector representative
- Policy Officer – Community Investment Team

Consideration in the medium/ longer term will be the potential involvement of other partners from Health and Adult Social Work to streamline support and take a whole family approach based on assessment of need and resources.

### Investment in Children's Services

The Children & Family Strategy 2020-23 summarises the importance in balancing the profile of care for our most vulnerable children, young people and families in Fife. Progress has been achieved through the belonging to Fife agenda which has seen investment in a range of resources to improve outcomes for children and young people. This has included a focus on prevention building capacity and resilience within families; strengthening family networks and kinship care, intensive resources for children and young people on the edge of care and greater capacity within Fife resources to avoid external placements.

Analysis of Fife's current service provision and data summarised in appendix 2 shows:

- evidence that Fife Council spends significantly more than the Scottish average on supporting Looked After Children

- evidence that there is currently insufficient support for keeping children safely at home with their families and within their community

Looking at evidence from other local authorities across Scotland, and elsewhere in the UK we can see a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence which strongly indicates the need for Fife to develop a community and family-facing 24/7 model of wrap around care for our most vulnerable children and young people

Consideration of levels of child poverty in Scotland confirms:

- Fife has relatively high levels of child poverty, across a range of measures, being consistently higher than Scotland and ranking around 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived of Scotland's 32 local authorities.
- Levels of child poverty in Scotland have been generally increasing in recent years and that a continued upwards trend was likely, without significant additional policy interventions, even before the impact of the current Covid-19 pandemic.

This clearly suggests that the levels of poverty faced by families with children were likely to have increased, even before the current Covid-19 pandemic. This would have placed further pressures on children's services.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to significantly increase the pressures on Fife families and, in turn, on the demand for and cost of our services for Fife's most vulnerable children and young people. On this basis it is concluded:

- Fife needs to develop a community and family-facing 24/7 model of wrap around care for our most vulnerable children and young people.
- A robust approach will be needed to monitor the development and implementation of this model, to accurately reflect the impact of the model on demand, outcomes and the financial costs of provision.
- Consideration of the learning during covid-19, engagement models and approaches with children/ young people, families and communities

### Implementation for the Commissioning work

In considering services to be commissioned it is important to recognise that current services vary in type, size and complexity. On this basis it is necessary to consider several factors such as;

- timing, cost and nature of requirements
- Geographic location
- Whether relevant expertise exists within the public body
- Potential for innovation
- Whether there is a market of capable service providers
- Feedback and views of service recipients
- Views of providers and staff

- Benefits and risks to people using the services
- Regulatory requirements to services and the workforce
- Outcome measure to be attached to services

The above will help inform options required for service delivery and the detail required in service design and Service Level Agreements.

**Work plan and timescales**

The stages below shared at the session on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 requires fuller consideration within the context of the cycles for commissioning to ensure all partners are clear on the activity over the next 6 months. The priorities within the C& F strategy outlined by Kathy Henwood (CSWO) on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January confirmed the need to re- shape services at the additional end of the continuum of need illustrated in table 2.

Table 1

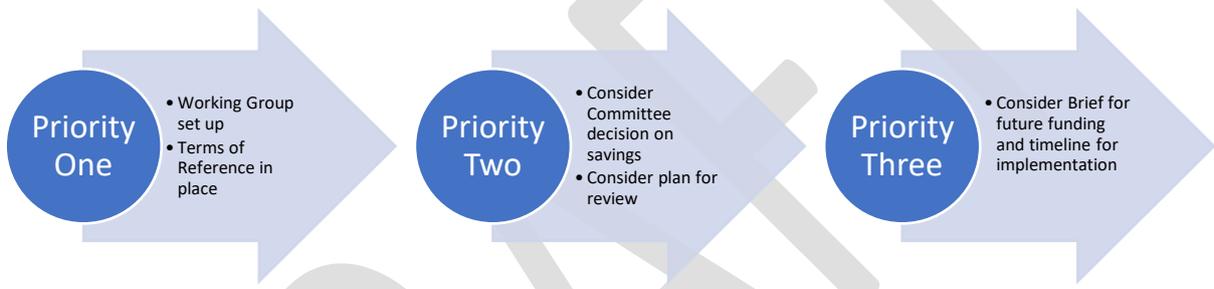


Table 2



## Implementation Plan and key stages

As already noted the timeframe is tight to reshape services leading to recommendations for approval in the next financial year, the table below outlines the key stages to be achieved.

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
<b>Analysis Stage</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGREEMENT OF OUTCOMES</li> </ul>	PROPOSALS AGREED BY SRATEGIC COMMISSIONING GROUP(SCG)FIRST MEETING 21/7/2020	JULY 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAPPING OF EXISTING SERVICE PROVISION</li> </ul>	COMPLETED MAPPING APPROVED BY SCG PRESENTATION TO WIDER PROVIDERS FORUM	AUGUST 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASSESSMENT OF NEED</li> </ul>	DATA ANALYSIS & NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPROVED BY SCG & PRESENTED TO THE PROVIDERS FORUM	AUGUST 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OPTION APPRAISAL</li> </ul>	IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS BY SCG & PRESENTED TO THE WIDER PROVIDERS FORUM	AUGUST 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RISK ASSESSMENT OF CHANGING MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY</li> </ul>	ANALYSIS OF RISKS	AUGUST2020
<b>Planning Stage</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMISSIONING STRATEGY COMPLETED</li> </ul>	COMPLETED COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK	AUGUST 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS IN PLACE</li> </ul>	OUTLINE BRIEFS DEVELOPED AND CONSULTED ON	AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OPTIONS FOR NEW SERVICES ASSESSED &amp; APPROVED</li> <li>• COMMISSIONING PLAN APPROVED BY COMMITTEE</li> <li>• NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOMES &amp; EXIT STRATEGIES IN PLACE</li> </ul>	<p>GRANT APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED</p> <p>APPROVAL BY E&amp;CS COMMITTEE</p> <p>APPROVAL BY E&amp;CS COMMITTEE</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020</p> <p>OCTOBER 2020</p> <p>OCTOBER 2020</p>
<p><b>Implementation Stage</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DETAILED CHANGE &amp; DELIVERY PLAN IN PLACE</li> </ul>	<p>APPROVED DELIVERY PLAN BY SCG AND CONSULATION WITH WIDER PROVIDERS FORUM</p>	<p>OCTOBER 2020</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP &amp; MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS TO OVERSEE IMPRMENTATION</li> </ul>	<p>MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH SCG AND REGULAR WIDER FORUM MEETINGS</p>	<p>OCTOBER 2020- APRIL 2021</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE OF FINANCIAL &amp; WORKFORCE ARRANGMENTS IN PLACE</li> </ul>	<p>HR &amp; FINANCIAL REPORTS TO SCG THROUGHOUT IMPLEMENTATION STAGE</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>

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Service Manager

Children & Families

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE****Grants to Voluntary Sector 2020-21**

Organisation	Project Description
Aberlour Childcare Trust	Provision of Residential Short Break and Outreach Service for children with Learning Disabilities and Autism.
Barnardo's - IP Capacity Assessment, Family support & Children's Rights Service	Family assessment and support services, Parenting Assessment and Children's Rights Service shaped around 'The Getting it Right for Every Child' Principles.
Birthlink	Provides assistance in the fulfilment of statutory duties towards adults affected by adoption.
Childline Scotland	Contribution to the telephone helpline, free confidential access to all children and young people.
Children's Parliament -subject to current review – funding to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 only	To facilitate two Children's Parliament groups in Fife exclusively for younger looked after children who will explore, through creative arts and focussed group work.
Clued-Up Project	Provides a comprehensive youth friendly drug information and support service to young people under 25 in the Kirkcaldy area.
Cottage Family Centre	Community based family support to children and families (3 yrs.), living in the Gallatown area of Kirkcaldy.
Crossroads (Fife Central)	Provides respite for carers to enable them to have a break from their caring role.
Drug and Alcohol Project Leven (DAPL)	Provides specialist counselling, support and information and awareness to people affected by their own substance use.
Early Years Scotland	Development Officer support to Playgroup committees to ensure financial sustainability, explore alternative management models and promote best management practice and procedures.
Families First	Supports families and provides activities for families through a range of supports.
Families Outside	Counselling Service for Children and families affected by imprisonment.
Family Mediation Tayside/Fife	Provides information, mediation counselling and other closely related service to separated and divorced parents and their children.
Fife Gingerbread	Provides accessible and non-judgemental support, advice and information to lone parent in Fife.

Organisation	Project Description
Fife Women's Aid	Provides refuge, follow-on and outreach support for children and young people aged 0-16 years that have experienced domestic abuse.
Fife Young Carers	Provides support service to young carers age 8 – 18 years.
Homestart (Dunfermline)	Provides support to vulnerable families. Families referred are experiencing difficulties and have at least one child under 5.
Homestart (East Fife)	Provides support to vulnerable families. Families referred are experiencing difficulties and have at least one child under 5.
Homestart (Glenrothes)	Provides support to vulnerable families. Families referred are experiencing difficulties and have at least one child under 5.
Homestart (Kirkcaldy)	Provides support to vulnerable families. Families referred are experiencing difficulties and have at least one child under 5.
Homestart (Levenmouth)	Provides support to vulnerable families. Families referred are experiencing difficulties and have at least one child under 5.
Homestart (Cowdenbeath)	Provides support to vulnerable families. Families referred are experiencing difficulties and have at least one child under 5.
Relationship Scotland – Couple Counselling	Provides a confidential counselling service for people in Fife who are experiencing difficulties in their marriage or intimate personal relationship.
RNIB	Provision of specialist resources, information, advice and support for families, childcare settings and staff to enable child centred support specific to children’s individual needs.
SCMA	Community Childminding - Childminding services for children and families at times of crisis and need, support is tailored to family’s needs and priority is given to children 0-3 yrs. of age. Inc. Development Officer Support.
Scottish Child Law Centre	Promotes the rights and welfare of children and young people through the provision of free specialist legal advice, information and training.
Seal Association	Support aimed at children and young people experiencing difficulties at home, school or in the community.
Snowdrop	Provides a crèche for 15 children giving respite for parents/carers in Lower Methil.
Who Cares	Provide independent safeguard for young people who are looked after and accommodated within Fife’s residential units.

\*\*Includem – Provision of intensive family support to children and young people on the edge of care (Funding is by way of a contract but will be considered within the review process)

## Appendix 2

### Spend on looked after children in Fife

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The data below is from the most recent update of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF).

How much does my council spend on providing residential accommodation for 'looked after children' (£ per child per week)?



How much does my council spend on providing fostering/family placements for 'looked after children' (£ per child per week)?



Although the LGBF indicators do not provide a robust basis for assessing the full system costs of children and family's services, they do capture some of the key features of current spend by Fife Council. In summary:

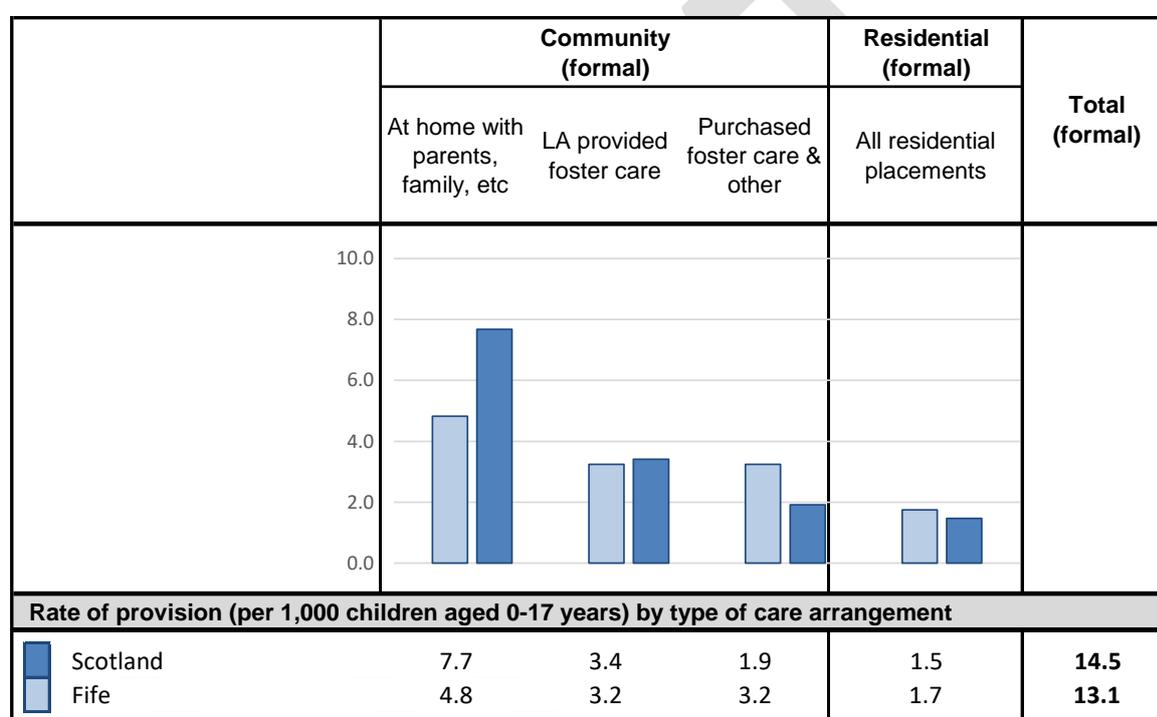
- Spend on residential placements is not out of line with the Scottish average.

- Spend on foster care placements is significantly higher than in the rest of Scotland. These key features are also evident in more detailed analysis undertaken by the service, using a range of available benchmarking data.

Therefore, Fife Council is spending significantly more than other councils in Scotland on supporting our vulnerable children, by an amount that totals several million pounds.

Comparison of profile of care in Fife with the Scottish average

The figure below shows the profile of care for looked after children in Fife as at the CLAS return for 2017-18 (i.e. the Children Looked After Statistics – the annual, national publication on LAC children across Scotland’s 32 local authorities). Benchmarking and service data suggest that the key features of the profile shown below also reflect the current position.



The following key features may be noted:

- Overall, a slightly smaller proportion of children in Fife are formally looked after than is the case in the rest of Scotland.
- Fife’s use of residential placements is broadly in line with the rest of Scotland. As such it is not surprising that Fife spends a similar amount on such placements, as measured by the LGBF for residential settings.
- However, Fife makes significantly greater use of purchased foster care to support looked after children than is the case for the rest of Scotland.
- By contrast, Fife is supporting significantly fewer looked after children at home with their family.

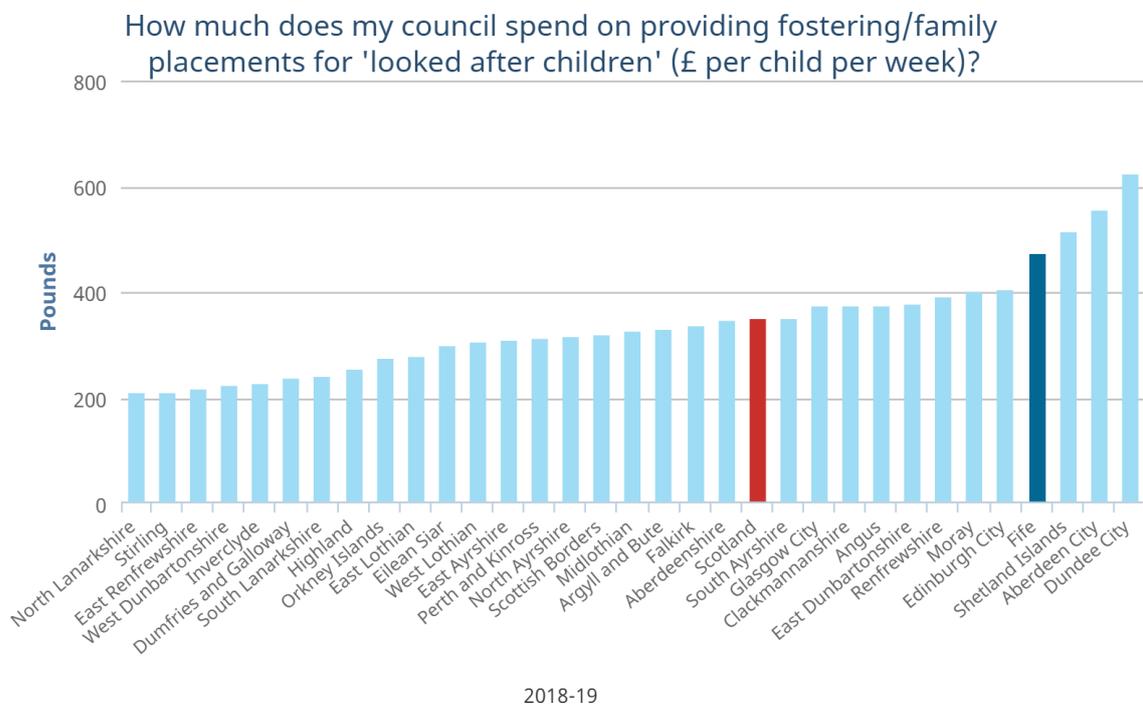
The significant skew in Fife towards use of purchased foster care to support looked after children in a community setting, would explain the significantly greater costs apparent in the LGBF indicator for costs in community settings.

The impact of moving to a model of community and family facing 24/7 wrap around care at the point of need

The figure below is taken from the most recent LGBF data. It shows the spend on community placements for looked after children across all of Scotland's 32 local authorities.

As can be seen, Fife is amongst the highest cost local authorities in Scotland. One of the key distinguishing features of councils at the opposite (i.e. left-hand end of the scale) is their greater use of community-based, family-centred, wrap-around care. This enables such councils to respond to emerging crises within families at the point of need, enabling many looked after children to be maintained in their family home, or in a kinship placement within their local community.

This is a distinguishing feature of the service structure within North Lanarkshire.



### Measures of child poverty in Fife relative to Scotland

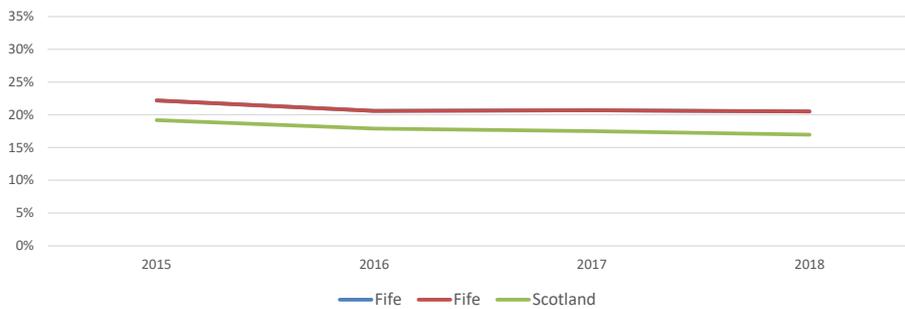
There are many measures of child poverty. Two widely cited measures are shown below. The first is a plot over time of the rate of registration for free school meals for primary pupils. The second is historic data from HMRC on the proportion of children living in low income households.

Both measures share features common to many of the most widely used measures of individual or household poverty affecting families with children.

- First, Fife has seen levels of child poverty that have been consistently above the national average over recent years.
- Second, Fife ranks 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived of Scotland’s 32 local authorities for these sorts of measures (i.e. somewhere around the boundary between quartile 1 and quartile 2 for levels of child poverty).

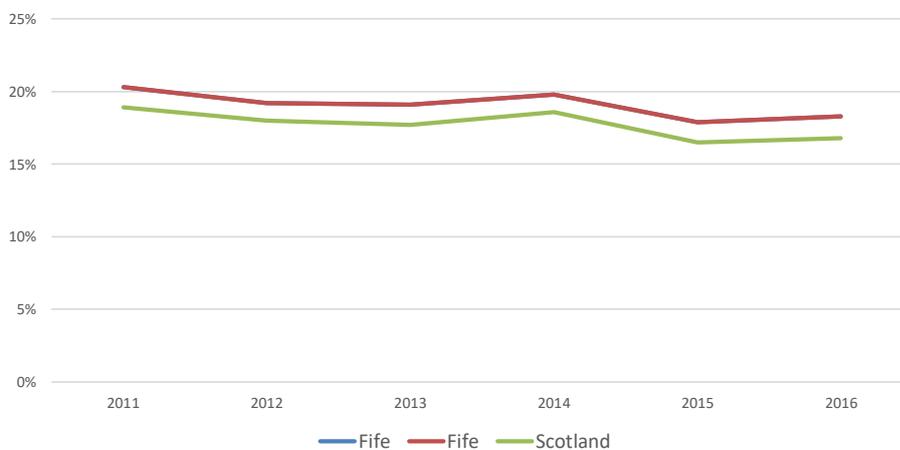
**Social security**

**% P4-P7 pupils registered for free school meals**



Source: Healthy Living Survey  
 Scotland figures include grant maintained schools.  
 Figures for 2018 exclude Jordanhill.  
[Click here for more info](#)

**% Children in low-income families**



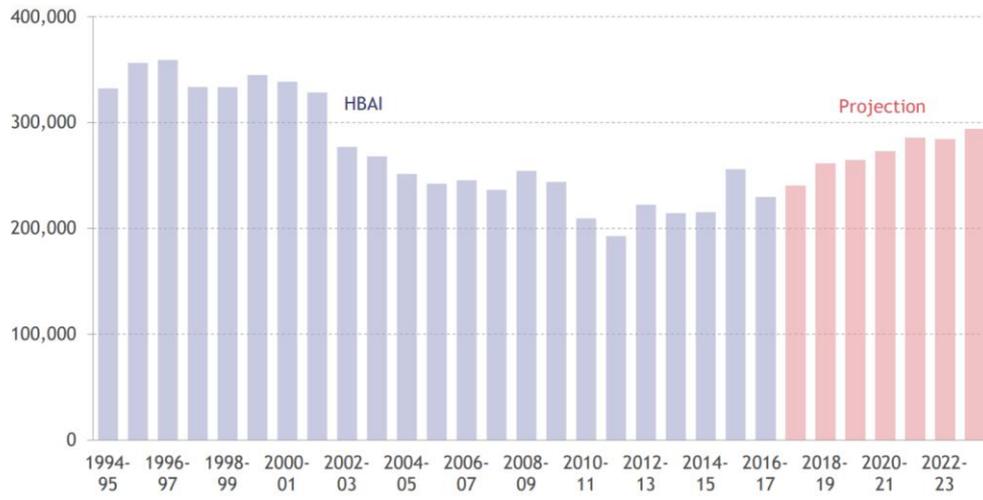
**Trends in levels of child poverty across Scotland**

A range of evidence in the past year or so has suggested that levels of inequality, including child poverty, have been increasing over the past 5-10 years, during the period in which a policy of austerity has been pursued by the UK government (see e.g. “The Marmot review 10 years on” report, February 2020).

Analysis of the Scottish context also indicates that child poverty has been generally rising over recent years and that, without a significant change in policy direction, it would continue to increase (see “Wrong Direction – can Scotland hit its child poverty targets?” by the Resolution Foundation, March 2019 – evidence below).

**Figure 2: Without significant policy changes, the number of Scottish children in poverty is likely to head in the wrong direction**

Number of children living in relative poverty (after housing costs), Scotland



Source: RF analysis of DWP, *Households Below Average Income (HBAI)*, and RF projection

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