



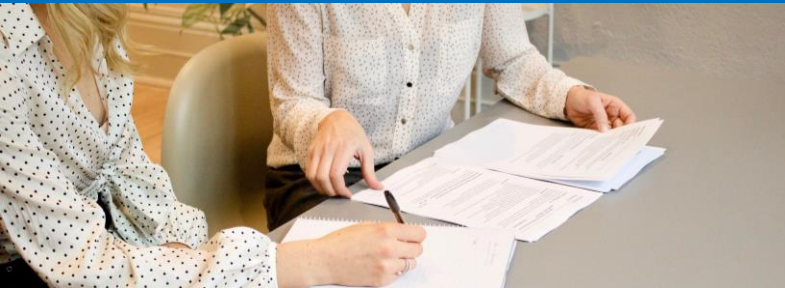
## A Dignified Approach to Tackling Food Poverty in Orkney

### Summary and Action Plan

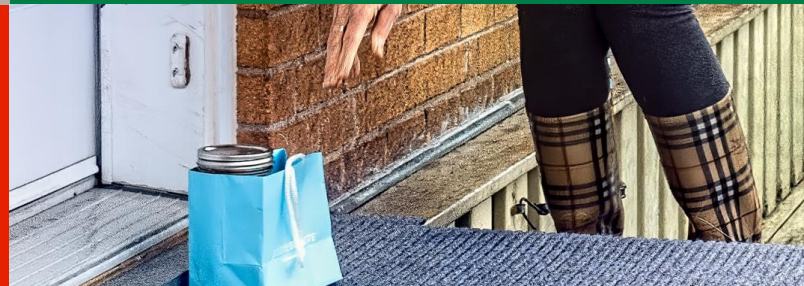
**Increase access to advice and support for financial and wider wellbeing needs**



**Develop a cash-first approach to support those experiencing food insecurity**



**Support and extend the third sector's delivery of food, financial & in-kind support**



**Reduce the costs of living for people on low incomes in Orkney**



**Reduce in work poverty by defining and promoting an Orkney Living Wage**



**Contribute to changing public discussion, and the local and national policy response**



## What is the purpose of this document?

This 'Summary and Action Plan' is intended to accompany the 'Recommendations for Action' report, authored by Nick Hopkins and published in May 2022. This document provides a summary of the actions in that report, and identifies the organisations responsible for taking them forward, any additional resource which is required and a provisional timeline for their completion.

## Who developed the recommendations?

The recommendations were developed by the Orkney Food Dignity Working Group. This was a short-life working group which reported into the Orkney Partnership's Community Wellbeing Delivery Group. The Orkney Food Dignity Working Group has been replaced by the Poverty Action Group, which has responsibility for taking these recommendations forward.

## How were these recommendations developed?

These recommendations were developed in three phases. The first phase involved the development of a 'briefing document', bringing together the insights gained from a literature review, interviews with local stakeholders, and an analysis of local and national data. The second phase focused on an initial community consultation, with an online event to invite members of the public to comment on the proposed structure and focus of the report. As part of this phase, people in Orkney were also invited to submit their experience of food insecurity using an anonymous form. In the third and final phase, we held a series of four workshops with the Orkney Food Dignity Working Group to develop the recommendations. Five people with lived experience attended as part of this group and provided invaluable insights throughout.

## Why isn't there a recommendation about X?

Our recommendations are evidence-based, led by people with lived experience and were developed with input from a broad coalition of statutory and third sector organisations. Nevertheless, the recommendations are intended as a starting point, to be added to and adapted as new insights and ideas come to light. The project was delivered within a short time-frame and as a result there are significant issues, such as the lack of childcare facilities or sick pay practices, which we didn't have time to address. If you have an idea that you'd like to put forward, please contact the Poverty Action Group by emailing [enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk).

*This document has been commissioned by Voluntary Action Orkney as part of the 'Orkney Food Dignity Project'. It has been developed by Harry Johnson, of Community Consulting.*

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# Increase access to advice and support for financial and wider wellbeing needs

Getting people to the right support early can prevent them from falling into persistent poverty. Services should be easily accessible and operate within 'every door a right door' pathways of support, which consider and link to wider factors such as employment, health and social capital, which can all increase the risk of somebody experiencing poverty.

## **Build the capacity of frontline staff to identify and refer people at risk of poverty**

We will support the expansion and roll-out of NHS Orkney's 'Money Counts' training programme, which aims to raise awareness of poverty and local support.

**Lead:** NHS Orkney, CAB, SSS

**Timeline:** Full rollout by April 2023

**Resource:** No additional resource required

## **Provide additional resource for one-to-one navigation support to those at risk of poverty**

We will seek funding for a navigation and advocacy role focused specifically on individuals who have accessed Orkney Foodbank, THAW, OCT, CAB and SWF. In addition, we will seek enhanced investment for CAB to create a post focused on the provision of more intensive and long-term capacity building support, with outreach at Orkney Foodbank.

**Lead:** Orkney Foodbank, CAB, THAW, OCT

**Timeline:** Recruitment begins April 2023

**Resource:** ≈ £60,000 PA for two full-time posts

## **Enhance routes for self-referral into support**

We will develop an online portal through which people can identify and contact the organisations who can provide help, and which provides access to information about benefit entitlements and other money issues. We will also develop a phone portal which mirrors this function and provides an initial diagnostic and information gathering conversation, with staffing shared across existing key organisations and agencies. Finally, we will support key advice organisations to conduct a review of their presence on the ferry-linked isles and to consider ways of increasing it, whether through funding or increased partnership working.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Review of ferry-linked isles complete by September 2022. Funding for portals secured by April 2023 and operational by December 2023

**Resource:** ≈ £20,000 for development of online portal

## **Maximise information sharing between organisations**

Based on a review of local arrangements and national best practice, and with the input of data protection specialists, we will develop and implement a set of information sharing and consent protocols for organisations working with people in poverty.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Protocols developed by September 2023

**Resource:** No additional resource required

# Develop a cash-first approach to support those experiencing food insecurity

We believe that cash-first approaches for those experiencing poverty provide the most dignified forms of support, and that the Scottish Welfare Fund should be the first port of call for people in this situation. Orkney is currently a significant distance from taking this approach. In contrast to the 17-18 households being helped per quarter by OIC through crisis grants in 2020/2021, Orkney Foodbank was helping around 145 per quarter. Orkney has the **second lowest level of applications** for Crisis Grants and the **sixth lowest acceptance rate** of any local authority in Scotland.

## Review operation of Scottish Welfare Fund

We will support Orkney Islands Council to complete a review of the operation of the SWF locally, to understand the reasons for the low uptake and acceptance rate for Crisis Grants. This review should consider local policy decisions, operational decisions in terms of staffing, the practice of those making decisions, and the experience of claimants. Council officers with responsibility for the SWF will be invited to join the Poverty Action Group.

**Lead:** OIC

**Timeline:** Review concluded by December 2022

**Resource:** No additional resource required

## Pilot a cash-first partnership approach

We will identify a small number of key foodbank referral agencies and support them to make their primary referral route the SWF. We will analyse changes in demand for crisis grants, the demands placed on staff administering the grant and the impact on individuals in poverty. We will use this understanding to guide a wider roll-out if required, subject to available resource. We will make an application to the Scottish Government's Cash First Partnership Pilot to support this work.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Pilot live by April 2023

**Resource:** ~ £75,000 (expected value of grant)

## Implement appropriate changes to Community Care Grants in Orkney

We will support Orkney Islands Council to explore the purchase of second hand goods through Community Care Grants. In addition, we will identify any potential need for a repair service for household appliances and furniture, to reduce the numbers needing this support.

**Lead:** OIC to conduct review, VAO to explore need for repair service

**Timeline:** Review concluded by December 2022

**Resource:** No additional resource required



# Support and extend the third sector's delivery of food, financial & in-kind support

Whilst we are committed to a transition to a cash-first approach we recognise that there are many factors outside of our control locally, particularly in relation to social security and energy costs, which mean there will continue to be a need for practical forms of support for those experiencing destitution. It is therefore essential that we support and extend the work of the third sector in providing food, emergency food aid, financial aid, and in-kind support.

## Ensure the provision of food aid is as dignified as possible

Orkney Foodbank supports its clients with dignity and when communicating our commitments we will ensure we avoid suggesting that support provided by the foodbank is undignified. We will support Orkney Foodbank as it continues to explore options for the provision of fresh food. In addition, we will explore options for increasing the availability of community fridges and pantries, making surplus food available free or at low cost.

**Lead:** Orkney Foodbank, Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Solution to fresh food in parcels identified by December 2022

**Resource:** Ad-hoc funding for community fridges

## Maximise the impact of third sector cash-based or dignified in-kind support on reducing the challenges facing people in poverty

A number of third sector organisations provide a range of support to those experiencing poverty, from grants and financial assistance, to cooking equipment and clothes. We will support organisations who provide these services to disseminate information on their work to other organisations, so that they can reach those most in need. We will also enable organisations to coordinate their donation campaigns to maximise the resources available. As our work continues and develops we will gather intelligence on the practical needs of those experiencing poverty locally and share these insights with those organisation who may be able to respond. In addition, we will support these organisations to embed referrals to wider advice and support. Finally, we will encourage continued recognition by the Community Planning Partnership of the role of the Third sector, backed by funding where necessary to ensure sustainability.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Resource:** No additional resource required

## Develop a 'Plus Food' initiative, integrating the provision of food into other activities and initiatives

We will seek funding to support a 'plus food' initiative. This will highlight to organisations providing social, cultural, leisure, health, education or training activities their potential role in tackling food insecurity, and support them to incorporate food provision at no or low cost. This fund will also support holiday hunger initiatives aimed at children and young people, and support the development of informal cooking / social clubs where 'members' pool resources to buy in bulk and take turns to cook.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Roll-out by September 2023

**Resource:** ~ £15,000 initial fund



# Reduce the costs of living for people on low incomes in Orkney

The existence of a 'poverty premium' means those on low incomes often pay more for goods and services, for example, by being unable to buy in bulk and suppliers engaging in pricing for risk. In addition, people in Orkney face an 'Orkney premium', with higher costs for transport, energy and, particularly on the ferry-linked isles, food. We believe it is therefore important to support people to maximise budgets and bring down costs of living wherever possible, particularly in relation to cheaper, higher quality food.

## Maximise the impact of local growing on the availability of fresh, affordable, high-quality food

We will support partners who are developing the Orkney Food Growing Strategy, highlighting the potential links to tackling food insecurity. As part of this engagement we will encourage the creation of a fund to support further growing projects.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Involved by September 2022

**Resource:** No additional resource required (though may be required for growing fund)

## Increase access to affordable credit

A key aspect of the poverty premium is the higher cost people in poverty face when accessing credit. Orkney is currently served by Hi-Scot Credit Union which offers affordable credit and savings options. Increasing access should be incorporated in poverty strategies.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Resource:** No additional resource required

## Support people in poverty to cook in a way which maximise the value they get from limited budgets

We will seek increased investment in cookery classes, delivered through existing and new providers, and as part of broader community learning interventions. As part of this offer, we will explore the utility of online resources. We will also explore how these skills can be embedded as part of longer-term support interventions.

**Lead:** NHS Orkney Public Health, OIC Learning and Development, Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Roll-out of cookery classes by September 2023

**Resource:** ≈ £5,000 initial investment

## Mitigate the impact of recent and projected rises in the cost of energy

Increases in energy prices will reduce the amount of money low income households have for food. We will call on the Community Planning Partnership to commit to having a strategy in place before the next rise in energy prices. This approach should include a clear strategic commitment from social landlords – investing in insulation and efficient heating systems, ensuring that new builds conform to the highest insulation standards, and exploring options for individual and community microgeneration. It should also explore how THAW can expand its work to engage with those focused on renewable production.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Ensure strategy in place by September 2022

**Resource:** No additional resource required





# Reduce in work poverty by defining and promoting an Orkney Living Wage

## Define an Orkney Living Wage

The headline figure for the Living Wage is a key campaigning and practical tool for organisations tackling poverty. Calculating such a figure for Orkney is therefore an immediate priority. Doing so will require a robust analysis of the additional costs of living on Orkney Mainland, and on the ferry-linked isles. If this figure differs significantly, it may be necessary to consider a separate figure for the two geographical areas. We will commission a research team to identify these figures. Partners are clear that the Living Wage interacts with a number of other aspects of people's experience of employment and cannot be a complete solution to poverty. These include the cost and availability of childcare, work related transport costs, and the often insecure nature of work in Orkney.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Research report complete by December 2023

**Resource:** ≈ £20,000

Employment is often seen as key to lifting people out of poverty, but current wage levels mean many people who are working still experience poverty. Nationally, work continues to progress to ensure the 'National Living Wage' is sufficient to meet basic needs. The higher costs of living in Orkney mean that the 'true' Living Wage is likely to be much higher locally.

## Consider promotion of a Orkney Living Wage Campaign

Whilst local partner do not have the power to enforce any wage level, they can promote the concept of a Orkney Living Wage and support employers with its implementation. This could include the use of a local accreditation scheme.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group

**Timeline:** Dependent on completion of research project

**Resource:** Dependent on outcome of research project

# Contribute to changing public discussion, and the local and national policy response

Negative perceptions of people in poverty, or perceptions that poverty is not a significant issue in Orkney, creates barriers to tackling the issue. We believe it essential to tackle the shame and stigma surrounding food poverty. One way this can be achieved is by involving and amplifying the voices of those with lived experiences, and ensuring that there is a public and meaningful response from all partners to this work.

## Secure a clear commitment from local organisations to deliver the recommendations in this report

The recommendations in this report require significant investment in terms of time and resource, and there should be a clear and public commitment from partners in response. We will present the recommendations at a partner forums, and support organisations to embed a commitment to tackling poverty in their own strategies and work.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group  
**Timeline:** Commitments by September 2022  
**Resource:** No additional resource required

## Increase public understanding of poverty in Orkney

We believe it essential to continue raising awareness and understanding of food poverty in Orkney and so will establish a public engagement initiative. This will include the development of a website which will host this report, as well as stories of those with lived experience in Orkney and providing resources for people to use in discussions on the issue. We will also seek to create a network of professionals and members of the public who can champion awareness of, and action in response to food poverty. Finally, we will coordinate a campaign for print and broadcast media.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group  
**Timeline:** Website launched by December 2022  
**Resource:** ≈ £2,000 for website

## Influence wider policy debates on issues related to food poverty

We believe that it is essential that there is a strong voice for Orkney, which draws attention to how our unique geography and communities interact with issues surrounding food poverty. This will be an important role for the Poverty Action Group moving forward.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group  
**Timeline:** Key messages developed April 2023  
**Resource:** No additional resource required

## Involve more local people practically in tackling these issues

In order to meaningful combat food poverty in Orkney, we need people from across our communities to take action. On our website we will highlight practical ways in which the general public can help people experiencing food poverty, highlighting appeals, volunteering and campaigning opportunities.

**Lead:** Poverty Action Group  
**Timeline:** Actions live by December 2022  
**Resource:** No additional resource required





# Poverty Action Group

At the Orkney Partnership's Community Wellbeing Delivery Group in May 2022, it was agreed that the Orkney Food Dignity Working Group would be replaced by a Poverty Action Group, bringing together work on child, fuel and food poverty.

Where possible, individual organisations have been listed against actions in this plan. Where a gap in provision or a lack of resource has prevented this, these actions have been assigned to the Poverty Action Group. These include:

- Developing the online and telephone portal
- Developing information sharing protocols
- Developing and implementing a cash-first support pilot
- Coordinating and enabling third sector cash-based and in-kind support
- Developing and implementing a 'plus-food' initiative
- Contributing to the Orkney Food Growing Strategy
- Commissioning research to define an Orkney Living Wage
- Securing commitments from partners
- Developing and implementing a public awareness campaign

## Poverty Action Project Coordinator

With consideration to the time required to take forward these actions, it is proposed that funding is sought for a 'Poverty Action Project Coordinator'.

The Project Coordinator would be responsible for leading and coordinating these actions, as well as supporting other organisations to implement assigned actions and to identify changes in their strategies and operations which would support the aims of this work.

The Project Coordinator would also have responsibility for the implementation of actions in the child and fuel poverty strategies.

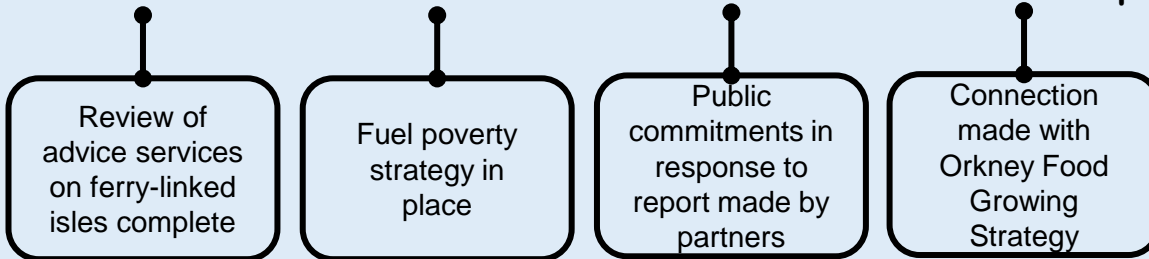
## Additional resource

In order to take forward many of the recommendations, it will be necessary to secure additional resource. This has been summarised in the table below, with the inclusion of a Poverty Action Project Coordinator, over a three year period. The time taken to secure this funding has been factored into the timeline overleaf, with a provisional start date of April 2023 for any grant funding.

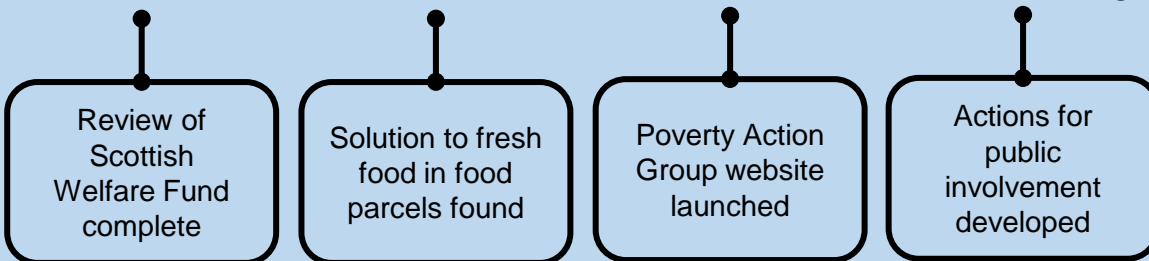
Item	Estimated cost	Reoccurs	Sub-total
Poverty Action Project Coordinator	£ 40,000.00	Every year for three years	£ 120,000.00
Community Navigator Role	£ 30,000.00	Every year for three years	£ 90,000.00
Orkney Citizens Advice Navigator role	£ 30,000.00	Every year for three years	£ 90,000.00
Cooking classes	£ 5,000.00	Every year for three years	£ 15,000.00
Website development and hosting	£ 2,000.00	Once	£ 2,000.00
Online and phone portal development	£ 20,000.00	Once	£ 20,000.00
Plus-food initiative initial funding	£ 15,000.00	Once	£ 15,000.00
Living wage research report	£ 20,000.00	Once	£ 20,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			£ 371,000.00

# Timeline

September 2022

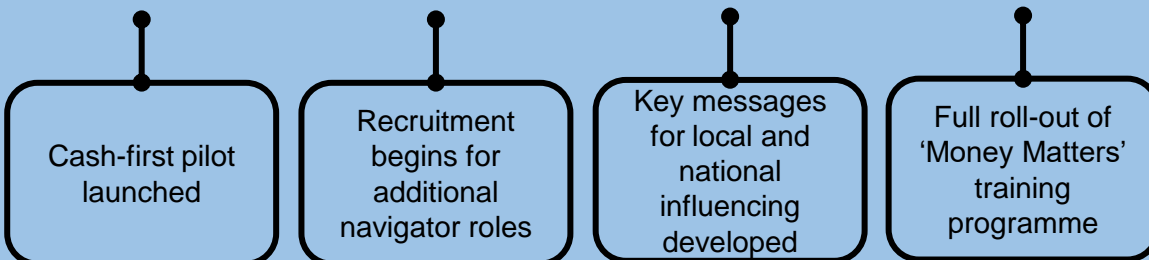


December 2022



## POTENTIAL GRANT FUNDING BEGINS

April 2023



September 2023



December 2023

