

## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



This guide offers more detailed information and advice for those who may be interested in adopting or adapting the initiative in their local area.

This document comprises the following sections (click hyperlink to skip to that section)

- [Initial Idea](#)
- [Early Development of the Project](#)
- [Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users](#)
- [Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty](#)
- [Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working](#)
- [Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements](#)
- [Funding](#)
- [Staffing and Resources](#)
- [Monitoring and Evaluation](#)
- [Reach and Impact](#)
- [Learning from Experience](#)

<b>Title</b>	Maximising Income for Families
<b>Organisation</b>	Braes High School, Falkirk Council
<b>Category</b>	Promising Practice
<b>Poverty Impact</b>	Reduction
<b>Introduction to the Project</b>	
<p>The Braes High School (Falkirk) Maximising Income for Families project works in partnership with the Community Advice Service (Falkirk Council), Senior Benefits Advisor and a dedicated IMO. The project aims to provide financial advice to the families of pupils, involving advising parents on which unclaimed benefits they may be entitled to. This is particularly aimed at the families of students who are a part of the schools Onwards and Upwards scheme. Those wishing to participate can either self-refer or have a member of staff refer them. The project has nourished a positive relationship between home and school for families.</p>	

# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



## Initial Idea

<b>Who had the initial idea?</b>
Emma Taylor
<b>How did the idea for the project come about?</b>
This project was an extension to much of the work the school were already doing for their Cost of the School Day programme. Furthermore, Emma had attended a Fairer Falkirk meeting regarding supporting children and young people which inspired her to start this project.
<b>Did you draw on any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice you had seen elsewhere to inform your plans?</b> <i>If so, please add details to the box below.</i>
This project was an extension to much of the work the school were already doing for their Cost of the School Day programme.
<b>Who was involved in developing the initial idea of the project?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emma Taylor (drama teacher/ PEF co-ordinator)</li><li>• Linda Cranston (resource manager)</li><li>• Anna Dick (welfare and benefits advisor)</li><li>• Julie Wilkinson (deputy headteacher)</li></ul>
<b>Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?</b>
This project was inspired by past conversations with parents and young people regarding the issues they had been facing.
<b>What funding was used, if any, to support the development of the initial idea of the project?</b>
Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



<b>What in-kind resources were needed when developing the initial idea of the project?</b>	
Facilities	Braes High School
Equipment	Computers, WIFI, telephones
Local Knowledge	Income Maximisation Officers (IMOs), Community Advice Service
Food and Drink	N/A
<b>What, if any, barriers did you have to overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?</b>	
The stigma which surrounds poverty and benefits may have acted as a barrier to some extent, though this was massively evaded by the culture already created by the school.	
<b>What, if anything, was helpful when developing the initial idea of the project?</b>	
Positive relationships had already been built between the school and the parents of children in attendance, meaning families were less likely to feel judgement in utilising the service	
<b>What was the timeline between the initial idea and the start of the project?</b>	
Approximately 5 months.	
<b>Who made the decision to introduce the project?</b>	
Group decision.	

[Return to Introduction](#)



# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



## Early Development of the Project

<b>Did you run a pilot project or carry out a feasibility study?</b>	
Yes.	
<b>What did you do? Please describe the pilot project or feasibility study.</b>	
6-month trial of funding advice workers for 2 hours per week.	
<b>Who was involved in the work of the pilot project?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emma Taylor (drama teacher/ PEF co-ordinator)</li> <li>• Linda Cranston (resource manager)</li> <li>• Anna Dick (welfare and benefits advisor)</li> <li>• Julie Wilkinson (deputy headteacher)</li> </ul>	
<b>How, if at all, were those with lived experience of poverty involved in the pilot of the project or feasibility study?</b>	
This project was inspired by past conversations with parents and young people regarding the issues they had been facing.	
<b>What funding was used, if any, for the pilot of the project or feasibility study?</b>	
Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).	
<b>What in-kind resources were used for the pilot of the project or feasibility study?</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	Braes High School
<b>Equipment</b>	Computers, WIFI, telephones
<b>Local Knowledge</b>	Income Maximisation Officers (IMOs), Community Advice Service
<b>Food and Drink</b>	N.A.



## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



**Was the pilot project or feasibility study evaluated? *If yes, please provide details***

Yes, this project is evaluated yearly as part of the PEF update. This project is also evaluated yearly by the Community Advice Service.

**What evidence, if any, from the pilot project was used to confirm that it was working?**

The pilot project saw an excellent response rate and financial gain.

**Who made the decision to continue with the project beyond the pilot or feasibility study?**

Group decision.

**How did the pilot or feasibility study inform the final design of the project?**

The final design has been remained much the same as the design of the pilot, though the advertising of the project has been improved.

[Return to Introduction](#)

## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



### Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

**Is there a referral process? If yes, how does the referral process work (self-referral, referred by other agencies, identified from an existing database)**

Parents can either self-refer or have a member of staff refer them.

**How are potential clients made aware of the project?**

Via e-mail, group call, school newsletters and social media.

**How do you keep in touch with service users? Do your service users have a preferred method of contact?**

Via phone and e-mail.

[Return to Introduction](#)

## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



### Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in delivering the project? *If so, please describe below.*

No

Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in managing the project or project governance? *If so, please describe below.*

No

Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in any other aspect of the project? *If so, please describe below.*

This project was inspired by past conversations with parents and young people regarding the issues they had been facing.

[Return to Introduction](#)

## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



### Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

<b>Who is responsible for managing the project?</b>
Emma Taylor
<b>Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project? <i>If not please describe the manager's wider roles and responsibilities.</i></b>
Emma is also a drama teacher.
<b>Is there a Project Steering Group? <i>If yes, who is involved in this and how does it work.</i></b>
The Onwards and Upwards group and the Cost of School Day Staff Working Group look at how the attainment gap can be closed at Braes High School.

[Return to Introduction](#)



## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



### Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

**Is the project part of a wider anti-poverty strategy? *If so, please give details.***

Yes, this project is part of the school's commitment to close the attainment gap.

**Is the project part of any other strategy? *If so, please give details.***

This project reflects the wider strategy in Scotland to minimise the impact of poverty on education and to close the attainment gap.

**Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment. *If so, please give details.***

Yes, because as a school BHS are responsible for the wellbeing of their pupils.

[Return to Introduction](#)

# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



## Funding

<b>Who funds the project? <i>Please give details.</i></b>
The school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). PEF is used to pay advice workers.
<b>How much does the project cost?</b>
£2,068.56 for the third year.
<b>Is future funding based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered?</b>
No

[Return to Introduction](#)



# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



## Staffing and Resources

<b>Which partners are involved in delivering the project (local authorities, organisations, community groups, etc.)?</b>	
Perth and Kinross Council.	
<b>Which paid staff are involved in delivering the project?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice workers (Falkirk Council)</li> <li>• Income Maximisation Officer (IMO)</li> <li>• Braes High School staff.</li> </ul>	
<b>Are volunteers involved in delivering the project? <i>Please describe their role and their contribution.</i></b>	
Not currently	
<b>What in-kind resources do you need to deliver your project?</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	Yes
<b>Equipment</b>	Computers, WIFI, telephones
<b>Local Knowledge</b>	Income Maximisation Officers (IMOs), Community Advice Service
<b>Food and Drink</b>	N/A
<b>For each of the in-kind resources listed above, who provides it?</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	Braes High School
<b>Equipment</b>	Braes High School
<b>Local Knowledge</b>	Income Maximisation Officers (IMOs), Community Advice Service
<b>Food and Drink</b>	N/A



## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



**Did you have to buy or develop new IT systems, software (databases, apps) or technology to deliver your project? *Please describe below.***

No

**Was additional staff training required to deliver your project? *If so, please describe.***

Not formally, although their CPAG toolkit was useful in raising awareness and understanding amongst BHS staff towards the issue at hand.

[Return to Introduction](#)

# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



## Monitoring and Evaluation

<b>What information, if any, do you collect about your project?</b>	
<b>Number of users</b>	Yes.
<b>Profile of users</b>	Yes.
<b>Experience of users</b>	Yes.
<b>Anything else</b>	No
<b>How often is data collected? Who collects the data?</b>	
The school receives a report at the end of each session (project runs from September until April each year) from their dedicated IMO. However, this data is available throughout the school year if requested.	
<b>Do you have baseline data on what things were like before the start of the project or before users started the project? <i>Please describe the type of baseline data that you have.</i></b>	
There is no specific baseline data for families from BHS.	
<b>Do you produce an annual report? <i>Please provide details of what this includes.</i></b>	
Both the dedicated IMO and BHS produce an annual report highlighting the financial gains for families because of the project.	
<b>In what ways, if at all, do you use the data that you collect to adapt the service that you provide?</b>	
N/A	
<b>Have you employed an external organisation to formally evaluate your project? <i>If yes, please provide details.</i></b>	
No	
<b>Do you intend to employ an external organisation to evaluate the service that you provide in the future? <i>If yes, please provide details.</i></b>	

# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



Emma would consider this, it is highly unlikely due to the limitations of funding.

[Return to Introduction](#)



## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



### Reach and Impact

<b>What difference has the project made?</b>
Families of children attending Braes High School feel more comfortable in contacting the school for support. There has also been a notable rise in family participation in school, as a more positive relationship between school and home has consequently been established.
<b>How do you know this? What evidence demonstrates impact (metrics, interviews, feedback)?</b>
Participant feedback.
<b>To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?</b>
The aims of the project have been achieved to a great extent, as this project aims to build positive relationships between the school and families, as well as aiming to reduce the impact of poverty on their pupils and pupils' families. It is evident that this has been achieved as feedback highlights that families of children attending BHS feel comfortable in contacting the school for support. Furthermore, over £35,000 in additional income was generated between over 25 families by this project for the year 2023.
<b>How, if at all, have conditions changed since the project was introduced?</b>
N/A
<b>Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes? <i>If so, whether positive or negative, please describe.</i></b>
The project has helped to build stronger relationships between school and families. It has also helped to highlight families who need support who they were previously unaware of. Lastly, the project has led to stronger relationships being built between school staff and advice workers.
<b>In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling child poverty? If so, please describe in what ways.</b>
Yes, as the project is raising the household income of families of children and young people attending BHS.

Tackling Poverty Locally Online Directory

# Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



[Return to Introduction](#)

Funded by





## Maximising Income for Families Project How-to Guide



### Learning from Experience

<b>What is working well?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular communication over multiple platforms.</li><li>• Having a positive culture in the school, which is welcoming, so that families see the school as being supportive and not an interference.</li></ul>
<b>What, if anything, is working less well?</b>
Nothing notable..
<b>What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners? For example, is there anything that you would do differently?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Creating a positive culture which makes the school approachable for support.</li><li>- Regular communication and advertising of the project</li><li>- Be persistent and willing to use school PEF.</li></ul>
<b>What plans do you have to develop or expand the project in the future?</b>
The project will continue to run as it is currently, though if demand increases, the delivering parties will do what they can to expand based on the funding available.
<b>How easily do you think your project could be replicated in another setting?</b>
Very easily.

[Return to Introduction](#)