

## 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.

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## Paths away from Poverty



<b>Title</b>	Paths away from Poverty
<b>Organisation</b>	South Lanarkshire Council
<b>Category</b>	Promising
<b>Poverty Impact</b>	Reduction and Prevention
<b>Introduction to the Project</b>	
<p>The "Paths away from Poverty" project is a targeted initiative led by South Lanarkshire Council in collaboration with partners, including NHS Lanarkshire and third-sector organisation Community Volunteers Enabling You (COVEY), a South Lanarkshire based organisation which offers one-to-one group befriending and mentoring. Funded by the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund, the Project aims to support families with disabled children by improving financial stability, enhancing emotional well-being, fostering community inclusion, and promoting long-term employability. Through a coordinated approach, it connects families to tailored benefits, advice, and community resources while addressing systemic challenges. Operational since early 2023, the project emphasises co-design, lived experiences, and innovative practices to create sustainable impacts on child poverty and family support structures.</p>	

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### Initial Idea

<b>Who had the initial idea?</b>			
The initial idea came from a collaborative effort by staff at South Lanarkshire Council.			
<b>How did the idea for the project come about?</b>			
The idea arose through collaborative discussions. However, data from Money Matters and an understanding of systemic challenges both played a part in the creation of Paths out of Poverty.			
<b>Were plans informed by any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice from elsewhere?</b>			
No.			
<b>Was anyone else involved in developing the initial idea of the project?</b>			
Money Matters Advice Service.			
<b>Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?</b>			
No.			
<b>Was funding required to support the development of the initial idea of the project?</b>			
No	✓	Yes	
<b>Please provide details of the funding that was used to support the development of the initial idea of the project.</b>			
<b>Which organisation provided funding?</b>			
<b>How much was required?</b>			
<b>What was the specific source of funding? (e.g., particular grant or policy)</b>			

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<b>Were specific resources – other than funding - needed when developing the initial idea of the project?</b>			
<b>No</b>		<b>Yes</b>	✓
<b>Please provide details of the resources that were required when developing the initial idea of the project.</b>			
<b>Staff/Volunteer Time</b>	Both staff and volunteer time was utilised through South Lanarkshire Council and partner COVEY		
<b>Facilities / Workspace</b>	N/A		
<b>Equipment</b>	N/A		
<b>Local Knowledge</b>	Information was collected from local organisations and used to identify families which would benefit from the approach		
<b>Food and Drink</b>	N/A		
<b>What, if any, barriers had to be overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?</b>			
Time constraints, reluctance to try new approaches, and complex needs of client group all proved to be barriers in the development of the initial idea.			
<b>What, if anything, helped enable development of the initial idea of the project?</b>			
Many things were helpful, including collaboration between partners, access to existing local data, lived experience (via COVEY) and supportive partnerships.			
<b>How long did it take between having the initial idea and starting the project?</b>			
The timeframe between initial idea and the beginning of the project was around six months.			
<b>Who made the decision to introduce the project?</b>			
South Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire, and third-party organisation COVEY.			

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Early Development – Pilot Project or Feasibility Study

<b>Was there a pilot project or feasibility study?</b>	
<b>No</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Yes, a pilot project</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Yes, a feasibility study</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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### Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

<b>Is there a referral process?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>The project features a request for assistance process, this includes an assessment of the need for the service by the referee (schools, health visitors, family nurses etc). Using this process aligns with GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) framework through targeted referral.</p>		
<b>Is referral the only way that potential clients are made aware of the project?</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>No</b>	✓
<b>Other than referral, how do potential clients come to know about the project?</b>		
<p>While referrals are the primary method, the project also relies on word-of-mouth within communities. However, due to the finite nature of the project and limited capacity, outreach has been targeted rather than broad-based.</p>		
<b>What is the most common way through which users typically access the service?</b>		
<p>The most common way users typically access the service is through referrals from trusted professionals, such as schools, health visitors, and social workers.</p>		
<b>Do you take steps to keep in touch / reach out to service users?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>Steps are taken to keep in touch with service users through a variety of methods, these being: direct communication, aftercare contact, and flexible engagement.</p>		

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Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

<b>Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>delivering</u> the project?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	✓
	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>managing</u> the project or project governance?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	✓
	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Are people with lived experience of poverty involved <u>in any other aspect</u> of the project? <i>If so, please describe below.</i></b>		
	<b>No</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	✓
Individuals with lived experience are involved by informing the project design, and providing feedback.		

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### Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

<b>Who is responsible for managing the project?</b>	
Kevin Mullarkey and Sharon Grant - A Senior Service Manager in social work.	
<b>Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project?</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	✓
<p>Kevin also handles strategic planning, policy coordination, and legislative compliance across various areas within education and children’s services.</p> <p>Sharon oversees all operational services for children and families in social work, including family support hubs and broader strategic social work responsibilities.</p>	
<b>What proportion of the manager’s overall workload is given over to this project?</b>	
<b>Most of it</b>	
<b>About half of it</b>	
<b>Just a small proportion of it</b>	✓
<b>Is there a Project Steering or Advisory Group?</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>The steering group includes:</p> <p>Kevin Mullarkey (Education and Children's Services).</p> <p>Sharon Grant (Senior Service Manager, Social Work).</p> <p>Representatives from NHS Lanarkshire.</p> <p>Representatives from Money Matters Advice Service.</p> <p>Representatives from COVEY, including senior staff.</p> <p>This group oversees the project's progress, addresses operational challenges, and ensures alignment with its objectives.</p>	

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Are any other governance arrangements in place to review strategy and performance?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>There are multiple governance arrangements in place to review both strategy and performance; these include:</p> <p>Children Affected by Disability Subgroup: Receives regular reports from the project.</p> <p>Whole Family Approach Thematic Group: Reviews the project's contributions to whole-family well-being strategies.</p> <p>Children's Services Plan: The project's work is reflected and reviewed as part of this plan.</p> <p>Child Poverty Partnership: Includes discussions on project outcomes and alignment with child poverty objectives.</p>	

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

<b>In your opinion, is the project aligned with national and/or local anti-poverty strategies and priorities (e.g., local authority or health board priorities)?</b>	
<b>Don't know</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>The project is aligned both at a national and local level; in terms of the national level, the project supports the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan and reflects the principles of GIRFEC. Locally, the project contributes to the South Lanarkshire LCPAR (Local Child Poverty Action Report) and Children's Services plan as well as aligning with local health priorities.</p>	
<b>In your opinion, has the project benefitted from being part of this anti-poverty strategy?</b>	
<b>Don't know</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>The project has benefitted significantly by building a strong partnership base and facilitating shared learning.</p>	

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Is the project part of any other strategy?)	
<b>Don't know</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p><b>Children's Services Plan:</b> The project contributes to this plan by addressing family and child well-being.</p> <p><b>Child Poverty Action Report:</b> The project is featured as a key initiative within South Lanarkshire's efforts to tackle child poverty.</p> <p><b>South Lanarkshire's Child Poverty Commitment:</b> This broader strategy embeds anti-poverty work into all aspects of local planning and service delivery, with the project playing a significant role.</p> <p><b>Community Plan:</b> The project's work is also reported as part of this overarching strategy.</p>	
In your opinion, has the project benefitted from being part of this strategy?	
<b>Don't know</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>The project has benefitted in several ways by being a part of this strategy, mainly through partnership support, visibility/integration, and learning/improvement. This has brought key partners together, providing support, ensuring the project is visible at local and national levels and promoting shared learning.</p> <p>The project strengthened partnerships by facilitating collaboration among local authorities, NHS Lanarkshire and other third parties. This provided essential support, further coordinating efforts and resources effectively.</p> <p>Being part of this strategy ensured that the project was aligned with key local and national frameworks, such as the Child Poverty Action Plan and Children's Services Plan. This reinforces the credibility of the project.</p> <p>The project promoted shared learning by creating opportunities to exchange insights and adapt approaches based on feedback and evidence.</p>	

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<b>Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment?</b>	
No	✓
Yes	

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### Funding

<b>Has external funding been secured to support the work?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please provide details of the external funding that was used secured to support this work?</b>		
<b>Which organisation provided funding?</b>	The Scottish Government	
<b>What was the specific funding stream/source/scheme?</b>	Child Poverty Accelerator Fund	
<b>How much funding was secured?</b>	Approx £80,000	
<b>For how long has funding been secured?</b>	18 Months	
<b>Is future funding from the same external source a possibility</b>		
	<b>Don't know</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Has a specific sum been secured from the host organisation to support this work?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please provide details of the funding that was used secured from the host organisation to support this work?</b>		
<b>How much funding was secured?</b>	N/A	
<b>For how long has funding been secured?</b>	N/A	
<b>Is future funding from the host organisation a possibility?</b>		
	<b>Don't know</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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### **What are the future - longer-term - prospects for this work if existing funding sources were no longer available?**

If existing funding sources were no longer available, the future and longer-term prospects for this work would depend on embedding its practices and lessons learned into existing services, for example:

**Integration into Core Services:** Key partners such as schools, social work, and health services would continue to provide support to families, informed by the project's approach and learning.

**Stronger Families:** Families that participated in the project would have improved capacity, knowledge, and confidence to articulate their needs and access support.

**Partnership Learning:** The collaboration with COVEY and other partners would influence the design and delivery of future initiatives, which would ensure that the project's principles of co-design and community accessibility are retained.

**Advocacy for Continued Support:** Evidence from the project would be used to advocate for sustained or alternative funding sources to extend or replicate its model.

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### Staffing and Resources

<b>Do existing staff from the host organisation contribute toward the work of this project as part of their broader work for the organisation?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>Kevin Mullarkey, whose responsibilities include strategic planning, policy coordination, and partnership work.</p> <p>Sharon Grant, a Senior Service Manager overseeing social work operations and the project's budget.</p> <p>Staff from education, social work, and health services participate in referrals, assessments, and steering group activities.</p>		
<b>Are existing staff from the host organisation paid extra (for example, taking on extra hours) to contribute toward the work of this project?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	✓
	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Have additional paid staff been employed to contribute toward the work of this project?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>The third-sector partner, COVEY, used the funding to enhance their staffing capacity. This included hiring additional staff, extending hours for existing staff, or reallocating roles to ensure they could effectively deliver the support required for the project. However, no additional paid staff were employed directly by the host organisation, South Lanarkshire Council.</p>		

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<b>Are volunteers involved in delivering the project?</b>			
			No
			Yes
Volunteers have been involved in the project. Some families who initially engaged with the project later shared their experiences and advice with other families, helping to provide guidance and support. While this volunteering was not formalised, it contributed valuable insights and assistance to other service users.			
<b>Are specific resources – other than staff/volunteer time and money - needed to support the delivery of the project?</b>			
		No	
		Yes	✓
<b>Please provide details of the resources that are required to deliver the project?</b>			
<b>Facilities / Workspace</b>	Meeting families in locations which are not as intimidating or professional as council buildings, cafes/community spaces.		
<b>Equipment</b>	N/A		
<b>Local Knowledge</b>	Used to assess the needs of the families targeted, ensuring the project reached the right groups.		
<b>Food and Drink</b>	N/A		
<b>Are any of the resources needed to deliver the project provided in-kind, rather than budgeted from project funds?</b>			
			No
			Yes
There are three main resources which are used in-kind to support the success of the project, these being staff time, local knowledge, and additional support services.			
<b>Were new IT systems, additional software, or upgrades existing software (databases, Apps) required to deliver this project?</b>			
			No
			Yes

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Was additional training – for staff or volunteers - required to deliver this project?	
No	✓
Yes	

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### Monitoring and Evaluation

<b>Is there baseline data to describe what things were like before the start of the project?</b>		
	No	
	Yes	✓
Baseline data does exist. The data is primarily qualitative and case-specific; this data comes from a variety of sources, including Money Matters Advice Services, family experiences, and community engagement.		
<b>Is the difference that the project is making measured or monitored by the host organisation?</b>		
	Yes	✓
	No	
<b>Who within the host organisation is responsible for monitoring the impact of the project?</b>		
<p>Within the host organisation of South Lanarkshire Council, the responsibility for monitoring the impact of the project is shared between Kevin Mullarkey and Sharon Grant.</p> <p>These individuals work collaboratively with the project's steering group, which includes representatives from social work, education, health, and partner organisations to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</p>		
<b>How often is the impact of the project monitored or measured by the host organisation?</b>		
<p>The impact of the project is monitored and measured by the host organisation approximately every 4 to 6 weeks through steering group meetings. Initially, these meetings were held more frequently (every 2 to 3 weeks) but transitioned to less frequent intervals as the project progressed.</p> <p>Additionally, highlight reports are prepared regularly and reviewed by the steering group and other governance bodies to ensure continuous monitoring and assessment. Communication among partners also occurs informally between meetings to address emerging issues.</p>		

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**What methods, techniques or strategies are used by the host organisation to measure the impact of the project?**

South Lanarkshire Council uses several methods, techniques, and strategies to measure the impact of the project. Including highlight reports, key metrics (financial benefits, school attendance, engagement with community resources etc.), family feedback, steering group oversight, and outcome tools.

**What information is collected by the host organisation about the project?**

<b>Number of users</b>	<b>Yes</b>	✓	<b>No</b>	
<b>Profile of users</b>	<b>Yes</b>	✓	<b>No</b>	
<b>Experience of users</b>	<b>Yes</b>	✓	<b>No</b>	
<b>Outcomes for users</b>	<b>Yes</b>	✓	<b>No</b>	
<b>Anything else</b>	<b>Yes</b>	✓	<b>No</b>	

The project also collects insights into systemic challenges families face, such as barriers to accessing support and broader well-being indicators, which inform evaluations and future strategies.

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<b>Has the data that has been collected by the host organisation been used to adapt the way the project works?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	✓
The data collected by the host organisation has been used to adapt the project in several ways; feedback from families, learning from early engagements, and tailored approaches are all adaptations which have been made using the data collected.		
<b>Has an external organisation been employed to formally evaluate the project?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	✓
	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Is there an intention to undertake your own formal evaluation in the future to estimate the impact of the project?</b>		
	<b>Don't know / no current plans</b>	
	<b>No</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	✓

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### Impact

To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?	
<b>Fully met</b>	
<b>Making progress toward meeting Aims</b>	✓
<b>Not making progress</b>	
<p>Paths away from Poverty has made progress in multiple areas. The project has been successful in helping families secure additional benefits and financial support that they are entitled to. Furthermore, improvements have been noted in the general well-being of children, young people, parents, and carers. Improvements have also been noted in community engagement. The project focused on supporting families to access clubs, groups, and other support that would improve engagement with statutory and voluntary sector services.</p>	
What difference has the project made?	
<p>The project has made a meaningful difference in several key areas, most notably in financial stability, parental confidence and well-being, community inclusion, child well-being, and systemic insights. These changes reflect the project's focus on providing tailored, holistic support to families with disabled children, contributing to both immediate relief and longer-term opportunities.</p>	
Have conditions or demand changed since the project was introduced?	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>Understanding of conditions and demand has evolved since the project was introduced. There is an increased awareness of needs and the complexity of needs. There has also been increased demand for the service.</p>	

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<b>Has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand?</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<b>No</b>	
An example of this is the capacity to address unexpected challenges. The project uncovered the need for support systems for parents and carers, which was not initially part of the plan.	
<b>Has the project changed through time?</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<b>What changed</b>	Focus on parental needs, referral and engagement process, community-based approach, and service flexibility.
<b>Why has it changed</b>	Family feedback, trust barriers, emerging needs, as well as learning and reflecting.
<b>Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes?</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	✓
<p>The project has experienced several unexpected or unintended outcomes:</p> <p><b>Parental Challenges Identified:</b> The project uncovered significant needs among parents and carers, such as confidence building and emotional support, which were not a primary focus at the outset.</p> <p><b>Broader Family Needs:</b> Some families presented challenges beyond anticipated, such as additional support needs for parents or siblings, requiring the project to adapt its approach.</p> <p><b>Cross-Sector Learning:</b> The collaboration highlighted systemic gaps in how statutory and third-sector organisations coordinate, providing insights for improving broader service delivery.</p>	

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In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling poverty?	
No	
Yes	✓
The project is having an impact on tackling poverty by addressing key factors contributing to economic and social disadvantage. Furthermore, the project has noticed improved financial stability, enhanced confidence, community inclusion, and greater long-term opportunities for families.	

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### Learning from Experience

<b>What is working well?</b>	
Several aspects of the project have been recognised as working well. Most notably providing targeted financial support, building rapport with other organisations, providing tailored and flexible support, building trust within the local community, and improving confidence in parents and carers within the community.	
<b>What, if anything, is working less well?</b>	
Some things have not worked as anticipated. For example, families were initially hesitant to engage, there were delays with establishing referral pathways, restrictions prevented the complete utilisation of the project, unexpected needs were revealed.	
<b>What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners?</b>	
<p>Collaborative partnerships are essential.</p> <p>Trust building takes time.</p> <p>Focus on the whole family.</p> <p>Adaptability is key.</p> <p>Start small but plan for growth.</p>	
<b>Are there plans to develop or expand the project in the future?</b>	
<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Yes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>There are plans to use the learning from the project to inform future initiatives and potentially expand its model. However, any expansion is contingent on:</p> <p><b>Securing Additional Funding:</b> Attempts have been made to obtain further resources from the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund and other sources, though no bids have been successful yet.</p> <p><b>Embedding Practices:</b> Even if direct expansion is not possible, there are plans to integrate the project's approaches into existing services, ensuring the sustainability of its impact.</p>	

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### How easily do you think this project could be replicated in another setting?

The project could be replicated in another setting with some considerations:

#### **What Makes Replication Feasible:**

**Strong Partnership Model:** Collaborating between statutory services and third-sector organisations is transferable to other contexts.

**Existing Frameworks:** The use of established processes, such as the GIRFEC framework and the Request for Assistance system, provides a replicable structure.

**Focus on Community Accessibility:** The project's emphasis on informal, community-based engagement is adaptable to other regions.

#### **Potential Challenges:**

**Local Knowledge and Networks:** Effective replication requires understanding local needs, resources, and service gaps.

**Resource Availability:** Adequate funding and skilled staff are essential to replicating the project's tailored, intensive support.

**Time for Trust Building:** Establishing trust with families, especially in disadvantaged communities, may require time and adjustments to suit local cultural contexts.

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