

POVERTY

LEADERSHIP

PANEL

PROGRESS REPORT 2016 to 2017



PEOPLE
MAKE
GLASGOW
FAIRER

26 June 2017

Contents

Introduction 2

Outputs for 2016 to 2017 3

Anti-Stigma 4

Mitigating Welfare Reform 5

Child Poverty 6

Participation 8

Credit and Debt 9

Work and Worth 10

Housing 11

Fuel Poverty 12

Tackling Poverty Event 12

Lone Parent Action Plan 13

Beyond 4 Walls 13

In-work Support 14

Homelessness Benefit Easement Card 15

Community Benefits 15

Pensioner Poverty 15

Building partnership with Community Planning 16

Basic Income Model 16

Monitoring of the PLP 16

Introduction

The Poverty Leadership Panel (PLP) was established in May 2013 following changes to the Welfare System that would make Glasgow one of the hardest affected cities by these reforms.

The PLP is made up of organisations that represent public sector decision makers, people with lived experience of poverty (Community Activist Panel (CAP), 3rd sector and voluntary groups.

The PLP meets quarterly and originally met within the City Chambers and other council owned buildings, however the PLP now meets in community venues to take the PLP out into local communities.



Poverty is made a thing of the past.

We want all of us across Glasgow to contribute to significantly reducing poverty and exclusion over the next decade, by acting now.

We want Glasgow to be a place where everyone agrees that poverty is an outrage, and where every person feels that they can be a part of Glasgow.



Poverty is not a lifestyle choice.



26 June 2017





Outputs for 2016 to 2017

The past 12 months or so have seen the PLP partners introduce a series of service improvements, new products and comprehensive research to support our vision to make poverty a thing of the past.

■ Discussion at the PLP Planning Event at Samaritan House, Govanhill.

The PLP strives to be a citywide all age group where decisions are made and products developed using the knowledge and experience of our public sector officers alongside the Community Activist Panel (CAP) members who have the experience of claiming Social Security benefits and living in poverty.

Our CAP members cover a wide range of groups, including: lone parents, disabled, pensioners, BME and young adults. Their input and challenges have helped ensure our outputs meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

Using our research, knowledge, CAP members experience and our data we have developed a number of service improvements and products that are helping us tackle poverty in our City.



26 June 2017



Anti-Stigma

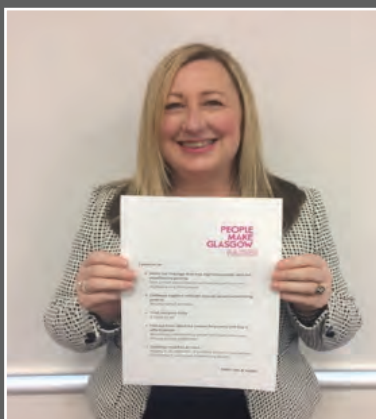
When our CAP members stated that being stigmatised due to their circumstances of living on benefits and in poverty, the PLP developed an online anti-stigma awareness package for public sector staff that included a video made by people with lived experience of poverty and facts that challenged some of myths presented in the tabloids and on TV.

The evaluation of this awareness training is underway and a new method for reducing stigma has been launched whereby a series of specific key messages are being developed for a range of groups, such as Lone Parents, Disabled, BME, etc. that will be launched via social media on a group by group basis each month.

In addition the second phase of the Mutual Mentoring project is underway that aims to build on the lessons learned from phase 1, where six public sector decision makers mentored 6 citizens with lived experience of poverty over a six month period. This second phase includes decision makers from private industry.

The PLP developed an online anti-stigma awareness package for public sector staff.

■ <http://povertyleadershippanel.org.uk/node/99>



■ Officers from Wheatley Group displaying their PLP Pledge.

Mitigating Welfare Reform

Changes to the Welfare System have resulted in Glasgow being one of the hardest hit cities in the UK with an overall financial loss of £348 million per year by 2020 to 2021. The welfare reform workstream recognises the need to challenge welfare reform and mitigate its negative impact on the poorest households in Glasgow. This approach endorses the need to inform people about the main welfare changes and tries, where possible, to provide appropriate support to those in greatest need.

Building on the 20,000 key message postcards and pocket guides, previously distributed across the City, a community event to highlight the main welfare changes was held in the City Chambers in April 2016. Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (Welfare Rights) have also provided 130 information and training sessions on welfare reform.

The right to appeal benefit decisions was promoted widely by Welfare Rights and free representation provided at social security appeal tribunals. The total success rate at these tribunals was 68% with a total financial gain of £4,015,116. This equates to an average amount per successful appeal of £7,300.

Unclaimed benefits contribute to levels of poverty with many not getting their full entitlement. Health and Social Care service-users were assisted to make the appropriate benefit claims and last year this secured over £4 million for Glasgow citizens.

Over 730 households in Glasgow were affected by the lowering of the benefit cap (£257.69 for single people and £384.62 for lone parents and couples, per week). Children are disproportionately affected with over 2,000 children in Glasgow denied the protection defined in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Welfare Rights are visiting all those in private landlord tenancies to assist with DHP claims and possible routes to exemption. A briefing session for frontline Registered Social Landlord (RSL) staff has been held and information on the best approach to the benefit cap widely circulated in a recent newsletter to RSLs. Training has also been given to the homeless casework teams and information provided to the Housing Welfare Reform Group on the approach being taken in Glasgow.

In December 2016 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced that eight of the 16 Jobcentre Plus offices in Glasgow are proposed for closure. A detailed response has been submitted to the DWP consultation highlighting a number of concerns including accessibility, cost to claimants, potential rise in benefit sanctions, and increased financial hardship.

A referral pathway to Welfare Rights for Scottish Welfare Fund applicants who received a benefit sanction is now well established. Those referred are offered assistance to challenge the decision at mandatory reconsideration stage and represented at an appeal tribunal if the decision is not overturned. A full benefit check is also carried out and money advice given as appropriate. A benefits sanction advice and mandatory reconsideration leaflet has been provided to every foodbank in Glasgow and free training offered to volunteers and staff.

Child Poverty

Following the production and success of the Cost of the School Day report (CoSD), further research was carried out and reported in respect of the Cost of the School Holiday (CoSH). Some of the main concerns raised in the CoSH report are:

- > **Lack of affordable and suitable activities during the summer holiday**
- > **Availability and cost of childcare**
- > **Loss of free school meals**
- > **Educational attainment and health**

These issues are part of an action plan with delivery of many of them due in the summer of 2017. The council has provided initial funding of £200,000 towards the summer timetable.

The cost of school uniforms was an issue highlighted in the CoSD report and using the council's data we identified that 5,400 of the 28,000 children that are entitled to the £47 school clothing grant were not receiving it. By using data matching we were able to issue the school clothing grant automatically to the families of the 5,400 children. It was agreed that the £47 rate would be increased to £52 (10%). The £5 increase was also sent to the bank accounts of the remaining 22,000 children. To date the take up has been over 97%, which as well as benefiting those families most in need, added approximately £382,000 into the City's economy as well as reducing the administrative process for the council.

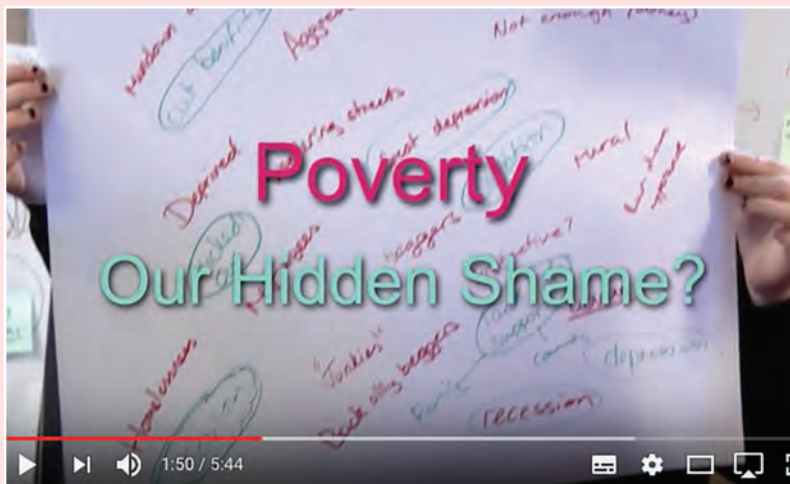


Child Poverty (continued)

During 2016 to 2017 the Cost of the School Day Project delivered on a number of outcomes. A package of teacher training was developed and over 60 staff accessed this training as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Twenty of these were identified as CoSD Champions who will share the learning within their schools. Supporting materials were produced and are available on Glasgow Online.

Guidance around CoSD was issued to all educational establishments in the city by the Education department in August, and this was highlighted at every establishment as part of their In-Service Day. The Glasgow Parent Council Forum enabled work to be delivered with guidance on how to be considerate about financial pressures on families. The original eight schools who informed the research were revisited and dialogue with pupils provided a wide range of examples of how the work had impacted positively on how things were done in school. Pupils were also pleased to hear that their views had been taken on board and had helped shape the actions taken to respond to the research.

The young people of Govan made a DVD “Our Hidden Shame” about some poverty related issues in their community and then took the issues to some decision makers, for example, Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the Headmaster of Bellahouston High School.



■ YouTube: 5 minute version.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNHB1kJjwA>

Participation

Community engagement is a key factor in the work of the PLP. While there have been several community events, two projects stand out; All in for Parkhead and All in for Priesthill and Househillwood.

All in for Parkhead has seen members of that community getting involved in activities with a local landowner and businesses to develop a plot of derelict land that was cleared and landscaped by local people and now hosts raised vegetable boxes managed by the community and acts as a local meeting place. Community groups have been involved in local litter picking projects and recently made a short film highlighting the unsociable issues locals have when there is a football match played at the local Celtic Park Stadium.

All in for Priesthill and Househillwood began when local residents decided that action was needed to counteract the decline in parts of their area, specifically the "Barratt" flats, where litter, rat infestation, graffiti and lack of security were causing major concerns to the residents. A community group was set up and other relevant and interested stakeholders were invited to join, for example Health and Community Planning. A short film was made to show the efforts being made by the community and their aspirations for their area.

Funding of £5 million from Glasgow City Council and Scottish Government has been secured to tackle some of the issues raised by the residents.

■ YouTube: 'Our Streets'
2 minute version by Parkhead children.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Om5ilwrE-TE>



■ Vimeo: 'All in for...Priesthill & Househillwood' 23 minute version.
<https://vimeo.com/150214844>





Credit and Debt

Community Finance Solutions (Salford University) estimated in their Payday Lending Report that Glasgow citizens borrow over £57 million per annum through payday lenders, home credit, pawn brokers and rent to own outlets.

In an effort to provide an alternative the PLP developed with partners (GCC, Pollok Credit Union, BCD Credit Union, Epic 360, Wheatley Group and CAP members) the Wee Glasgow Loan, which was launched in November 2016. This product which is fair and affordable at 2% flat rate 26% APR has been developed and targeted at citizens with low income, in receipt on welfare benefits and poor credit scoring that gives them the opportunity to borrow up to £400 over a period of time that suits their circumstances. Financial Support is available from EPIC 360 to customers who have been unsuccessful in their application.

The Wee Glasgow Loan

Fair and affordable

2% flat rate

26% annual percentage rate (APR)

■ <http://www.weeglasgowloan.scot>

Work and Worth

Volunteer Glasgow worked closely with the local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to agree new guidance for citizens on benefits who want to volunteer. The Volunteer Charter was published by DWP the on 23 February 2017.

We have launched an in-work progression pilot programme within the Care Sector, part of the City Deal that forms part of the interventions under the theme: "Supporting Growth – Tackling Long Term Unemployment and Increasing Earnings"

There are now 450 registered Glasgow Living Wage employers, employing over 80,000 people in the city, with a target of 1,000 employers by the year 2023.

Glasgow
living wage

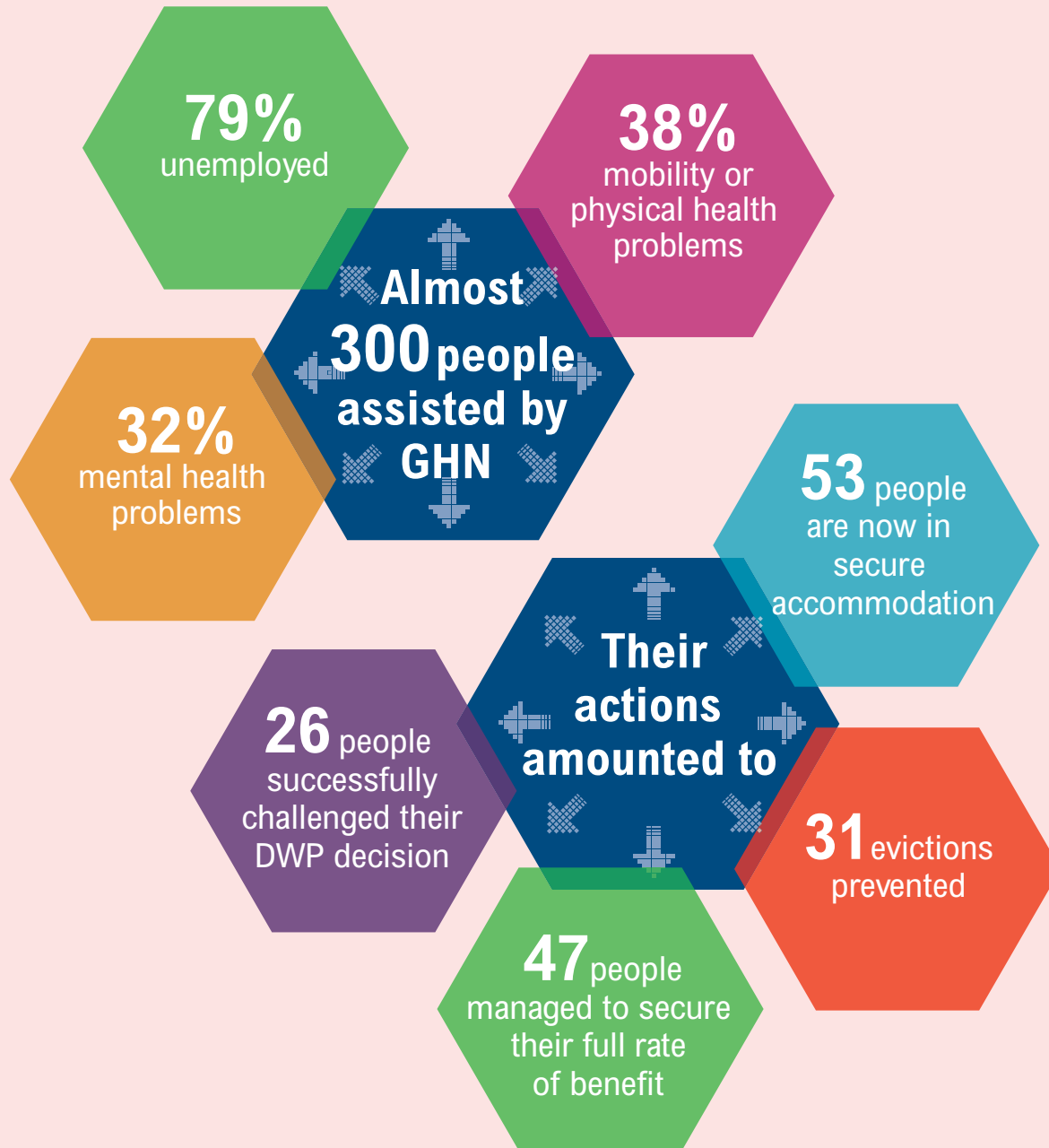
■ <https://www.glasgowlivingwage.co.uk>

The screenshot shows the Volunteer Glasgow website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'blog', 'about us', 'support us', and 'contact us', alongside a search bar. The main header features the 'volunteer glasgow' logo and the slogan 'PEOPLE MAKE GLASGOW'. Below the header is a secondary navigation menu with 'home', 'volunteer', 'organise', 'partners', 'services', and 'charter'. The main content area includes several promotional banners: 'You can volunteer for as many hours as you want and still claim social security benefits if...' with a link to more info; 'Want to Volunteer?' with a link to search opportunities; and 'Need Volunteers?' with a link to advertise opportunities. Below these are three columns of featured content: 'Urgently Required...' with links to 'Buckets of Fun!' and 'Food Train Friend'; 'Our Volunteering Stories...' with a video thumbnail; and 'From the Blog...' with links to 'Learn new skills, help cure cancer' and 'Trust me, I'm a volunteer!'.

■ <http://www.volunteerglasgow.org>

Housing

The Housing Workstream is hosted by the Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN) and offers local people assistance through its Navigate Volunteers, to take forward issues they have with their landlord. Fifty two local people have been trained as Citizen Advocates.



Fuel Poverty

According to the Scottish Government's Scottish House Condition Survey, 34% of households in Glasgow were in fuel poverty between 2012 and 2014, with 8% estimated to be in extreme fuel poverty. This equates to approximately 102,000 households in fuel poverty in Glasgow. This compares with the national averages of 35% and 10% respectively. Over 45% of the people in fuel poverty in the city are elderly.

In 2016 Glasgow published its Affordable Warmth Strategy for 2017 to 2022. The council provides an affordable warmth payment of £100 per annum for pensioners over 80 years of age.

Partnership working between DRS, Energy Action Scotland and Improving the Cancer Journey resulted in an additional £220,000 of additional funding being awarded to enable people in Glasgow with a cancer diagnosis to deal with fuel poverty issues such as replacement boilers, economical white goods and fuel debt. This model of support is now being piloted Scotland wide by Macmillan Cancer Support.

Tackling Poverty Event

The PLP Members agreed that we needed to engage further with our community and other stakeholders to identify and collate the issues that they felt most strongly about. An event was organised for March 2016 in the Pearce Institute in Govan and was attended by all the PLP partners, volunteer groups, 3rd sector, members of the local community and decision makers from other organisations.

The result of this event was the development of the People Make Glasgow Fairer Strategy by the PLP partners, including members of CAP with their experience of living in poverty.

We also identified at this event that citizens were struggling to cope with the cost of making a claim to Universal Credit by phone and often ran out of credit before the claim was finalised. We installed with the support of City Building apprentices a Freephone facility to call the DWP in two of the city's libraries as a pilot exercise.



26 June 2017



Lone Parent Action Plan

Lone Parent work was funded as a partnership between Glasgow City Council and Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS and the Wheatley Group. This enabled a lone parent development officer to be recruited to look at the particular poverty issues facing lone parents. The Lone Parent Development Officer was able to work with partners to:

- > **bring forward the application date for School Clothing Grant (SCG) making sure that families received the payment before the start of term**
- > **agree with GCC that lone parents could apply for SCG by paper application form**
- > **develop and deliver training and awareness on lone parent issues to Jobcentre staff**
- > **Evaluation of the Lone Parent Action Plan was commissioned by partners and is currently being finalised.**

Beyond 4 Walls

Beyond 4 Walls was PLP research carried by a group of young people supported by the Poverty Alliance and Children in Scotland. It took a participatory approach to understanding the needs of young people living in social housing in Glasgow and west central Scotland. Two groups of young volunteers were recruited: one of 14 to 17 year-olds and a second of 18 to 21 year-olds.

The project won the prestigious UK Housing Excellence Award (HEA) for youth engagement in 2016.



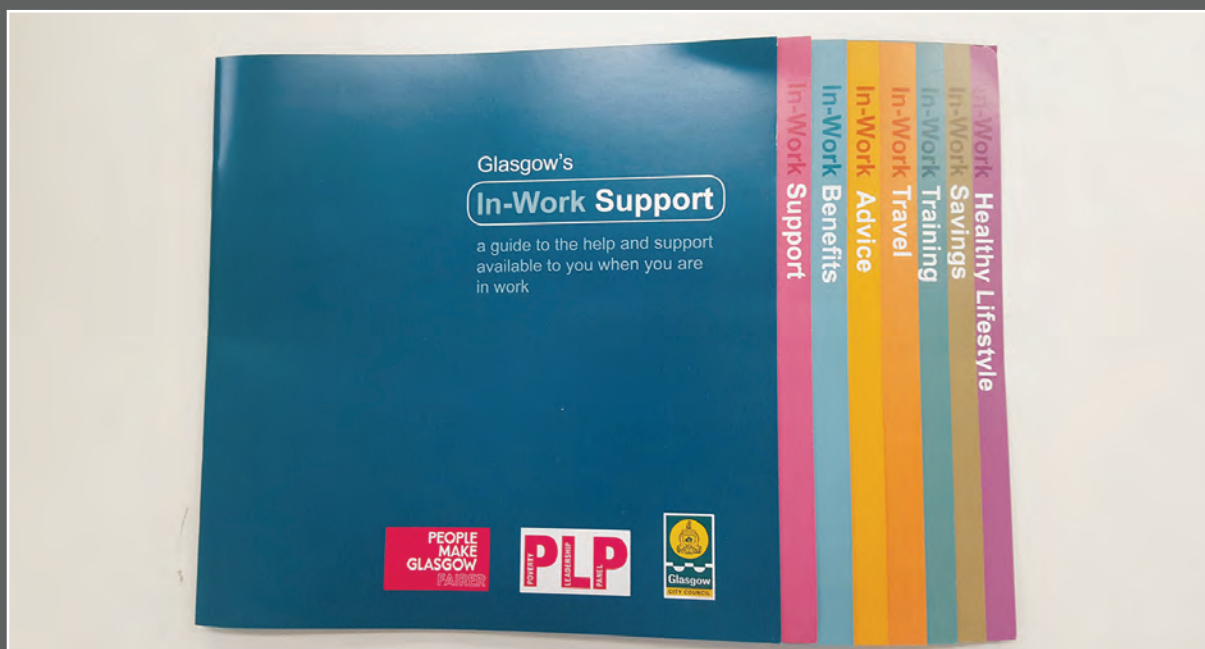
■ **Beyond 4 Walls.**
<http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/project/beyond4walls>

In-work Support

In-work poverty in Glasgow is now a major issue with 58% of people in poverty living in a household where there is one person in employment.

People from our communities who had moved into employment after a period of claiming benefits stated that they didn't receive enough support to see them through the transitional period and were unaware of what financial assistance was available once they had started work.

Working with CAP members and other key stakeholders we developed the In-Work Support guidance, which includes details and contact points to a range of benefits, services and advise providers. There is also an In-Work Support website www.glasgow.gov.uk/iws



■ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=20568>

Homelessness Benefit Easement Card

Through closer working with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) we discovered that many homeless citizens were inadvertently claiming the wrong benefit and this was making them worse off and having a major impact on council funds. We identified the issue and produced guidance for homeless citizens that explained the definition of homelessness and the process when claiming social security benefits.



Community Benefits

Community Benefits through the council’s procurement process has been standard practice on construction contracts for some time. The PLP is now working closely with the Corporate Procurement Team to develop a process whereby we can gather more community benefits through their goods and services contracts that will help tackle local poverty related issues. Work to develop a robust and efficient process is underway.

Pensioner Poverty

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted that if every pensioner claimed their full benefit entitlement then pensioner poverty would be wiped out overnight.

We have been working with a range of partners, such as DWP, Housing Associations and the council to develop a pilot exercise whereby we are using our data to target single pensioners over the age of 75 in the north of the city to assist with a claim to Attendance Allowance. If successful, our research has shown that on average pensioners would be approximately £500 per month better off. We expect to commence this project early summer 2017.



Building partnership with Community Planning

The PLP is developing a closer working relationship with the Community Planning Partners and has been involved with recent participatory budget projects in Govan, Parkhead and Priesthill, where funding of £75,000 was secured from Scottish Government which enabled citizens to vote for the community project they preferred funding to be allocated to.

Basic Income Model

The PLP is working with the Royal Society for Arts (RSA) on a plan for engagement with a range of key stakeholders, including community groups to gauge opinion on the introduction of a Basic Income Model. Work is at a very early stage and the first stage of engagement should be taking place late May early June 2017. Following engagement with all partners a report on the feasibility of the Basic Income Model for Glasgow will be reported to the Executive Committee of Glasgow City Council.

Monitoring of the PLP

PLP partners agreed to set up a Governance Panel that would review the progress against the priorities set out in the PLP Priorities Report 2017, which will be attended by the PLP Workstream Leads, CAP members and chaired by the council's Chief Executive Officer.

The panel will meet between the quarterly PLP meetings and report on progress of their individual action plans and identify barriers to progress and up and coming new issues.



For more information or to comment please visit
<http://povertyleadershippanel.org.uk>
or twitter [@povleadpanel](https://twitter.com/povleadpanel)

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