

Child Poverty



What work is Scotland doing to have less child poverty?



Child poverty means children living in a household where there is not enough money to buy basic things like food, clothing or to stay warm.



Facts and figures say around one in four children in Scotland are living in poverty.



The Scottish Government want there to be less child poverty.

Everyone should work to make things better.



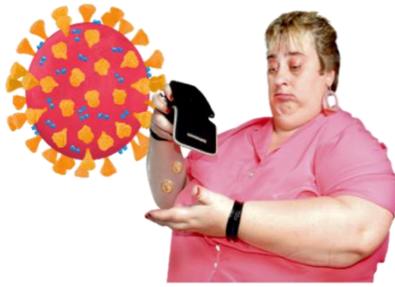
A law called the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 tells us what the child poverty **targets** are for Scotland and how the Scottish Government and councils should try to meet them.

A **target** is what they are trying to achieve.



Child poverty levels are going up.

There is not enough being done to meet the targets.



Families on **low incomes** have been affected the most by the coronavirus pandemic.

Low income means not having enough money for the things you need.



The cost of living is going up and things are getting more expensive.

The **cost of living** is the cost of everyday things we need like food, clothes and heating.



COVID-19 and the cost of living going up will make it more difficult to reach the child poverty targets.



The first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan did not say enough about how it would check if the changes made a difference.

What should be in the next Child Poverty Delivery Plan?



All government policies and plans must:

- work on child poverty
- support families and look at what they need
- join up and work together



There are 6 kinds of family that are more at risk of poverty that must be at the centre of the Delivery Plan.

They are:

- lone parents
- families with a disabled adult or child
- young mothers
- minority ethnic families
- families with a child under 1
- and families with 3 or more children

People who have experienced poverty must be involved in all the work in the plan.



Making sure people have more income and cheaper housing are the main ways to have less child poverty.

Income is the money that comes into a household from work or benefits.

Social security



The quickest way the Scottish Government could meet the child poverty target is by:

- raising the Scottish Child Payment to £40 per week
- giving more Scottish Child Payment money to families who need it most



But increasing benefits can have risks.

For example: if a family gets more income from work they might lose money they get from Universal Credit.

If they lose their Universal Credit they would then lose all of their Scottish Child Payment.



The next Delivery Plan must:

- make sure families get the payments they are entitled to
- look at Scottish Government powers to make new benefits including a **Minimum Income Guarantee**



The **Minimum Income Guarantee** is a way to make sure everyone has a level of income to have a good standard of living and get the services that they need.

Work and earnings



Many people in poverty have a job and being in a job does not stop them being in poverty.

Many people find it difficult to get a job.

Most children in poverty live in a household where someone works.



In the next Delivery Plan the Scottish Government needs to:

1. make and encourage good new jobs
2. make sure jobs are secure, pay people well and have good working conditions like flexible hours
3. Have good services like transport so that people can get to work
4. Support parents to get and keep jobs or to work more hours



The Scottish Government should test and check plans and policies to create good new jobs.



It should keep working with **public sector organisations** to deliver **Fair Work First**.

Public sector organisations are run by the government with money raised from taxes.

They provide goods and services for the community.



Fair Work First is guidance for employers to make sure they treat their workers fairly.

The Scottish Government should check to see if Fair Work First is working well.



The Scottish Government should do work to give fair pay and better working conditions for people who work in care and childcare jobs.



The next Delivery Plan should put more money into childcare and transport to make them cheaper for families.

This would help parents to work.



The Scottish Government should put more money into giving people skills and training so they have a better chance of getting work.



It should work with employers to look at what makes it difficult for some parents to get jobs, particularly disabled parents.

Housing



Scotland has lower child poverty rates than the rest of the UK.

This is mostly because housing is cheaper in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has spent a lot of money on good quality housing that people can afford where they feel safe and secure.



The Scottish Government plan 'Housing to 2040' does not look at what affordable housing is needed to have less child poverty.

The next Delivery Plan should also look at all the costs of living in a home including the cost of heating.



What should be in the next Child Poverty Plan: Recommendation 1



The Scottish Government must use all the powers it has to do work on child poverty.

The Scottish Government must:

- do more work
- spend more money on the work
- work much more quickly
- say how work will meet the targets

Recommendation 2



The Scottish Government must make sure work is linked to targets.

Before it decides to spend money on work it must be clear how the work will help there to be less child poverty.

Recommendation 3



The next Delivery Plan must:

- do more work more quickly
- join up work plans and policies across government



- protect human rights
- have the 6 family groups at most risk of poverty at the centre of the work to understand what families need and want
- address the **structural inequalities** that cause poverty



Structural inequalities are unfairness in the way organisations are set up and how the country works.

- take an intersectional approach

Intersectionality means looking at how policies and laws affect people and their different identities.



- have better facts, and figures and use them to check how work plans and policies are working and if they are making a difference



- work in a way that reduces the **stigma** around poverty

Stigma means being negatively judged and treated unfairly.

Recommendation 4



Work to reduce child poverty must be at the centre of all plans and policies across government.

There must be stronger leadership from Government.

They must also take responsibility for their work and be able to explain what they are doing.

Recommendation 5



The Scottish Government will need to increase the Scottish Child Payment to more than £20 per week to meet child poverty targets.

It should decide to give the money to:

- all children who get the Scottish Child Payment
- or to families who need it the most

If the Government decides to meet the targets in another way it must show how the work will hit the target.



The Scottish Government should change the rules so more children get free school meals and can then get other benefits like the school clothing grant.

Recommendation 6



The Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland should make sure that families get all the benefits they are entitled to.

They should look for ways that people only need to apply for benefits once to get everything they are entitled to.



The Scottish Government should make sure families can get information about benefits from people that they trust in places they use every day.

They could do this by:

- having benefits advice in local community services and organisations like health and school buildings and through faith communities
- peer support



Peer support is when people use their own experiences to help each other.



- Citizens Advice services and Money Talk Team
- advisors who can visit people's homes



- accessible online information
- information in a range of formats and languages



- a campaign on TV, radio and newspapers to encourage people to get the Scottish and UK benefits they are entitled to



The Scottish Government should look at how people are being told about the benefits they are entitled to.

They should see which are the best ways of getting information to families.

Recommendation 7

The Scottish Government should look at:



- ways to use its powers to control some of the benefits system
- ways to give out Scottish benefits without being linked to the UK benefits system

New Scottish benefits would then not be affected by UK Government decisions about Universal Credit levels.

The Scottish Government should decide how to give unpaid carers:



- the same amount of support as the Living Wage if they care for more than 20 hours a week

- a Minimum Income Guarantee to give them a higher level of income that reflects the value of the care they give



- the benefits and services that are entitled to

- ways to make sure the earnings limit of benefits do not stop carers working if they want to



- ways to get education and training

Recommendation 8



The Scottish Government should use the powers it has to make and encourage more good jobs in Scotland.

It should make sure that when public services spend money they help to deliver fair work.

It should check if Fair Work First is making a difference.





Public service organisations should improve pay and conditions in care and childcare jobs.

The new National Care Service should make sure care workers get fair work.



The Scottish Government should spend money on ways to test and check new work and policies that will make more good jobs.

Recommendation 9



The Scottish Government should spend money on childcare and transport services so it is cheaper and easier for parents to work.



The Government should offer free childcare for children up to the age of 12 so that more parents can work full-time if they need to or want to.

The childcare must meet the needs of disabled children and be available for older disabled children where needed.

Recommendation 10

The Scottish Government should spend money on training and skills and work with employers to make it easier for parents to get a job, particularly disabled parents.



The Scottish Government should put more money into the Parental Employability Support Fund to help parents get a job.

There should be a policy that offers a job, training or education to parents supported by the Fund.

The Scottish Government should involve people who have experienced poverty in work to develop the Fund.

It should check if support is working well and change it if it is not what families need.



The Scottish Government wants to halve the **disability employment gap** by 2038.

The **disability employment gap** is the gap between:

- the number of disabled people who have a job
- and the number of people who are not disabled who have a job





This will take too long for children in poverty who live in a household where someone is disabled.



The Scottish Government should give money to Disabled People's Organisations so they could:

- work with employers to support disabled people to get a job
- support employers with recruiting and supporting disabled employees



The Scottish Government should look at the 'Planning for Skills' report and do work to see how money for training and skills has made a difference to child poverty and what work should be done now.



It should look at how employers can be encouraged to spend more money on staff training.

Recommendation 11

The Scottish Government must check how housing policies are making a difference to child poverty.



The Scottish Government should support families to move to cheaper social housing.

It should check if houses being built are suitable for families.



Local housing plans should use Scottish Government guidance to show how they would reduce child poverty.

Local plans should be checked to see if they are reducing child poverty.



The Scottish Government should get facts and figures about how much private rent costs are.

They should use this information when they make new policies about rent controls.



The Scottish Government and the Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel should find ways to help families on low incomes heat their homes.