Dear Ms White

Please find below a response on behalf of East Ayrshire in relation to your Call for Written Evidence on the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill.

- **Whether you agree that statutory child poverty targets should be re-introduced for Scotland?**

  Yes. The reintroduction of statutory child poverty targets is to be welcomed. Tackling poverty and inequality is a priority in East Ayrshire. Child poverty is a particular concern in East Ayrshire. Overall child poverty is almost 28 per cent across the CPP area. This is the third highest level of child poverty in Scotland. The level of child poverty varies between communities and in Kilmarnock South and Doon Valley child poverty is at 38 per cent.

  East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership responded positively to the initial consultation regarding the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill and, while welcoming the ambition to address child poverty, also suggested that this could be strengthened as a commitment to eradicate child poverty.

  It is important that child poverty plans and measures are aligned with Community Planning Partnership local outcome improvement plans and with broader strategies which are inextricably linked to child poverty, e.g., economic development, welfare reform, education reform, housing and community empowerment. This would recognise the multi-factorial nature of child poverty and the need for cross-sector action to address it.

- **The appropriateness and scope of the 4 proposed targets.**

  The targets are appropriate, robust and based on recognised measures of child poverty developed over a long period of time. The proposed targets are in line with those set under the Child Poverty (2010) Act at UK level and are compatible with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

  The measures and targets require to be reportable at an individual partnership area to track progress. There is also a need for some additional analysis to be periodically produced to ensure inclusion of vulnerabilities within overall child poverty, e.g., looked after children, young carers, rural poverty.

  Supplementary measures such as the slope of inequality, Gini coefficient would provide context. However, the reporting framework must be streamlined and complement existing/developing frameworks. Importantly, in keeping with the ambition, continuing activity across sectors will be required to go beyond the 2030 targets.

- **Whether interim targets are needed.**

  Interim targets along the trajectory towards the 2030 end-point would help maintain momentum in delivery and enhance accountability and scrutiny.
The proposed arrangements for reporting progress towards meeting the targets and how best to hold the Scottish Government to account.

Delivery planning and annual reporting arrangements seem appropriate but need to ensure a focus on strategically and operationally delivering change and taking action to address child poverty.

This would require cross-sector activity within Community Planning Partnerships and reporting would need to reflect this.

It will be important for supporting guidance to facilitate outcomes-focused reporting.

The responsibility placed on local councils and health boards to make local progress reports.

The recognition of critical role of local authorities and NHS Boards in tackling child poverty in the Bill is welcome, though, as above, the multi-factorial nature of child poverty means that addressing this must involve cross-sector working.

The lead roles accorded to local authorities and NHS Boards would require resourcing beyond the proposed reporting framework to coordinate partnership activity. This would provide an opportunity to take action beyond mitigation to prevention and undoing child poverty.

The existing Child Poverty Measurement Framework and its 37 indicators.


The measures are widely recognised and accepted.

Work would be required to enhance datasets to ensure suitable coverage across the ‘pockets’, ‘prospects’ and ‘places’ dimensions at a partnership level.

Although not in this Bill, the Scottish Government has committed to establishing a national poverty and inequality commission. What should this commission’s status and powers be in relation to this Bill?

Such a Commission could provide leadership, engage with people with lived experience, engage with all partners/stakeholders, identify good practice and evidence, analyse the potential for possible solutions and on that basis make recommendations for implementation in iterations of the delivery plan.

There could be a role for scrutinising or evaluating delivery.

A Commission could have a proactive role in relation to evidence-based campaigns or a brokerage role in linking agencies together to take action on poverty and inequality.

Any other issues you think are relevant to this Bill.

It is important to maintain a focus on prevention and early intervention in delivering long-term sustainable outcomes in relation to child poverty.

Ensuring that policy-making is joined-up should be a consideration – possibly through child poverty proofing or child poverty impact assessment.
There are opportunities arising from the devolution of tax and social security powers that have a bearing on child poverty.