Evidence to the Scottish Parliament’s Social Security Committee
Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill – call for written evidence

1. About Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland
Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland (the Foundation)’s mission is to make a difference to the lives of individuals and communities in Scotland, by encouraging positive change, opportunities, fairness and growth of aspirations, which improve quality of life. The Foundation has over 30 years’ experience as one of Scotland’s leading grant-makers, distributing more than £132m through over 14,500 grants to charities.

We work closely with other charities, communities and policy makers to encourage positive change, opportunity, fairness and growth of aspirations and aim to do this through delivery of four key aims:

- Be the best grant-maker we can be, always improving the way we work and supporting work that enables people to thrive.
- Work with communities, getting alongside people to create positive change.
- Make best use of our expertise, sharing our learning and offering services to other grant makers.
- Be the partner of choice for others who want to collaborate to maximise the impact we can have together.

The Foundation delivers a range of programmes, including: a place-based programme which works alongside communities that do not historically access independent grant funding but who experience significant challenges; the Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI) which supports charities working with children and young people affected by substance misuse; and, on behalf of Scottish Government the Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention and Adult Learning and Empowering Communities Fund.

2. Statutory child poverty targets
The Foundation strongly welcomes the re-introduction of statutory targets. This should support a shared direction across the many agencies that need to contribute to tackling child poverty as well as providing a crucial means of holding the Scottish Government, local authorities and the NHS to account.

Comments on the four targets:

- It is welcome that the targets bring together different dimensions of poverty. In particular the combined low income and material deprivation measure will be important in recognising where children live in poverty as a result of higher costs. This should help to recognise, for example, poverty experienced as a result of disability, debt or geography.
- The Foundation would welcome a further target of achieving complete abolition of child poverty. While this may be set for a point relatively far in the future, it would signal a
clear intention to continue progress beyond the targets set for 2030-31 and lessen the risk that remaining pockets of child poverty are regarded as acceptable.

- There is a risk that the targets may be reached when measured across the whole population, but that some geographical areas might still have far higher levels. The Committee could consider an additional target, for example requiring that no local authority area in Scotland exceeds the levels of poverty set out in the national targets.

3. Interim targets
   It seems likely that interim targets will be necessary to ensure the rate of improvement was sufficient to reach the 2030-31 targets. Interim targets should also be set at local authority level, although these may vary by area to area to allow an approach that responds to local situations, priorities and need.

4. Reporting arrangements
   The Foundation welcomes the level of accountability that will be provided by the Bill’s requirement that each ‘delivery plan’ and annual report must be laid before Parliament. The annual report should draw on a range of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative and, in particular, the lived experience of children and families. This will be crucial to enabling an understanding of trends, dynamics and issues that underlie the progress (or lack of progress) towards the targets.

   It is vital that children themselves are able to understand progress and hold the Scottish Government and others to account. The Bill should therefore require publication of a child-friendly version of the delivery plans and annual reports, as well as those produced by local authorities and health boards.

   While the Bill requires the Scottish Government to explain the reasons for any targets not being met by 2030-31, there is no requirement for explaining reasons for lack of progress before this final date. Alongside introducing interim targets, the Bill should require Scottish Government (and local authorities and health boards) to: provide a projection of whether or not they are on track to achieve the targets; explain any areas where progress is not yet sufficient; and provide details of their plans to increase the speed of progress.

5. Responsibility on local councils and health boards
   Local activity will be key to achieving the targets so is welcome that local authorities and health boards are also required to report. However, the legislation only requires reporting to be on activity that they consider will contribute to the targets, rather than on the impact of the activities or the progress being made at local authority level towards the targets. If reporting is not impact or outcomes focused, it may be of relatively little value.

   Meeting the targets set out in the Bill will require contributions from a wide range of organisations and sectors, and indeed from communities themselves. It will be important that the guidance for local authorities and health boards clearly sets out that the local child poverty action report should be prepared in consultation with others, including children.
In many local authorities there are areas of affluence and pockets of poverty so reporting would be most meaningful if it were able to capture progress at as local a level as possible e.g. neighbourhoods rather than only local authority wide.

6. **Child Poverty Measurement Framework**
   - There is a need for the indicators to better reflect children’s rights.
   - Many of the indicators refer to the views of adults. While it is valid to include these, many of the areas covered may be experienced very differently by children (for example ability to influence decisions or perception of their neighbourhood as a good place to live) and indicators should be of children’s perspectives as far as possible.
   - There would be merit in developing an indicator(s) around parenting and parents’ involvement in their child’s life.
   - It is unclear why there is an indicator that refers to a child’s ability to talk to their ‘mother or stepmother’ and not to their father. There may also be value in widening this indicator beyond parents as a child may have a range of important relationships with other adults e.g. other relatives, foster carers, youth workers etc.
   - Indicators relating to children’s resilience are valuable but should be treated with care; for example some children have very high resilience as a result of experiences that may not be wholly positive e.g. being a young carer.
   - Further indicators could be developed to measure the quality of support available for children and families and the relationships between families and services.
   - There may be scope for greater linkage across different sources of data, for example child health surveys.

7. **National poverty and inequality commission**
The proposed national poverty and inequality commission has the potential to significantly support the drive to tackle child poverty, including by:
   - Supporting understanding and evidence based insight, including lived experience of children and the factors/risks that contribute to people being pushed into poverty, as well as those that enable people to avoid or escape poverty.
   - Supporting greater collaboration across sectors and organisations.
   - Playing a role in holding the Scottish Government and other public bodies to account in relation to child poverty and developing work to understand and unlock barriers to progress.
   - Address public attitudes and support a culture in which everyone feels shared ownership of the responsibility for tackling child poverty.
   - Understand and challenge stigma in relation to poverty.

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