

Scottish Parliament Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

Written submission by the Children in Scotland, September 2024

Children in Scotland is a national membership organisation for those working with and for children and young people. We chair the [Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum](#) which brings together senior members from across the children's sector to explore good policy and practice, using our learning to contribute to the improvement of children's and families' lives. I am writing to you on behalf of the Forum.

The Forum recently discussed the impact of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act, and members were keen that we write to you to highlight the importance of the Act whilst also identifying some of the key challenges that exist. The Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum would like to echo many of the points already raised in the submissions the committee has received from the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland and other End Child Poverty Coalition in Scotland members.

We believe that the statutory framework introduced by the Act has been key to securing increased policy focus and investment that is already having a substantive, albeit as yet inadequate, impact on child poverty. The Act has been instrumental in ensuring that child poverty has been a collective focus, impacting on the way decision-makers at both a national and local level have approached reducing child poverty – from Ministers across the Scottish Government to statutory bodies such as local authorities and health boards.

The Act has been fundamental in raising the profile of child poverty and has helped to drive real progress on key issues including the social security support, employability and transport policy. It has also been instrumental in the implementation of the Scottish Child Payment, which forecasts suggest is lifting between 40,000 and 60,000 children out of poverty.

The introduction of statutory targets and reporting processes have helped to ensure the Scottish Government and statutory bodies have remained focused on action to reduce child poverty. The Poverty and Inequality Commission, which was established as part of the Act, has also provided an important source of independent scrutiny.

Whilst there are many positives, it is important to recognise the range of policy measures that the Scottish Government has currently committed to will not be sufficient for Scotland to meet the current child poverty targets. The recent Concluding Observations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child are clear that Scotland must take urgent and progressive action to tackle child poverty and ensure every child has an adequate standard of living. The Committee expressed deep concern about the number of children living in poverty and food

insecurity, and called on the Scottish Government to strengthen policies and resources to ensure that children have access to an adequate standard of living, including affordable housing and support services. We welcome the First Minister's commitment to eradicating child poverty as key part of his policy agenda however, the lack of progressive action in the Scottish Government's 2024-25 Scottish Budget and the recent Programme for Government is deeply disappointing.

The introduction of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act reinforces the need for urgent action from Scottish Government on this issue, including committing increased resource to deliver the required policy interventions to reduce child poverty. This prioritisation and investment is essential if the Scottish Government is to meet its child poverty targets and deliver on its UNCRC commitment that every child in Scotland has an adequate standard of living and the opportunity to develop and grow healthily.

Appendix

Membership of the Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum:

Children in Scotland (Dr. Judith Turbyne, CEO)
Aberlour (SallyAnn Kelly, CEO)
Action for Children (Fiona Steel, National Director for Scotland)
Alliance (Marianne Tyler, Senior Development Officer)
Cattanach
CELCIS (Claire Burns, Director)
CHAS (Rami Okasha, CEO)
Supporting the Third Sector Project (David Mackay, Head of Policy, Projects and Participation at Children in Scotland)
Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland (John Dickie, Director) Circle (Douglas Guest, Development Manager)
COSLA
Early Years Scotland (Jane Brumpton, CEO)
East Park School (Catriona Campbell, Head of Education)
Fast Forward (Allie Cherry-Byrnes, CEO)
Fife Voluntary Action (Mark Hutchison, Children's Services Development Manager)
Includem (Martin Dorchester, CEO)
LGBT Youth Scotland (Dr. Mhairi Crawford, CEO)
Little Bugs Nursery, (Louise Licznerski, Founder)
National Deaf Children's Society (Mark Ballard, Head of Policy and Influencing for Scotland)
One Parent Family Scotland (Satwat Rehman, CEO)
Pamis (Jenny Miller, CEO)
Parenting Across Scotland (Amy Woodhouse, CEO)
Play Scotland (Marguerite Hunter Blair, CEO)
Scottish Childminding Association (Graeme McAlister, CEO)
Scottish Women's Aid (Dr. Marsha Scott, CEO)
Scottish Youth Parliament (Jamie Dunlop, CEO)
Social Work Scotland (Ben Farrugia, Director)
STAF (Jo Derrick, CEO)
Starcatchers (Rhona Matheson, CEO)
Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) (Juliet Harris, Director)