

## Scottish Out of School Care Network response 9 September 2016

### CHILD POVERTY BILL CONSULTATION QUESTIONS – SUMMARY 1.

- 1. Do you agree with the Scottish Government including in statute an ambition to eradicate child poverty?**

Yes

- 2. What are your views on making income targets statutory?**

We agree with making income targets statutory to ensure that the aim of ending child poverty is enshrined in law.

- 3. How do you think the role of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Child Poverty can be developed to ensure that they play a key role in developing the legislation?**

This group has a valuable role to play. We are assuming that representatives are able to regularly consult with people who have experience of living in poverty, and indeed should be also engaging directly with children themselves. Experts with thorough knowledge of the importance of childcare for children (of all ages) as a route out of poverty should possibly be represented on the group.

- 4. How can links between the national strategy and local implementation be improved? What could local partners do to contribute to meeting these national goals? This might include reporting and sharing best practice or developing new strategic approaches.**

Local community planning partnerships should also have targets and monitoring in place to support the goal of ending child poverty. This need not be a new measure in itself, but aligned to reporting on activities which are recognised as addressing the issue; e.g. expansion of early learning and childcare and provision of out of school care locally; including breakfast and holiday clubs which also provide lunch etc., as well as other measures in “pockets” “prospects” and “places”. See <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/03/5304> for a fuller explanation on the 2014 to 2017 child poverty strategy measures.

There should be a national HUB online where effective good practice is shared.

The Scottish government could take the lead in, for example, recommending or creating standardised packages of support; either universal, like the idea of the baby box; <https://www.holyrood.com/articles/news/nicola-sturgeon-pledges-finnish-style-baby-box-every-scottish-newborn>, or more specifically targeted, such as ensuring the high cost of the school day is covered for low income families. This could include budgets to ensure children have uniforms, all

weather clothing, PE kits, stationery and a budget for school trips. Meals during school holidays should also be provided.

[http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report%28Oct15%29\\_1.pdf](http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report%28Oct15%29_1.pdf)

Currently there is huge variation in the amount local authorities provide to low income parents to cover the cost of just one uniform per year. The online HUB could offer guidance on the other costs to be considered, of course, backed by resources.

- 5. What are your views on the income based measures of poverty proposed for Scottish child poverty targets? For example, are there any additional income-based measures you think we should also use (and if so, why)? Are there any alternative approaches to measuring income – for example, as used in other countries – that you think could apply in Scotland?**

We agree with using all three income based measures; relative poverty, absolute poverty and persistent poverty.

- 6. What are your views on the Scottish Government's proposals for the levels of child poverty that the targets will be set at?**

Targets must be realistic and relate to the levers available to the Scottish Government, it would render the legislation meaningless if there was not an informed calculation based on what is possible to achieve. Nevertheless the ultimate goal should be to eradicate child poverty (indeed poverty) and the targets should be reviewed and reset when possible to make this happen sooner.

- 7. What are your views on the Scottish Government's proposal to set targets on an after housing costs basis? For example, are there any disadvantages to this approach that we have not already considered?**

We agree this is the right approach. A child can be poor even if they live in an affluent area; e.g. a child of a couple who have divorced but one has retained the family home but is now on one, much lower wage, as family income.

- 8. What are your views on the Scottish Government's proposal to set targets that are expected to be achieved by 2030?**

See answer to question 6 above.

- 9. What are your views on the proposal that Scottish Ministers will be required by the Bill to produce a Child Poverty Delivery Plan every five years, and to report on this Plan annually?**

We agree with this proposal. As well as reporting on this Plan annually, we would ask what measures would be taken should there be no or little progress achieved? For the plan to work there should be measures in place to enforce intervention or action, including on an emergency basis where necessary.

**10. Do you have any suggestions for how the measurement framework could usefully be improved? For example, are there any influencing factors that are not covered by the measurement framework? Or are there any additional indicators that could be added?**

We would suggest that access to out of school care, including breakfast clubs and holiday clubs and activities such as summer food programmes should be included in the measure. Access to play, arts, cultural and sporting activities could be also in this measure. It has been demonstrated that all of these activities help support disadvantaged children and reduce the attainment gap. See, for example,

[http://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/658\\_health\\_and\\_early\\_years\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_a\\_gcph\\_synthesis](http://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/658_health_and_early_years_children_and_young_people_a_gcph_synthesis)

And for benefits of out of school care and activities:

Tanner, E, Chanfreau, J, Callanan, M, Laing, K, Skipp, A & Todd, L ( 2016). *Out of school activities during primary school and KS2 attainment*, working paper from the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS). <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1135440/CLS-WP-2016-Out-of-school-activities-during-primary-school-and-KS2-attainment.pdf>

Although the expansion of early learning and childcare will benefit many parents, once their child starts school, in order to work full time, parents need out of school care, before and after school and in the holidays. Childcare is so essential to address underemployment/unemployment and for parents, especially lone parents, to access the labour market.

**11. Do you have any additional views on a Child Poverty Bill for Scotland?**

The Scottish Out of School Care Network is a long term member of the UK wide End Child Poverty Campaign and indeed the alleviation of child poverty is a charitable core aim of our organisation.

We are particularly interested in the action and investment which is required beyond legislation, which, as acknowledged, in itself, will not make all the change required to ensure that so many of Scotland's children are no longer experiencing the short and long term effects of poverty.

Part of such investment and action should include ensuring children have access to nutritious food, play, culture, arts and sports, and there are over a thousand out of school care services in

Scotland who could lead this work in their communities, for disadvantaged children, with proper investment and resources.

In turn, their parents will be enabled to study or work .Indeed, the Scottish Government Independent Poverty Adviser's 'Shifting the Curve' report (January 2016) recommendation 3 was to "consider providing a limited number of free hours of childcare for primary school aged children". <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00492430.pdf>

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You can respond to the consultation online at

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-justice/consultation-on-a-child-poverty-bill-for-scotland>

Or by sending an email and a completed Respondent Information Form to [childpovertyconsultation@gov.scot](mailto:childpovertyconsultation@gov.scot), the deadline is 30 September 2016.