

ANNUAL REPORT

2018/2019



WORKING TOGETHER
TO COMBAT POVERTY
IN SCOTLAND

CONVENOR'S REPORT

The vision of the Poverty Alliance speaks of a 'sustainable, poverty free Scotland, with dignity and social and economic justice for all.' To get there, we will work with communities and organisations to 'change the distribution of power and resources.' These are lofty aims. Realising our vision will take some time, however, working with others over the last year we have achieved positive change on key issues.

The previous year, 2017-18, was one where high-level policy changes that the Poverty Alliance and our members had been calling for were finally passed. It saw the passing of the Social Security (Scotland) Act; the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act; the commitment to set up a statutory Poverty and Inequality Commission; the implementation of the Fairer Scotland Duty, and the creation of a new Fair Work Action Plan.

Over the last year, the Poverty Alliance staff team has focussed on consolidation - seeking to support the implementation of these new and very welcome legislative developments.

The contributions of the Poverty Alliance and our members have helped ensure that the promise of new social security powers is beginning to be realised. Our work around the Income Supplement, in partnership with other key organisations, will ensure that the policy is generous and genuinely helps to lift children out of poverty. We contributed to and shaped the context for the new Social Security Charter which will ensure that people using the new Scottish system will be treated with dignity. But our new social security powers cannot deliver a poverty free Scotland on their own. They can however, make a real difference to people's lives and show what is possible to set out a new direction for social protection in Scotland.

Our work on the real Living Wage has made a real contribution to delivering the economic justice needed for a Scotland free of poverty. By focusing on the real Living Wage we have helped deliver over £160m to Scottish workers over the last 5 years. As well as this, we have demonstrated that real change is possible and that employers play a critical role in creating a poverty-free Scotland.

It's also important to remember that poverty is about more than money. It is also about changing the distribution of power and resources. That is why we contributed to the Scottish Government's Democracy Matters consultation, and why we are ensuring that people with direct experience of poverty have their voices heard in the development of Local Child Poverty Action Reports. Through practical means like these we can begin to redistribute power, which is a fundamental requirement to create a Scotland free of poverty.



So once again, the Poverty Alliance, as both an organisation and a network, can be proud of the advances we have made. However, as we have said in other years, the context is not favourable for delivering the kinds of changes that we would like to see. We are beginning to see a consistent increase in poverty, and predictions that poverty will grow in the years to come due to the long-term impacts of austerity. Added to this, Brexit and the very likely economic and social disruption that will follow in its wake presents a serious threat to the people and communities who are already affected by poverty.

Over the next 18 months, the board of the Poverty Alliance will be working with the staff team and our membership to develop the priorities and goals for our next five year strategy in 2021. In light of our social, political and economic climate, the need to change the narrative on poverty and support policy and practice change that will impact real peoples' lives is greater than ever. We hope that you will remain engaged and active in the network at this crucial time.

Anela Anwar

Convenor



DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

'Too many people in Scotland are locked in poverty.' It is a statement the Poverty Alliance has repeated many times over the last year, and one that we will doubtlessly repeat many times over the coming years. Official figures published earlier in 2019 back up the statement, showing that around 1 in 5 people, more than 1 million Scots, were living on a low income. For most people reading this report such statistics will be very familiar.

But for many Scots such statistics are met with either scepticism or fatalism. Either they just can't believe that so many people in Scotland are really living on a low income, or they think that it has always been the case and there is not much we can do about it. The Poverty Alliance's members and supporters know that these figures are unfortunately very true, but we also know that we can certainly change this reality.

It is this goal, to change policy and practice in ways that help to tackle poverty, that we have all been working on over the last year. Despite the difficult political, economic and social context that we have been working in for many years now, we have continued to make progress where we can, and it is important to celebrate the successes when we can. It is by showing what is possible and what can be achieved that we begin to win over both the sceptics and the fatalists.

Over the last year we have launched new programmes to help more people in communities engage in issues around poverty, we have continued to reach out to more organisations and individuals to help change the narrative on poverty and have supported practice change that will lead to real changes in individuals lives. Our new Get Heard Scotland was developed and launched to provide a means for local groups to help contribute to Local Child Poverty Delivery Plans. We will continue to learn from this new initiative, refining the ways in which we can help to ensure that people with experience of poverty are at the heart of local policy making.

Our work to grow the network of accredited Living Wage employers has also continued apace in 2018-19, with the network growing by more than 30 per cent ensuring that thousands more Scottish workers receive the real Living Wage. We also launched the new 'Making Living Wage Places' initiative in Dundee in March, which represents a new and exciting phase in this work. As well as the practical change that our Living Wage Scotland project has made, we have also made sure that the Living Wage remained at the heart of the Scottish Government approach to decent employment, which we saw in the publication of the new Fair Work Action Plan.

We know that it takes more than policy to make the kinds of changes that we need to really address poverty.



Photo credit: Callum Bennetts

Changing what we believe is possible with regard to poverty, engaging the sceptics and the fatalists, is important to make real change. Our work on the Challenge Poverty Week initiative, has continued to grow and will hopefully lay the basis for changing the narrative on poverty in Scotland. There is, of course, a need to grow this work and to reach out across the UK and ensure that a broader network of anti-poverty organisations is working together to make the changes we need. This will be work that we will take forward in the coming years.

Our member organisations, and the people with direct experience of poverty that we work with, are crucial to the success of all the work that we do. So too has been our growing staff team. We have strengthened our Living Wage Scotland team and our communications team, who have all had a significant impact on our work. We should also thank Rachel Thomson who worked on campaigns for the Poverty Alliance and moved on last year. I would also like to thank all of our board members, particularly Anela Anwar our convenor and Hugh Foy our vice convenor for the leadership they have provided. Finally I would like to also thank all of our funders who have made this work possible. All of this support, from staff, board, members and funders, will become even more vital as we face significant challenges in the years ahead. By working together we can, I believe, continue to lay the basis for the poverty free Scotland that we all desire.

Peter Kelly
Director

KEY ACTIVITIES

In 2018-19 we focused our activity in five areas to help us fulfil our objectives. These five areas of activity were:

1. To support the development of policy and practice which promote social justice and combat poverty;
2. To work with people and communities to help them challenge poverty;
3. To work with organisations to build a strong anti-poverty network in Scotland;
4. To raise awareness, encourage debate and action on poverty; and
5. To provide high quality research and knowledge about poverty in Scotland

A wide range of activities are carried out by the staff team with our members and many others in each of these areas.

INFLUENCING POLICY AND PRACTICE

We spent much of the year 2018-19 following up on key legislative successes secured in the previous year. The Child Poverty Act has set stretching targets for the reduction of child poverty that will require action by the Scottish Government, local authorities, Health Board, the private sector and voluntary organisations. The Poverty Alliance has a role in ensuring that the key commitments made by the Scottish Government in its Child Poverty Delivery Plan (CPDP) are implemented.

We have identified the development of the Income Supplement, a new policy that was announced in the CPDP, was a key area for our activity in the last year. We met with officials who were designing the payment and brought members together to discuss with the Scottish Government their hopes for the Income Supplement. This work has ultimately proved to be successful, with the Scottish Government committing to the early introduction a new Scottish Child Payment of £10 per week, which will have a potentially significant impact on child poverty in the years to come.

We have also been developing our approach to engaging with local authority and other public sector stakeholders in relation to the development of Local Child Poverty Action Reports. This is work that has been carried out through our Get Heard Scotland programme and is described in more detail below. However, a key part of this work is to seek to influence local policy.



We have focused our activity in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dumfries and Galloway, and we have been encouraged by the initial results of this work. As well as focusing on the local level, this work has also contributed to our work at the national level, providing evidence which has enabled us to engage with MSPs and Scottish Government officials on issues of transport and poverty. We have also worked with the Poverty and Inequality Commission on the issue of transport and poverty. We will continue to work on issues of transport and poverty over the coming year as the new Transport Strategy is in development.

We have also continued to engage in policy and practice change in a number of other areas: we are active members of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Panel and have been working with the Panel to look at how it could better engage with the lived experience of poverty. We also remain active in the Carnegie UK Trust's Affordable Credit Action Group and will look to increase our activity in this area in the coming year. Over the last year we were able to bring our knowledge gained from the Affordable Credit Action Group and ensure that it was fed into policy.

In-work poverty has remained a key focus for the Poverty Alliance over the last year. For more than 10 years we have been campaigning on this issue and we can see a real impact from this work. By the end of the financial year through our Living Wage Scotland project we had accredited more than 1,400 employers in Scotland, delivering pay increases to thousands of workers in the private, public and voluntary sectors. This work, delivered in partnership with the Living Wage Foundation, has meant that we are now working alongside a range of employers and are reaching out to sectors where low pay is particularly problematic. We have been very encouraged by the progress that has been made in the hospitality sector over the last year and look forward to working with more employers in this area to bring about change.



A significant step forward for Living Wage Scotland was the development and launch of the 'Making Living Wage Places' initiative. Working alongside key employers in the private, voluntary and public sector we developed a scheme that will help ensure that more workers receive the Living Wage through this innovative place-based approach. We were delighted that Dundee became the first city in the UK to be recognised under the scheme, and would like to thank Dundee City Council, Xplore Dundee, DC Thompson, the Dundee Chamber of Commerce and Dundee Voluntary Action for helping to make it happen. Early indications are that the initiative is encouraging other employers in the city to become accredited and will help make Dundee a real Living Wage city for even more workers.

An issue of mounting concern over recent years has been the growing number of people using food banks. Poverty, and particularly acute income crises, lies behind this increase so in 2017-18 we worked with Oxfam Scotland, Nourish Scotland and CPAG Scotland to launch the Menu for Change project, that sought to reduce reliance on foodbanks by improving local systems. In the last year the project has worked intensively in Fife, Dundee and East Ayrshire. Using Action Learning Sets to deliver practical changes in systems at the local level that will ensure that people in crisis can access food in dignified and rights-based ways. Using an Action Learning Set methodology, we have worked with local advice providers, foodbanks, local authority staff and others to develop a range of solutions to help people experiencing food insecurity. In the last year the project also supported several pilot projects working on innovative solutions to issues of food insecurity to launch.

These will run until late 2019. In addition, the project has also worked with groups of people with lived experience of food insecurity, ensuring that this experience informed the work of the project.

People with lived experience also played a crucial role in contributing to our support for the 'Foodbank as It Is' play, which had performances in Glasgow, Edinburgh and at the Scottish Parliament thanks to the support and input from the project.

Photo credit: Alistair Kingsbury





Photo credit: Erika Stevenson

WORKING WITH PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

We have strengthened our work with community organisations and with people experiencing poverty over the last year. The Get Heard Scotland programme has given us new opportunities to work in more focused ways with community organisations and with people with experience of poverty. People with experience of poverty contributed to the design of the toolkit which is at the heart of the project. We delivered 28 workshops as part of the Get Heard Scotland programme, mostly in Glasgow and Edinburgh. We hope to build on this next year, working more in Highland, North Ayrshire and Midlothian. We will also ensure that the views that are collected through the Get Heard process are used as evidence in the next iterations of the Local Child Poverty Action Reports.

Our work with people experiencing poverty was also crucial for our contribution to policy developments around transport and local democracy. We worked with the Poverty and Inequality Commission and Oxfam Scotland to organise events in Glasgow and Lairg involving people with direct experience of poverty to discuss issues of transport and poverty. Again, this is work that will be followed up in the year to come.

When the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, Philip Alston, visited Glasgow in November 2018 we ensured that he met with people with direct experience of poverty in a visit we organised to Cranhill Development Trust in Glasgow. We have also played a key role in supporting the lived experience groups in the Menu for Change Project that have been important in development of the project.

Our Community Activist Advisory Group (CAAG) remains central to our work with people with direct experience of poverty. Not only does the group contribute to our policy responses but has been increasingly involved in media activity associated with campaigns work. In addition, we once again supported members of our CAAG to attend the annual European Meeting of People with experience of Poverty in Brussels. Over the coming year we will be strengthening the work of the CAAG, revising the terms of reference, providing more structured training for the group and creating more opportunities for development.



Photo credit: Erika Stevenson



NETWORKING

Alongside the engagement of people with experience of poverty, another key aspect of the Poverty Alliance's work is building our network of supporters in the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. All of our work is increasingly focused on considerations of how we build a stronger network, whether it is through our policy and practice work, our community engagement activity, or our campaigning work. Building this network includes essential activity such as providing regular information to our members through our e-news service, distributing the Scottish Anti-Poverty Review, and sharing information on relevant consultation processes.

We have remained active in the European Anti-Poverty Network. Peter Kelly's role as one of the Vice Presidents of EAPN came to an end in 2018, although the Poverty Alliance is still represented on the Executive Committee of the network. We will remain a point of contact for the network in the UK, particularly as the UK goes through the process of leaving the EU. However, our focus in this area will be in re-establishing a network of UK anti-poverty organisations. We will take forward this work in 2019-20.

A very wide range of events took place last year that helped to build our network, this included specific member only events on issues such as Basic Income, Scottish poverty trends and the Income Supplement. We also arranged a members meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty when he visited Scotland in November 2018. In addition, we also delivered large and small networking events, with our annual conference last year bringing together around 100 people to discuss the Scottish Government local governance review.

TRAINING

Our Poverty Awareness Training is delivered to frontline and policy staff in public agencies in Scotland. Much of this work has been delivered in the last year in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council, where we have been commissioned to provide the training to over 1,000 members of staff. This work is part of the authority's anti-poverty strategy and will continue into 2019-20. The evaluation of this work will feed into our plans for the development of Poverty Awareness Training in the future.

As part of Challenge Poverty Week, we also developed our training on 'framing' poverty. A wide range of groups undertook training to help them frame their messages on poverty more effectively. This training was well received and we aim to increase the number and depth of the training that we offer in this area in 2019-20.



AWARENESS RAISING

We have continued to produce a range of publications, including the Scottish Anti-Poverty Review, leaflets and briefing sheets. We also produced a number of parliamentary briefings and evidence papers on a wide range of issues including child poverty, transport and fuel poverty. Prior to the UN Rapporteurs visit in 2018, we produced a document containing key policy demands that had emerged out of the Poverty Alliance's work in recent years.

Challenge Poverty Week has become a key part of our awareness raising work. We have been organising the Week since 2013 but the activity in 2018 represented the biggest year so far. More than 110 organisations delivered almost 200 activities ranging from conferences and seminars to blogs and community days. We secured more than 80 comments in local and national media over the course of the week. A key dimension of the Week is not simply to have more events organised, but to begin to change the way we talk about poverty. This desire feeds over into all areas of our media and communications activity and so we have worked with key organisations outside of Challenge Poverty Week to help ensure that their messages are framed in ways that are most helpful for shifting the narrative.

We are grateful to the support that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has provided to help develop Challenge Poverty Week.

We have continued to be active in a range of campaigns and coalitions. The Give Me Five campaign, which is coordinated by CAPG Scotland, has played a key role in pushing forward proposals on the Income Supplement.

The Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform continued to be a key campaigning vehicle for the Poverty Alliance and we have supported its work over the last year. As we have focused much of our energies on Challenge Poverty Week, we have taken the opportunity to pause and reflect on the future direction of the anti-stigma campaign, Stick Your Labels. This has been very successful, with more than 60 organisations pledging to take part, but now is the time to review how this campaign is framed and how it can develop in the future. We will complete this review in the year 2019-20.

As we have continued to expand our work around Living Wage Scotland we also sought to review the future direction of the Scottish Living Wage Campaign, which we launched in 2007. We organised two listening events in 2018 and will continue to look at the future of this campaign, alongside the future development Living Wage Scotland.





Photo credit: Erika Stevenson

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE

Over the last year we have continued to develop our work on generating new evidence that can be used to help address poverty. Get Heard Scotland is a key means of gathering evidence on the experience of poverty and on the actions needed to address it. However, we have developed expertise in carrying out rigorous, high quality qualitative research on a wide range of poverty related topics. A key part of our work in this area in the last year has been our contribution to the research on food insecurity as part of the Menu for Change project. The fieldwork for the research for this project was completed during the last year, and provides an in depth, longitudinal approach to understanding experiences of food insecurity. The evidence has already been used to feed into policy responses. A full research report will be published in the autumn of 2019.

Our partnership with the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) at Glasgow Caledonian University has been strengthened over the last year. We have worked together on a number of research related events and activities. This has included jointly hosting the annual Challenge Poverty Lecture as part of Challenge Poverty Week in October 2018. We were delighted to have Professor Kate Pickett, author of the Spirit Level, deliver the lecture to a packed audience. We also worked with SPIRU to deliver two seminars as part of the European ReInvest project. The first of these brought speakers together from partners in Scotland, England and Belgium to discuss the main conclusions from the research, which has looked at the impact of the economic crisis from 2008 on the 'social investment' policies.

The second seminar was an opportunity to explore the co-production of research evidence, which was at the heart of the ReInvest project. This seminar brought together people with lived experience of poverty from Ireland and Scotland to discuss their experiences of being involved in the research process.

Our research partnership with Fife Gingerbread has continued in 2018-19. We have continued our support of the evaluation of the Making it Work employability project. This is a partnership project involving four agencies, Fife Gingerbread, Clued Up, Citizen Advice Rights Fife and Supported Employment Service (SES) and involved tracking households across the project experiencing an intervention as well as reflections from practitioners across the respective agencies.

Our research into anti-poverty organisations engagement with issues around smoking was completed and published in March 2019. This work was carried out in partnership with ASH Scotland and was funded by Cancer Research UK. The research has found that there is still much to be done to engage anti-poverty organisations in issues of smoking cessation. The Alliance is exploring follow up work with ASH Scotland that would see us taking forward the recommendations in the report.

Finally, we are working with Professor Sharon Wright and colleagues at the University of Glasgow to carry out a study of the roll out of full-service Universal Credit in Glasgow. This research, which will be completed in 2019-20 and is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, will provide insights from the perspective of those receiving UC and those delivering the benefit.

FINANCE REPORT

The financial position of the Poverty Alliance has been stable for the last two years, due in large part to the generous support for the organisation's work from the Scottish Government. The last financial year was the first of indicative three year funding agreement between the Alliance and Scottish Government covering the organisation up to March 2021. We have secured core funding to support the development of the Get Heard Scotland programme and we are delighted to receive an increase in funding to support the work of Living Wage Scotland. This funding allows us to reach more employers, ensuring that low paid workers receive the real Living Wage and that we are able to generate additional income in the future.

Aside from our core funding we have continued to win the support of other funders for a range of policy, research and training activity. We continued our work on food insecurity, funded by the Big Lottery Fund via Oxfam Scotland. As in previous years our research work has become an important source of income, with grants from Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Cancer Research UK and the European Commission. We have also further strengthened our campaigns activity through an increased grant from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to support additional activity on Challenge Poverty Week.

The board of the Poverty Alliance will begin the process of preparing for our next five year strategy in 2019-20. A key element of this strategy will be ensuring that the Poverty Alliance remains financially viable into the future. Whilst we have been successful in stabilising our funding, there is still a need to secure new sources of funding, particularly sources that can support our vital policy and campaigns activity. Over the next 18 months the Board will work with our staff team, our members and our funders to ensure that the Poverty Alliance continues to be able to deliver on its core aims. As always, we thank all of our funders, including our members, for their support.

Income	2018-19	2017-18
Donations	1,411	1,828
Charitable activities	746,422	732,719
Other trading activities	37,325	40,448
Other income	77	41
Total	785,235	775,036

Expenditure	2018-19	2017-18
Charitable activities	774,821	704,260
Total	774,821	704,260
Net movements in funds	10,414	70,776
Balance brought forward	290,821	220,045
Balance carried forward	301,235	290,821

STAFF AND BOARD, APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2019

BOARD MEMBERS

Anela Anwar, Oxfam Scotland (Convenor)
Nick Bailey, University of Glasgow (Treasurer) (co-opted) (until 26 October 2018)
Hugh Foy, Xaverian Missionaries UK Province (Vice Convenor)
John Dickie, Child Poverty Action Group
Jill Wood, Engender (until 27 April 2018)
Bill Scott, Inclusion Scotland
Irena Paterson, Moray Disability Forum
Mary McLean, Western Isles Healthy Partnership
Dave Moxham, Scottish Trades Union Congress
David Liddell, Scottish Drugs Forum
Fiona Garven, Scottish Community Development Centre (co-opted)
Rachel McEwen, Scottish & Southern Electricity Ltd (co-opted)
Emma Richardson, North Thumberland Council (co-opted)
Nuala Watt, Community Activist Advisory Group (co-opted)

STAFF TEAM APRIL

Peter Kelly, Director
Robin Tennant, Fieldwork Manager
Twimukye Mushaka, Senior Fieldwork Development Officer
Neil Cowan, Policy and Parliamentary Officer
Frances Rayner, Communications Officer (from 3 September 2018)
Rachel Thomson, Campaign and Policy Assistant (until 11 March 2019)
Fiona McHardy, Research and Information Manager
Lynn Law, Research Officer (p-t) (until January 2019)
Laura Robertson, Research Officer (from 4 February 2019)
Anna Baillie, Project Officer (Menu for Change)
Julie McGahan, Living Wage Scotland Manager (p-t)
Jack Evans, Living Wage Scotland Manager
Lynn Anderson, Living Wage Places National Co-ordinator
Lynn Cunningham, Living Wage Accreditation Officer (until 1 May 2018)
Christine McCaig, Living Wage Accreditation Officer (from 2 July 2018)
Iain Russell, Living Wage Accreditation Officer (from 2 July 2018)
Rachel Morrison, Living Wage Accreditation Officer (from 2 July 2018)
Poe McHugh, Administration and Finance Manager
Patricia Di-Tommaso, Administrative Assistant (p-t)
Lesley Sherwood, Administrative Assistant (p-t)
Jiyoung Kim, Administrative Assistant (from 30 April 2018)



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