

Challenge Poverty Week 2024 Faith Leaders' Statement

We commend to everybody, whatever your faith or religious belief, work to eradicate poverty.

During Challenge Poverty Week, we extend an invitation for prayer, reflection or meditation on the structural and systemic causes of poverty.

We offer our encouragement and hope for inspiration to action which can overcome the barriers to fairness, equal opportunity and compassion.

This year we highlight in particular the growing interest in and support for a Minimum Income Guarantee, which seeks to reform work, social security and the provision of essential services like childcare to guarantee everyone would have sufficient income.

In essence the Minimum Income Guarantee is all about enough: it comes down to one very simple question: do we believe that everyone should have enough to lead a decent, dignified and healthy life?

The biggest reason why people are pulled into and trapped in poverty are because of the broken structures and systems that exist in our society:

- Social security systems that do not meet the needs of those who need a safety net.
- Unaffordable child and social care that are out of reach for far too many families.
- Low wages and precarious employment arrangements that even working hard is not enough to afford a basic standard of living,
- A lack of suitable and affordable housing that means home is temporary for over 10,000 children in Scotland today.
- Insufficient income, rising prices.

These are the injustices that push people into poverty and keep them trapped there.

A Minimum Income Guarantee would help break generational cycles of financial and material poverty, addressing Scotland's rate of 23% of children living in absolute poverty and 12% of children in deprivation, going without household basics. We believe in hope, we believe a fairer society is possible

We share a view that the values of community, solidarity, neighbourliness, hospitality and kindness should be the cornerstones of our society, and that everyone should have enough to be able to live life without the fear of not having enough or exclusion which poverty brings.

The Minimum Income Guarantee is a big bold idea, but one that can be delivered. At its heart the desire to build a just and compassionate Scotland, where everyone has sufficient income and the opportunity to flourish. Something that we can all work towards.

Signatories

Rev Colin C Brown

Moderator
United Free Church of Scotland

Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills

Convener, Inter Faith Relations Committee
Scottish Episcopal Church

Ali Hussnain

Co-Chair
Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society

Emma Jackson

Convener, Public Life and Social Justice
The Church of Scotland

Madhu Jain

Jain Community and Hindu Mandir, Glasgow

Jill Kent

Chairperson, Justice & Peace Scotland

Acharya Medinipati Mishra Ji

Hindu Mandir, Glasgow

Ravinder Kaur Nijjar

Advisor Sikhs in Scotland
Sikh Representative, Scottish Religious Leaders Forum
Chair, Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network
Vice Chair, Religions for Peace UK
Board Member, RfP International Women's Coordinating Committee
Board Member European Women of Faith Network

Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson

Moderator of the General Assembly
The Church of Scotland

Rev Lindsey Sanderson

Moderator, National Synod of Scotland
The United Reformed Church

Dr Maureen Sier

Director
Interfaith Scotland

Most Rev Mark Strange

Bishop of Moray, Ross & Caithness and Primus
Scottish Episcopal Church

Ameed Versace

Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society