

# Taking Forward The Government Economic Strategy:

A Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty,  
Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland

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Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland

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# **Taking Forward The Government Economic Strategy: A Discussion Paper On Tackling Poverty, Inequality And Deprivation In Scotland**

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# TAKING FORWARD THE GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STRATEGY: A DISCUSSION PAPER ON TACKLING POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND DEPRIVATION IN SCOTLAND

## Introduction

1. The overarching Purpose of the Scottish Government is “**to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.**”

2. Sustainable economic growth is therefore the one central Purpose to which all else in government is directed and contributes.

3. The *Government Economic Strategy (GES)* sets out how we will deliver on that Purpose through an entirely fresh approach. It identifies five strategic priorities through which growth will be driven - and also sets out, for the first time in Scotland, a number of national, time-bound Purpose targets.

4. The focus of the *GES* is on maximising Scotland’s richest resource - its people - and on making Scotland a wealthier *and* a fairer place. The *GES* is clear, therefore, that delivering sustainable economic growth must also involve delivering on the Government’s three ‘Golden Rules’ of Solidarity, Cohesion and Sustainability.

5. The Cohesion Golden Rule involves giving greater priority to achieving more balanced growth across Scotland, to give all across Scotland the chance to succeed. The Solidarity Golden Rule, on the other hand, involves providing the opportunities, and incentives, for all to contribute to Scotland’s sustainable economic growth.

6. As the *GES* makes clear, delivering on the Solidarity Golden Rule will mean focusing “Government policy...on reducing inequality in Scotland and influence[ing] the UK Government to ensure welfare reform addresses Scotland’s social equity issues.”

7. Quite apart from the economic imperative, we believe Scotland must tackle poverty because of the blight and strain it places on individuals’ lives, on the communities in which they live, and on society in general; we believe Scotland has a proud history and ethos of being a compassionate nation with a strong sense of social justice and addressing the needs of the vulnerable, and we want to embrace this ethos on the basis that it is simply morally unacceptable that over 20% of our children still live in poverty

8. This discussion paper will help inform the Scottish Government’s development of a framework for delivering the aspects of the *GES* related to tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation, most prominently reflected in the Solidarity Golden Rule but also in other aspects such as learning, skills, health and wellbeing.

9. The framework is intended to improve the co-ordination of action by the Scottish Government, its agencies and our delivery partners to tackle poverty, inequality and deprivation; to explain how the various policies being pursued across the Government come together to contribute to a coherent and unified approach to

tackling these challenges; to audit and review these policies and identify any gaps, setting the future direction for work on tackling poverty in Scotland, in the context of the *GES*; and to articulate how national policy will connect with local policies and delivery on the ground, working with partners to maximise the impact on poverty, particularly child poverty, in Scotland.

10. This paper is designed to spark discussion and debate to help us develop a framework in a way which reflects the views and concerns of partners and stakeholders beyond the Scottish Government. It sets out some broad proposals for the future direction of anti-poverty policy in Scotland, and seeks to clarify where the Scottish Government can maximise its impact on poverty, in partnership with the UK Government and others. It identifies key questions and issues to address through the consultation process leading to development of an approach which in particular will help deliver the Solidarity Golden Rule - providing the opportunities and incentives for all to contribute to Scotland's sustainable economic growth.

11. The Concordat between the Government and CoSLA and the development of single outcome agreements has established a new relationship between central and local government. This is a relationship based on trust, mutual respect and full partnership working on the development of strategic approaches and achievement of shared outcomes. It also recognises the strategic role of local authorities in pursuing their own policy priorities for tackling poverty and providing services to address the needs of the most vulnerable. CoSLA is therefore working as a full partner with the Government in taking forward this work.

12. Policies to tackle poverty in Scotland, as in the rest of the UK, have developed considerably over recent years, and we now have a better understanding of the key issues and barriers to greater progress, as well as a clearer idea of what works to prevent people falling into poverty or to help lift them out of it. We must draw on this evidence in considering what our future approach should be. We must also draw on the expertise of people working in the field and, importantly, from people experiencing poverty themselves. The development of our framework will be an inclusive process as we seek to draw on the knowledge and experience of people from right across Scotland on what is working and what more needs to be done to tackle poverty effectively in Scotland.

13. The final section of this paper outlines our plans for consultation and how you can get involved.

### **What do we mean by Solidarity, Cohesion, Income Inequality and Poverty?**

14. *Income Inequality* refers to the gap between the highest and lowest earning households. Income inequality can be reduced by lowering the income of the highest earners, or raising the income of the lowest earners. Reducing inequality does not necessarily lead to a reduction in poverty.

15. The *Solidarity* Golden Rule, as set out in the *GES*, is backed by a corresponding Purpose target – namely, “to increase overall income and the proportion of income earned by the three lowest income deciles as a group by 2017.”

16. The 670,000 adults and 210,000 children who are in relative poverty in Scotland are all within the lowest two income deciles. Therefore increasing the

incomes of households in each of the lowest three deciles should have a positive effect on tackling poverty and contribute to the achievement of the UK wide target to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

17. The *Cohesion* Golden Rule, as set out in the *GES*, is backed by a corresponding Purpose target aimed at “narrow[ing] the gap in participation between Scotland’s best and worst performing regions by 2017”. In Scotland 600,000 of the adult population are economically inactive and 285,000 are on Incapacity Benefit. Delivering on the Cohesion target involves continuing the work already started under the *Workforce Plus* employability framework – and narrowing the gap in economic activity between Scotland’s best and worst performing regions. Reducing these geographical disparities is an important objective in promoting equity across different areas of Scotland and tackling the challenges of regenerating communities suffering from concentrated multiple deprivation.

18. *Poverty* is technically defined as when a person’s household income (adjusted for the size and composition of the household) is less than 60% of the UK median income. The Government also uses a measure to assess fuel poverty, based not only on income but also on fuel prices and the energy efficiency of homes.

19. This discussion paper is designed to inform the development of a framework for achieving the *GES*’s Solidarity Golden Rule, contributing to the Cohesion Golden Rule, and articulating the links to other relevant aspects of the *GES*.

20. In seeking to reduce poverty and inequality we want to improve the wellbeing of people in Scotland. However we need to think about poverty more broadly than merely in terms of income. As well as having an adequate income tackling poverty involves ensuring that individuals and communities they live in have access to other key material and non-material resources such as education, health and housing. Breaking down the structural barriers to these opportunities is key to the task. It is also about ensuring that all individuals and communities have the capacity to access these resources and the opportunity to develop their potential - to equip people with the capabilities to maximise their life chances, as defined by their health, education and skills, physical environment, working status and so on.

21. In rural areas other factors may also contribute to poverty, such as lack of access to services and the fragility of remote communities. These can compound the effects of low income, educational achievement and poor health on life opportunities, and the capacity to seize them. There are also strong correlations between poverty and a lack of environmental sustainability.

22. In analysing poverty we must also recognise the importance that the issues experienced by men and women may be gender-specific and demand distinct approaches to be taken in addressing the needs of men and women. For example the vast majority of lone parents – a key group for tackling both adult and child poverty – are women, and this may suggest the need for a gendered approach to the interventions which are made for them.

## **Our Commitment to Tackling Poverty**

23. As indicated above, we believe that tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation is vital if we are to achieve the Government's Purpose. The evidence is clear that the continued existence of poverty acts as a drag on economic growth and both contributes to, and derives from, a range of other social problems.

24. Scotland is too small a country to waste some of its most precious economic resource – its people – by not realising their full potential. We will not be able to achieve our ambitions for sustainable economic growth while too many fail to realise their potential. In an increasingly competitive global marketplace this failure diminishes our attractiveness as a place to do business with and invest in – and reduces our supply of skilled labour.

25. We need all who are able to contribute to a thriving Scottish economy to do so. Scotland has among the best employment rates in the EU27<sup>1</sup> but there are still too many people out of work, unable to provide for themselves and their families, and therefore stifling our economic potential. There are also a significant number of people who are in work, but who are low-skilled or unskilled and earning insufficient income to lift themselves out of poverty – 50% of all children in poverty live in a household where at least one adult works. By equipping Scotland's citizens with the skills and attributes they need to become economically active we can ensure that they are able to secure a decent income and quality of life for their family, while contributing to the Scottish economy.

26. It is also clear that dealing with the consequences of poverty has a considerable impact on the public purse in terms of additional costs in providing education, children's social services, free school meals, primary and acute healthcare, and housing.

27. Added to this are the knock-on effects in later life of child poverty: less likelihood of employment and therefore higher expenditure on benefits and less tax receipts, greater likelihood of: crime; being a lone parent; having poorer health; being a substance abuser; and becoming homeless. It is clear that if we can shift the bulk of resources and efforts from crisis managing the consequences of poverty to preventing it and tackling its root causes then the gains, both economic and societal, will be massive. The challenge is to identify how we effect this transformation.

28. Continued poverty not only affects the adults involved by condemning them to a life of financial struggle, reduced life chances, and a greater risk of suffering poor physical and mental wellbeing. Poverty among families also affects everyone in the household. We know that children who grow up in poor households are more likely to grow up to be poor adults themselves, and that they are more likely to achieve fewer qualifications and be less likely to enter Higher Education, to be more likely to have poor physical and mental health, and to suffer from worklessness in adult life.

29. Concentrations of poverty also damage the communities affected. The evidence on the gap between Scotland's most deprived communities and the rest of

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<sup>1</sup> The current 27 members of the European Union



Scotland presented in the 2005 report *Social Focus on Deprived Areas*<sup>2</sup> is stark. Deprived communities suffer considerable disadvantage across the full spectrum of indicators – from education and health to crime and housing – when compared to their more affluent neighbours. Poverty therefore drags down communities by affecting the people living there and can lead to the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

30. We have made clear our commitment to tackling these issues throughout our national outcomes framework:

- The overarching Purpose of the Scottish Government is to create a more successful country, with opportunities for *all* of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.
- We are clear that the Solidarity Golden Rule, as set out in the *GES*, is central to the delivery of the Purpose.
- We have developed a national Performance Framework incorporating the following:

*Outcome 7: We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish Society*

*Indicator 10: To decrease the proportion of individuals living in poverty*

- And beyond these priorities we have also focused across the range of national outcomes and indicators on making progress in areas which will directly contribute to tackling poverty by getting at the root causes which lie in areas such as health, education and employment.

31. At the same time we have made clear our commitment to the UK Government child poverty targets. We are committed to doing all within the powers available to us to help achieve the milestone to halve child poverty (from a 1998/99 baseline) by 2010, and the goal of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

32. The poverty indicator will be reported annually through the *Households Below Average Income* statistics derived from the *Family Resources Survey* and will be disaggregated to show progress for children, working age adults, and pensioners. We will also disaggregate the statistics, as far as we are able, to show how the incidence of poverty breaks down within and across Scotland (for example, for key equality groups, for urban and rural Scotland, and for the most deprived communities.) This will help to determine whether, and where, efforts need to be targeted at a sub-Scotland level. The latest annual poverty statistics (for the year 2006-07) will be published in March 2008.

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<sup>2</sup> Social Focus on Deprived Areas, 2005, Scottish Executive.

## Key Principles

33. In developing the framework, there are some key principles that we will seek to ensure are at the heart of our plans for the future:

- A focus on tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty
- An approach that improves the internal capacity of disadvantaged individuals to lift themselves and their families out of poverty by developing their resilience, while also seeking to tackle the structural barriers (such as market failures, unresponsive public services or prejudice and discrimination) that prevent some people from accessing the opportunities available to others
- A focus on early intervention and prevention wherever possible – to break the cycle of disadvantage
- A focus on providing work for those who can work, alongside support for those who can't – this should of course be sustainable work that lifts households out of poverty and provides real personal development opportunities
- A conviction that everyone – regardless of their circumstances – should be supported to achieve their potential
- The need for gendered analyses - and, where necessary, gendered approaches
- Targeted support for the most disadvantaged – but within a framework of universal service provision and a minimum 'offer' that we expect everyone to be able to access
- The promotion and adoption of partnership working and seamless service provision which effectively connects with individuals and successfully moves them through the system (with service providers focusing on what they do best and then passing people on) in order that, as far as is feasible, they make progress at every stage and do not become stuck in the 'revolving door' of support services, circulating in and out of poverty or work
- Delivery of sustained, holistic, personalised support which is client rather than provider-focused and equips individuals to sustain themselves into the future
- The adoption of policies and services that are founded upon user involvement, consultation with people experiencing poverty, and community engagement and empowerment, so that policies and practice are informed by the real experience of those whom we are trying to help
- Achievement of the right balance between closing the gap/tackling inequality and helping the very poorest in society
- The development of more active public engagement around poverty in Scotland as an issue which should concern us all and which requires action from the private as well as the public and third sectors

### *Key questions*

34. Through the consultation process we will be seeking views on these principles.

- Are they the right ones?
- Are there others that we should be adopting?

- Is there potential for some to compete with others?
- How do we ensure that they are in turn adopted by key delivery bodies and agencies?
- Given that there is a finite resource available to deliver on these laudable aims, what is it feasible to expect and should we prioritise some over others?

### **Achieving both Economic Growth and Reduced Income Inequality and Poverty**

35. As indicated above, the *GES* makes it clear that our Purpose is to provide opportunities for *all* of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth. That is why we have made *equity* one of our strategic priorities in the *GES* and why we have developed a set of Golden Rules to determine the characteristics of growth.

36. Experience from other countries shows us that this is a difficult dual goal to achieve. While a number of countries, particularly the Arc of Prosperity<sup>3</sup> countries which surround Scotland, have achieved higher economic growth in the last decade or so, this has not always been achieved alongside reduced income inequality or poverty. For example, while Ireland achieved an average GDP growth rate of 6.8% between 1998-2005, over the same period poverty actually increased by 2%, while income inequality hardly changed.

37. International experience therefore tells us that while it is possible to achieve strong economic growth and reduce poverty and income inequality, countries that achieve all three over the medium term are the exception rather than the rule. In addition, work undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>4</sup> found that the poorest 25% in society have benefited less than the rest of society from the increase in UK prosperity over the last 20 years. We will therefore need to consider carefully how we can achieve balanced progress on all 3 indicators of success.

38. We will be doing further international comparative work to consider what other countries can teach us about balancing growth and greater equality and will share this with consultees during the consultation process.

39. The central question on which we want to seek people's views is therefore: **how best can we achieve economic growth and reduced poverty and income inequality in Scotland?** What policies are key within the existing powers available to the Scottish Government? Who are the key actors who we must influence to ensure we achieve all of our goals? What role might the private sector play in helping to achieve this aspiration?

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<sup>3</sup> The Arc of Prosperity countries referred to here include Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland and Ireland.

<sup>4</sup> Darton, D and Strelitz, J (2003) Tackling UK Poverty and Disadvantage in the Twenty-First Century, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

## Numbers of People in Poverty in Scotland Today

40. There are 880,000 individuals living in relative poverty in Scotland. This represents 18 per cent of the population.

41. Children and working-age adults living in working families form a large proportion (38 per cent) of the poorest in Scotland, even though the risk of poverty is far higher for those in workless families (35 per cent of people in workless families are poor compared to 10 per cent of people in working families.)

*Chart: Number of children, working age adults and pensioners in the lowest 3 deciles, in poverty and in severe poverty in Scotland 2005/06*

		In Lowest 3 Deciles		In Poverty		In Severe Poverty	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Children</b>	in <b>working</b> households	220,000	26%	110,000	13%	30,000	4%
	in <b>workless</b> households	130,000	83%	100,000	64%	20,000	10%
<b>Working-age adults</b>	in <b>working</b> households	400,000	16%	210,000	8%	70,000	3%
	in <b>workless</b> households	360,000	62%	260,000	46%	100,000	17%
<b>Pensioners</b>		390,000	42%	190,000	20%	30,000	3%
<b>All individuals</b>		1,500,000	30%	880,000	18%	240,000	5%

Source: Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2005/06

Poverty is defined as having an equivalised net income of less than 60% of the UK median, before housing costs.

Severe poverty is defined as having an equivalised net income of less than 40% of the UK median, before housing costs.

Percentages are per group, e.g. 13% of children in working households are living in poverty.

42. Further statistical information and recent trends can be found at Annex A, which provides an overview of the evidence base.

## Key Areas for Action by the Scottish Government

43. We believe that levers available to the Scottish Government under the current devolution settlement enable us to tackle poverty in 3 broad ways. These recognise that many people are already in poverty and that there is therefore a need for actions which address the consequences of poverty, as well as measures to prevent poverty:

- Prevention of poverty and tackling the root causes – these include addressing educational disadvantage and underachievement; tackling poor health; providing more choices and more chances for vulnerable young people at risk of disengagement; tackling worklessness – particularly deep-rooted pockets of inter-generational worklessness; providing the best start in the early years so that all children can achieve their potential; and regenerating our most disadvantaged communities suffering from concentrated deprivation.

There are also deeper societal causes which need to be addressed; these are to do with the discriminatory attitudes and values underlying life in Scotland today, ranging from perceptions of class, the worth we attach to different kinds of employment and childcare (and the balance between the two), and the degree to which people are provided with genuine choices to access the opportunities offered to them, for example through the provision of effective support to families that allows parents to take up employment or further their education.

- Helping to lift people out of poverty – for example, by improving employability (through more *and* better employment and through ‘one door’ employability services that provide clients with a joined-up package from Jobcentre Plus, economic development, health, social and childcare services) so that people can take advantage of the opportunities that economic growth will provide; improving individuals’ mental wellbeing and resilience; enhancing the availability and quality of advice and information services; promoting benefit take-up to ensure that people entitled to benefits and tax credits maximise their incomes; helping people through key transition points in their lives (such as when they leave school, return to work, or leave the care system); tackling substance misuse and homelessness; and reducing re-offending.
- Alleviating the impact of poverty on people’s lives – for example, by increasing entitlement and encouraging the take-up of free school meals; through the abolition of prescription charges; by funding free personal care for older people; providing free bus travel for older people and discounted travel for young people; by tackling fuel poverty; by developing the concept of a ‘living wage’; and through the introduction of a fairer Local Income Tax to replace Council Tax.

44. *Key questions:*

- Are these three areas for action the right ones to adopt?
- How should our efforts be balanced between them?

45. We also want to look ahead at the potential for fiscal action to reduce inequality and help lift people out of poverty if further devolution of powers from Westminster - and ultimately independence, as proposed under the National Conversation - brings greater powers to the Scottish Parliament.

46. It is clear that we need a portfolio of policies that will help the full range of people in poverty – and we need to link that in turn to the delivery of the *GES* and the Solidarity and other Golden Rules. Not all initiatives will impact on everybody in the same way, and not everybody has the same needs. For many moving towards or into sustained work will be a clear and relatively straightforward route out of poverty. For others who cannot work or are a long way from the labour market other interventions will be necessary.

47. Many of those in severe poverty, who are in the lowest income decile, may have multiple and complex needs which will require multifaceted and often intensive interventions. Others, like pensioners, may require support to maximise their disposable income through benefit take-up or reduction of essential living costs. In rural areas policies to combat poverty may link closely with the development of sustainable places and measures to enhance and protect the environment.

48. We also need to be clear about the respective roles and responsibilities of the Scottish and UK Governments. As indicated above, we believe the focus of the Scottish Government should primarily be on tackling the root causes of poverty – through action in areas such as early years, education, health, housing, employment and skills – as this is where devolved levers can have the greatest long-term impact.

49. In terms of lifting people out of poverty, the existing evidence shows that UK-wide policies on aspects such as tax and benefit arrangements (particularly the tax credit system) and the minimum wage have had the greatest impact on poverty in Scotland to date, but that devolved policies designed to help more people into work (particularly lone parents), to tackle poor health, and to improve skills and qualifications have played an important supporting role. However it appears that much of the impact of recent changes to UK tax and benefit systems has already been felt, that further progress on tackling poverty will require new policies and programmes, and that devolved and reserved policies will need to work together more effectively.

50. While we intend to focus on tackling the causes of poverty we also believe that Scottish Government policies have a potentially significant role to play in helping to lift people out of poverty. It is here that our policies and those of the UK Government (such as the Welfare to Work programmes managed by Jobcentre Plus) must complement each other to ensure that we move the greatest number of people into sustainable employment, both raising their household income above the poverty line and providing them with a long-term future.

51. We must also accept that we will not eradicate poverty overnight and that Scottish Government policies in a number of areas can help to improve the quality of life of people currently living in poverty – again in co-operation with the UK Government.

52. We currently have limited powers available to us under the devolution settlement to use fiscal policies to tackle poverty and income inequality. However we believe that our proposal to replace Council Tax with a fairer Local Income Tax has the potential to contribute to tackling poverty and income inequality, although we also know that it may not be sufficient on its own to lift many households out of poverty. We will be seeking views on our Local Income Tax proposals through a separate process and we will want to consider those views in conjunction with the views elicited from the discussion of this paper.

53. In discussion with stakeholders a vital question on which we will be particularly keen to get views is: **to what extent are current policies and programmes fit for purpose?** We will also be seeking views on:

- Where the Scottish Government can contribute most to tackling poverty;
- How we maximise the impact of these policies and programmes;
- Where there may be gaps in these policies and programmes that need filling, and how they should be filled;
- The balance of activity by the Scottish Government between the three key areas outlined above;
- How well reserved and devolved programmes currently complement each other and any areas where co-operation can be improved;
- The key barriers to greater partnership working and examples of how these can effectively be overcome;
- Any areas where it is believed enlargement of the devolution settlement could improve the seamless provision of support and achieve a greater impact on poverty and income inequality;
- The constituencies within Scotland, such as employers, with whom the Scottish Government should do more to influence thinking and action on tackling poverty.

### **Target Groups?**

54. We want to tackle poverty among all groups within society. However this does not mean a 'one size fits all' approach. Different groups may have different needs. We recognise the gendered nature of poverty and the need to consider whether different approaches for men and women are required. There may also be good reason to take a differentiated approach to tackling poverty for other groups in order to secure real improvements.

55. We will be seeking views during the consultation process on such a differentiated approach; how it might be taken forward; and if there are particular issues for groups which should be considered. We will also undertake an equality impact assessment of the framework.

### **Perceptions of Poverty – Communicating Our Ambitions**

56. For those unfamiliar with Scottish and UK policies on poverty, inequality and deprivation in recent years the language used can be complex and confusing. 'Social justice', 'social inclusion', 'relative and absolute poverty', 'income inequality', 'Closing

the Opportunity Gap', 'Opportunity for All', and 'material disadvantage' have all been in common use in recent years.

57. At the same time there is a growing concern among academics and the Third Sector that people suffering from poverty and disadvantage are increasingly viewed as 'someone else' and that the families affected can be split into the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor by some commentators.

56. We do not believe this is helpful and will be seeking views during the consultation period on how best to communicate with the whole of Scottish society – those affected by poverty, inequality and deprivation, those in higher income households, the business sector, and service providers. We will need the support of all sections of society if we are to succeed.

58. This discussion document is deliberately couched in the terminology used consistently by the new Scottish Government – the Government Economic Strategy, fairness and equity, Solidarity and the other Golden Rules. We believe that this language is more easily understood by all parts of Scottish society and we will be seeking views during the consultation process on whether you agree that this change is helpful.

59. We are also keen to seek consultees' views on whether the resultant framework, and its constituent parts, need to be 'labelled' in particular ways in order that we can connect with all necessary stakeholders. For example, when considering how we improve people's skills and qualifications, does the language of "better life chances" make sense? In considering all of this, we are anxious that a focus on "poverty" does not narrow our focus unnecessarily. As we have made clear earlier in this paper, "poverty" comprises more than just financial income, it also implies a lack of access to services and opportunities and sometimes a lack of personal resilience and capacity that we consider must be central to our approach.

60. *Key questions:*

- How do we best go about engaging the wider public in efforts to tackle poverty in Scotland?
- What kind of language should we use in order to communicate effectively on these issues?

## **Delivering on Our Ambitions – Connecting National Policy and Local Delivery**

61. In developing a framework that will contribute to the delivery of the *GES* and its Solidarity and other Golden Rules we will work with our partners in local government and with key stakeholders on how our national ambitions can be translated into action at all stages of the delivery chain. Central to delivery must be the Single Outcome Agreements and our new relationship with local government. Clearly the Scottish Government has a considerable role to play in tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation by setting a direction of travel, joining up the range of national policies and programmes that must be brought to bear, and working with its partners in local government, the NHS and beyond to help facilitate the delivery of agreed outcomes.



62. But poverty cannot be 'sorted' by national government alone. The Scottish Government cannot know the exact nature of poverty and disadvantage in each part of Scotland, nor can it identify each individual or family that needs help, or determine the unique package of support that they require. That is why this work must be taken forward together with local government and their community planning partners in the public and third sectors, and through effective engagement with the private sector.

63. The Third Sector has a crucial role to play and should be regarded as a full partner in the process. They provide crucial services for some of the most vulnerable in society and are usually a trusted source of advice and support for the hardest to reach, often those who are reluctant to seek help from public services. We foresee a strong role for the Third Sector in delivering our ambitions in this area and will be seeking views on how best their strengths can be harnessed.

64. Both CoSLA and the Poverty Alliance are advising on the development of the framework and the process of consultation. Throughout the consultation process we will be seeking views on how best we can harness the potential of the new single outcome agreements (including the Fairer Scotland Fund) and the associated performance management arrangements to maximise the impact of local action on poverty in Scotland. We will also be seeking views on what the respective roles of the various partners in the Community Planning process, including the Third Sector, should be, and how community planning partnerships should develop to enable them most effectively to deliver the joined-up services required.

### **What should a Framework cover?**

65. The following bullets outline the broad areas which the framework might cover. These are 'starter for ten' suggestions designed to generate discussion. As such they are open to change and revision and should not be taken in any way as fixed positions:

- a narrative which would explain where tackling poverty will help deliver the *GES* and the overarching Purpose of the Scottish Government;
- the current position regarding the respective roles and powers of the Scottish and UK Governments, and the key commitments and indicators;
- an outline of the evidence base in terms of what we know about the incidence of poverty in Scotland, what causes it, its relationship with determinants such as health and education, and the international context;
- an audit and review of the current range of Scottish Government policies related to tackling poverty and income inequality with an analysis that identifies any gaps/need for change (in terms of policies; client groups; approaches; and the constitutional settlement) and how they should be addressed;
- a clear exposition of how the national policy framework should connect to delivery on the ground. This would explain the respective roles of the UK

Government, Scottish Government, local government, community planning partnerships, and partners in the Third and private sectors. It would also outline how delivery of national goals will be achieved through the outcomes-based arrangements being developed with local providers, how public sector investment can be maximised; how delivery can be improved through simplification of the local delivery landscape; and how national government and local providers can work together on these issues;

- an outline of any concrete actions (in terms of fresh policy priorities, research and new approaches) to be taken as a result of developing and producing the framework, and to whom the action falls;
- an explanation of how the framework will be monitored and evaluated and of the potential for maintaining on-going engagement with stakeholders as work on tackling poverty progresses.

### **The Process for Developing the Framework**

66. In developing a framework for tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation we aim to engage with a broad range of stakeholders, to harness their knowledge and experience of what has worked to date and their views on how we can achieve greater progress in the future. This paper will be circulated to a wide range of stakeholders across Scotland, ranging from service providers to the Third Sector, the world of business and academia. It is also available on the Scottish Government website at [www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/current](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/current) and we would welcome written views from anyone who wishes to comment. A form for written responses is included with the covering letter.

67. We are keen however to engage with stakeholders in a way which goes beyond the traditional method of written response. We will therefore be hosting a series of events to seek views on development of the framework and on the key questions set out in this discussion document. We will also be working with colleagues across the Scottish Government to ensure that issues of poverty, inequality and deprivation are considered with stakeholders across a range of policy areas, and included in consultations which may already be taking place (for example, as part of the work of the Health Inequalities Task Force, the developing Early Years Strategy, the ongoing National Conversation, and the Youth Strategy (where it is intended that universal services and opportunities for all young people can be accessed by those from disadvantaged communities and minority groups, thereby improving life chances for those at risk of poverty while also addressing the needs of all young people in Scotland.))

68. In addition we have asked CoSLA, as one of our partners in the development of the framework, to consult with their members.

69. We have also asked the Poverty Alliance, as our other key partner in the development process, to undertake a consultation with people experiencing poverty, building on their experience gained through the *Get Heard* process.

70. In arranging specific consultation events we are keen to engage with as wide a range of interested parties as possible, so if you are keen to be involved please send your details to [alan.nicholson@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alan.nicholson@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) , Tel: 0131 244 7369. The Poverty Alliance will shortly be announcing details of events related to the consultation exercise. Please check [www.povertyalliance.org](http://www.povertyalliance.org) for further details.

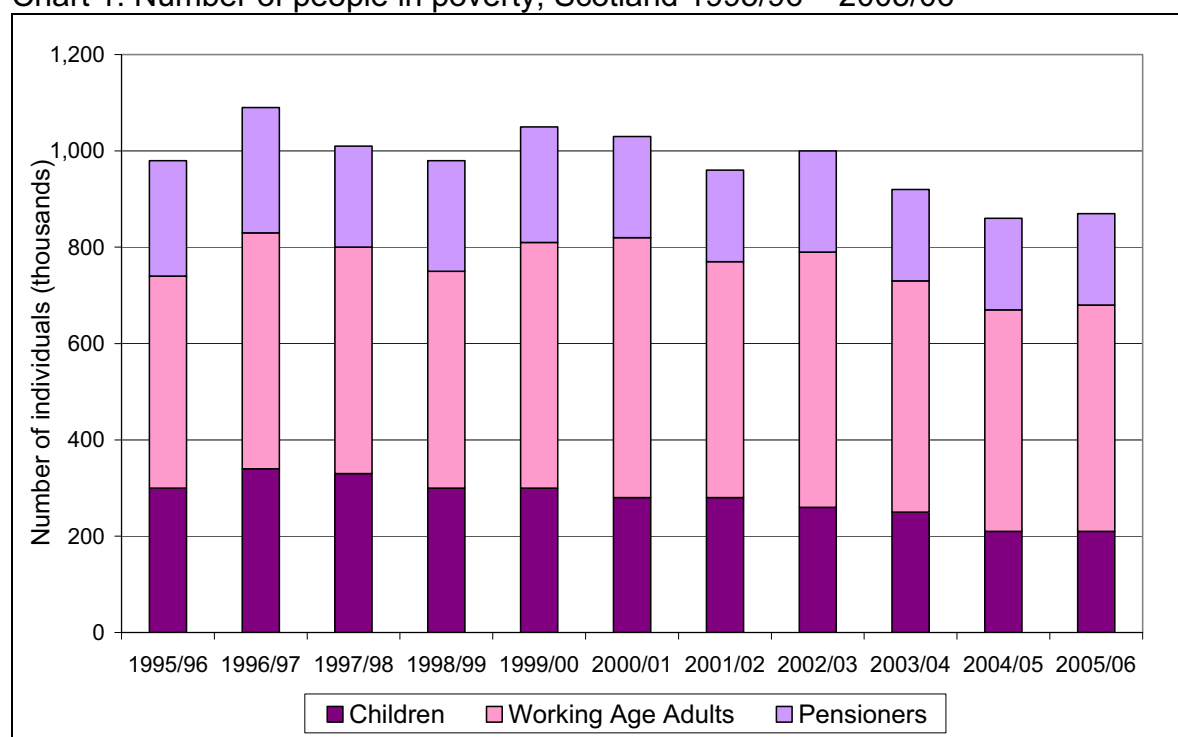
71. The consultation process will run between now and the summer (with any written comments invited by 2 May 2008), following which we will draw together and publish the framework later this year.

## Poverty in Scotland: a brief overview of the evidence

### General

1. There are 880,000 individuals living in relative poverty before housing costs in Scotland. This represents 18 per cent of the population<sup>i</sup>.
2. There are 990,000 individuals living in relative poverty after housing costs in Scotland, representing 20 per cent of the population<sup>i</sup> (all other figures throughout this document are on a 'before housing costs' basis).
3. Nine per cent of the British population are in persistent poverty<sup>ii</sup>, defined as being poor in 3 out of the last 4 consecutive years.
4. The number of people in poverty in Scotland has fallen by 10 per cent in the last 10 years. The reduction has been greatest amongst children and pensioners. However last year the number of working age adults in poverty rose by 10,000<sup>i</sup>.

Chart 1: Number of people in poverty, Scotland 1995/96 – 2005/06



Source: Family Resources Survey, Households Below average Income datasets.

5. Individuals in working families form a large proportion (38 per cent) of the poorest in Scotland, even though the risk of poverty is far higher for those in workless families (35 per cent of people in workless families are poor compared to 10 per cent of people in working families)<sup>i</sup>.
6. There is little difference between urban and rural areas in the prevalence of poverty<sup>i</sup> although there may be some difference in how people in rural areas experience poverty as some goods are more expensive in rural areas<sup>iii</sup> and some services are less convenient to access<sup>iv</sup>. The Scottish Government is currently undertaking a literature review on the difference between urban and rural experiences of poverty.

7. Children who grow up in poor households are more likely to have low self-esteem, play truant, leave home earlier, leave school earlier and with fewer qualifications, and be economically inactive as adults<sup>v</sup>. Consequently, children born into poor families are more likely to be poor adults.
8. One hundred and thirty thousand children in Scotland live in households that are both relatively low income and materially deprived, according to the definition used by HM Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions<sup>i,vi</sup>.
9. Poverty levels in Scotland are similar to the UK as a whole. They are lower than in Ireland but higher than all other countries in the Arc of Prosperity. The table below shows the levels of economic growth and poverty in these countries. A number of countries, such as France, Austria, Greece and Hungary, have demonstrated that economic growth can be achieved alongside a reduction in poverty.

Table 1: GDP and Poverty in Scotland, the UK and The Arc of Prosperity Countries

	Percentage GDP Growth 1995-2005	Percentage of people in poverty 1995	Percentage of people in poverty 2005
UK	2.8	20	18
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
Ireland	7.5	19	20
Iceland	4.3	-	10
Norway	2.8	-	11
Denmark	2.1	10	12
Sweden	2.7	8	9
Finland	3.5	8	12

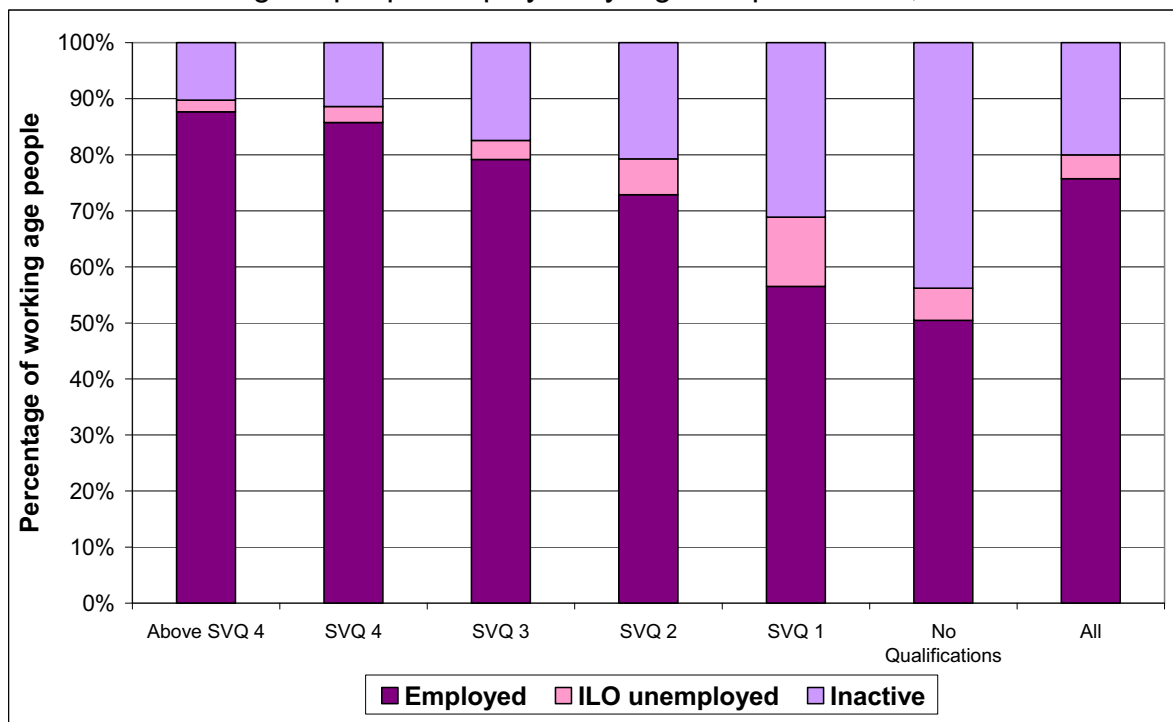
Source: Paichaud, D., Mangen, S., and Burchardt, T (2007) Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage: Arc of Prosperity and Other Countries, paper produced for the Scottish Government.

### Education and Employment

10. If a family member is in paid employment the risk of poverty to that family is much reduced, although there are many in-work households that remain in poverty due to low wages and/or large families<sup>i</sup>. Over 50% of children in poverty live in a household where at least one adult works
11. The rate of worklessness for working-age households in Scotland is 16 per cent<sup>vii</sup>.
12. Over 500,000 Scottish employees are low paid (paid less than 60 per cent of the median full-time hourly wage), representing almost 24 per cent of working people. The chance of being low paid is greatest for women, part-time employees, private sector employees, young people, disabled people and some ethnic minority groups<sup>viii</sup>.

13. Temporary, seasonal employment is a particular issue in rural Scotland and self-employment rates are high. In remote rural Scotland the highest proportion of workers are in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry and fishing.)<sup>ix,x</sup> Furthermore, in remote rural areas 8 per cent of people have more than one job compared to 3 per cent in large urban areas<sup>xi</sup>.
14. In 2007 median hourly pay for adults in full-time employment was 12% lower for females than for males<sup>xii</sup>.
15. The lower a person's qualifications the higher their risks of being out of, but wanting work, or being in low paid work<sup>xiii</sup>.
16. As there is a strong relationship between education and employment so there is a strong relationship between education and poverty: 27 per cent of people with no qualifications are in poverty compared to 13 per cent with qualifications<sup>i</sup>.

Chart 2: Percentage of people employed by highest qualification, Scotland 2006

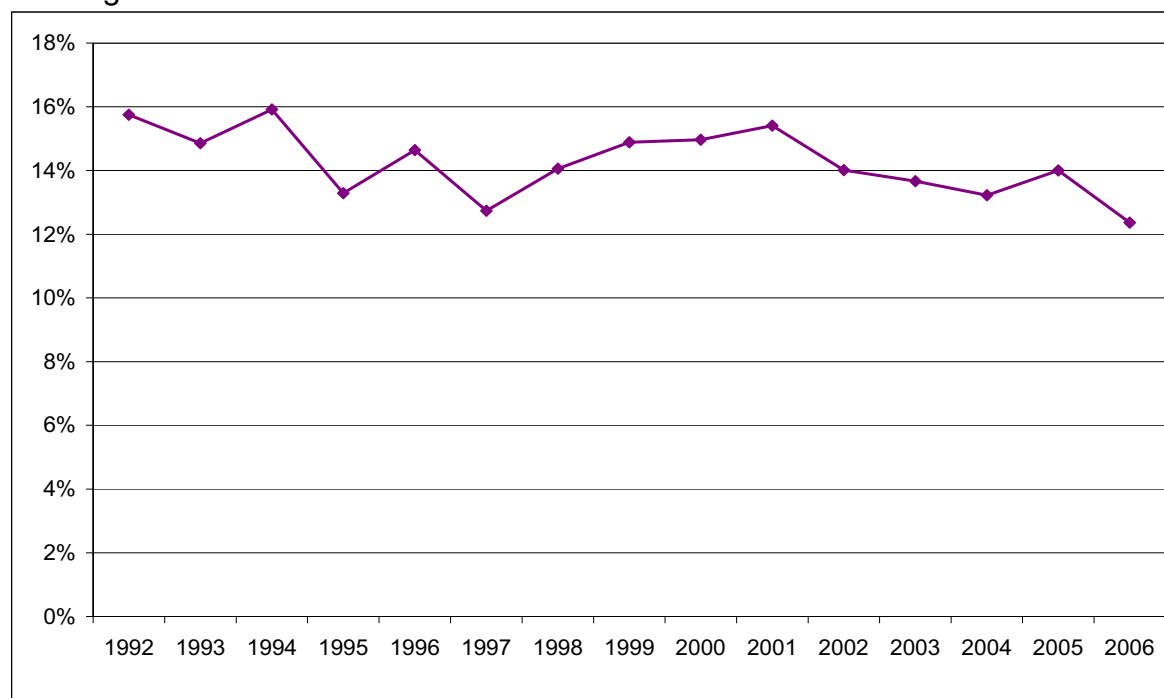


Source: Annual Population Survey (Jan-Dec) 2006, Office for National Statistics. ILO = International Labour Organisation. The ILO definition of unemployment covers people who are out of work, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous 4 weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight; or out of work and have accepted a job that they are waiting to start in the next fortnight.

17. Around 77 per cent of school leavers from the ten per cent most deprived areas entered a positive destination (further or higher education, employment, training or voluntary work) in 2006/7 compared with just over 93 per cent of those from the ten per cent least deprived areas<sup>xiv</sup>.
18. The proportion of 16-19 years olds not in employment, education or training has not changed significantly over the last 15 years, as the graph below illustrates. Data for the latest year indicates a slight drop. Other evidence from school

leavers destinations statistics and from the Department of Work and Pensions benefit statistics also suggest that this group has reduced in recent years.

Chart 3: Percentage of 16-19 Year Olds Not in Employment, Education or Training 1992-2006



Source: 1992-2002 Labour Force Survey (LFS), Quarters combined, 2003 – Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey, 2004-2006 Annual Population Survey

20. The recent OECD report *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland*<sup>xv</sup> highlights the strong influence that socio-economic status has on student performance in Scottish schools. The report notes that the big factor that impedes the ability of Scottish children to use school effectively is socio-economic status. This factor is more complex and broader than poverty, concerning the relationships between individuals and institutions and relating to cultural attributes and practices – family values, child rearing, language development, health and physical wellbeing, aspirations, and financial capacity.

## Housing

21. Families who own their own home makeup 47 per cent of the poorest people in Scotland, even though the risk of poverty is far greater for families that do not own their own home (12 per cent of families who own their own home are poor compared to 31 per cent who do not)<sup>i</sup>.

22. A household is in fuel poverty if it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income on household fuel. 'Extreme Fuel Poverty' can be defined as a household having to spend more than 20% of its income on fuel.

23. Twenty-four per cent of households are fuel poor and 8 per cent are extremely fuel poor. The rate is much higher for single pensioners, of whom almost half are fuel

poor. The number of fuel poor households has been rising steadily since 2002, although numbers are lower than a decade ago<sup>xvi</sup>.

24. Over 40,000 households were homeless in 2006/07<sup>xvii</sup> (homeless people are not included in the official poverty statistics<sup>xviii</sup>) and around 3% of families live in overcrowded conditions<sup>xix</sup>.

### **Disability, Health and Mortality**

25. Almost 310,000 people (7 per cent of the population) claim Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance in Scotland. A further 30,000 claim Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance<sup>xx</sup>.

26. There is now considerable evidence to show that lack of work can be a major driver of ill health.<sup>5</sup>

27. The risk of poverty is far higher if a household contains a disabled adult: 23 per cent compared to 15 per cent for non-disabled households<sup>i</sup>.

28. Two per cent of working age people become disabled each year<sup>xxi</sup>.

29. People with less autonomous, less secure working conditions and lower earnings are more likely to develop an illness which limits their capacity to work<sup>xxii</sup>.

30. Life expectancy is 70 years in the 10 per cent most deprived areas of Scotland compared to 81 years in the 10 per cent least deprived areas<sup>xxiii</sup>.

31. Deprived populations have considerably higher levels of Coronary Heart Disease mortality. The Standardised Mortality Rate for under 75s in Scotland's 15 per cent most deprived areas is 110.2 per 100,000 compared to 61.8 per 100,000 in Scotland overall<sup>xxiii</sup>.

### **Debt and Financial Exclusion**

32. Ten per cent of Scottish households report not managing financially<sup>xxv</sup>.

33. Five per cent of families do not have a bank or building society account<sup>xxv</sup>.

34. Forty-two per cent of families living in rented accommodation do not have contents insurance, compared to 2 per cent of families who own their home<sup>xxv</sup>.

35. Citizen's Advice Scotland debt clients owe an average of £13,380. Over half have no income other than pensions or benefits<sup>xxiv</sup>.

36. Twenty-seven per cent of households in the 15 per cent most deprived areas have savings or investments, compared to 58 per cent in the rest of Scotland<sup>xxv</sup>.

### **Crime, Disorder and Justice**

37. There is little doubt that poverty is correlated with the risk of crime victimisation, with disorder and criminal activity, and with the likelihood of imprisonment. Those living in the most deprived areas of Scotland have higher levels of worry about being the victim of crime, and experience much higher levels of disorder and antisocial behaviour. The areas they live in have much higher levels of recorded crime, and men from these areas are much more likely to be imprisoned.

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon Waddell, A. Kim Burton: Is Work Good for Your Health and Wellbeing?: TSO 2006



38. Over half (53%) of people in the most deprived areas are worried about being assaulted or mugged, compared with around one third (35%) in the rest of Scotland.<sup>xxvi</sup>

39. Nearly half (48%) of people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods experienced at least one form of antisocial behaviour, compared with around a third (34%) in Scotland as a whole.<sup>xxv</sup>

40. For the crimes included in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006, in the most deprived areas there was one crime recorded in 2004 by the police for every 9 residents, compared to one crime per 23 residents in the rest of Scotland.<sup>xxvii</sup>

41. Domestic abuse is more than twice as common amongst those with income of under £10,000 per year (7%) than amongst the overall population (3%).<sup>xxviii</sup>

42. For men, the imprisonment rate for those coming from the most deprived areas is four times higher than the Scotland average (953 per 100,000 males of all ages, compared to 237 per 100,000 males of all ages in Scotland as a whole).

### **Inequality and public perceptions of poverty**

43. For the past 12 years, the lowest three income deciles have taken home approximately 14 per cent of the total income in Scotland. The top 3 deciles have taken home about half of the total income in Scotland.<sup>i</sup>

44. Over the last 20 years, a large and enduring majority of people (73 per cent in 2004) have considered the gap between high and low incomes too large. People do not necessarily think that those of low income are underpaid but that those on high incomes are overpaid. However a smaller proportion of people support income redistribution<sup>xxix</sup> as a way of reducing inequalities.

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<sup>i</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2005/06.

<sup>ii</sup> Low-Income Dynamics 1991-2005: Great Britain. *Department for Work and Pensions*.

<sup>iii</sup> 2003 Rural Scotland Price Survey. *Highlands and Islands Enterprise*.

<sup>iv</sup> Rural Scotland Key Facts 2007. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>v</sup> Ermisch, J et al (2001) The Outcomes for Children of Poverty. DWP Research report 158.

<sup>vi</sup> Combined low income and material deprivation is Tier 3 of the joint HMT/DWP Child Poverty Measure.

<sup>vii</sup> Work and Worklessness among Households, First Release August 2007. *Office for National Statistics*.

<sup>viii</sup> Working out of Poverty: A study of the low-paid and the 'working poor' 2007. *Institute for Public Policy Research*.

<sup>ix</sup> Rural Scotland Key Facts 2007. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>x</sup> Annual Survey of Small Businesses 2005. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xi</sup> Scotland's People : Annual Report of the Scottish Household Survey 2005/6. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xii</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2007. *Office for National Statistics*.

<sup>xiii</sup> Palmer, G., MacInnes, T and Kenway, P 2006. Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Scotland 2006. *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*.

<sup>xiv</sup> Destinations of Leavers from Scottish Schools 2006/07. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xv</sup> Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland. *OECD*.

<sup>xvi</sup> Scottish House Condition Survey: Key Findings for 2005/6. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xvii</sup> Operation of the Homeless Persons legislation in Scotland: national and local authority analyses 2006-07. *Scottish Government*.

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<sup>xviii</sup> The Family Resources Survey, from which the poverty estimates are derived, surveys only private households (i.e. it excludes people in hostels or other communal establishments) and it specifies that only those individuals who usually live at the address should be included in responses. Consequently, homeless people are not included in the estimates of the number of people in poverty.

<sup>xix</sup> Scotland's People: Results from the 2005/06 Scottish Household Survey. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xx</sup> Scottish Economic Statistics 2007. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xxi</sup> Burchart, T (2003) Being and Becoming: Social exclusion and the onset of disability, ESRC Centre For Analysis of Social Exclusion. *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*.

<sup>xxii</sup> Howarth, C and Kenway (2004) Why worry any more about the low paid? *New Policy Institute*

<sup>xxiii</sup> Technical Notes for the 2007 Spending Review. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xxiv</sup> On The Cards: The Debt Crisis Facing Scottish CAB Clients. 2004. *Citizens Advice Scotland*.

<sup>xxv</sup> Social Focus on Deprived Areas 2005. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey 2004: Research Findings. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Analysis was carried out using data available from Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics Website.

*Scottish Government*.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Partner abuse in Scotland: Findings from the 2006 Scottish Crime & Victimization Survey. *Scottish Government*.

<sup>xxix</sup> Orton, M and Rowlingson, K 2007. Public attitudes to economic inequality. *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*.

31 January 2008

Dear Stakeholder

## **DISCUSSION PAPER ON TACKLING POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND DEPRIVATION**

Please find attached a copy of the Scottish Government discussion paper “Taking Forward the Government Economic Strategy (*GES*): A Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland” published on 31 January 2008 by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing.

This discussion paper is designed to inform the development of a framework for delivering on the aspects of the *GES* related to tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation in Scotland. It is aimed at a broad range of key stakeholders with an interest in the area of poverty and social inclusion in Scotland and will support a period of engagement and discussion over the coming weeks. This will be followed by the drawing up and publication of a framework later in the year.

This discussion paper is designed to spark debate and discussion with stakeholders which will help us develop a framework that reflects the views and concerns of partners and constituencies beyond the Scottish Government. It poses questions about:

- the underlying principles which should guide our approach to tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation;
- the key areas for action by Scottish Government (and how these should relate to UK Government actions);
- how we should deal with public perceptions of poverty, particularly in terms of language, communicating our ambitions and connecting anti-poverty work with wider Scottish society;
- how we can improve policies and programmes on poverty and how we should connect national policy with local delivery on the ground.

This paper and is being circulated to a wide range of stakeholders including service providers, Third Sector organisations, academics and UK Government Departments.

Also attached to this letter is a response form provided for the convenience of consultees. However responses to the discussion paper will be accepted in any format and consultees are not required to use this form when commenting on the proposals set out in the document.

I look forward to engaging with you on these vital issues, whether through active discussion or written response. The closing date for receipt of comments is 30 June 2008

Yours faithfully

Mike Palmer  
Deputy Director for Social Inclusion

**TAKING FORWARD THE GOVERNMENT  
ECONOMIC STRATEGY:  
A DISCUSSION PAPER ON TACKLING POVERTY, INEQUALITY  
AND DEPRIVATION IN SCOTLAND**



**RESPONDEE INFORMATION FORM**

Please complete the details below and attach it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. Are you responding as: (please tick one box)

(a) an individual?  (go to 2a/b)

(b) **on behalf of** a group or organisation?  (go to 2c)

2a. **Individuals:**

Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government website)?

Yes  (go to 2b)

No, not at all

2b. **Where confidentiality is not requested**, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes):

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

**2c. On behalf of groups or organisations:**

Your name and address as respondees **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government website). Are you content for your response to be made available also?

Yes

No

3. We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Government to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes

No

Please fill in the form below to record your views. Other views (in addition to the questions) would also be welcome. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

**Other comments**

Copies of the completed form should be sent no later than **Monday 30 June 2008** to:

**Miss Nicole Ronald  
The Scottish Government  
Social Inclusion Division  
Area 2-F (South), Victoria Quay  
EDINBURGH  
EH6 6QQ**

**or e-mailed to: [nicole.ronald@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nicole.ronald@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)**

**Q1. Where can the Scottish Government contribute most to tackling poverty?**

Comment

**Q2. To what extent are current policies and programmes fit for purpose?**

Comment

**Q3. How should the Scottish Government maximize the impact of these policies and programmes?**

Comment

**Q4. Do you consider there are gaps in these policies and programmes that need filling? If so, how should they be filled?**

Comment

**Q5. How best can the Scottish Government achieve both economic growth and reduced poverty and income inequality?**

Comment

**Q6. How should the Scottish Government and its partners balance their efforts between the three areas for action outlined at paragraph 43 of the discussion paper?**

Comment



**Q7. With respect to the set of key principles detailed at paragraph 33 of the discussion paper what are your views on the following:**

- **Are they the right principles?**
- **Are there others that the Scottish Government should be adopting?**
- **Is there potential for some to compete with others?**
- **How should the Scottish Government ensure that they are in turn adopted by key delivery bodies and agencies?**
- **With regard to the finite resources available, what would you consider as feasible expectations in tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation, and should some key principles be prioritized over others?**

Comment

**Q8. Do you think that reserved and devolved programmes currently complement each other effectively and are there any areas where co-operation can be improved?**

Comment

**Q9. What are the key barriers to greater partnership working? Can you give an example of how these can effectively be overcome?**

Comment

**Q10. Do you consider that there are any areas where enlargement of the devolution settlement could improve the seamless provision of support and achieve a greater impact on poverty and income inequality?**

Comment

**Q11. With which constituencies within Scotland could the Scottish Government do more to influence thinking and action on tackling poverty?**

Comment

**Q12. How should the Scottish Government best go about engaging with the wider public in its efforts to tackle poverty in Scotland?**

Comment

**Q13. What kind of language should the Scottish Government use in order to communicate effectively on these issues?**

Comment

**Note**

This form is provided for the convenience of consultees. However responses to the discussion paper will be accepted in any format and consultees are not required to use this form when commenting on the proposals set out in the document.

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