Actions to prevent and mitigate child poverty in CPPs in Scotland

National Stakeholder Event
Dr Morag Treanor
31 August 2017

The review

- Conflation of causes and consequences
- ► The four areas of the review:
 - Income maximisation
 - Education
 - Childcare
 - Lone parents
- Preventing child poverty
- ► The changing policy landscape in Scotland

But first a quiz...

Who knows what document this is from?

'The Group are concerned that the attitude of professionals and planners for children appears to be influenced by dated personal theory and prejudice. The end result of this process is that policy and professional action evolve in some mysterious fashion because there is no agreed view on basic child care needs and objectives...

...The Group hopes to improve policy development for children by stimulating debate and discussion, culminating in a minimum declared charter of rights for all children in ...'

Room to Grow

Strathclyde Regional Council (1979)

Conflation of causes and consequences

- What are not major causes of poverty:
 - Addiction (usually portrayed as drugs/alcohol)
 - Poor parenting
 - Being bad at relationships
 - Low educational attainment
 - Worklessness (what does that even mean?)
 - Debt
 - Personal characteristics and behaviours
- If these were major drivers of poverty, then a particularly poor person would look like ...

A lot of people!



Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York

"Had I not just chosen food as my friend, I would have chosen something else. I mean a lot of people turn to shopping, alcohol, smoking, any other addiction. My addiction was food."

"I'm a hardworking single mum".

"I'm continually on the verge of financial bankruptcy."

"Do you understand that I absolutely have not a pot to piss in?"

"It's just because my ex-husband's so nice that he lets me be a guest at his house. If I didn't have him I'd be homeless."

"happiest divorced couple in the world".

Sarah, Duchess of York is left 'devastated' after being ditched by her toyboy lover Manuel Fernandez after two years together.

A university education might have helped her navigate her adult life with less drama, she says. 6

Risks, causes and consequences

Risks, causes and consequences

- these characteristics do not distinguish the poor from the non-poor
- They do not measure poverty
- Anyone at any level of income can experience these situations
- these can pose a risk of poverty but it's not inevitable
- these are more likely to be consequences of poverty
- Media, government and the general public continually conflate risks, causes and consequences.
- However, some of these characteristics, when combined with poverty, are especially devastating and need a targeted response (eg addiction)

The four areas of the review:

- Income maximisation
- Education
- Childcare
- Lone parents
- Caveat!! This review was a bespoke response to the particular requirements of South Ayrshire CPP. These were the areas they wished to address. You may have other priorities that are not covered in the review. Hopefully, it can still be of use to you.

Income maximisation

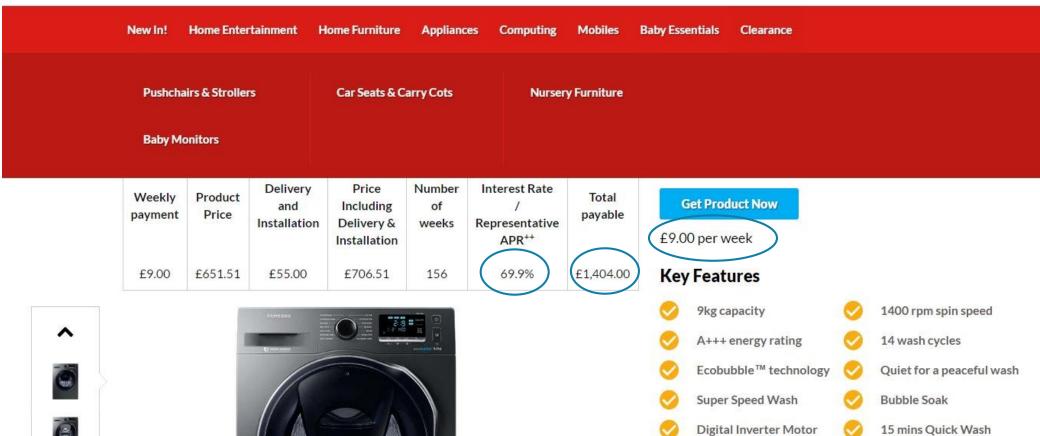
Why income maximisation?

- The evidence shows negative effects of financial insecurity on maternal and child wellbeing over and above the negative effects of income and poverty
- One of the Scottish Government's foci is 'Pockets' (income maximisation) - work in this area would be in synergy with national priorities
- Opportunities for sharing of learning and resources to develop income maximisation services
- Income maximisation is one of the few poverty reduction strategies that affects children and families pre-, per- and post-pregnancy.
- Including income maximisation allows CPPs to identify those at risk of poverty and to take preventative action, as well as to mitigate against already existing poverty
- Income is brought into the local area and spent locally.

Poverty premium - where does the problem lie?

- Poverty premium where people living in poverty cannot pay the full amount for an item, nor can they access mainstream credit, nor pay on a credit card, nor set up a direct debit...
- Example from my research in April in foodbanks in Dundee...







V





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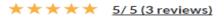


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Poverty premium - what can you do?

- Create or tap into a local credit union to encourage savings and to allow access to cheaper borrowing (see for example Scotcash5 and Fair for You)
- Work with businesses to encourage them to provide a nointerest loans scheme similar to the Good Shepherd Microfinance scheme in Australia which offers no-interest loans to low income households in receipt of certain benefits who are excluded from mainstream credit
- ► Provide advice services and support to access debt reduction services where families are already in debt, especially as a result of high interest credit.
- ► Fife CPP is developing plans along these lines. It aims to:
 - Create a social enterprise lending facility to offer borrowing and money advice to those who would otherwise use higher cost alternatives.
 - ► Take a lead in supporting credit union membership, either by making links to existing facilities or creating their own.
 - Develop plans with housing associations for non-commercial tariffs for digital broadband for social housing tenants

Education

Education - where does the problem lie?

- Cost of the school day
- Teacher understanding
- Targeted vs universal services
- Barriers to parental engagement:
 - Self esteem/self efficacy
 - Previous experiences of school (contradictory)
 - Gender issue parent or mother?
 - School culture
 - Pressures on teachers' time

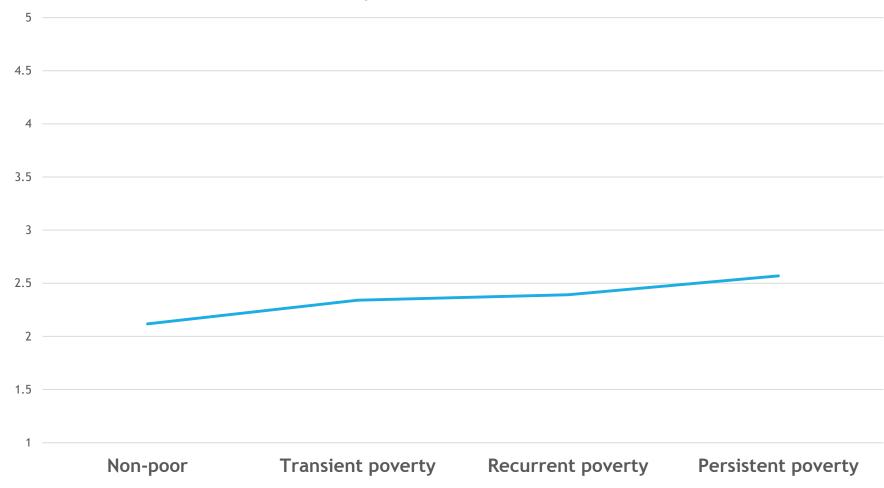
Minor digression - poorer parents' (contradictory) experiences of school

- Parents' living in poverty report both positive and negative experiences of school.
- They say they struggled, and that they didn't get on with teachers, but that they loved school.
- School was sometimes considered a sanctuary.
- Don't assume the kid living in poverty, or the kids dealing with other family circumstances that are more likely to occur when you're living in poverty, the kid who might act up in class and you may think of as a pain, don't assume that kid isn't glad to be there, or enjoying school. There can be just other stuff going on. And education has not been good at picking up on that in the past. I could give numerous examples if time allows...

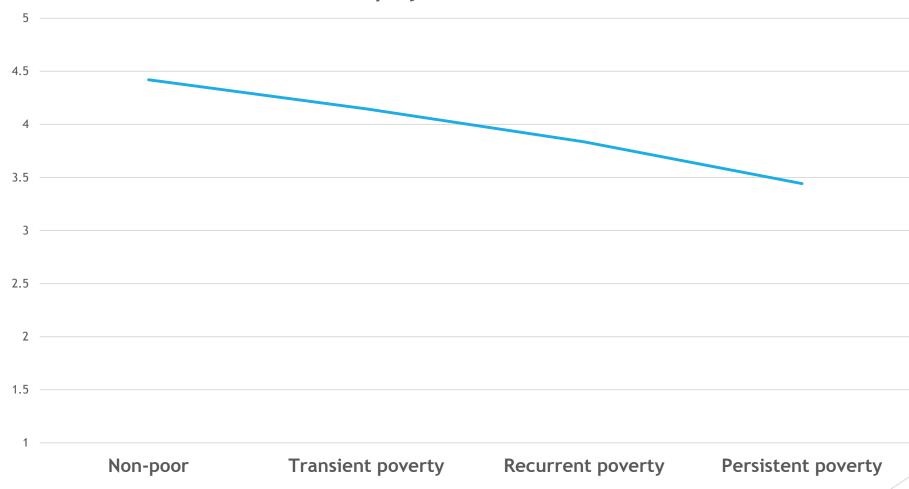
I enjoyed being at school

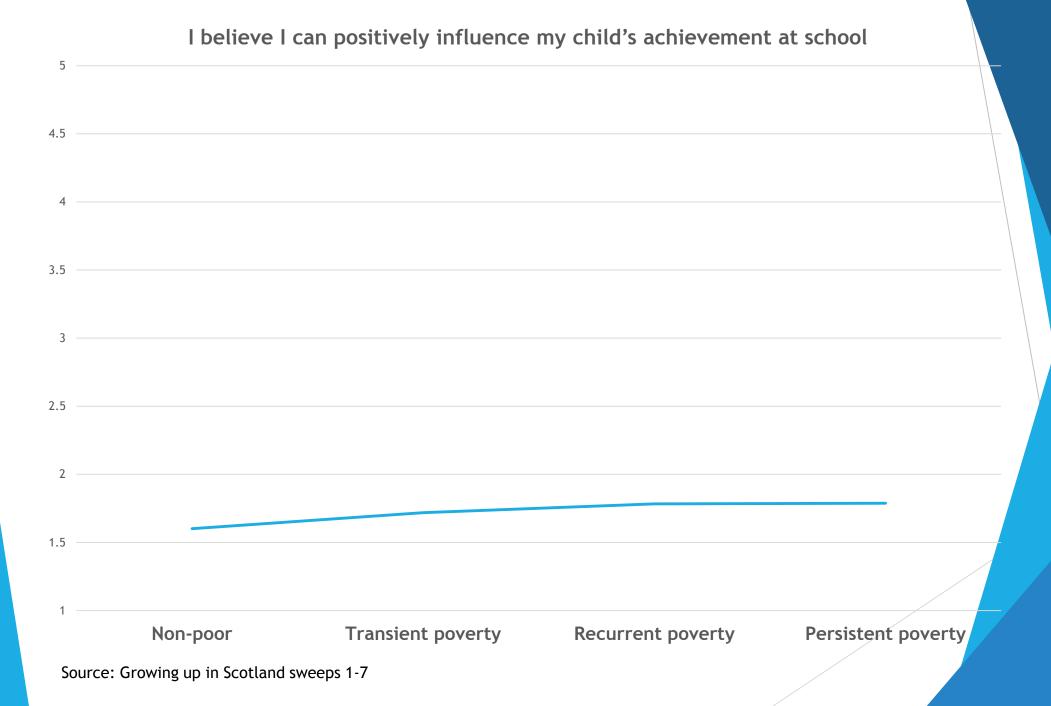


I tried really hard to achieve at school

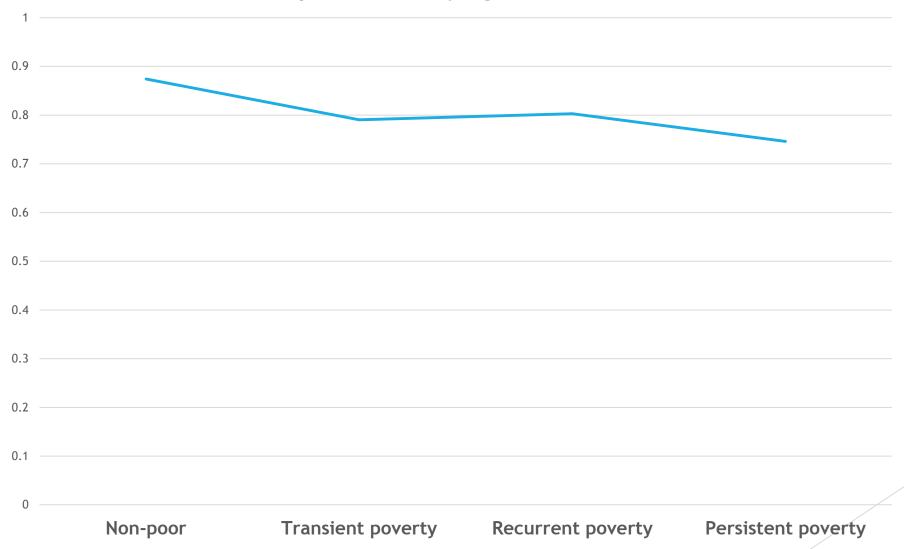


I often played truant at school





Aspirations: Staying on at school



Take home messages

- School is important to and for poorer children
- Poorer parents value school and want to help
- ► The 'Poverty of Aspiration' is a myth
- Parents all want the best for their child
- Poorer parents less likely to know what that looks like or how to achieve it
- Poorer parents less likely to know how to help their child
- ► Think carefully how you spend your Pupil Equity Fund money.

School costs - what can you do?

- Encourage take up of free school meals/school clothing grant/EMA entitlement
- Ensure privacy for pupils on free school meals in order to minimise stigma.
- Make taking school meals the usual mode of eating at lunchtime.
- Accept supermarket uniforms rather than branded school uniforms
- Reduce fundraising/charitable giving that can highlight poorer pupils' lack of income, e.g. money for book clubs, wear your own clothes day.
- Schools can consider an end of year activity that is of minimal cost to parents, rather than school proms which can be expensive for parents.
- Implement breakfast and holiday clubs on a sliding scale of fees that are available to all pupils, but free to those on the lowest incomes.
- Provide teachers with high quality continuing professional development on the nature, causes and consequences of poverty, such as the recent initiative by the City of Edinburgh Council's 1 in 5 project.
- Undertake initiatives to build relationships with the poorest parents so that they are comfortable to be in the school environment.
- Pupil Equity Framework
- ▶ Become a Rights Respecting School? See Aberdeen City Council's experience

Universal and targeted approach

- Many CPPs use the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to target poverty prevention and mitigation services.
- Only 50% of children living in poverty live in a low SIMD area.
- Use SIMD and eligibility for the school clothing grant & free school meals to capture as large a proportion of children living in poverty as possible.



Engaging parents - what can you do?

- Family Liaison Officers dedicated, directed, free up teachers' time
- Combine parents' evenings with other information sessions
- Relationship building at the school gates
- Informal social events in school
- Internet access for parents in school
- Coffee mornings where pupils serve their parent(s)
- Engage other services, eg Families and Schools Together (FAST)
- Use text messages and social media to communicate
- Use a whole school approach for engaging parents get all staff on board
- and so on...

Childcare

Childcare



Fees from 2016

Availabi	lity
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- Sometim high qua
- Only 15% working
- State support does not pr
- Cost

		Babies Age 0-2		Toddlers & Pre-schoo Age 3-5	
		Weekly	Monthly	Weekly	Monthly
2 DAYS	4 HOURS	£44.47	£188.97	£42.00	£178.47
	6 HOURS	£70.54	£299.78	£66.83	£284.00
	FULL DAY	£110.60	£470.00	£104.40	£443.76
3 DAYS	4 HOURS	£66.88	£283.47	£63.00	£267.69
	6 HOURS	£105.80	£449.65	£100.22	£426.00
	FULL DAY	£165.88	£705.05	£156.60	£665.64
5 DAYS	4 HOURS	£111.16	£472.45	£104.98	£446.19
	6 HOURS	£176.34	£749.43	£167.09	£710.10
	FULL DAY	£276.47	£1175.06	£261.05	£1109.40

Note: Fees are reviewed annually in April

Childcare - what can you do?

- ▶ Offer additional hours to enable full-time employment charged on a sliding scale of costs
- Work with private, community-based and voluntary sector provision to guarantee hours and subsidise childcare for the poorest
- Operate a tapered fee model, fees should be kept below 10% of a family's disposable income
- Explore the idea of co-operative after school clubs to ensure that families living in poverty have access to out of school hours care.
- Work in partnership with voluntary organisations, such as Save the Children and One Parent Families Scotland, to provide local high-quality childcare to families living in poverty.
- Develop social approaches and parent-led childcare in communities based on need rather than ability to pay market rates as other CPPs such as Fife aim to do.
- Initiate breakfast clubs with a sliding scale of fees so that they are free to children living in poverty. Such provision, while focussed on the nutrition of children, would usefully double up as a childcare provider
- Provide holiday clubs during the school holidays with a sliding scale of fees with better off parents paying full fees and poor parents paying little or nothing.
- Think about the barriers to voluntary, community or parent-led sector providers increasing provision in South Ayrshire - do they pay rent? Could this be subsidised or CPP buildings, or part buildings, be given over for childcare?
- Could funding should shift from the demand side (parents through the tax credits system) to the supply side (childcare providers)?

Lone parents

Lone parents - where does the problem lie?

- Prejudiced assumptions
- ▶ Policies that impoverish lone parents
- ► Lack of access to affordable childcare
- ► Lack of access to education, skills and employment
- ► Facts about lone parents in Scotland:
 - the average age of lone mothers in Scotland is 36 years old
 - in Scotland only 3% of lone mothers are teenagers
 - only 15% have never lived with the father of their child
 - Lone parenthood is not usually a permanent status for families in Scotland but is often another stage in family life that lasts on average around $5\frac{1}{2}$ years
 - ▶ it is estimated that around one third to one half of all children in Scotland will spend time in a lone parent family formation
- Poverty for lone parents is not inevitable

Lone parents - what can you do?

- Address their deeper levels of poverty and material deprivation.
- Support lone parents into stable employment that enables them to earn a decent wage at a time that is right for them and their children.
- Communicate to central government when policies are punitive or result in precarious employment.
- Reduce and remove the barriers to employment by improving the affordability and availability of childcare, holiday care and specialised care for disabled children
- increase maternal skills and confidence, increasing maternal education and vocational training and helping with the costs of childcare.
- Support projects that build lone parents' social capital, social relationships, social support and social engagement.
- ► Ensure adequate support for mental health difficulties (often related to work/money issues).
- Often there is support for child poverty initiatives but not those aimed at their families - you can't help children without helping their families too.

The triple bind of single-parent families

Resources, employment and policies to improve well-being

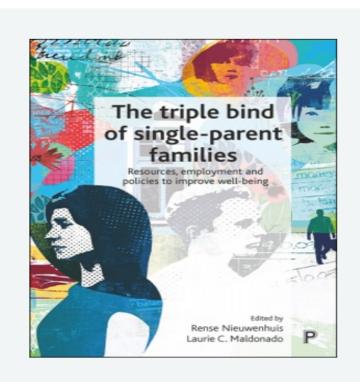
Edited by Rense Nieuwenhuis and Laurie C. Maldonado



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Description Author Contents

The Triple Bind of Single-Parent Families: resources, employment, and policies ~ Rense Nieuwenhuis, Laurie C. Maldonado; Single-mother poverty: how much do educational differences in single motherhood matter? ~ Juho Härkönen; Income poverty, material deprivation and lone parenthood ~ Morag Treanor;

Single motherhood and child development in the UK ~ Susan Harkness, Mariña Fernández Salgado;

Single parenthood and children's educational performance: inequalities among families and schools ~ Marloes de Lange, Jaap Dronkers; Wellbeing among children with single parents in Sweden –focusing on shared residence ~ Emma Fransson, Sara Brolin Låftman, Viveca Östberg, Malin Bergström;

Changing policy context in Scotland

- Child Poverty Bill 2017
- Fairer Scotland Action Plans pledge on child poverty/socioeconomic duty
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014:
 - Children's Services Plans (due April 2017)
 - Children's Rights Reports (first is due in 2020)
 - ▶ Health Boards and other public bodies subject to the same duties
- Reporting requirements could be complementary. After all, several of the UNCRC articles pertain to child poverty:
 - the right to protection against discrimination (article 11)
 - the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need (article 26)
 - the right to have a good enough standard of living (article 27)
 - the right to education no matter who they are
 - the right to education which develops your personality, respect for others' rights and the environment.
 - Et cetera...
- Interrelatedness of policy landscape child poverty, fairness, equality, children's rights

Progress of the Child Poverty Bill for Scotland

It has passed stage 2 and we got some really important amendments agreed.

Amendment - interim targets

- Interim targets have now been set to be achieved in the financial year beginning with 1 April 2023 (so by 31 March 2024).
- The interim targets are that, of children living in households in Scotland:
 - less than 18% fall within section 2 (relative poverty),
 - less than 14% fall within section 3 (absolute poverty),
 - less than 8% fall within section 4 (combined low income and material deprivation),
 - less than 8% fall within section 5 (persistent poverty).

Amendment - Delivery Plans

- In preparing a delivery plan, the Scottish Ministers must, in particular, consider what if any) measures they ought to take in relation to
 - the provision of financial support for children and parents
 - supporting local authorities to consider the automatic payment of benefits and support,
 - ▶ the provision and accessibility of information, advice and assistance to parents in relation to
 - social security matters
 - income maximisation
 - financial support
 - education
 - the availability and affordability of housing
 - the availability and affordability of childcare
 - ▶ the facilitation of the employment, and of the development of the skills, of parents
 - physical and mental health
 - the exercising of any of the powers provided for in Part 3 of the Scotland Act 2016 (welfare benefits and employment support)
- A delivery plan must, in particular, set out whether, during the period of the plan for the purpose of meeting the child poverty targets, the Scottish Ministers intend to bring forward legislation to exercise the power provided for in section 24 of the Scotland Act 2016 (discretionary payments: top-up of reserved benefits)
 - This would allow for implementation of £5 per child per week child benefit top up as calculated by Jonathan Bradshaw which would decrease child poverty rates in Scotland by 14%.

Amendment - poverty & inequality commission

- Poverty and Inequality Commission to be established on a statutory basis (was not statutory in original bill).
- ► There is currently disagreement between the SG, civil society and opposition parties on the format, scope and statutory underpinning of a proposed commission.
- SG object to its being statutory

Amendment - local CP action reports

- ► Local Child Poverty Action Reports- Successfully amended to include forward looking duty as well as retrospective.
 - Previously local authorities only had to state in retrospect what action they had taken to reduce child poverty. They could have done very little and just stated this in their report.
 - Now they have to state what action they intend to take for the purpose of contributing to the meeting of the child poverty targets in advance.
- ► A local child poverty action report must describe income maximisation measures taken in the area of the local authority during the reporting year to provide pregnant women and families with children
 - information, advice and assistance about eligibility for financial support, and
 - assistance to apply for financial support.



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Consultation on the Socio-Economic Duty

Consultation on the Socio-Economic Duty

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

ISBN: 9781788511148

In 2017, Scotland will become the first part of the UK to introduce the socioeconomic duty. This consultation paper asks for your help in doing this, ahead of guidance that we will be developing later in the year.

Executive Summary

The socio-economic duty asks particular public authorities to do more to tackle the inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. In particular, the duty aims to make sure that strategic decisions about the most important issues are carefully thought through so that they are as effective as they can be in tackling socio-economic disadvantage and reducing inequalities of outcome.

Contents

View as HTML

Associated downloadable documents

Related links

Respond online to the consultation

Easy read consultation paper

Fairer Scotland Action Plan

Contact

Karen Armstrong

Thank you for your attention.

Any questions?

Note I am now at Stirling University:

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