



Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Third Sector Forum
Thursday 12th December 2019
10am – 12pm
CVS Falkirk and District

Present:

Scott Malcom (SM) (Chair)	CVS Falkirk and District
Cheri Ann Kerr (CAK)	Cyrenians
David Stewart (DS)	Falkirk Foundation
Mairi Wright (MW)	NHS Forth Valley
Allan Crawford (AC)	Home Energy Scotland
Martin Allen (MA)	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Duncan Hearsum (DH)	Dial a Journey
Martin Fotheringham (MF)	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
Kat Jarvie (KJ)	NHS Forth Valley
Robin Tennant (RT)	Poverty Alliance

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the members to the forum and introductions were made.

2. Review of Previous Minutes – 27.06.19

The previous minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Poverty Alliance: Robin Tennant

RT took us through the Poverty Alliance's Poverty Awareness presentation and amended it slightly to include some relevant statistics on employment and in work poverty.

RT explained that the Poverty Alliance work in 4 key areas: Adequate Incomes, High Quality Public Services, Opportunities to Participate and Public Support.

The Poverty Alliance would like to see a number of changes made to increase the standard of living for people in Scotland and as such have been involved in the following:

- Increase living wage to £9.30 – which has been done.
- Access to high quality services.
- "Get Heard Initiative" - Get Heard Scotland (GHS) helps people affected by poverty get their voices heard on the policies and decisions that most impact their lives. The programme is



coordinated by the Poverty Alliance and funded by the Scottish Government as part of its Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

- Lobbying the Scottish Government to enable top up to existing benefits.
- Challenge Poverty Week - Challenge Poverty Week aims to: Highlight the reality of poverty and challenge the stereotypes, Showcase the solutions to poverty, increase public support for action to solve poverty.
- Raising awareness of the cost of the school day.
- Giving people the chance to participate strategically and in community planning.

RT then continued to discuss the measures of poverty and introduced the **Relative Poverty Line** which is weekly income after tax and housing costs. Another way of measuring poverty is to use **The Minimum Income Standard**.

The Poverty Alliance define poverty as:

“People are in poverty when they lack resources, the types of diet, participation in activities and living conditions which are customary, in the societies in which they belong”

Definitions can and have changed over the years. For example, with the advent of broadband and the amount of services which require internet use, it is now imperative that people have access to the internet.

For individuals and families this means:

- Lack of basic necessities, for example, some families need to choose between heating or eating
- Leads to people being socially isolated through lack of money to travel
- Too much bureaucracy and lack of information
- Lack of respect and hope
- Lack of decent work
- Fear for their children

The Poverty Alliance’s statistics also show that most people experiencing poverty are in work and it is forecast that the current generation will be the first to be worse off than its parents for the first time in over 100 years. To highlight the scale of in work poverty, 17% of NHS workers reported difficulties in providing food before pay day.



Income maximisation could help alleviate some of these problems, especially with around £16 billion going unclaimed in benefits per annum.

The proportion of those with no savings increased by 12% over the last decade leaving people unable to deal with unexpected bills.

Some of the drivers which make poverty happen are the 5-week wait for universal credit which puts people at an immediate disadvantage, the 2-child limit for claims and the fact that benefits have been frozen at the 2015 level.

Drivers for in-work poverty include low pay and rising living costs, with most people not receiving the basic standard of living wage rises for a number of years.

Current Poverty Trends

- 1 million people in Scotland currently living in poverty
- 230,000 children currently living in poverty
- 66% of the children in poverty are living in working households
- Scottish Government expects child poverty to increase to 38% by 2028

Rising fuel prices are another factor which increases the numbers of those affected by poverty especially those on prepay meters which have higher tariffs. Effectively charging poorer people more for their energy and exacerbating the problem.

Child Poverty

Around the year 2000, policies were put in place to reduce poverty, mostly through benefits and increased opportunities for work. However, these measures have been systematically dismantled to the point that if child poverty were to reach 38% this would return us to the point before these measures were put in place.

This seems to show that austerity is driving poverty and some reports suggesting that £560 of cuts per working age adult. The austerity program has, therefore, driven the rise in child poverty also.

- 34% of children in Glasgow are living in poverty
- 22% of children in Edinburgh are living in poverty
- 23% of children in Dumfries and Galloway are living in poverty

Types of Poverty



There are 2 main types of poverty, those being food insecurity and housing poverty. Foodbanks being a new phenomenon means there is currently little data available.

8% of adults said they were worried about running out of food with 7% saying they ate less than they should due to lack of money and 4% said that they had actually run out of food due to lack of money.

With housing related poverty there are problems with less secure tenancies and private property owners not wanting to take on clients who are in receipt of benefits.

Summary

- Increasing number of people being locked in poverty
- Over 1 in 3 children are in danger of being pulled into the rising tide of poverty because of welfare changes
- Employment is not a route out of poverty for everyone due to low pay, part time contracts and rising living costs
- We need strong public services, including social security, to help people stay afloat

Action: Scott to send out Robin's contact details

4. Partnership Updates

There were no partnership updates

5. Third Sector Updates

5.1 NHS Forth Valley

MW informed the forum about a capacity building booklet which is available and centred around the topic of food insecurity.

Action: Scott to email MW and then send out to forum members

5.2 Cyrenians

CAK's role as navigator working with people with criminal convictions may be moving to an outreach post with CAK covering Forth Valley.

5.3 Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)

MF introduced himself as the new Manager at CSREC and explained that CSREC looks at things from a lense of minority communities and from those with protected characteristics.

At the moment CSREC is working on a project to promote culturally appropriate food. They also have other projects centred around dementia, energy advice, advocacy and employability.

5.4 Falkirk Foundation

DS informed us that the stadium is empty every day from 3pm-5pm and he is looking to work in partnership with other groups to have this space used for the benefit of the community.

The Social Impact Champions Club will be a partnership to link organisations together to deliver programs in partnership.

5.5 Dial a Journey

DH informed the forum about how his service has gone from a social transport model to a community transport model whereby most journeys are taking people to hospital appointments and other similar appointments.

5.6 Home Energy Scotland

AC made the forum aware that Home Energy Scotland have their warmer homes discount available and lots of information for dealing with energy bills over the winter period.

More information at the [Home Energy Scotland](https://www.homeenergyscotland.org.uk) website.

5.7 Forth Valley Sensory Centre (FVSC)

MA delivered some information that FVSC are delivering benefits advice to people with sight loss.

6. AOCB

There was no other business to discuss.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 19th March 2020

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