



**CHILD  
POVERTY  
ACTION  
GROUP**  
IN SCOTLAND

## **Child Poverty in Scotland**

NHS Health Scotland national learning and dissemination event

John Dickie, Director of CPAG in Scotland  
7/11/16

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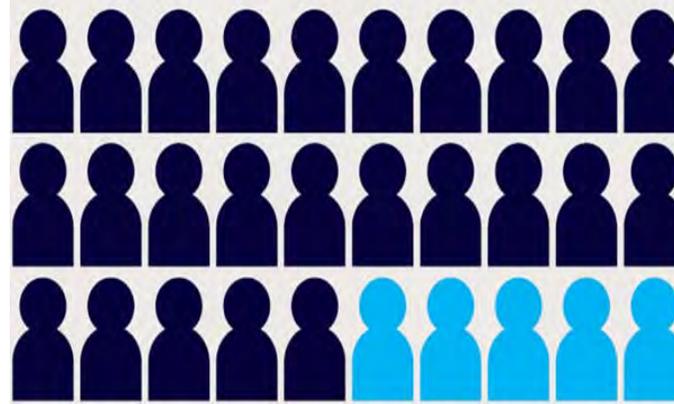
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## Scale of child poverty in Scotland

- 1 in 5 children in Scotland living in poverty (220 000)
- below a poverty line less than 70% of the minimum income standard for families
- two thirds (66%) of children in poverty live in working households
- affects families in every part of Scotland ([www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2016/](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2016/))
- Rising levels acute income crisis. e.g. families with children using food banks: 1,861 in 2011/12 to 36,114 in 2014/15

5 CHILDREN IN AN AVERAGE SCOTTISH CLASSROOM OF 23 LIVE IN POVERTY



## Some children at even greater risk

1 in 3 in families affected by disability

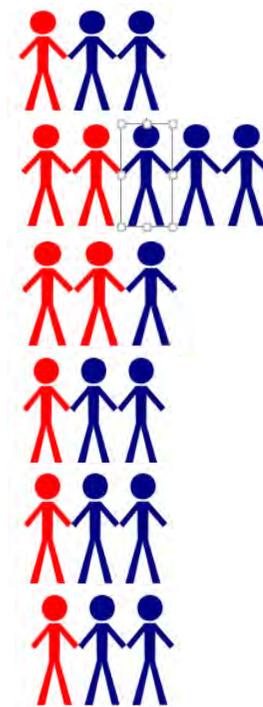
Nearly half where lone parent

Two thirds where no paid work

Over a third in larger (3+) families

1 in 3 where youngest child under 5

38% where mum under 26



# Impact on health

- health compromised from birth - average birth weight significantly lower (ECP, 2008)
- more likely to have chronic illness as toddlers (ECP, 2008)
- more likely to suffer mental distress (CPAG, *Poverty in Scotland 2011*)
- long term health problems and poor general health increases as deprivation increases (NHS Health Scotland, March 2013)
- greater risk of problems with psychosocial health and language (GUS, 2010)
- increased risk of unintentional injury (GUS, 2010)
- increased exposure to risk factors relating to maternal ill health and poorer diet (GUS, 2010)

## Impact on education

- by age 5 gap of 10 months in problem solving and 13 months in vocabulary development (GUS 2011, in JRF 2014)
- by S2 pupils in areas of low deprivation twice as likely to be performing well on numeracy, with 16 percentage points difference in reading (JRF 2014)
- school leavers from areas of high deprivation
  - lower attainment tariff score - half that of least deprived (JRF 2014)
  - less likely to enter positive destinations – 14% don't, compared to 4% of least deprived (Scottish Government 2016)
- attainment gap remains stubbornly wide

## Impact

There've been times when I've said to my child, "Tonight, we'll light candles, and we'll get our books in bed". And it's because I've no electric. And when I've run out of gas and there's no hot water we'll boil kettles for the bath. I don't tell Mike - who's only 12 - because I don't want him panicking and thinking "Oh my god my mum hasn't got any money."

*I had to go and pick him up from the school one day because he had been sick. Just before lunchtime. He never had any dinner money left. And I said to him "what's happening? What's going on?" and he said "I'm getting bullied because I'm poor and I've not got any money for a bacon roll".*

'The school is always coming up with wee trips and things like that and then you're caught out. And maybe it's only two or three pound and they don't really see that two and three pounds is a big issue, but when you're struggling it is'.

## Progress made

- Nothing inevitable about these levels of poverty
- Real progress: by 2011/12 170 000 fewer children in poverty than in 1996/7
- Policy worked – at UK and Scottish level
- Child wellbeing improved (e.g. see Bradshaw 2012)

## Challenges ahead

- UK gov. abandoned child poverty targets and duties
- By 2020/21 post-2015 'welfare reforms' will take another £1bn out of household incomes in Scotland alone, on top of £1.1 billion already lost since 2010 (Sheffield Hallam, Nov 2016)
- Households with children worst affected. Key cuts include benefits freeze, benefit cap, cuts to work allowance in UC, two child policy.
- IFS and Resolution Foundation modelling forecasts increases in child poverty across UK of 50% by 2020

## Opportunities in Scotland

- Child Poverty Bill: legal force to ambition to end child poverty, statutory income based targets and duties to publish a report on delivery plan. Potential to include community planning partners in statutory framework?
- Social Security Bill: commitments include on carers benefits and Best Start Grants. Potential to use 'top up' powers?
- Fairer Scotland Action Plan: Ending child poverty one of five high level ambitions by 2030. Specific commitment to 'take action to reduce the costs of school for low income parents' and 'spread the learning' from CPAG costs of school day work in Glasgow.