

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 26 November 2019

Edinburgh Poverty Commission Progress Update

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Sustainability Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Note the work carried out by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission and the emerging findings published by the Commission based on its inquiry progress to date
 - 1.1.2 Note the adoption by Council of Poverty and Sustainability as the policy priorities which will provide a focus for the development of the Council's budget for 2020-23
 - 1.1.3 Agree that, in advance of final recommendations from the Commission, officers work with Edinburgh Partnership colleagues and other stakeholders to develop specific joint actions and options on key findings identified in the interim report, including in the first instance:
 - 1.1.3.1 A more streamlined, accessible, and high impact city-wide advice service for those seeking support on welfare rights, debt, homelessness, and employability
 - 1.1.3.2 A new approach to engaging local private sector leaders in designing a new Fair Work Guarantee for Edinburgh
 - 1.1.3.3 A change in culture among support service providers to tackle stigma and improve understanding of poverty and its impacts

- 1.1.4 Agree the planned process for elected member engagement and consultation on draft final findings following their publication in January 2020
- 1.1.5 Agree that a further report on full Council responses to the Edinburgh Poverty Commission will be considered by Committee following publication of final findings in March 2020

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Edinburgh Poverty Commission Progress Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This paper provides an update on progress of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission in the period since its formal launch in November 2018, and the next steps planned during the final stages of the commission's work programme towards March 2020.
- 2.2 The paper also presents a first summary of initial findings and recommendations developed by the Commission, based on its work to date. These findings provide a new picture of the modern face of poverty in Edinburgh, a definition and vision of what solving poverty in Edinburgh would mean, and an initial framework of solutions and game changers (material, relational, and strategic) that are required to meet that vision.
- 2.3 These interim findings and solutions are presented for discussion and to help build early consensus on the steps Edinburgh can take to solve poverty.

3. Background

- 3.1 In June 2018 City of Edinburgh Council agreed to support the launch of a new Edinburgh Poverty Commission and agreed that recommendations proposed by the commission will be used to inform the implementation of the Council Change Strategy. The launch of the Commission was similarly supported in June 2018 by the Edinburgh Partnership Board, with a commitment that the Commission findings would be used in the development and implementation of the Edinburgh Community Plan.
- 3.2 In October 2018 the Corporate Policy and Sustainability Committee agreed to the appointment of Jim McCormick, Associate Director Scotland for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, as independent chair of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, with Cllr Cammy Day as vice chair.
- 3.3 Edinburgh Poverty Commission was formally launched in November 2018 with an agreed work programme to conduct a process of inquiry throughout 2019 to determine the solutions and changes needed to solve poverty in Edinburgh. Including the chair and vice chair, the Commission is made up of 12 people from diverse backgrounds, including citizens who have direct experience of living in poverty in Edinburgh.

- 3.4 In October 2019 the Finance and Resources Committee approved the adoption of addressing poverty and sustainability as the policy priorities which will provide a focus for development of the Council's budget for 2020-23.

4. Main report

Progress to date

- 4.1 Throughout 2019 commission's process of inquiry has been structured around three phases of work - considering aspects of poverty in Edinburgh relating to the themes of 'Pockets', 'Prospects', and 'Places'. Each phase includes visits to community projects in all parts of the city, evidence gathered from citizens on their experience of poverty, evidence gathered from support services, and commissioned research into the reality of poverty in this city and what solutions work best.
- 4.2 Following a final session of the year in December 2019, the Commission will publish its recommendations on the actions the city should take forward to solve poverty in Edinburgh. These will include actions for the public sector, the third sector, businesses, and communities across the city. Final recommendations will be published by the Commission by March 2020.
- 4.3 As at November 2019, the full Commission has:
- 4.3.1 Met 5 times in full session to hear and deliberate on evidence from citizens, service providers, community groups, and researchers, covering the three inquiry phases described above
 - 4.3.2 Made 35 additional visits to meet and hear from community groups, citizen groups, public and third sector organisations, and other stakeholders
 - 4.3.3 Launched 3 public calls for evidence, hosted on the Consultation Hub, and analysed the results of some 90 written submissions received through these calls so far
 - 4.3.4 Heard from and visited over 50 organisations across the city
 - 4.3.5 Carried out an initial programme of engagement workshops with colleagues from across Council service areas.
 - 4.3.6 Commissioned new research into the experience of citizens living on low income in Edinburgh, and attitudes to poverty across all parts of the city. This research is being carried out by the Poverty Alliance and incorporates focus groups and one to one interviews with citizens. The full cost of this research is covered by funding provided to the Commission by Scottish Government.
 - 4.3.7 Engaged with Poverty Truth Commissions and other citizen led initiatives in other cities to help inform the development of independent legacy structures needed to carry forward the work of the Commission post March 2020.

4.3.8 Developed new branding and communications toolkit for the commission, and launched a new independent website at <https://edinburghpovertycommission.org.uk/>

Emerging findings

- 4.4 The Commission has now completed the analysis of its first two phases of its work, covering topics such as benefits, debt, working conditions, living costs, employment, learning, and care. As the work of the commission continues through its final phases, it will continue to gather evidence and pursue discussions raised in this first phases of inquiry as well as hearing evidence on the themes and topics it has not yet considered. Key elements being considered during Autumn 2019 include housing, homeless, transport, and community building in Edinburgh.
- 4.5 Even before the full inquiry is complete, however, the Commission has been able to develop some first interim thoughts on the actions Edinburgh should consider taking. Appendix 1 to this paper sets out these interim findings, describing what the Commission have learned about poverty in Edinburgh, and their responses to the evidence heard so far.
- 4.6 These findings present 12 initial recommendations, structured around three three categories of 'Game Changers' through which the solutions to poverty in this city can be found:
- 4.6.1 **Material Game Changers** - Ensuring people have more money in their pockets is the single most effective thing we can do to end poverty. We need strong solutions that are about reducing costs as well as boosting incomes.
- 4.6.2 **Relational Game Changers** - We want people to thrive not just survive at a few pounds above the poverty line. We need solutions that remove the barriers that reduce people's ability to contribute and shape the lives they want
- 4.6.3 **Strategic Game Changers** - Taking significant steps to tackle poverty needs a long term perspective, and investment in change. Delivering the change required needs a supportive environment of bodies (public, private, and third sector) confident enough and empowered to take appropriate risks.
- 4.7 Final recommendations from the Commission will not be presented until the end of its inquiry, so these represent very early outputs from its work. They are presented now for sharing and discussion with partners, to help gather more input, and to help form consensus on the steps Edinburgh should take to solve poverty.
- 4.8 Within the context of Council activity, however, while these findings include many options that need full consideration and will be part of council thinking on an ongoing basis, it is clear that some options already stand out as areas which the Council could prioritise with a view to taking immediate positive action. In particular, it is recommended that a number of key emerging findings from the Commission are taken forward as part of the Council's commitment to adopt poverty and sustainability as the policy priorities for development of the Council's budget for 2020-23.

4.9 Areas for focus and immediate action include:

- 4.9.1 Action to maximise incomes and lower living costs for people who are struggling to get by.** Analysis suggests that Edinburgh citizens are missing out on benefit entitlements that could amount to as much as £80m a year in DWP benefits alone. Much activity is already undertaken by the Council, NHS, and other partners to help citizens access support on welfare rights, benefits, employment, and living costs. However, while there is much good practice in evidence in the city (including projects such as Maximise!), the Commission's evidence to date concludes that significant additional effort is needed to improve the reach and impact of these services. Overall, the Commission recommends that a new city-wide/ cross partner approach is needed to deliver streamlined, accessible, and high impact welfare, benefits, and employment support. This approach may include protecting or expanding budget support for these areas, but equally should focus on improving the co-ordination and impact of existing resources.
- 4.9.2 Action on fair work and fair wages in Edinburgh.** Our analysis shows that the majority of people in poverty in this city are of working age, probably in employment, probably living in rental accommodation in a family with children. Indeed, some 43,000 people live in poverty in Edinburgh where at least one adult is in work. Such levels of in-work poverty are driven by a number of factors, but core among them are the issues of wage levels and working hours. Some 13% of all Edinburgh residents work for wages below the level recommended by the National Living Wage Foundation. At the same time direct evidence from Edinburgh citizens describe the impossibility of managing a household budget when zero hour contracts mean that hours and pay from work are volatile, and fluctuate significantly from week to week.
- 4.9.3** These findings lead the Commission to conclude that, despite the successes of Edinburgh's economy, growth in employment alone is not enough to raise people out of poverty, if that work is based on hours and levels of incomes that are not enough to live on, or which are too unpredictable to manage. The Commission finds that any solution to poverty in the city requires Edinburgh's employers in all sectors to pay wages at a level people can live on in this city, and to offer consistent and predictable hours and pay for all workers. Towards this, it is recommended that Council and partner agencies collaborate to shape a new approach to engaging local private sector leaders in designing a new Fair Work Guarantee for Edinburgh.
- 4.9.4 Action on improving relationships and compassion.** From the evidence heard so far, Edinburgh Poverty Commission is clear that people in poverty want to have control of their lives and to be able to contribute to a city where people look after each other. In contrast to this, too many citizens speak of a struggle to find the support they need to help keep afloat, of systems of support that are too bureaucratic and complex to deliver help when it is needed. Conversely these same systems are often quick to remove support

when situations allow, and show a worrying lack of real awareness and understanding of the reality of life in poverty in Edinburgh.

- 4.9.5 The Commission finds that all people in Edinburgh, regardless of their income or assets, have the right to be treated with respect and compassion in every aspect of their lives, especially when seeking support from public agencies, or jobs from employers. A critical part of this is work to tackle stigma and improve understanding of poverty and its impacts among support service providers. Such common understanding is critical to ensuring that people in poverty can rely on being treated with respect and compassion by the support services they rely on. Excellent examples of this work are already in place in the Council to address these issues – including the 1in5 project on awareness and stigma of child poverty in schools – but much work is required to learn from this approach and support its expansion across other key council and partner services. The IJB with support from the Council is already committed to empowering citizens and a compassionate approach to service delivery through ‘3 Conversations’ model. This approach is consistent with the aims of the Change strategy and its prevention strand and it is recommended that Committee agrees to support the exploration of mainstreaming this approach throughout Council activity.

Elected member engagement and consultation

- 4.10 Since initiation of the commission a total of three engagement sessions have been held for elected members, in addition to updates on progress provided through the Policy and Sustainability Committee business bulletin.
- 4.11 Following the last of these sessions in September 2019, it was agreed that further discussion on interim findings would take place for individual member groups during November 2019.
- 4.12 A final period of consultation on the findings of the commission will take place following publication of draft final recommendations in January 2020. It is recommended that this process will include opportunity for both open and cross party discussion, as well as engagement and discussion within individual political groupings.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Next steps for the Edinburgh Poverty Commission include:
- 5.1.1 5th of December 2019 – full meeting of the Commission to determine the shape of its final recommendations
 - 5.1.2 End January 2020 – publication of draft final recommendations for consultation
 - 5.1.3 March 2020 – publication of the final recommendations of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Secretariat support for Edinburgh Poverty Commission is led by City of Edinburgh Council which provides project management functions for the Commission, with colleagues across the Edinburgh Partnership providing additional support and contributions as the project requires.
- 6.2 All costs for the Commission are covered by a budget of £76,000. This is made up of £16,000 of funding provided by Edinburgh Partnership to cover running costs, and £60,000 provided by Scottish Government to cover the cost of research and citizen engagement activities. No additional financial costs are incurred by the Council associated with its support of the Commission.
- 6.3 In addition to that funding, the project has secured additional research support from Joseph Rowntree Foundation covering the period to March 2020.
- 6.4 Throughout its work the project has also been dependent upon the time of its 12 commission members and their commitment and investment in the inquiry process. As at September 2019, this has equated to well over 500 hours of volunteer time from our independent commission members.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Details of stakeholder and community engagement are detailed in the paper above and in the appended report.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [City of Edinburgh Council, June 2018](#)
- 8.2 [Corporate Policy and Sustainability Committee, October 2018](#)
- 8.3 [Finance and Resource Committee, October 2019.](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Edinburgh Poverty Commission Interim Findings, November 2019

Solving poverty in Edinburgh – interim findings

November 2019

Summary

Interim findings and solutions

This paper provides interim findings and solutions from the work of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission so far this year. They represent the first expression of a vision and way forward to end poverty in Edinburgh, built from eight months of inquiry with citizens, service providers, and third sector organisations across the city. They are presented now for comment, feedback and discussion with key stakeholders. Over the next few months the commission will continue its programme of inquiry, working towards publication of final recommendations in March 2020.

The modern face of poverty in Edinburgh

The evidence we have gathered so far tells us that poverty is not a marginal issue in Edinburgh. It affects a sizeable proportion of the population – 80,000 people including almost one in five of all children – and there is much evidence to suggest its scale and impacts are growing larger over time.

The picture emerging is one in which the modern face of poverty in Edinburgh is not restricted solely to one of destitution and homelessness. **The majority of people in poverty in this city are of working age, probably in employment, probably living in rental accommodation in a family with children.**

Very often these families will be affected by **illness, by disabilities, and by mental health problems** brought about either as a cause of or as a result of the poverty they experience. Such families **live in every area of the city, in every type of neighbourhood and community.** The majority of people in poverty in Edinburgh do not live in those areas commonly considered as ‘poor’ or ‘deprived’.



It feels like the system is especially designed to prevent people from helping themselves and taking an active role in shaping their lives.”

#EdinPovertyCommission contributor



The cost of renting privately in Edinburgh ... is now beyond the reach of most people on low incomes even if they are working full-time.”

#EdinPovertyCommission contributor

Responding to the evidence

From the evidence we have heard so far, **Edinburgh Poverty Commission** believes that:

- People want to have control of their lives and contribute to a city where we look after each other
- Edinburgh wants to be a compassionate city that looks after everyone who lives here
- It is not right that so many people feel that the city does not care about their wellbeing, feel exhausted by the impossible decisions life on a low income demands, and feel trapped in a system that does not help them to thrive
- Poverty in Edinburgh is neither acceptable nor inevitable, and the city has many of the tools and influence it needs to end poverty
- There is no credible solution to poverty in Edinburgh that is not led by and delivered with the people those solutions are designed to support
- All people in Edinburgh, regardless of their income or assets, have the right to be treated with respect and compassion in every aspect of their lives, especially when seeking support from public agencies, or jobs from employers.

The commission further believes that **solving poverty in Edinburgh means** aiming for a future in which, by 2030:

- No-one in Edinburgh feels stigmatised because of their income or assets
- No-one in Edinburgh is destitute, having to do without the basic essentials they need to eat, keep clean and stay warm and dry.
- Fewer than one in ten people are in poverty at any given time
- No-one spends more than 2 years in poverty during their lifetime

“

Having to choose between heating a home or eating ... being left with very little money after the bills are paid... being made to feel inadequate and unable to provide the basics.”

#EdinPovertyCommission contributor

“

Cuts in benefits are forcing some people into limited lives of just surviving.”

#EdinPovertyCommission contributor

Game changers

Our inquiry so far suggests three categories of **Game Changers** through which the solutions to poverty in this city can be found.

- **Material Game Changers** - Ensuring people have more money in their pockets is the single most effective thing we can do to end poverty. We need strong solutions that are about reducing costs as well as boosting incomes.
- **Relational Game Changers** - We want people to thrive not just survive at a few pounds above the poverty line. We need solutions that remove the barriers that reduce people's ability to contribute and shape the lives they want
- **Strategic Game Changers** - Taking significant steps to tackle poverty needs a long term perspective, and investment in change. Delivering the change required needs a supportive environment of bodies (public, private, and third sector) confident enough and empowered to take appropriate risks.

Solutions to poverty in Edinburgh

Building on these principles, our work so far suggests that the following actions that should be taken to solve poverty in Edinburgh:

- **Maximise incomes, lower costs:** Edinburgh citizens are missing out on estimated £80m of unclaimed DWP benefits every year. A new approach is needed to deliver streamlined, accessible, and high impact welfare, benefits, and employment support.
- **Fair work and fair wages:** Edinburgh's employers in all sectors should pay wages at a level people can live on in this city, and should offer consistent and predictable hours and pay for all workers.
- **Affordable transport:** Edinburgh should ensure place based investment and development removes the need for costly travel to access services and support. Availability of free transport should be the norm for services targeted at people experiencing poverty
- **Family friendly:** Family and working parent friendly hours should be the norm for all services which aim to support people in poverty. Service hours should be explicitly built on an understanding of the needs and preferences of end users.
- **Early years:** Edinburgh should focus on ensuring the availability of holistic early years provision that provides modern flexible childcare and education that supports families in employment and on low incomes
- **Culture and understanding.** A change in culture is needed to tackle stigma and improve understanding of poverty and its impacts among support service providers. Such common understanding is critical to ensuring that people in poverty can rely on being treated with respect and compassion by the support services they rely on.

- **A new relationship with citizens:** A new approach is needed to change the relationship between citizens and service providers in Edinburgh. Citizens experiencing poverty must be involved in the planning, design and development of the support services they rely on.
- **Safe and welcoming:** All support services used by people in poverty should be located in places where the user feels safe and welcomed, and in places that are recognised and valued by the community they serve.
- **Trusted relationships:** Services relied upon by people experiencing poverty should be accessed through trusted community brokers with a single point of contact, not by referral and signposting to multiple agencies and locations.
- **Relationship based commissioning:** Change is needed in commissioning of services by the public sector in Edinburgh. We need a shift towards a new model of commissioning which puts priority on long term relationships between services and the people who rely on them, on building community capacity and citizen empowerment.
- **Flexibility in contracting is key.** Funding for services should be commissioned and delivered through monitoring and payment frameworks designed to support positive impacts for individual people, not to comply to rigid, often counter-productive criteria.
- **Innovation.** More of the same approaches used in the past will not be enough to solve poverty in Edinburgh. A commitment is needed to support innovation and experimentation in new ways to implement the solutions outlined in this paper.

Next steps

This document sets out our first emerging thoughts on the steps needed to end poverty in Edinburgh. At this point in our inquiry we know that these do not present a complete solution, and that there is no model of change to poverty in this city that does not include critical issues not covered here, including:

- Housing availability, cost, and homelessness
- Cost of transport and service accessibility
- Experiences of criminal justice, and
- Community led approaches to lifting people out of poverty

Over the next few months we will continue our research programme to focus on these issues, and the levers for change available in the city. In advance of publication of our final recommendations in March 2020, this phase will introduce new ideas not only around *what* needs to change, but also about *how* that change can be delivered in a city like Edinburgh.

Solving poverty in Edinburgh – interim findings

1. Introduction

This paper presents an overview of interim findings and solutions arising from the work of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission so far this year.

The paper provides:

1. An overview of the **purpose and work undertaken** by the Commission to date
2. A summary of the **evidence and findings** heard by the commission during its first two phases of inquiry
3. A proposed model to guide **the response of the city** to these findings, including a vision of what it would mean to solve poverty in Edinburgh
4. An outline set of **solutions for the city** to implement.

“There is no interest in the well-being of low income families. Food banks are keeping people fed.”



Unaffordable and inflexible childcare leads parents to being stuck in low paid work.”

#EdinPovertyCommission contributor

2. Edinburgh Poverty Commission

Edinburgh Poverty Commission is an independent group working together to define the steps we all need to take to end poverty in Edinburgh.

The Commission was launched in November 2018 and aims to:

- Better understand the forces which drive almost one in four children in Edinburgh into poverty
- Listen to and learn from the voices of citizens in Edinburgh who are struggling to get by
- Build on what works well, but challenge the city to do better, and
- Design the changes we can make as a city to end poverty in Edinburgh.

The commission is chaired by Jim McCormick of Joseph Rowntree Foundation and made up of 12 people with experience of tackling poverty and its effects, including citizens who have direct experience of living in poverty in Edinburgh.

The work of the Commission is supported by the **Edinburgh Partnership**, and **The City of Edinburgh Council**, both of which bodies have committed to acting on the final recommendations made by the Commission. It is also supported with funding for research activity provided by the **Scottish Government**.

Process of inquiry

Throughout 2019 commission’s process of inquiry is structured around three phases of work - on **pockets, prospects, and places**. Each phase includes visits to community projects in all part sof the city, evidence gathered from citizens on their experience of poverty, evidence gathered from support services, and commissioned research into the reality of poverty in this city and what solutions work best.

Following a final session of the year in November 2019, the Commission will publish its recommendations on the actions the city should take forward to solve poverty in Edinburgh. These will include actions for the public sector, the third sector, businesses, and communities across the city. Final recommendations will be published by the Commission by March 2020.



Edinburgh Poverty Commission



As at mid September 2019, the full Commission has:

- **Met 4 times in full session** to hear and deliberate on evidence from citizens, service providers, community groups, and researchers, covering the first two inquiry phases described above – **Pockets, and Prospects**
- **Made 18 additional visits** to meet and hear from community groups, citizen groups, public and third sector organisations, and other stakeholders

- **Launched 3 public calls for evidence**, hosted on the Consultation Hub, and analysed the results of some **70 submissions** received through these calls so far
- Heard from and visited over **50 organisations** across the city
- Launched a programme of engagement with staff across all parts of City of Edinburgh Council
- Published an early summary of its Emerging Findings, in May 2019
- Commissioned new research into the experience of citizens living on low income in Edinburgh, and attitudes to poverty across all parts of the city. This research is being carried out by the Poverty Alliance, and incorporates focus groups and one to one interviews with citizens. The full cost of this research is covered by funding provided to the Commission by Scottish Government.
- Developed new branding and communications toolkit for the commission, and launched an independent website.

The Commission has now completed the first two phases of its work, covering topics such as benefits, debt, working conditions, living costs, employment, learning, and care. As the work of the commission moves on to its next phase, it will continue to gather evidence and pursue discussions raised in this first phases of inquiry as well as hearing evidence on the themes and topics it has not yet considered. Key elements to be considered during Autumn 2019, include housing, homeless, transport, and community building in Edinburgh.

Even before the full inquiry is complete, however, the Commission has been able to develop some first interim thoughts on the actions Edinburgh should consider taking. Final recommendations from the Commission will not be presented until the end of our inquiry, so these represent very early outputs from our work. They are presented now as questions we would like the city to consider, to help us gather more input, and to provoke more discussion to help us form a forward plan on the steps Edinburgh should take to reduce, prevent, and mitigate against poverty.

This paper sets out these interim recommendations, describing what we have learned about poverty in Edinburgh, and our responses to the evidence heard so far.

3. The modern face of poverty in Edinburgh

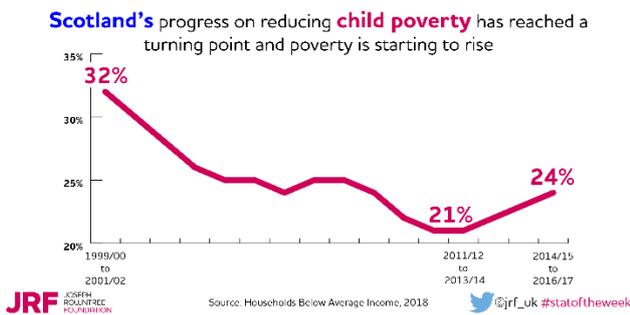
What we know

Edinburgh aspires to be a compassionate city that looks after all the people who live here. But we know that too many people in Edinburgh do not feel that compassion or that sense of care, and that far too many people's lives are not touched by any of the prosperity and quality of life the city is known for.

The blunt numbers are by now well-rehearsed – **80,000 people** in Edinburgh live in poverty, including almost **one in four** of all children, and there is a **life expectancy gap of over 21 years** between some affluent and less affluent areas of the city.

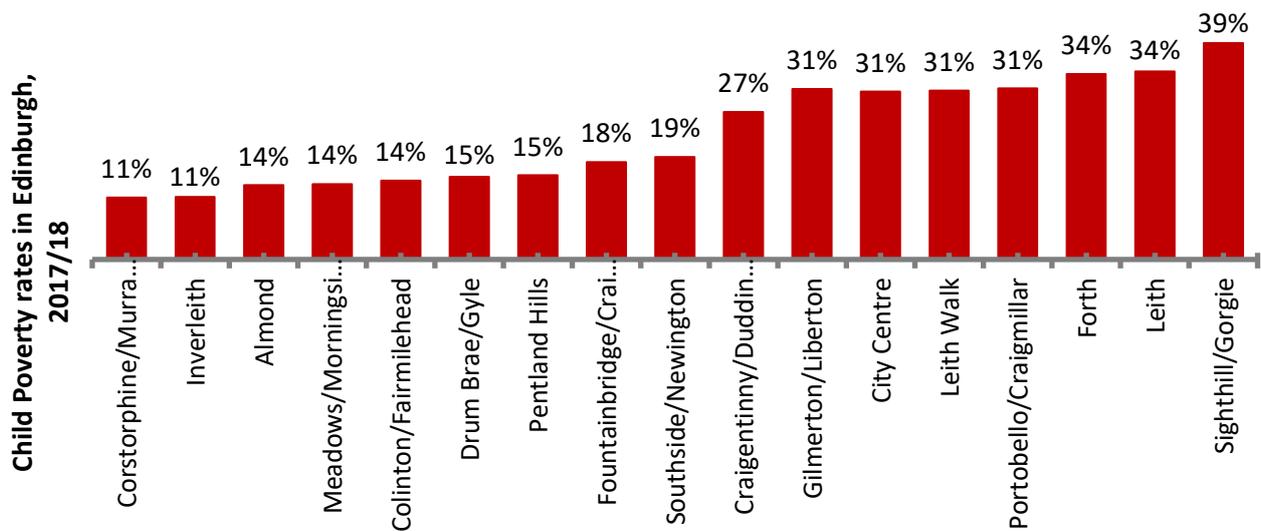
All of the evidence we have gathered tells us that the modern face of poverty in Edinburgh is not restricted to one of destitution and homelessness. **The majority of people in poverty in this city are of working age, probably in employment, probably living in rental accommodation in a family with children.**

Very often these families will be affected by **illness, by disabilities, and by mental health problems** brought about either as a cause of or as a result of the poverty they experience. **Such families live in every area of the city, in every type of neighbourhood and community.** The majority of people in poverty in Edinburgh do not live in those areas commonly stigmatised as being 'poor' or 'deprived'.



If no action is taken, Scottish Government estimates project Child Poverty Rates rising to 38% by 2030

Some parts of Edinburgh are already at that rate in 2019



Child Poverty Rates in parts of Edinburgh rank amongst the highest in Scotland

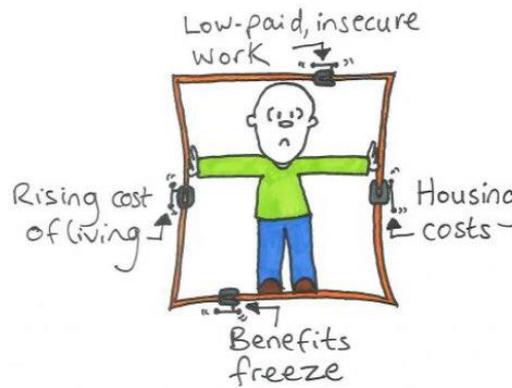
60% of people in poverty in Edinburgh live outside the city's most deprived areas

60% of all children in poverty grow up in a family where at least one adult is in work

40% grow up in a family affected by disability

Citizens voices

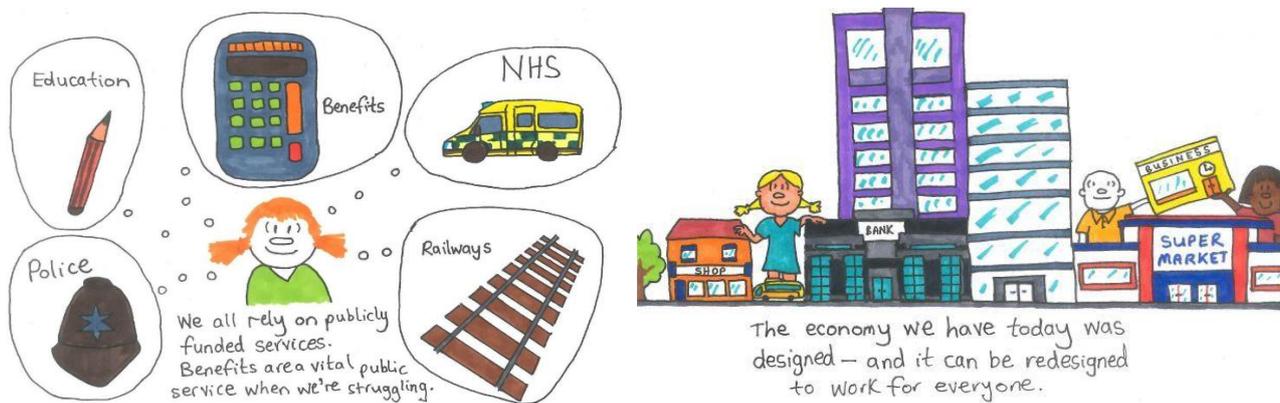
What is obvious, though, is that these numbers alone do not tell us the whole story. At the beginning of our inquiry we were clear that the most important part of our work was to listen to and respond to the real voices of citizens in Edinburgh who are experiencing poverty. From this work so far, the stories that have resonated most strongly have described a city full of:



- People who feel **trapped** in a system that does not care about them
- People **struggling** to find the support they need to help keep afloat
- The **frustration** felt by people working hard to hold down a job that pays barely enough to keep their family surviving, and never enough to prosper on
- People, particularly women and young people, who feel **exploited** in the city's labour market.
- The **shame** felt by people using foodbanks for the first time because they have nowhere else to go
- People who feel **exhausted and made unwell** by having to make the constant, impossible decisions brought by a life on a low income
- **Cruel and unfeeling** systems of support – too bureaucratic and complex to deliver help when it is needed, but very quick to remove it when situations allow
- The **fear** that rising housing costs are making ever larger parts of the city 'unliveable' for people on low incomes, even when they are in full time work
- The **impossibility** of managing a household budget when zero hour contracts mean that hours and pay from work are **volatile**, and fluctuate significantly from week to week
- The **isolation** felt by families living in temporary accommodation, disconnected from their friends and communities.

We see too that many of the patterns and experiences reported across Scotland, apply equally in its capital city. We see evidence that:

- Growth in work and wages alone is not enough to raise people out of poverty, if that work is based on hours and levels of incomes that are not enough to live on, or which are too unpredictable to manage
- Benefits freezes have been the largest single contributor to growth in poverty seen in recent years
- People in poverty face higher costs and higher rates of inflation, and poorer access to services than the rest of the population



The response of the city

Through our evidence sessions and visits during the past six months we have been inspired and encouraged by the groups and individuals we have met who are making a huge difference to the lives of people in Edinburgh who are looking for support.

All these projects, and many others, are evidence that poverty and the suffering it causes is not inevitable and there is much we can do, and are already doing, to break the locks that keep people in poverty. They also give us confidence that there is commitment and knowledge already in place across the city that are ready to take part in a long-term movement to end poverty in Edinburgh.

What is also clear, however, is that there is much progress still to be made. The testimony we have heard so far has shown examples of:

- A worrying **lack of real awareness and understanding** of the reality of life in poverty in Edinburgh among some service providers and decision makers
- Too much evidence of decisions being made **without the full participation, ownership, and participation** of the people affected most directly
- A lack of awareness among some service providers of the whole system within which they operate, resulting in **citizens in need being forced to navigate through separate/siloed services** that don't appear to share data or collaborate
- Continuing evidence of the **impact of austerity**, public sector budget cuts, and managerial responses to those pressures, affecting the levels and quality of support available for vulnerable people in the city
- An over-reliance on signposting and referral as a means to help, leaving vulnerable people feeling they are being **shifted from pillar to post** before getting the support they need
- The persistence of **myths and misunderstanding among citizens** relating to benefits eligibility, the rights of workers, and the responsibilities of employers
- Too many workers in sectors across the city who experience levels of pay, hours, and working conditions that are **insufficient to support a life without poverty**
- Too many citizens being moved from or **having to travel far out of their communities**, and support networks, to access the services they need.

4. Responding to the evidence

In response to the evidence we are gathering, the role of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission is to design a framework for change needed for the city to take the steps needed to end poverty in Edinburgh.

This framework should be built on an expression of core, shared principles and values that all citizens and stakeholders can buy into.

It should include specific recommendations, or game changers, to be taken forward and delivered by the city – including challenges and recommendations to be led by the public sector, the private sector, the third sector, and by communities.

It should also include recommendations for the legacy structures and changes needed to ensure long term delivery, scrutiny and continued development of the work begun by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission this year.

Across this framework, the Commission aims to deliver recommendations which are:

- **Authentic and Credible** – led by and reflecting the real voices of citizens experiencing poverty in Edinburgh, deliverable in the real world, and reflecting the powers and influence available to the city
- **Provocative and Positive** – bold, radical, and ambitious for real change, and willing to tell challenging, uncomfortable truths when necessary
- **Thoughtful and Clear** – reflective and creative in its response to evidence, and clear-sighted in its expression of the change needed and the owners of the actions needed to make that change
- **For the long term** – sustainable and deliverable and capable on maintaining the long term support and commitment - from different political parties, public and private sector stakeholders, and different sections of public opinion - needed to make significant change.



What do we mean when we say ‘Solve Poverty’?

Poverty is often described as a complex problem with simple solutions. It is also often thought of as a perennial problem that is impossible to eradicate – after all, if we take a definition of poverty based on relative income levels, there will surely always be a proportion of the population who fall below any threshold we choose to draw?

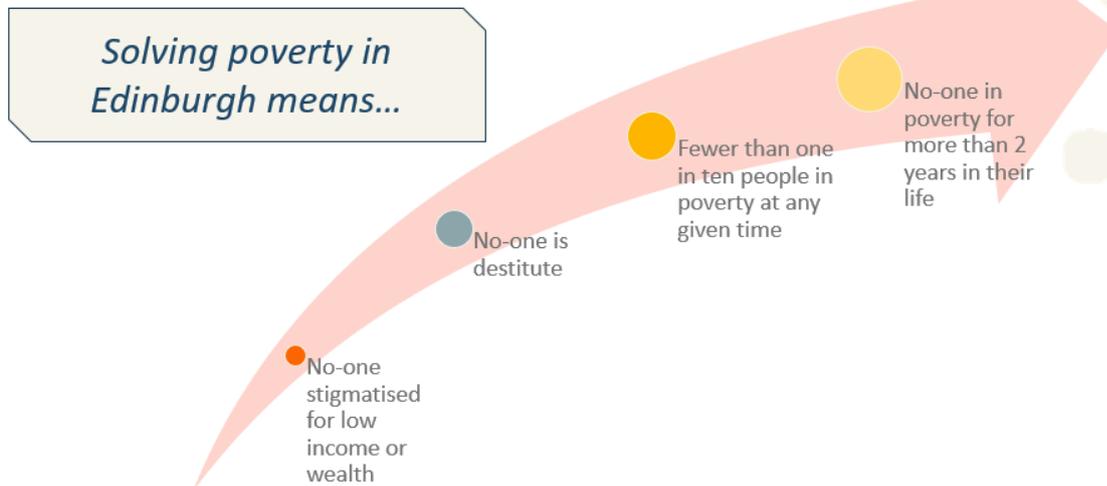
From the work we have carried out so far, our attitude to poverty falls somewhere between these two perspectives. We believe that it is necessary for this city to set an ambitious goal. That goal is to solve poverty, not to accept that any level of poverty is in some way acceptable.

From this perspective, we can set a definition of ‘solving’ poverty that rests on a number of specific goals and expectations. These goals will be further developed as our inquiry continues, but at present include the following:

- That no one in Edinburgh feels stigmatised, abandoned, or treated with less respect by the city as a result of their income or their wealth
- That no one in a city as prosperous as Edinburgh lives in a state of destitution, having to do without the basic essentials they need to eat, keep clean and stay warm and dry
- That the number of people in Edinburgh, including children, who grow up on incomes below the standard statistical relative poverty threshold is reduced to 10% by 2030 (in line with levels achieved in other developed countries, and in line with Scottish Government child poverty targets), and that

- The experience of poverty becomes a temporary factor, rather than a permanent way of live. That no person in Edinburgh spends more than 2 years in poverty during their life.

Edinburgh Poverty Commission



Common principles and values

From the evidence we have heard so far, Edinburgh Poverty Commission believes that:

- People want to have control of their lives and contribute to a city where we look after each other
- Edinburgh wants to be a compassionate city that looks after everyone who lives here
- It is not right that so many people feel that the city does not care about their wellbeing, feel exhausted by the impossible decisions life on a low income demands, and feel trapped in a system that does not help them to thrive
- Poverty in Edinburgh is neither acceptable nor inevitable, and the city has many of the tools and influence it needs to end poverty
- There is no credible solution to poverty in Edinburgh that is not led by and delivered with the people those solutions are designed to support
- All people in Edinburgh, regardless of their income or assets, have the right to be treated with respect and compassion in every aspect of their lives, especially when seeking support from public agencies, or jobs from employers.

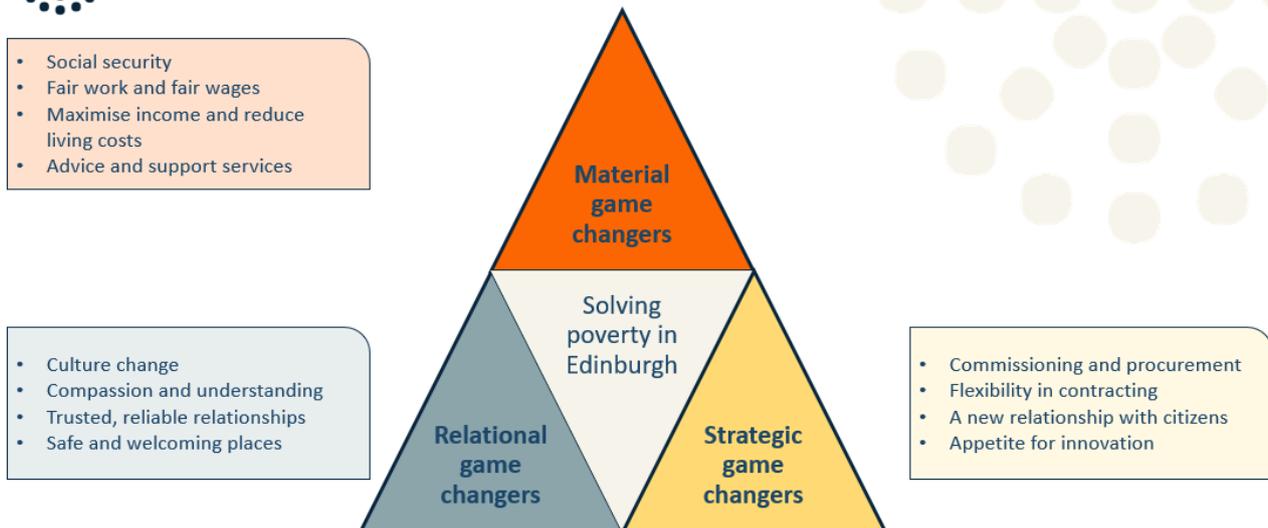
Game changers

To take forward these principles, the Commission aims to identify the key solutions needed to end poverty in Edinburgh. Much more work is needed to develop the specific actions and owners

needed, but our inquiry so far suggests three categories of Game Changers around which our recommendations will be structured – the **Material**, the **Relational**, and the **Strategic**.



Edinburgh Poverty Commission



- **Material Game Changers** - Ensuring people have more money in their pockets is the single most effective thing we can do to end poverty. We need strong solutions that are about reducing costs as well as boosting incomes.
- **Relational Game Changers** - We want people to thrive not just survive at a few pounds above the poverty line. We need solutions that remove the barriers that reduce people's ability to contribute and shape the lives they want
- **Strategic Game Changers** - Taking significant steps to tackle poverty needs a long term perspective, and investment in change. Delivering the change required needs a supportive environment of bodies (public, private, and third sector) confident enough and empowered to take appropriate risks.

5. Solutions to Poverty in Edinburgh

Across this framework for change, our work so far suggests a number of clear solutions to poverty in Edinburgh. Over the next years, Edinburgh should focus its resources and efforts on the following solutions:

- **Maximise incomes, lower costs:** Edinburgh citizens are missing out on estimated £80m of unclaimed DWP benefits every year. A new approach is needed to deliver streamlined, accessible, and high impact welfare, benefits, and employment support.
- **Fair work and fair wages:** Edinburgh's employers in all sectors should pay wages at a level people can live on in this city, and should offer consistent and predictable hours and pay for all workers.

- **Affordable transport:** Edinburgh should ensure place based investment and development removes the need for costly travel to access services and support. Availability of free transport should be the norm for services targeted at people experiencing poverty
- **Family friendly:** Family and working parent friendly hours should be the norm for all services which aim to support people in poverty. Service hours should be explicitly built on an understanding of the needs and preferences of end users.
- **Early years:** Edinburgh should focus on ensuring the availability of holistic early years provision that provides modern flexible childcare and education that supports families in employment and on low incomes
- **Culture and understanding.** A change in culture is needed to tackle stigma and improve understanding of poverty and its impacts among support service providers. Such common understanding is critical to ensuring that people in poverty can rely on being treated with respect and compassion by the support services they rely on.
- **A new relationship with citizens:** A new approach is needed to change the relationship between citizens and service providers in Edinburgh. Citizens experiencing poverty must be involved in the planning, design and development of the support services they rely on.
- **Safe and welcoming:** All support services used by people in poverty should be located in places where the user feels safe and welcomed, and in places that are recognised and valued by the community they serve.
- **Trusted relationships:** Services relied upon by people experiencing poverty should be accessed through trusted community brokers with a single point of contact, not by referral and signposting to multiple agencies and locations.
- **Relationship based commissioning:** Change is needed in commissioning of services by the public sector in Edinburgh. We need a shift towards a new model of commissioning which puts priority on long term relationships between services and the people who rely on them, on building community capacity and citizen empowerment.
- **Flexibility in contracting is key.** Funding for services should be commissioned and delivered through monitoring and payment frameworks designed to support positive impacts for individual people, not to comply to rigid, often counter-productive criteria.
- **Innovation.** More of the same approaches used in the past will not be enough to solve poverty in Edinburgh. A commitment is needed to support innovation and experimentation in new ways to implement the solutions outlined in this paper.

6. Next steps

An incomplete model

At this point in our inquiry we know that these do not present a complete solution, and that there is no model of change to poverty in this city that does not include critical issues not covered here, including:

- Housing availability, cost, and homelessness

- Cost of transport and service accessibility
- Experiences of criminal justice, and
- Community led approaches to lifting people out of poverty

Over the next few months we will continue our research programme to focus on these issues. We will also focus on developing our thoughts on the levers for change across all these issues that are held by the city, considering not only *what* needs to change but also *how* that change can be delivered in a city like Edinburgh.

This phase will introduce new ideas and new issues to deepen our thinking ahead of publication of our final recommendations by March 2020.

Key dates for the next period of our work include:

- September 26th – a full session meeting of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission covering the theme of ‘Places’
- October 7th to 11th – Challenge Poverty Week, including a series of events attended and organised by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission
- November 26th – The final scheduled full session meeting of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission
- January 2020 – publication of draft final recommendations for public consultation and feedback
- March 2020 – launch of final recommendations from the Edinburgh Poverty Commission.

Annex 2: Meetings and Visits so far

Category	Meeting	Venue
Edinburgh Poverty Commission Meeting	Edinburgh Poverty Commission - inception meeting	Foundation Scotland
Conference	Edinburgh College: Tackling Poverty Conference	Edinburgh College Granton Campus
Visit	Business in the Community Place Leadership Group	Virgin Money
Visit	Moredun Multis	Moredun Multis, Liberton,
Visit	Trongate Foodbank	6 Craighour Gardens, Moredun
Visit	Granton Information Centre advisors workshop	The Prentice Centre, 1 Granton Mains Ave, Edinburgh
Edinburgh Poverty Commission Meeting	Edinburgh Poverty Commission - Meeting 1	Gilmerton Community Centre
Conference	Homelessness Scotland report launch	Central Hall, 2 West Tollcross, Edinburgh
Conference	Edinburgh 1in5 project conference	The Faith Mission
Visit	Employability service providers workshop	Norton Park Conference Centre
Edinburgh Poverty Commission Meeting	Edinburgh Poverty Commission - Meeting 2	North Edinburgh Arts Centre
Visit	Granton Information Centre clients meeting	134-138 W Granton Rd, Edinburgh
Visit	Session with Social Care workers and clients	Thistle Foundation, Centre of Wellbeing, 13 Queen's Walk, Edinburgh
Visit	Session with Early Years Care providers	Craigetanny Early Years Centre
Visit	Session with Employability Skills clients	North Edinburgh Arts Centre
Visit	Visit to Cyrenians Community Cook Club	Easter Road Stadium, Edinburgh

Visit	Visit to Citadel Youth Centre parents drop in group	Citadel Youth Centre - 175 Commercial St, Edinburgh
Visit	Third sector forum group meeting	City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, 25 Nicolson Square
Visit	Visit to Muirhouse Medical Group	Muirhouse Medical Group, 1 Muirhouse Ave, Edinburgh
Edinburgh Poverty Commission Meeting	Interim findings deliberation session	Grassmarket Project
Visit	City of Edinburgh Council CLT discussion session 1	City of Edinburgh Council
Visit	City of Edinburgh Council CLT discussion session 2	City of Edinburgh Council
Conference	National Association of Welfare Rights Advisors	Annual Conference 2019, Edinburgh City Chambers

Annex 3: Contributors and Participants so far (exc CEC)

EVOC	Fresh Start	Presence In Action
ADVOCARD	Granton Information	Collective
Bethany Christian Trust	Centre	RNIB
Business in the Community Scotland	Grassmarket Community Project	Scotcash
Capital City Partnership	Joined Up 4 Jobs providers forum	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
Carnegie UK Trust	Liberton High School	Shelter Scotland
CHAI	LINK	Stepping Stones
Changeworks	Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living	Support in Mind Stafford Centre
Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI)	Low Income Families Together (LIFT)	The Junction, young people, health & wellbeing
Community Renewal	Mind the Craic	The Ripple
Craigentiny Early Years Centre	Moredun Multis Residents Group	Thistle Foundation
Crewe Medical Centre	Muirhouse Healthy Living Centre	Tron Kirk Foodbank
DWP	NHS Lothian	Tynecastle High School Equity Improvement Group
Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Programme Office	One in five: raising awareness of child poverty in Edinburgh	Unite Hospitality
Edinburgh City Youth Cafe	People Know How	University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh College	Pilmenny Development Project	University of Edinburgh Students Association
Edinburgh College Students Association	Port of Leith Housing Association	
Edinburgh Tenants' Federation	Poverty Alliance	
Foursquare Scotland (Stopover Hostel)		

Annex 4: Edinburgh Poverty Commission members

Jim McCormick, Joseph Rowntree Foundation - chair

Councillor Cammy Day, City of Edinburgh Council - vice chair

Celia Tennant, Inspiring Scotland

Zoe Ferguson, Edinburgh citizen

Craig Sanderson, Edinburgh citizen, former CEO Link Housing Association

Betty Stevenson, Edinburgh citizen

Chris Kilkenny, Edinburgh citizen

Stephen Kelly, Liberton High School

Diana Noel Paton, Edinburgh citizen, former CEO Thistle Foundation

Mary Alexander, Unite the Union

Sandy MacDonald, Aberdeen Standard Life

Carol Tannahill, Glasgow Centre for Public Health.