



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Published 31 January 2025
SP Paper 733
1st report, 2025 (Session 6)

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017



Published in Scotland by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

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Social Justice and Social Security Committee

To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice excluding matters relating to housing and tenants' rights.



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Membership changes

1. The following changes to Committee membership occurred during the Committee's scrutiny:
 - On 10 October 2024, Liz Smith MSP replaced Roz McCall MSP.
 - On 13 November 2024, Gordon MacDonald MSP replaced Kevin Stewart MSP.
 - On 15 January 2025, Mark Griffin MSP replaced Katy Clark MSP.

Introduction

2. The Committee explored areas of post-legislative scrutiny it could undertake at its Business Planning Day in June 2023. At the Committee meeting on [28 September 2023](#), Members agreed to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#) ('the Act').
3. On 22 May 2024, the First Minister, John Swinney MSP, set out the priorities that would underpin the work of the Scottish Government and reaffirmed its commitment to address child poverty, saying—

 My first priority is to eradicate child poverty—not tackle or reduce child poverty, but eradicate it. That will be the single most important objective of my Government and my Cabinet, because child poverty stunts the progress of any nation, and it stands in the way of social justice and economic growth. My Cabinet will do everything in our power—including listening to and working with members across the chamber—to achieve our aim. ¹
4. At its meeting on [20 June 2024](#), the Committee agreed its overall approach to post-legislative scrutiny of the Act as well as a call for views. Following the analysis of the call for views, the Committee considered and agreed its approach to oral evidence taking for its post-legislative scrutiny at its meetings on [3 October](#) and [10 October 2024](#).

Requirements under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

5. [The Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#) was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 8 November 2017. The Act aims to tackle, report on and measure child poverty. Its specific intention is to set clear targets relating to the eradication of child poverty as well as making provision for planning and reporting relating to the achievement of these targets.
6. The Act:
 - sets out [four statutory income targets to be met in financial year 2030-31](#)
 - Sets out four interim income targets, to be met in financial year 2023-24
 - Creates a statutory [Poverty and Inequality Commission](#) with functions related to the child poverty reduction targets from July 2019.
7. The Act requires:
 - the Scottish Government to meet the four income-based child poverty targets by 2030 and report on the actions they will take to meet those targets;
 - the Scottish Government to publish child poverty delivery plans at regular intervals (2018, 2022 and 2026), with annual reports to measure progress;
 - local authorities and health boards to report jointly annually on what they are doing to contribute to reducing child poverty in their local area.
8. None of the above requires legislation. However, the Scottish Government noted in its [consultation on the Bill](#):
 - ” The Scottish Government has proposed that the key purpose of the Child Poverty Bill will be to enshrine in legislation a Scottish Government ambition to eradicate child poverty. That ambition will be underpinned by the reinstatement of statutory income targets, against which our progress can be judged, and a robust 'Team Scotland' Delivery Plan.

The need for a statutory framework

9. The [Policy Memorandum](#) includes the following reasons why the Scottish Government felt a statutory framework was necessary:
 - It was introduced in reaction to the UK Government's decision to replace the statutory child poverty income-based targets with measures on worklessness and educational attainment.
 - The [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Bill](#) would establish Scotland as the only part of the UK with statutory income targets on child poverty.
 - A 2030 time frame would provide an opportunity to fully implement a long-term,

comprehensive and sustainable delivery plan.

- Alternatives to the Bill would have been to either not replace the targets or set non-statutory targets. The proposed targets were seen as a clear, public statement outlining ambition and the direction of travel and a useful tool to galvanise action and to drive cross-Government action necessary to tackle child poverty.
- The targets, delivery plans and annual reporting would allow the Scottish Parliament and the public to hold the Scottish Government to account for its progress towards eradicating child poverty.
- The UK was examined on its performance under the UNCRC in May 2016 and there were concerns about the UK Government's decision to repeal the child poverty targets. The UN Committee recommended that the UK 'set up clear accountability mechanisms for the eradication of child poverty, including by re-establishing concrete targets with a set time frame and measurable indicators, and continue regular monitoring and reporting on child poverty reduction in all parts of the State party'.

10. In its Stage 1 report on the Bill, the Social Security Committee concluded that—

” The Committee notes that setting targets will not, of itself, reduce child poverty. However we agree that legislation to reinstate statutory targets to tackle child poverty serves several important purposes. It sends a message about the importance the Scottish Government and this Parliament attaches to addressing child poverty. It serves to focus minds and resources and sets a clear vision of where, as a society, we want to be. ²

Delivery plans and progress reports

11. The Act provides for three delivery plans covering the 12 years from 2018 to 2030 with annual reports published each June and final progress reports to be published for each plan.

- [Every Child, every chance: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022](#) - The flagship policy in this plan was the Scottish Child Payment. Progress reports were published each June, with the [final report](#) published in 2022.
- [Best Start Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-26](#) - A key focus of the plan was how to increase earnings through parental employment. The most recent progress report, [for 2023/24](#), was published in June 2024 and gave updates on over 108 policies.
- The third delivery plan will cover 2026 to 2030 and must be laid in Parliament by March 2026.

12. The Poverty and Inequality Commission publishes its own reports on the two annual progress reports. The [most recent report](#), published in June 2024, found that limited progress had been made towards achieving the targets set and that the work underway was not enough to 'deliver the transformation required. The report also

stated that —

” While the Scottish Government's modelling suggests that its policies may have prevented an increase in the number of children in poverty, compared to a scenario where the Scottish Government took no action, the latest statistics demonstrate how far Scotland is from meeting its child poverty targets.

13. Each year, there is a parliamentary debate on the latest progress report. [On 11 June 2024](#), the debate focused on joint commitment, the challenging context and whether the Scottish Government's action is sufficient.

Focus of the Committee's scrutiny

14. During this parliamentary session, the Committee has scrutinised two key areas of the current policy approach – [the impact of the Scottish Child Payment](#) and [efforts to increase earnings from parental employment](#). This post-legislative scrutiny will add to that work by considering the impact of having a legislative framework underpinning these policies.
15. The Committee focused its scrutiny on an exploration of the difference a statutory rather than non-statutory approach has made to achieving the policy aims. The Committee wished to understand whether, if there had not been a statutory approach:
 - there would be different policies,
 - there would be less of a focus on child poverty.
16. The Committee also wished to understand what impact the statutory approach has made, such as:
 - Has the Act served to 'focus minds and resources'?
 - What difference has the statutory status of the Poverty and Inequality Commission made to scrutiny?

Evidence gathering

17. A call for written views was open from 10 July to 13 September 2024. The Committee received [35 submissions](#), and [8 additional written submissions](#) received after the call for views closed. The respondents included 12 local authorities, 13 organisations from the third sector, and four health boards. Respondents consistently agreed that the Act has changed the narrative. However, there were diverging views about the value of the Act. [A summary of the responses](#) is available on [the Committee's web-page](#).
18. On 11 October 2024, the Committee sent a survey to all local authorities in Scotland. The survey aimed to gather further information on the extent of local variation on child poverty policies and governance structures at a senior level. There were [nine responses received](#).
19. The Committee took oral evidence at its meetings on [21 and 28 November 2024](#). The Committee heard evidence from two panels of witnesses focusing on the impact of the Act on local policy and delivery and whether the Act has met expectations. The Committee took oral evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Shirley-Anne Somerville, on [5 December 2024](#).

Summary of findings

20. The oral and written evidence received indicates that there is a general view that the Act has had a positive impact. It has done so by creating a more strategic, whole-government focus on child poverty and by ensuring that child poverty issues are visible and kept on the agenda at senior leadership level. However, there is some concern about the lack of sufficient action and resources provided for commitments to ensure that the targets are met and to drive necessary substantial change.

Key issues

21. The following is a summary of the key issues that emerged during our evidence-taking.

Impact of a statutory approach

Impact on child poverty and the Scottish Government's policy choices

22. The Committee heard evidence that the legally binding nature of the Act and associated accountability and scrutiny have brought about an increased focus on reducing child poverty across government.
23. In evidence, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice stated that the greater focus on delivery, accountability and increased investment has "assisted collaborative working across the Scottish Government and with local government, third sector partners, health boards and so on, with a shared understanding of the national mission." ³
24. Ms Somerville also told the Committee that the Act has contributed to the shaping of policy in cross-portfolio areas such as employability support, childcare and transport and has "culminated in the recent formation of a Cabinet sub-committee on child poverty, which has elevated our oversight arrangements and further strengthened our approach." ⁴
25. John Dickie from End Child Poverty Coalition, told the Committee that "it is hard to imagine that it would have seen that level of focus and policy intervention and significant investment without that shift whereby Scottish ministers have had a direct legal responsibility to bring about significant reductions in child poverty." ⁵
26. Mr Dickie explained that, prior to the Act, there was not much appetite for another social security payment and that the requirement to produce a delivery plan against targets has "focused minds in Government and pointed the use of all the levers, including social security powers, which had not been a done deal." ⁶ Mr Dickie added that this has encouraged the development of the Scottish Child Payment.
27. The Committee heard that the Act has ensured that there is a continued focus on child poverty in the face of external events outwith the Scottish Government's control that could have pushed child poverty into the background. Examples of external events include the COVID pandemic, the cost of living crisis as well as some UK Government policies which have stretched public finances and worsened poverty for low-income families.
28. Chris Birt from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, stated that—

- ” Without the act, there was a risk that the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament could have decided to react to those temporary shocks and immediate emergencies without giving thought to the provision of a better society with much lower poverty levels in the longer term. The act has been absolutely crucial in ensuring that the Government has been focused not just on the immediate hardship that people face but on fixing the issue in the longer term.⁷
29. Despite the introduction of the Act resulting in an increased focus and commitment at senior level, the Committee heard that a lack of investment and action on policies has led to stagnating levels of poverty. Most of the written evidence received indicates that the current level of Scottish Government investment is not of a scale necessary to reach the statutory targets.
30. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted that the "after housing cost relative poverty" rates have remained the same as when the Act was passed in 2017 and stated that even if other factors have impacted on progress, "there was no provision in the Act that said the targets would only be achieved in tranquil economic conditions or with the help of the UK Government."⁸
31. John Dickie indicated that the Scottish Government's investment package is insufficient, saying that "the reality is that we are a long way from meeting the targets." Mr Dickie went on to say that—
- ” There has been a failure on the part of the Parliament to hold Government to account, because progress has stalled and we have not seen any substantive new policy investment or policy interventions since 2022-23. The last budget was clearly a missed opportunity to take substantive new action on child poverty, so I look to the Parliament to live up to its role in holding the Government to account for ensuring consistent year-in, year-out progress towards meeting the targets that the entire Parliament very much welcomed and supported when it passed the 2017 act.⁹

Impact of Scottish Government policies at local level

32. The Committee heard that one of the key impacts at local level of having a statutory approach has been improved buy-in from local authorities and partners to take action on reducing child poverty.
33. Professor Stephen Sinclair, Chair of the Poverty and Inequality Commission, told the Committee that before the Act came into force, he found that—
- ” Local officers who were responsible for child poverty and related issues regretted not having that statutory duty, because they felt that having it would have strengthened their hand, including in negotiations, and strengthened their prominence within their authorities.¹⁰
34. The Poverty Alliance stated that due to the statutory approach, child poverty is now "a strategic priority for councils, community planning partnerships, health boards, children's services partnerships and health and care partnerships - embedded

- across local strategies beyond their Local Child Poverty Action Reports." ¹¹
35. Members heard that this stronger focus on child poverty at local level has, in turn, improved collaboration, particularly between local authorities and health boards.
36. NHS Lanarkshire described how the framework has kept issues on the agenda across departments and allowed "discussion around senior tables, senior management buy-in and governance support." ¹²
37. Evan Beswick from Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership agreed, telling the Committee that "the greatest strength of the act [...] has been collaboration locally rather than between local authorities, as well as the use of the act as a focus to bring together partners across health, social care and the third sector to drive collaboration and collate experiences of what has worked well." ¹³
38. Mr Beswick provided the example of how the Act has impacted positively on Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership's approach to consultation and engagement with children and led to more co-production work informing their approach locally.
39. In the written evidence received from health boards, some positive outcomes were highlighted as a result of enhanced collaboration at local level. NHS Orkney provided the example of the establishment by its Community Planning Partnership of a Cost of Living Task Force arising from an increased local focus and collaborative work approach. ¹⁴ NHS24 highlighted "the development of Child Poverty Action Groups, bringing together key stakeholders and decision makers with influence [...] to develop holistic approaches to tackling child poverty at a local level." ¹⁵
40. However, some written submissions suggested that, with a sustained focus at national level, a lot of anti-poverty work would have taken place anyway without the Act enshrined in law. NHS Lanarkshire highlighted this point, noting that it might not have happened 'in such a co-ordinated way.' ¹⁶
41. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicated that on the ground "there has been little evidence of a significant shift in priority or budgets to date that have resulted in a reduction of child poverty." They warned that "the support that Health Boards and Local Authorities receive tends to revolve more around the production of plans, rather than capacity to more assertively reduce poverty." ¹⁷
42. The Committee also heard that national targets can feel quite distant at local level and are not always applicable to the reality of how local authorities operate. The Committee heard that the Scottish Government needs to recognise that scope for impact depends on local context and a range of factors.
43. Peter Kelly from the Poverty Alliance cautioned that targets "can be a motivating factor, or perhaps a demotivating factor if the task seems too great." ¹⁸
44. Martin Booth from Glasgow City Council explained that the levels of poverty in Glasgow are above the national average and although national targets are helpful for all local authorities to aim for the same result, not every area starts from the same position and with the same aspirations. Mr Booth explained that—

” At the moment, our motivation is not so much to meet the national targets as it is to reduce the depth of poverty faced by those who are in poverty; it is also about trying to prevent families from falling into poverty, given the impacts of that on a number of service areas. That is really challenging. It does not feel as if we are making a massive contribution to meeting the national targets, but having them is important because it focuses minds.¹⁹

45. Some of the evidence received indicates that the national target poverty measures do not take account of the high cost of living in rural areas. However, having the measures has enabled local authorities to address the issue.
46. Evan Beswick indicated that the Act has helped Argyll and Bute Council to "communicate the importance of a specifically rural approach to poverty". He added that "funding that has been delivered through the islands cost crisis emergency fund— about £1 million in the past year—has been valuable in tackling rural poverty."²⁰

Conclusion

47. It is clear from the evidence we have received that the introduction of the Act has focused minds at both national and local levels and instilled an appetite and motivation to keep the issue of tackling child poverty high on the agenda. It has motivated partners at local level to collaborate and work in partnership to shift and adapt their priorities, despite being faced with constraining external factors.

However, it is also clear that the measures in the Act have not resulted in the required level of action to meet the policy's intention. The Scottish Government needs to increase its efforts and support to local partners if it is to achieve its targets.

The First Minister stated that eradicating child poverty is a priority for his Government and has demonstrated his commitment to this aim through the 2025-26 budget. For the announced priorities and funding allocation to have a tangible impact, coordinated action is needed, taking into account the circumstances and capacity of local authorities.

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government takes the opportunity of its focus on child poverty to secure more buy-in and collaboration at national and local levels, with working groups and partnerships, and to encourage a culture of collaborative working.

It is important that child poverty targets set for local authorities are achievable. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government liaises with local authorities to determine whether they are able to meet the set targets or whether there are any specific circumstances which should be taken into account.

The Scottish Government commissioned research in 2021 on 'Improving our understanding of child poverty in rural and island Scotland'. The Committee would welcome an update on the work the Scottish Government has undertaken since the report on the researchⁱ was published in June 2022. In particular, we would welcome details of how it has assisted the Scottish Government to understand the issues that contribute to a high cost of living in rural areas and the subsequent steps taken to refine measures to ensure those issues are taken into consideration.

Local planning and reporting requirements

Annual reporting

48. The Committee heard evidence that the planning and reporting requirements for local authorities and health boards brought in by the Act have created a cluttered reporting landscape and added pressure in terms of timing and financial constraints. Some respondents to the call for views highlighted the need for streamlining of the requirements at government level to reduce this burden and the complexity of the process. In contrast, the Committee heard from some witnesses that the annual reporting requirements have created a good discipline.
49. Social Work Scotland and the Scottish Association of Social Workers explained that—
 - ” The inclusion of reporting on poverty adds to the complexity, overlap and confusion [...] creating a more complex landscape for leaders and removing vital resource away from front line efforts to tackle poverty.”²¹
50. Aberdeen City Council stated that reporting ‘conflicts with other statutory reporting requirements’ and that “better alignment at national level on related legislation, policies and strategies to streamline efforts”²² is needed.
51. There was a concern raised by some that the pressure on already tight budgets could impact on the delivery of interventions to tackle child poverty. Scottish Borders Council noted “that local authorities operate in a constrained fiscal environment’, adding that the ‘limited room for manoeuvre impacts our ability to effectively tackle child poverty, limiting the efficiency of the framework.”²³
52. Some of those who responded to the call for views suggested that the number of reports and reporting cycles are too demanding and do not allow enough time and focus to evidence positive outcomes.
53. NHS Lanarkshire commented in its submission that two or three-year plans, as opposed to annual reports, would seem more appropriate. Argyll and Bute Council suggested in its evidence that a questionnaire or survey incorporated into a national Improvement Service report would work better.
54. Shetland Council warned that for small local authorities, the increasing number of

ⁱ [Improving our understanding of child poverty in rural and island Scotland](#)

statutory reporting requirements could distract from the actual delivery of interventions.

55. In contrast to the evidence in the written submissions, some of the witnesses told the Committee about the value of annual reporting. Martin Booth told the Committee that, although Glasgow City Council's motivation is more to prevent and reduce poverty for local families than to meet national targets, "it keeps us disciplined and it makes sure that we are working together and keeping our elected members well briefed." ²⁴
56. Peter Kelly from the Poverty Alliance stated that as long as a balance between reporting and delivering is achieved, "it is good discipline to do annual reporting to make sure that child poverty—and poverty in general—stay high up on the agenda of local authorities and health boards." ²⁵

Inconsistent reporting and accountability

57. The Committee heard that the pressure of annual reporting can result in inconsistency, and the lack of a standardised reporting mechanism can mean there is a lack of accountability across local authorities to demonstrate that the actions being taken are having an impact in reducing child poverty.
58. CRER (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights) noted in their written submission that—
 - ” Local authorities do not report in a consistent manner or with a standardised format. This makes comparison across local authorities difficult. While the Act demands a requirement for local authorities to describe measures taken in relation to priority groups, there is no accountability to ensure that local authorities take any action. ²⁶
59. The Poverty Alliance described in their evidence the consequences of the lack of enforcement from the Scottish Government, stating that—
 - ” In the absence of negative consequences or enforcement, it becomes unclear the extent to which the statutory framework has impacted approaches to reducing child poverty, particularly in local areas least committed to this agenda. ²⁷
60. There were calls from some of those who provided evidence for more support and additional resources to ensure that local authorities have adequate capacity to be accountable and comply with reporting requirements.
61. In their written evidence, Aberdeen City Council called for an accountability framework, saying that—
 - ” There should also be a clear accountability framework in place, outlining the responsibilities of all partners and the consequences of failing to work towards meeting the targets set out in the Child Poverty (S) Act 2017. This will ensure that all parties remain committed to achieving the overarching goal of eradicating child poverty in Scotland. ²⁸

62. The Committee considered whether a focus on reducing poverty in general rather than specifically on reducing child poverty would have more impact and make reporting more manageable.
63. Martin Booth told the Committee that it is a complex situation as the two tend to be interlinked, saying that—
- ” Clearly, children who live in poverty are in families, so it is about dealing with family poverty. A lot of our actions have been about trying to target families in particular.²⁹
64. Peter Kelly agreed, telling the Committee that employers paying the real living wage and local authorities and health boards integrating child poverty action reports within wider reports can both be helpful. Mr Kelly said that—
- ” We cannot focus just on efforts that are directed solely at children; we have to think about the employability piece with regard to parents, the efforts to increase the number of jobs that pay at least the real living wage and so on. They are all part of the general effort to tackle child poverty. It is difficult to tease all of that out, which is why the efforts that some local authorities and health boards have made to integrate their child poverty action reports into wider reports can be quite helpful.³⁰
65. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice told the Committee that the work done by local authorities in addressing child poverty deserves praise. Ms Somerville explained that "they are now taking an increasingly strategic and preventative approach to what is going on."³¹ The Cabinet Secretary confirmed that the Scottish Government is keen to allow flexibility in how local partners plan and report on their actions and will assist them through guidance and sharing of good practice from national partners.
66. The Cabinet Secretary also explained that a balance has to be struck between being too prescriptive and allowing necessary flexibility within reporting requirements. She confirmed that the guidance for reporting was refreshed in 2022 and aimed not to be "burdensome to local authorities." Ms Somerville gave a commitment to keep the guidance under review and highlighted the ongoing work of the Improvement Service and the Child Poverty Leads Peer Support Network in considering what is working and how it can be improved.
67. Ms Somerville added that "should the committee recommend that we look at it again with our local authority partners, I would seek their views on it. The guidance should be a tool for improvement, rather than something that gets in the way of what is happening."³²
68. The Cabinet Secretary also told the Committee that she is giving consideration as to how to encourage more local authorities to join the work that is being done by the Fairer Futures Partnerships, or to continue it in another guise, as that learning is exceptionally important.

Support and feedback from national partners

69. The Committee heard from respondents to the call for views and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice about the importance of feedback to local authorities on the content of their reports and the sharing of good practice.
70. Fife Council indicated in their written evidence that the feedback they receive from the Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland is helpful, as an awareness of the approaches taken by other local authorities assists them in informing their own approach.³³
71. Members asked the Cabinet Secretary to provide details about the type of feedback that individual local authorities receive on their reports and whether that feedback is provided automatically or on request.
72. The Cabinet Secretary explained that all the reports are reviewed by the members of the national partners group and feedback either in writing or in person is available on request. Ms Somerville added that it is up to local authorities to take advantage of the feedback mechanism.³⁴

Conclusion

73. It is clear that some local authorities find the reporting requirements a burden. There is also a concern about a lack of consistency and accountability. Improved support, guidance and consideration of how to streamline reporting requirements by the Scottish Government could assist local authorities to demonstrate the work being done in their areas to reduce child poverty.

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government provides further support to local authorities and considers alternative reporting timescales and methods to ensure compliance. This should be coupled with additional resources to increase capacity where required.

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government introduces a clear accountability framework, outlining the responsibilities of all partners, as well as the consequences of failing to work towards meeting the targets set out in the Act.

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government and Improvement Service provide feedback to all local authorities by default on the content of their annual reports, to improve the consistency of the information provided and to better share best practice across all local authorities.

The Committee asks the Scottish Government to consider whether providing a reporting template for local authorities and health boards to use would address consistency

issues.

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government seeks the views of local authorities and local partners as to whether the revised guidance has led to improvements and whether there are any further improvements that can be made.

The importance of data

74. The Act's targets are based on four measures of poverty defined after housing costs, aiming to capture different aspects of poverty. These targets provide a clear baseline for measuring child poverty, tracking trends and driving policy and can aid the establishment of priorities at local level.
75. The Committee heard about the importance of collecting the right data to demonstrate the impact of policies, priorities and interventions. Members also heard about the complexities of doing so at both a national and local level and the importance of clarity on what data is collected and for what purpose, as it is a resource intensive exercise.
76. Sally Buchanan from Falkirk Council recommended being selective about the data to be collected and suggesting asking the following questions "What are we going to do differently now that we've got all this data? Does it actually tell us anything that we didn't know at the start?" Ms Buchanan explained that Falkirk Council uses data to do useful things on the ground such as small improvements in services to reach more people and to identify people who might be missing out on benefits. ³⁵
77. Professor Sinclair, Chair of the Poverty and Inequality Commission, told the Committee that data collection is not always a necessary requirement to take action on policies, saying that—
 - ” There are certain things we know, that we don't need to measure. We shouldn't not engage in particular actions just because we don't have data. We know that hungry children don't flourish. You don't really need marginal data on that. There are certain policies that it is very plausible to believe have an effect. ³⁶

Data, choice of measures and other evidence

78. Different types of data have a specific purpose. Some provide broad headline trends to keep track of the Scottish Government's progress against the targets set in the Act. Tracking at local level is also important. It is, however, also necessary to collect data to evaluate the impact of specific policies at both local and national level and to identify specific individuals who may need support. Witnesses discussed the value and usages of different types of data as well as challenges faced when collecting and accessing data.

Data for tracking trends in poverty at national level

79. The Committee heard warnings about the risk of data being impacted by external factors which are outwith the Scottish Government's control. These could potentially skew policy choices and their key levers. The COVID pandemic, the cost of living crisis, as well as the limitation imposed by matters not devolved to the Scottish Government were cited.
80. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation cautioned that this should not be seen as "a failing of the Act or an excuse for slow progress on the targets. Rather it must be a motivation for far deeper collaboration between governments." ³⁷
81. The Committee heard that data used to measure the impact of the Act can fluctuate year-on-year and as a result a three-year rolling average is needed to show useful trends.
82. The Family Resources Survey provides child poverty statistics against the four target measures and is published annually in March. Some of the witnesses raised a concern about the limitations of the survey. These included the time lag before statistics are published, the volatility in year-to-year results and the large margin of error.
83. Witnesses also raised specific issues about the survey data. This included the use of a small sample size in Scotland, which does not allow detailed analysis of quantitative data, as well as a lack of data on the impact of the Scottish Child Payment on families.
84. Chris Birt from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation told the Committee that understanding this impact is crucial, recommending that "officials from the Scottish Government and the DWP sit down together and try to get a solution." ³⁸
85. John Dickie from End Child Poverty Coalition told the Committee that issues with the data affect all parts of the UK and therefore it is vital for the survey to be based on the right methodology, so that it can show the actual income of families in Scotland. Mr Dickie recommended that the survey data be improved to ensure there is access to the best possible estimates of child poverty, at both a national and local level. ³⁹
86. Chris Birt described the lack of access to data on families in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment as a major issue. Mr Birt also suggested that the survey's sample size in Scotland remains too small, which has been an ongoing issue since the COVID pandemic. He indicated that Northern Ireland has introduced measures to change their survey, which has increased the sample size, and recommended that the Scottish Government and the DWP consider whether their approach could be replicated.
87. Mr Birt added that there is a lot of qualitative data available on top of the quantitative data used to measure progress on the targets and noted that "it is not that hard to get qualitative data, and we should not dismiss that. That is key, because of the scale." ⁴⁰
88. Dr Randolph from Fraser of Allander Institute told the Committee that there are

ways to collect richer data, but it requires investment and planning. In the context of the Scottish Child Payment, Dr Randolph provided the following example of non-static modelling, which could potentially be used, saying that—

” Ideally, we would also have some evidence from actual measurement, where we follow people over time who are receiving the payment and compare them with people who are not receiving it, and isolate the change that comes from a particular policy change.⁴¹

89. John Dickie pointed out the difference between policies in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK. Mr Dickie told the Committee that—

” We can do more to understand not only the headline numbers of children who are lifted out of poverty but what difference that is making to the lives of children and families in Scotland. If we compare families in Scotland with similar low-income families elsewhere in the UK, there is an unfortunate natural experiment going on here, where we are providing real, additional financial support to families in Scotland.⁴²

90. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice agreed that gathering robust data is challenging for a number of reasons, especially for priority groups, as response numbers to the survey are low. Ms Somerville provided the Committee with the following reassurance—

” We are working actively with the DWP on that issue. The Scottish Government has been paying for a 100 per cent boost to the family resources survey’s Scottish sample since 2002, to try to improve that work. Sample sizes for many large population surveys are being affected by falling response rates—that is happening not just for the [Family Resources Survey] but more widely, and we are looking at what can be done to mitigate that.⁴³

The Committee requests further information on how the Scottish Government liaises with COSLA and Improvement Scotland to gather and share evidence of effective local interventions.

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government considers the measures introduced in Northern Ireland to increase the sample size of the Family Resources Survey, to determine whether the approach can be replicated in Scotland.

Given the calls for richer data, the Committee recommends the Scottish Government commissions further research into comparative policies for tackling child poverty across the UK.

Data for tracking trends in poverty at local level

91. The Committee heard that local reporting duties have helped to focus minds and

resources, as well as leading to improvements in the delivery of interventions. However, there are issues with accessing local data and barriers to data-sharing, which is necessary to inform both local targeting and national policy.

92. One of the barriers to gathering the data required to inform national policy is the time and resources required by local partners to be dedicated to this task. The Committee heard that this is difficult to do alongside all of the other priorities of local authorities.
93. Peter Kelly from the Poverty Alliance warned that collecting data on the impact of policies cannot be a priority for local authorities and suggested that a balance needs to be struck "between having that data and the resource that would be required to gather so much of it at the local level."⁴⁴
94. An issue raised by some in the written submissions received is the quality of data used to report on local activity.
95. NHS Lanarkshire indicated in their submission that 'inconsistencies or gaps in data reporting can hinder meaningful assessments'. They explained that—
 - ” There are challenges with measurement of short/medium/long term impacts, given that the impact of initiatives on child poverty levels and individuals may take time to be evident and may not always be captured in annual reports.⁴⁵
96. Another issue raised in evidence is that the data on which the statutory targets are based is not available at a local authority level. Local authorities use administrative data to inform their understanding of local trends. This can impact on the ability of local partners to efficiently plan and deliver their interventions.
97. The Committee heard that, while the Act emphasises the use of data to inform policy, some witnesses felt frustrated by the demands on resources to access timely and detailed ward-based data to best target their delivery.
98. Peter Kelly told the Committee that the Act's focus on local data collection has highlighted gaps in national datasets that local authorities and health boards cannot address, and added that they 'are doing the best that they can with the data that they have.' Mr Kelly provided a positive example of an initiative introduced by Dundee City Council, saying that—
 - ” The Dundee fairness and local child poverty action plan takes a useful scorecard approach, linking its targets with available data to track progress over longer periods of time, from when the plan was initially set to the current year, and to make projections for the future.⁴⁶
99. Aberdeen City Council stated in their written evidence that "there is a need to ensure the availability of child poverty datasets at local and neighbourhood level to enable improvement to be evaluated and ensure targeted interventions are directed to support a reduction in inequalities."⁴⁷ They suggested that this would ensure that local reports clearly show that data and evidence have been used to inform a local authority's decisions and priorities.
100. Evan Beswick from Argyll and Bute Council highlighted to the Committee that many of the datasets are not refined enough to cover small areas and pockets of

population. Mr Beswick described how this data gap has been addressed by Argyll and Bute Council, saying that—

” Through the work that has been driven by the act, we have been able to invest money from the child poverty practice accelerator fund into some very technical and specific data work. We have bought in datasets from other organisations that have allowed us to refine our work and target it much more closely to where it is most needed. That work is resource intensive, but it has been very valuable that we have been able to do it.⁴⁸

101. In evidence to the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice acknowledged that ‘the data source for the statistics on the statutory targets cannot be disaggregated at a local level’. Ms Somerville highlighted the following areas of work which assist in improving the datasets—

” The Scottish household survey provides breakdowns by local authority. Data from the DWP, HMRC and the children in low-income families survey are also valuable resources. Work is being undertaken through the child poverty practice accelerator fund, to look at what data could be used and how it could be used more effectively. That Scottish Government fund also assists various local authorities to look at different datasets and models, to see how they can be brought together.⁴⁹

Data on individuals in order to target specific support for individuals

102. Data sharing is key for local authorities and health boards to access data on families in their areas. Some of the witnesses highlighted difficulties with obtaining data on child poverty rates necessary to enable them to identify those families that require support and thereby increase take-up of their interventions.

103. Martin Booth from Glasgow City Council explained that a simpler and standardised data management system would help local authorities better identify and respond to needs, and enable them to have a greater impact on reducing child poverty. Mr Booth gave the following example to illustrate the issue for local authorities—

” The data on children who are entitled to the school footwear and clothing grant is driven by data that we hold, because it is driven by council tax and housing benefit-type data. We can automate the payments of that grant; [...] We cannot do that with other education-based benefits, because the criteria for free school meals and education maintenance allowance are different from the criteria for the school clothing grant. To me, if you need a school clothing grant, you need free school meals as well and, if you are of the appropriate age, you also need an education maintenance allowance.⁵⁰

104. The Committee heard that the introduction of a data-sharing agreement between Social Security Scotland and all local authorities would be beneficial in addressing this issue.

105. Sally Buchanan from Falkirk Council agreed that such a data sharing agreement

would assist local authorities in better targeting and improving interventions. Ms Buchanan added that this would be a more efficient approach than 32 local authorities each developing their own approach.⁵¹

106. A data-sharing agreement is in place between DWP and the Scottish Government. This agreement allows local authorities to access data on eligibility for early learning and childcare in their area, so that they can make eligible families aware of the support available locally. The data cannot, however, be used for any other purpose.

107. Martin Booth described how Glasgow City Council uses the data provided by the DWP, but highlighted limitations when seeking Scottish Child Payment records from Social Security Scotland to target eligible families who have not claimed the benefit. He said that—

” The data has allowed us to target individual wards. We know the wards that have the deepest levels of poverty and the wards with the most children that are on the verge of poverty. If we can carry out early intervention to prevent families from falling into crisis, that can make a big difference. Having the data is really important, but having a wider dataset and access to all the data would be really helpful, as would being able to use that data to target families that need help, rather than having to take a wildfire approach.⁵²

108. In evidence to the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary for social Justice acknowledged that although there has been continuous improvement in data-sharing arrangements, more could be done. However, this can only be done within the legal limitations for data sharing. Ms Somerville added—

” Always, as we work through that, we need to work out what data people want, what they are going to do with it and the legal basis for sharing information. We are already working with local authorities to see what can be done between the agency and councils to share information on the Scottish child payment. However, we cannot just give councils that information; for that to have a legal basis, we have to work out why councils want the information and what they are going to do with it.⁵³

The right data and evidence to evaluate the impact of policies

109. An issue raised in evidence is the need to evaluate local policy interventions to determine their impact on reducing child poverty.

110. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted in their evidence comments from the Improvement Service's analysis of the year 5 Local Child Poverty Action Reports about the lack of clarity on how all the data available is put to good use. They said that—

” What the reports do not reflect clearly is whether data, intelligence and wider evidence is routinely being used to inform priorities, policy decision and/or service delivery.⁵⁴

111. Some of the witnesses told the Committee that the local reports provided good

evidence of activities that are making a difference to reducing child poverty. Peter Kelly from the Poverty Alliance told the Committee that local authorities have been making great efforts to address child poverty in difficult circumstances.⁵⁵

112. One example of impact was provided by Sally Buchanan from Falkirk Council. Ms Buchanan described joint work being done in Falkirk on the Parental Employment Support Fund and how collaboration between the Council and the health board has "supported 78 people to get welfare benefit checks, 19 people supported with debt, 21 people to get six month paid NHS work placements and 4 people being offered jobs through a separate work academy."⁵⁶
113. Evan Beswick from Argyll and Bute Council described how the welfare rights team in Argyll and Bute has helped achieve a client gain of about £4.5 million in 2023-24, putting 'real money in people's pockets that would not have happened without the work of that team'.⁵⁷
114. The Committee considered whether more could be done to understand the impact of the Scottish Government's policies on reducing child poverty.
115. John Dickie from End Child Poverty Coalition, said that more analysis is needed to go beyond the broad child poverty headline targets and statistics to ensure that there is a refined understanding of the impact of policies on individual children and their families. Mr Dickie explained that "there are significant additional levels of support going into family homes. Families, parents and carers are telling us what a difference that is making to their lives."⁵⁸
116. Professor Sinclair, Chair of the Poverty and Inequality Commission, highlighted the value of qualitative data, especially when undertaking modelling work and looking at the broader impact of policies beyond the headline measures. He said that—

” Intelligence and feedback from community organisations and service providers can give us a much more rounded picture. We know from testimony that the Scottish child payment is making a difference to the wellbeing of families; it is reducing stress. Unfortunately, they are having to spend it on essentials, because there is still a chronic, on-going cost of living crisis and a legacy of austerity policies. That is not going to show up in modelling, but it is still valid data that can give us a much broader and richer picture.⁵⁹

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government considers how best to improve the evaluation of the impact of interventions to reduce child poverty.

Scrutiny, reporting and national planning

117. The Committee heard a variety of views on how well the Act had enabled effective scrutiny of the progress made in reducing child poverty. Some of the witnesses told the Committee that the Act ensures that there is accountability, transparency and continual progress towards reducing child poverty. Others were critical of the level of effective action the targets and scrutiny measures have generated.

118. The Committee heard that the work of the Poverty and Inequality Commission was welcomed.
119. The Poverty Alliance praised the Commission's "timely reporting that allows for the Scottish Government to be held to account" and how its broad remit on all aspects of poverty "spotlights the necessity of holistic and intersectional approaches to anti-poverty action."⁶⁰
120. Scottish Borders Council highlighted in their evidence that "the Commission's independence gives added credibility, weight, and authority to its pronouncements, which has a further catalysing impact on action."⁶¹
121. Some raised concerns in their evidence about the Commission's limited resources and how the timescales it needs to adhere to for its scrutiny work impact on how much it can achieve.
122. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation noted in its submission that the Commission requires greater resources, saying that—
 - ” The Commission has a key scrutiny role for the Act in addition to providing research and support. However, their wide and complex remit, ad hoc requests for advice, the relatively low staffing and the small research budget of the Commission means that the ability to scrutinise can be limited.⁶²
123. The Committee heard that the contribution of the Improvement Service to scrutiny was also considered valuable. Shetland Islands Council said in its submission that the Service had helped with the production and delivery of Local Child Poverty Action Reports. In its written evidence, Fife Council indicated their appreciation for the feedback provided by the Service on their report and that they found it useful to learn from the approach of other areas.⁶³
124. On the effectiveness of the scrutiny measures, although the local reporting processes in place were seen as useful, the Committee heard that they were deemed insufficient to drive change.
125. The Poverty and Inequality Commission stated in its submission that "the targets, plans and reporting in themselves are not sufficient to drive change alone, and also require effective scrutiny by Parliament and civil society."⁶⁴
126. Falkirk Council noted that it can be difficult to assess local impact because "local areas report on different things in different ways" through complex reporting mechanisms. They added that "the bureaucracy this creates is costly to all parties involved, and the statistics suggest that the existence of scrutiny measures alone has made no real impact."⁶⁵
127. The Scottish Women's Convention highlighted that there is a lack of "tangible, evidence-led actions and observable difference to children's lives". Save the Children raised a concern that "existing scrutiny measures are not encouraging the bold action that is required to end child poverty."
128. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice told the Committee that the Scottish Government has been putting in place structures to improve work across portfolios

and enhance national planning. Ms Somerville stated that—

” The Act has helped to shape policy with regard to how we deliver employability support, childcare, transport and a host of other policies that span all ministers and portfolios. Ministers have collaborated increasingly closely over this time, and that has culminated in the recent formation of a Cabinet sub-committee on child poverty, which has elevated our oversight arrangements and further strengthened our approach. The subcommittee builds on the learning from the actions that we have taken, and it will create more opportunities to co-ordinate policies and maximise our collective impact on child poverty.⁶⁶

129. The Committee notes the request for the Scottish Parliament to do more to hold the Scottish Government to account in meeting its child poverty targets and will give consideration as to how the Social Justice and Social Security Committee can best contribute to robust scrutiny.

The Committee recognises the valuable scrutiny and oversight work that the Poverty and Inequality Commission undertakes to make progress on reducing child poverty. The Committee asks the Scottish Government to respond to the evidence received that the Commission does not have the necessary level of resources to undertake all of its functions.

Conclusions and lessons learned looking beyond 2030

130. The Committee undertook post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 to explore what difference a statutory rather than non-statutory approach has made to achieving the policy aims.
131. The Committee heard that the Act and its measures have definitely served to focus minds and resources and kept the goal of reducing child poverty high on the agenda at national and local levels. It has provided focus to the work of the Scottish Government and brought about necessary cross-government collaboration and motivated local partners to review their priorities. All of this has happened in the context of external factors outwith the control of the Scottish Government.
132. The evidence we have received has however clearly shown that the measures in the Act have not resulted in enough defined action and prioritisation to bring about sufficient and sustained progress against the targets to eradicate child poverty.
133. The Committee also heard that more should be done to support and guide local authorities to improve and report on interventions at local level.
134. Overall, the statutory approach has had a positive impact, but of course the important thing is whether the Scottish Government succeeds in reducing child poverty. Change has taken place. The Scottish Child Payment is a good example of positive progress. However, change of an even bigger scale needs to happen, as we are still some way from meeting the targets.
135. The Act does not specify what is to happen if targets are missed and the Committee is looking forward to the Scottish Government sharing its vision for the coming years and hearing about how it will use learning so far to better inform and support strategy and delivery at local level.
136. Through the Act, the Scottish Government chose to set targets. The Scottish Government needs to intensify its efforts and consider how it can better work across government and with local partners to meet those targets and maximise the impact and make a real difference to the daily life of children and families in Scotland.
137. The Committee will continue to scrutinise the policies and progress in targeting child poverty as progress reports against the targets and the final delivery plan are published.

Annexe A - Minutes of meetings and Official Reports

Minutes of meetings

You can read minutes of the Committee's meetings at the Scottish Parliament website: [Social Justice and Social Security Committee - Meetings](#).

Extracts from the minutes of meetings of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee:

[20th Meeting, 2024 \(Session 6\), Thursday, June 20, 2024](#)

3. Work programme (In Private)—

The Committee considered its work programme. In relation to post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, the Committee agreed a call for views, that late submissions be published as correspondence but excluded from the SPICe analysis of responses and that any future approaches to scrutiny be taken in private. In relation to its scrutiny of the legislative consent memorandum on the UK Data Protection and Digital Information Bill, the Committee agreed to take no further action. The Committee also considered and agreed arrangements for its business planning day.

[26th Meeting, 2024 \(Session 6\), Thursday, 3 October 2024](#)

2. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (In Private)—

The Committee considered its approach to oral evidence taking for the inquiry and agreed to consider a revised approach at its next meeting.

[27th Meeting, 2024 \(Session 6\), Thursday, 10 October 2024](#)

5. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (In Private)—

The Committee considered and agreed its revised approach to oral evidence taking for the inquiry.

[31st Meeting, 2024 \(Session 6\), Thursday, 21 November 2024](#)

2. Decision on taking business in private—

The Committee agreed to take item 7 in private.

3. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017—

The Committee took evidence from—

Evan Beswick, Chief Officer, Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership

Sally Buchanan, Library Services and Fairer Falkirk Manager, Falkirk Council

Martin Booth, Executive Director of Finance, Glasgow City Council

Peter Kelly, Chief Executive, The Poverty Alliance.

7. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (in private)—

The Committee considered the evidence heard under item 3.

[32nd Meeting, 2024 \(Session 6\), Thursday, 28 November 2024](#)

1. Decisions on taking business in private—

The Committee agreed to take items 3 and 4 in private.

2. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017—

The Committee took evidence from—

John Dickie, Director of Child Poverty Action Group Scotland, End Child Poverty Coalition

Dr Hannah Randolph, Economist Fellow, Fraser of Allander Institute

Chris Birt, Associate Director for Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Professor Stephen Sinclair, Chair, Poverty and Inequality Commission.

3. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (In Private)—

The Committee considered the evidence heard under item 2.

[33rd Meeting, 2024 \(Session 6\), Thursday, 5 December 2024](#)

1. Decisions on taking business in private—

The Committee agreed to take items 3 and 4 in private.

2. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017—

The Committee took evidence from—

Shirley-Anne Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice

Ann McKenzie, Unit Head, Tackling Child Poverty Policy Unit

Andrew Fraser, Child Poverty Briefing and Strategy Team Leader, Scottish Government.

3. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (In Private)—

The Committee considered the evidence heard under item 2.

[4th Meeting, 2025 \(Session 6\), Thursday 30 January 2025](#)

2. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (In Private):

The Committee considered a draft report. Various changes were agreed to, and the report was agreed for publication.

Official Reports

[Official Report of Thursday 21 November 2024](#)

[Official Report of Thursday 28 November 2024](#)

[Official Report of Thursday 5 December 2024](#)

- 1 [Meeting of the Parliament, Official Report, 22 May 2024, Col 24](#)
- 2 [Stage One Report on the Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Bill, 22 May 2017, p8](#)
- 3 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 3
- 4 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 2
- 5 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 4
- 6 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 16
- 7 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 4
- 8 [Joseph Rowntree Foundation, written submission](#)
- 9 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 16
- 10 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 5
- 11 [The Poverty Alliance, written submission](#)
- 12 [NHS Lanarkshire, written submission](#)
- 13 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 12
- 14 [NHS Orkney, written submission](#)
- 15 [NHS24, written submission](#)
- 16 [NHS Lanarkshire, written submission](#)
- 17 [Joseph Rowntree Foundation, written submission](#)
- 18 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 18
- 19 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 17
- 20 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 16
- 21 [Social Work Scotland and Scottish Association of Social Workers, written submission](#)
- 22 [Aberdeen City Council, written submission](#)
- 23 [Scottish Borders Council, written submission](#)

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, 1st report, 2025 (Session 6)

- 24 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 4
- 25 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 4
- 26 [CRER, written submission](#)
- 27 [The Poverty Alliance, written submission](#)
- 28 [Aberdeen City Council, written submission](#)
- 29 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 9
- 30 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 10
- 31 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 8
- 32 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 9
- 33 [Fife Council, written submission](#)
- 34 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 10
- 35 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 8
- 36 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 25
- 37 [Joseph Rowntree Foundation, written submission](#)
- 38 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 23
- 39 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 25
- 40 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 23
- 41 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 24
- 42 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 11
- 43 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 17

- 44 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 7
- 45 [NHS Lanarkshire, written submission](#)
- 46 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 6
- 47 [Aberdeen City Council, written submission](#)
- 48 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 7
- 49 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 18
- 50 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 21
- 51 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 21
- 52 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 9
- 53 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col 11
- 54 [Joseph Rowntree Foundation, written submission](#)
- 55 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 16
- 56 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 16
- 57 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 21 November 2024, Col 15
- 58 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 12
- 59 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 28 November 2024, Col 12
- 60 [The Poverty Alliance, written submission](#)
- 61 [Scottish Borders Council, written submission](#)
- 62 [Joseph Rowntree Foundation, written submission](#)
- 63 [Shetland Islands Council, written submission](#)
- 64 [Poverty and Inequality Commission, written submission](#)
- 65 [Falkirk Council, written submission](#)

66 Social Justice and Social Security Committee, Official Report, 5 December 2024, Col
4

