

# Submission to the Scottish Government

## Consultation on the National Outcomes

1 June 2023



### About us

The Poverty Alliance is Scotland's anti-poverty network. Together with our members, we influence policy and practice, support communities to challenge poverty, provide evidence through research and build public support for the solutions to tackle poverty. Our members include grassroots community groups, academics, large national NGOs, voluntary organisations, statutory organisations, trade unions, and faith groups.

## 1. Introduction

The Poverty Alliance welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on the national outcomes agreement. Too often, the success of a nation is measured purely on economic measures; failing to consider the wider range of factors that contribute to a nation's success and the well-being of its citizens. It is vital that we measure what matters. A just and compassionate Scotland is one that recognises the wellbeing of all its citizens as central to a successful nation. Overall, we believe that the priorities outlined within the current national outcomes should be retained. However, we also stress the need for expansion of these outcomes to have greater emphasis on housing and the care economy. In addition, there is a need to ensure that the national outcomes are accompanied by robust data that enables Scotland to measure our progress against these objectives, and that greater consideration is afforded to the inequalities experienced by particular groups.

## 2. Retaining outcomes on Poverty and Fair Work

We continue to support the inclusion of the outcomes related to Poverty and Fair Work. The realisation of fair work, and the eradication of poverty are critical aspects of the move towards a wellbeing economy, and it is therefore right that these high-level priorities be reflected in our national outcomes.

Poverty strips people of dignity and prevents people from realising their human rights. A functioning and just economy has no place for poverty within it and we welcome the Scottish Government giving the eradication of poverty weight within the national outcomes and measuring their success against this objective.

Likewise, a growing number of households facing poverty are in paid employment, demonstrating the growing disconnect between wages and the real cost of living. The latest data shows that over two-thirds (69%) of children, and 57% of working-age adults experiencing poverty live in a household where someone is in paid work.<sup>1</sup> This highlights that work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty, and the emphasis must be on getting more people into fair work that pays at least the real Living Wage. Retaining the measurement on fair work is therefore crucial to ensure that the Scottish Government continue to promote work that pays the real Living Wage and provides employees with protection and flexible working conditions.

### 3. A Scotland that Cares

Everyone needs care at some point in their life: as a child, in older age, or due to ill health or additional needs. It is completely unjust that there has been a long-standing and systemic undervaluation of care and the care economy. Too many carers, both paid and unpaid, across Scotland are locked in the grip of poverty as a result. The long-standing gendered nature of care means women are impacted most severely by this undervaluation. In Scotland, women account for as many as 70% of unpaid carers<sup>2</sup>; 96% of childcare workforce,<sup>3</sup> and 80% of adult social care staff.<sup>4</sup> Both the childcare and social care sectors are characterised by low pay, poor working conditions, and job insecurity which contributes to women's experiences of in-work poverty in Scotland.

We want Scotland to fully value and invest in care and end that injustice for good. To this end, we support the calls of the *A Scotland that Cares* coalition calling for a new, dedicated National Outcome focused on care and carers in Scotland. Specifically, that:

***We fully value and invest in those experiencing care and all those providing it.***

For more information about the Scotland that Cares campaign and the proposed sub-indicators, we direct you towards the campaign's submission to this consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2023) *Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-2*. Available at: <https://data.gov.scot/poverty/>

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government (2021) *Carers Census Scotland 2019-20 and 2020-21*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-census-scotland-2019-20-2020-21/pages/5/#:~:text=Around%207%20in%2010%20carers,of%20unpaid%20carers%20were%20female>

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government (2020) *A Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland Consultation*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-2020-expansion-early-learning-childcare-scotland-consultation/pages/5/>

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government (2022) *Adult Social Care Workforce: evidence*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-adult-social-care-workforce-scotland/documents/>

#### 4. Safe, secure and affordable housing,

Having somewhere safe to live is one of our most basic needs. A home is more than a physical structure and lays the foundation for many other human needs to be met. Sadly, it is a basic need that can often be denied to people living on low incomes due to lack of affordable, good quality housing that meets people's needs.

Scotland is facing a housing emergency. And if urgent action is not taken, this will make it much more difficult to address child poverty and improve health, education, and employment outcomes.

This is why it is so important that housing is prioritised within the National Performance Framework. We are therefore echoing calls from organisations such as Crisis Scotland and Shelter Scotland, recommending that a new outcome is included in the revised National Performance Framework that specifically deals with housing and homelessness. As stated in Crisis Scotland's submission, this outcome would include the following:

***We all have good homes we can sustain: Everyone has a home to live in that is good quality, affordable, and suitable to their needs, and can access the support they need to live in it, so that no one becomes homeless.***

This outcome must consider people in a wide range of circumstances, including those in poor housing, living in poverty, who have care needs because of age, disability, health or other needs. In their response, Shelter Scotland have recommended the following indicators which we believe are a good starting point for development of this outcome:

- Reducing affordable housing need – including protected characteristic groups
- Delivering the required number of suitable quality social homes in the right places
- Reducing the numbers of households, including children who enter temporary accommodation.
- Reducing the time households spend in temporary accommodation.
- Increasing the numbers of households in housing need who secure a good housing outcome that meets their needs.

We would call for the final indicators to align with work by the homelessness Outcomes Measurement Task and Finish Group commissioned by Scottish Government.

#### 5. Robust data to support our national outcomes

Our national outcomes are intended to support the measurement of Scotland's success against key shared priorities. However, the existence of critical data gaps

somewhat limits our ability to utilise the national outcomes as a robust measure of our progress.

The purpose outlined for the National Performance Framework include “giving more opportunities to all people living in Scotland” and “reducing inequalities”. However, the lack of equalities mainstreaming and robust equalities data makes it difficult to achieve these objectives. For example, while the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan outlines priority family groups, there continues to be a lack of data pertaining to the experiences of disabled people; single parents; Black and minority ethnic people; and young parents. This makes it difficult for us to effectively measure our success in tackling poverty for these groups. Similarly, within the context of the national outcome on fair work, there continues to be a lack of labour market data which is disaggregated by race; disability status and gender.

In their response to this consultation, Engender have highlighted that the capacity of the National Performance Framework to mainstream gender and wider equality is limited by a lack of gender-sensitive intersectional data being collected or used to measure its progress. Only two of the National Performance Framework’s 81 statistical indicators measure a form of gender inequality. We remain some distance from intersectional equalities data being available for every indicator. Consequently, it is possible that progress towards the National Outcomes is undermining progress towards substantive equality in Scotland.

The existence of these data gaps thus makes it challenging to measure whether our national outcomes are delivering for everyone in Scotland. As part of the efforts to refresh Scotland’s national outcomes, the Scottish Government should also commit to addressing these data gaps and ensuring that our shared outcomes are underpinned by equalities data.

**For more information, please contact:**

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