



Scottish Parliament Social Justice and Social Security Committee Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 OPFS Submission September 2024

Overview

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 aims to measure, tackle and report on child poverty in Scotland.¹ The Act:

- sets the Scottish Government targets to reduce the number of children experiencing the effects of poverty by 2030
- requires Scottish Ministers and public bodies to create delivery plans and reports to help reach those targets

The Scottish Parliament Social Justice and Social Security Committee has announced it will examine the impact of the Act since it came into effect.²

Key questions in this call for views

1. The Act introduced a statutory framework for reducing child poverty. What difference has that framework made to the way the Scottish Government has approached reducing child poverty?

One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) is the national organisation for single parent families. We support family wellbeing; empower single parents with the right advice and information; enable parents to access training, employment, and education; and campaign to reduce child poverty and inequality.

Our national services and family hubs in six local areas reach thousands of single parent families. We campaign for structural and systemic change alongside single parents who are experts in their dual role of caregiving and providing for their children. We take an intersectional approach, recognising most single parents are women and that many BAME, disabled and young single parents face multiple structural barriers affecting access to services and opportunities.³

¹ [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/11/contents/enacted)

² www.parliament.scot/social-justice-and-social-security-committee/post-legislative-scrutiny-of-the-child-poverty-scotland-act-2017

³ <https://opfs.org.uk/>

As a member of End Child Poverty Campaign (Scotland) OPFS was involved in the work of the group calling for a Child Poverty Act in 2016 and the ongoing work to influence the contents of the Bill as it progressed through the Scottish Parliament. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 introduced a statutory framework aimed at reducing child poverty through specific targets and structured plans. We believe that this framework has significantly influenced the Scottish Government's approach in several ways. The Act set challenging targets to reduce child poverty by 2030, with interim targets for 2023.⁴ These targets include reducing relative poverty, absolute poverty, combined low income and material deprivation, and persistent poverty. This has created a clear accountability structure for the Scottish Government.

The Act requires the Scottish Government to develop and publish delivery plans every four years, detailing the actions they will take to meet the targets. These plans are accompanied by annual progress reports.⁵ This introduced the opportunity to have continuous monitoring and the ability to adjust strategies based on what is working and what isn't. The framework requires that local authorities and health boards also create and implement plans to tackle child poverty. This enables a more coordinated and comprehensive approach across different levels of government and public services.⁶

The statutory framework has encouraged the use of data and evidence to inform policy decisions. This highlighted the need for more targeted interventions aimed at the most vulnerable groups.⁷ The Poverty and Inequality Commission was established in July 2019 to provide independent advice and scrutiny on the progress towards the targets. This has added an extra layer of oversight and expertise to the government's responsibilities under the Act.⁸

Overall, we believe the statutory framework introduced by the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 has made the Scottish Government's approach to reducing child poverty more structured, accountable, and evidence-based. Child poverty targets, delivery plans and reporting requirements are underpinned by the legislative framework in the Act.

The Act for all the reasons above has brought significant focus on child poverty, but we are concerned that it may have inadvertently overshadowed the importance of women's poverty, particularly when viewed through a gendered lens. The majority of single parents are women so we have concerns that the Act and its implementation have often taken a gender-neutral approach, which can overlook the specific challenges faced by women.

For instance, the use of terms like "parents" instead of explicitly addressing the unique barriers single mothers face in employment and caregiving can dilute the focus on women's poverty. While the Act aims to address child poverty, it is crucial to recognise that women's poverty is deeply interconnected with child poverty. Women are more likely to be primary caregivers and are disproportionately affected by low wages, precarious work, and low social security benefits. Addressing child poverty without a gendered lens can miss these critical connections. We believe there should be more gender-sensitive policies within the child poverty framework. For example, increasing actions to address the gender pay gap,

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/6/enacted>

⁵ [Child poverty analysis - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-poverty-analysis/pages/introduction.aspx)

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/6/enacted?view=interweave>

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/6/enacted>

⁸ <https://povertyinequality.scot/>

more investment in support for women returning to work, and targeted training and education programmes are essential to tackle both women's and child poverty effectively.

Existing cultural and social norms around family and parenthood remain highly gendered and unequal. This can perpetuate single mothers poverty if their dual role of caregiving and providing for their children is not explicitly addressed in policy measures. Engender, for example, have highlighted the need for a more explicit focus on women's poverty within the child poverty strategy. We agree with them on the importance of gender mainstreaming in policy responses and a stronger emphasis on the unique challenges faced by women.⁹ This includes recognising the interconnectedness of women's and child poverty and implementing policies that address the specific barriers faced by women.

2. What difference has the statutory framework made to the way local authorities and health boards have approached reducing child poverty?

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 has significantly influenced how some local authorities and health boards approach reducing child poverty.

Local authorities and health boards are required to jointly prepare and publish annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports. These reports detail the actions taken and planned to reduce child poverty in their areas.¹⁰ The statutory framework has led to more strategic and coordinated planning. Local authorities and health boards should align their efforts with the national child poverty targets set for 2030, ensuring a unified approach.¹¹

Additional resources have been allocated to support the preparation of these reports and the implementation of child poverty reduction measures. This includes financial support for income maximisation initiatives and formal referral routes between early years services and local money/welfare advice services¹² We would argue that there should be an increase in the resourcing of child poverty focused policies including an increase in the school clothing grant level while opening up eligibility to all families on UC and increases in Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing (DHP) budgets.

The requirement for annual reporting has increased accountability and transparency. It allows for regular monitoring of progress and adjustments to strategies based on what is working effectively¹³ The statutory framework offers the opportunity for greater collaboration between different sectors, including health, education, and social work, to address the complex nature of child poverty.¹⁴

Overall, the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 has created a more structured and accountable environment for tackling child poverty, enabling local authorities and health boards to work together towards common goals.¹⁵

⁹ [Engender-Submission-to-the-SJSS-Committee-Inquiry-into-child-poverty-and-parental-employment.pdf](#)

¹⁰ [Guidance on the reporting process - Developing a local child poverty action report: guidance](#)

¹¹ www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/news/supporting-people-in-need/>

¹³ cciglasgow.org/reports/child-poverty-report-23.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/poverty-and-social-justice/child-poverty/>

¹⁵ www.improvementservice.org.uk

3. What difference has having the targets, delivery plans and reporting requirements built into the Act made at a national level?

The inclusion of targets, delivery plans, and reporting requirements in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 has made a significant impact at the national level. The Act sets clear targets for reducing child poverty, which creates accountability. The Scottish Government is required to report annually on progress towards these targets, ensuring that efforts are continuously monitored and evaluated.¹⁶ The delivery plans outline specific actions and initiatives to be undertaken over set periods. This strategic approach aims to facilitate coordination across different sectors and levels of government, leading to more effective interventions.¹⁷ With defined targets and plans, resources should be allocated more effectively.

The Scottish Government has invested significantly in various programmes aimed at reducing child poverty, such as increasing the Scottish Child Payment and supporting parental employment.¹⁸ Again we would argue that there should be increased investment in the Scottish Child Payment, early years and out of school childcare and free school meals for all primary children

The reporting requirements facilitate a more data-driven approach, allowing for the assessment of the cumulative impact of policies when the data is available which is not always the case.¹⁹ The transparency brought by regular reporting aims to increase stakeholder engagement. This has offered a more collaborative environment where various stakeholders, including local authorities, health boards, and community organisations, could work together. However there is still clearly a power imbalance with the third sector and experts by experience having less resources and influence.

The Act has led to the development of initiatives like the Child Poverty Pathfinders in Glasgow and Dundee, which aim to provide person-centred support to families most at risk of poverty. OPFS is a partner in both Pathfinders which are designed to create 'joined-up' services, making it easier for families to access the support they need.²⁰ By bringing together various stakeholders, including local authorities, health boards, and the third sector, the Act provided the framework to encourage a holistic approach to tackling child poverty, so that efforts are coordinated and effective.²¹ This is still an area which requires further investment in breaking down siloed thinking and a focus on where systemic and structural barriers hold back progress.

4. The Act set up several scrutiny measures. How effective have these been?

The scrutiny measures established by the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 have been quite effective in several ways. The Act requires the Scottish Government to report annually on progress towards child poverty reduction targets. This has increased accountability and

¹⁶ www.gov.scot/publications/annex-b-cumulative-impact-assessment-update/

¹⁷ www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/annex-b-cumulative-impact-assessment-update/>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/annex-b-cumulative-impact-assessment-update/>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-poverty-pathfinders-early-implementation-process-evaluation/>

²¹ www.gov.scot/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26

transparency, enabling an assessment of whether the aims of the Act are being supported by actions.²²

The establishment of the statutory Poverty and Inequality Commission was a key recommendation from the ECP charities in the development of the legislation. It aims to provide independent scrutiny of the government's child poverty strategy and whether it is doing enough to reach the targets, involves the third sector and gives recommendations. The Commission embeds participation in its work.

This year, the Commission focused its scrutiny by looking more closely at the Scottish Government's 'priority family types'. These are the six family types that are at higher risk of poverty.²³ OPFS was one of the eight organisations who worked with the Commission this year to involve single parent to give their views on Scottish Government policies designed to reduce poverty, how well they felt these policies were working, and what else they felt was needed.²⁴

The scrutiny measures offer a framework for a more data-driven approach to policy-making. Regular reporting and monitoring offer the opportunity for assessment of the effectiveness of various initiatives, helping to refine and improve strategies over time. However this is an area which requires further resourcing.²⁵

By setting clear, long-term targets, the Act has a focus that ensures efforts to reduce child poverty are sustained over time. ECP (Scotland) were keen that the legislation would ensure a long-term focus which helps to maintain momentum and prevent short-term political changes from derailing progress. Scrutiny measures have also increased stakeholder engagement. Regular reports and reviews provide opportunities for feedback and collaboration. However we feel there could be an increased focus on resourcing the involvement of experts by experience and the organisations which can facilitate that.

Overall, the scrutiny measures have been effective in maintaining a focused and transparent approach to reducing child poverty in Scotland. Limited funding and resources can hinder the Commission's ability to scrutinise and offer recommendations on poverty reduction initiatives.²⁶ Ensuring that policies and recommendations are evidence-based requires robust data collection and analysis. There can be challenges in accessing timely and comprehensive data, which is crucial for informed decision-making.²⁷

5. If you were involved in scrutiny of the Bill in 2016/17, has it had the impact you expected?

In June 2016 leading members of the Campaign to End Child Poverty (ECP) in Scotland (CPAG; Poverty Alliance; Children 1st; Barnados; Save the Children and OPFS) wrote to the then Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities. The letter said

²² [Child poverty analysis - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-poverty-analysis/pages/child-poverty-analysis.aspx)

²³ [www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-priority-families](https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-priority-families/pages/tackling-child-poverty-priority-families.aspx)

²⁴ [Publications - Poverty & Inequality Commission \(povertyinequality.scot\)](https://povertyinequality.scot/publications)

²⁵ [State of the Nation \(scothealthequity.org\)](https://www.scothealthequity.org/state-of-the-nation)

²⁶ [Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-Strategic-Plan-2020-2023.pdf \(povertyinequality.scot\)](https://povertyinequality.scot/publications/poverty-and-inequality-commission-strategic-plan-2020-2023)

²⁷ [https://Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-Cost-of-Living-Briefing-July-2023-1.pdf](https://povertyinequality.scot/publications/poverty-and-inequality-commission-cost-of-living-briefing-july-2023-1)

"As a grouping of third sector organisations united in our vision of a Scotland free from child poverty..... We believe that one vital way of tackling poverty in Scotland is ensuring that we have ambitious targets for the eradication of child poverty. As such we are writing to ask if you will introduce a Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill during the current session of parliament.

As you will be aware, the Resolution Foundation has forecast a 50% increase in child poverty in the UK by 2020 . Yet despite a growing poverty crisis, the UK Government has dismantled the UK Child Poverty Act 2010, scrapping the binding commitment to eradicate child poverty in the UK by 2020. It has also removed the definition of child poverty from legislation and left no requirement on public bodies (including the Scottish Government) to produce strategies setting out how they will tackle child poverty or its effects. The Scottish Government has made it clear over the past year that it does not support these changes. We are therefore asking that the Scottish Government act now to give effect to this statement and establish a Child Poverty Act for Scotland to replace and improve upon the Child Poverty Act 2010. Such legislation could:

- Set ambitious but achievable targets for the reduction and eradication of child poverty in Scotland*
- Provide a legislative basis for the Scottish Government commitment to continue to report annually against the poverty measures previously contained within the Child Poverty Act 2010*
- Ensure the production of a Child Poverty Strategy every three years outlining how the Scottish Government intends to contribute to the reduction of child poverty in Scotland*
- Introduce a legislative duty on local authorities and their planning partners to take a strategic approach to addressing and reducing child poverty locally.*

We very much welcome the fact that the Scottish Government has already set out a range of policy and legislative commitments that will contribute significantly to improving the health and wellbeing of children living in poverty in Scotland. There is, however, still an urgent need for a Child Poverty (Scotland) Act to ensure that – as well as tackling the effects of poverty and the prospects of children experiencing poverty – the Scottish Government and local authorities make direct and immediate steps to reduce and eradicate child poverty itself.

Only by reducing income inequality and maximising the financial resources available to families in Scotland can real and lasting progress be made towards reducing wider societal inequalities and improving child wellbeing. A legislative framework that enshrines existing income based measurements of poverty, establishes poverty reduction targets and requires the Scottish Government to produce child poverty strategies will not only improve transparency and ensure ongoing focus on this issue, it will also provide a useful prism through which to assess and measure the success of wider policies aimed at reducing poverty and socio-economic inequality in Scotland.

Indeed, the Child Poverty Strategies produced to date by the Scottish Government under the Child Poverty Act 2010 have already helped to sharpen the Scottish Government's focus and ensure that the issue of child poverty has maintained a high political profile in Scotland. Whilst we recognise that legislation itself will not end child poverty, we believe a Child Poverty (Scotland) Act will help build upon the Scottish Government's existing focus on poverty reduction while holding this and future governments to account.

We also believe that Scotland specific legislation provides an opportunity to improve upon the Child Poverty Act 2010. While the duty to produce child poverty strategies under the CPA 2010 was limited to the Scottish Government, we believe there would be advantages to extending the duty to local authorities and their community planning partners requiring these bodies to demonstrate that they are taking a strategic approach to reducing child poverty. One potential way of doing this would be –through their Children’s Services Plans and Locality Plans – which would help to improve accountability and transparency whilst also ensuring that identifiable and appropriate action is being taken at every level of government”

In July 2016 we welcomed the then First Minister's announcement that the Scottish Government would bring forward legislation that intended to set out a new approach to tackling poverty and inequality. We said then that its success would depend not only on policies to reduce poverty but to also address the fundamental structural inequalities in our society.

In Feb 2017 members of the End Child Poverty (ECP) coalition welcomed the introduction of a new Bill aimed at eradicating the scandal of child poverty in Scotland and that for the first time local authorities and health boards would also have a legal duty to report on the action they are taking to reduce child poverty.

During the passage of the Bill OPFS was actively involved in working with opposition MSP's and the government to ensure children in single parent families were a key part of the proposed child poverty strategy and delivery plans. We supported the proposal of Pauline McNeill MSP to ensure single parent families were included as a priority family and that requirements around specific measures for single parent families were brought into the overall list of areas that the delivery plans must cover. A letter from the then Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities to the Chair of the Social Security Committee in October 2017 said " *This will mean that Ministers will be required to set out specific measures they propose to take in relation to single parent families in each delivery plan.* "

We also wrote a proposed amendment to the Bill which suggested an additional area to be covered in the Delivery Plans would be *'that the provision of Scottish Government funded employability services should be designed to be accessible to and take account of the particular needs of single parents and carers.'*

When we look at the statistics for child poverty in single parent families in Scotland compared to England these show notable differences. In Scotland 38% of children in single-parent families live in poverty²⁸ compared to 44% in England.²⁹ A difference of six percent. Even so the fact that over one in three children in single parent families live in poverty in Scotland is unacceptable so in that respect the Act has not had the impact we hoped for.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 commits Scottish Ministers to set out in their delivery plans what measures they propose to take in relation to children living in single-parent households; and to include in their annual progress report the effect of those measures on reducing the number of children living in single-parent households for each of the four poverty targets.³⁰

²⁸ [Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures/tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-2026/pages/28.aspx)

29 Poverty: facts and figures | CPAG

³⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/6/crossheading/targets-relating-to-child-poverty/enacted>

So in addition to recognising the wider picture of the challenges that poverty presents to all parents and the generic actions that would tackle poverty for all children in Scotland, the specific challenges that are faced by single parent families are important.³¹ This includes the higher risk rate of child poverty for those living with a single parent, compared to couple parent families; draconian work conditionality expectations in Universal Credit that are specific to single parents; the barriers to finding and sustaining employment that single parents face and the need for flexible affordable early years and out of school childcare.

In Every Child Every Chance, the first delivery plan for 2018-2022³² and the recent Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026³³ children in single parent families are identified as one of six 'priority groups'. What is most striking about single parent poverty (as well as younger parents, those from BME households and those in which a disabled person lives) is the higher relative risk of poverty for these groups.

The child poverty rates amongst each of these groups are as follows³⁴:

- Lone parent families – 38%.
- Young mothers (under 25) – 55%.
- Larger families (with 3 or more children) – 32%.
- Minority ethnic families – 38%.
- Families with a baby (under one) – 34%.
- Families with a disabled adult or child – 29%.

Scottish Government analysis also finds that children often belong to more than one of the priority groups.³⁵ The overlap between children in single parent households and other priority groups, is important in order to advance a better understanding of the multiple, intersectional inequalities facing many single parent families. Data published by the Scottish Government presents averages of Child Poverty Priority Families Overlap stats .

The data highlights the overlap between children in poverty in single parent families who are in different priority groups:

- 68% belong to at least one other priority group.
- 48% belong to two priority groups.
- 16% belong to three.
- 4% belong to four.

This shows that children in poverty in single parent families are likely to be in more than one priority group. Of children in relative poverty in single parent families:

- 40% have a disabled adult or child in the household.
- 19% are in larger families.
- 17% have mothers under 25.
- 10% have a baby in the household.

³¹ povertyinequality.scot/single-minded-the-child-poverty-scotland-act-and-lone-parent-households/

³² [Every child, every chance: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/every-child-every-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-2022/pages/10.aspx)

³³ [Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-2026/pages/10.aspx)

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ [Child Poverty Priority Families Overlap stats](https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-poverty-priority-families-overlap-stats/pages/10.aspx)

- 6% are in a “non-white” household.

Moreover a significant proportion of children in poverty in the other priority groups belong to single parent families, particularly amongst children with young mothers (54%) and children in families with a disabled adult or child.(37%)

Knowing that over half of children in poverty with mums under 25 are in single parent households provides a strong evidence basis for One Parent Families Scotland and other to provide support services aimed at young mums, and campaigning on issues affecting them.

It can also allow us to understand what proportion of single parents are likely to be impacted by specific policies. For example, knowing that one in 5 children in poverty in single parent households are in larger families provides evidence that the two-child limit is a significant issue for single parents.

This data can help to inform policy makers & services and provide the evidence of the importance of particular issues or types of support to single parent families. More data is required to better understand the impacts of intersecting inequalities on child poverty and the responding tailored actions needed.

In addition to a focus on the six priority groups we feel integrating a gendered lens into existing child poverty strategies could help address the unique challenges faced by women and ensure more effective and equitable outcomes.

The specific references to actions to support single parents mainly relate to employment. Recognising the particular structural barriers that single parents face in accessing sustainable employment is to be welcomed. However, there is also a need for a single parent specific focus when it comes to the other key drivers of child poverty, i.e. reducing the cost of living and social security. Moreover the projected impact on single parents of many of the key actions that are proposed are vaguely specified.

The Act has clearly had a major impact on reducing child poverty but there are challenges affecting the Scottish Government’s ability to achieve the targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act .One of the major challenges is the financial constraints faced by the Scottish Government. Budget cuts and financial pressures have made it difficult to allocate sufficient resources to effectively tackle child poverty. This has led to criticisms that the government is not doing enough to meet its ambitious targets.

Budget cuts at the local authority level have also impacted the effectiveness of child poverty reduction efforts. Reductions in funding for local services have been criticised for undermining the overall strategy. Broader economic and social factors, such as the cost of living crisis and economic instability, have made it challenging to reduce child poverty. These factors are often beyond the control of the Scottish Government but significantly impact its ability to meet its targets.

There have been criticisms regarding the implementation and coordination of the various plans and strategies. It is our experience that there needs to be better alignment and coordination between different levels of government and public bodies to ensure a more cohesive approach. Despite these challenges, we believe the framework with its clear targets and structured approach, has brought more focus and accountability to the issue of child poverty in Scotland.

6. What does the implementation of the Act tell us about the effectiveness or otherwise of statutory targets as a way of driving policy?

When looking back at the development of the Bill to the Act and where we are just now, it is very much the correct direction of travel. Statutory targets as a way of driving policy have resulted in investment in social security payments which has had a very positive impact on reducing child poverty and it is important that costs for low income families are reduced by free school meals, free prescriptions, more social housing which has cheaper rent (because the sale of council housing was stopped) and the compensations implemented to reduce the impact of the bedroom tax, and the benefit cap are important too as is free bus travel for young people. There is still much to do - but we believe a statutory framework for reducing child poverty is the right model but improvements in delivery and resourcing are needed especially around support into childcare, training, education & fair work.

We would like to see a strengthening of data collection methods and ensuring timely access to comprehensive data can support evidence-based decision-making. Improving collaboration with and resourcing of various stakeholders, including government bodies, local authorities, and community organisations, can ensure a more cohesive approach to tackling poverty. Increasing the involvement of single parents with lived experience of poverty in decision-making processes can provide valuable insights and ensure that policies are grounded in real-world experiences.³⁶

Effective child poverty reduction requires coordinated efforts across various sectors, including childcare, housing, education, employability and health. Our experience is that a joined up approach with all government departments working together with the third sector seamlessly is a complex and ongoing challenge.

However research by Scottish Government provides a first step in assessing the evidence on place-based, system change initiatives aimed at tackling child poverty for example the Glasgow and Dundee Child Poverty Pathfinders. The research highlights: “greater partnership working with a shared sense of purpose; regular and clear communication and strengthened relationships; and recognising and building on the knowledge and experiences of local communities.

The key challenges that were identified to successfully implementing initiatives focused on the long-term nature of implementing system change.³⁷ Many excellent initiatives require long-term investment and commitment to see significant results. However, political and funding cycles often prioritise short-term gains over long-term solutions, making it difficult to sustain impactful programmes.

Despite these challenges, the Scottish Government says they remain committed to reducing child poverty.³⁸ Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders to ensure that the progress made is not only sustained but also built upon.

³⁶ <https://www.povertyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PIC-Guidance-FINAL.pdf>

³⁷ [Learning from place-based, system change initiatives to tackle child poverty \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-from-place-based-system-change-initiatives-to-tackle-child-poverty/pages/12_to_14.aspx)

³⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/programme-for-government/>

7. Do you have any other comments?

Overall, the implementation of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 demonstrates that statutory targets can be an effective tool for driving policy, provided they are supported by adequate resources, robust data, and strong collaboration among stakeholders.

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