

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

Title of Policy	Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland - Our Approach 2014 - 2017
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	Our vision is for a Scotland where no child is disadvantaged by poverty. The Child Poverty Strategy revision outlines an approach focussed on maximising household resources, improving life chances and providing sustainable places.
Directorate: Division: team	Housing, Regeneration and Welfare: Welfare: Tackling Poverty and Scottish Welfare Fund

Executive summary

The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has shown that the aims and obligations set out in the revised Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland could have an impact across the whole of the Scottish population to varying extents.

It is expected that the most significant impacts, and the most positive impacts, will be on children, families with children and those with caring responsibilities for children, including kinship carers. The strategy is part of the Government's preventative approach to tackling poverty and inequality – focussing on early intervention.

By focusing on children living in poverty and those at risk of falling into poverty, we are by extension targeting the parents

and others who look after children and so contributing to reducing the overall levels of poverty.

The revised strategy is therefore likely to have a very limited impact on those adults who do not have caring responsibilities for children including single working and non-working adults as well as some members of older generations.

The strategy is likely to positively advance equality of opportunity, particularly in relation to age and sex, with specific components of the policy designed to improve educational attainment and to enable people, especially women, to enter into employment.

The strategy also outlines specific programmes which are aimed at adults with disabilities. These aim to provide support and guidance to facilitate employment. There is also provision to provide support services, including income maximisation advice, to both carers and young carers.

Research concludes that there are significant links between race and poverty. Research also showed that there are significant links between religion, employment status and area deprivation which has been used as a proxy as there is no data available which demonstrated a link between religion and poverty.

The policies which contribute to providing an appropriate provision of high-quality childcare, access to employment and development in the early years can help promote race and religious equality by removing barriers which otherwise could have perpetuated the cycle of poverty.

There is insufficient data available to draw conclusions as to how the policy will impact on people in relation to sexual orientation and transgender status.

Background

Our vision is for a Scotland where no child is disadvantaged by poverty. The Scottish Government firmly believes that children in Scotland deserve the best possible start in life, and we do not want to see any child born into or condemned to live a life of poverty.

The revised Child Poverty Strategy outlines an approach focussed on maximising household resources, improving children's life chances and developing sustainable places.

This work contributes to all of the national outcomes, in particular:

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.

The UK Child Poverty Act 2010 requires that the Scottish Child Poverty Strategy must be revised every three years. This strategy must set out the progress Scottish Ministers intend to make:

- For the purpose of contributing to the UK wide child poverty targets, and;
- For the purpose of ensuring as far as possible that children in Scotland do not experience socio-economic disadvantage.

It must also describe the progress that Scottish Ministers have made in Scotland, in the previous three year period.

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Scottish Government officials continue to work closely with the UK Government's Child Poverty Unit, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Executive, to share information, experience and good practice, and to ensure that our approaches are as coherent as possible.

The Scope of the EQIA

The likely effects of the policy were assessed through identifying the number of policy components which could potentially impact on each group and by identifying the potential severity of each of those impacts.

The data used to influence the strategy, and that which was referenced in the EQIA record was provided by Scottish Government Analytical Services Division.

The data on each group was provided as follows:

Age - 1. Family Resources Survey, DWP, 2. Labour Force Survey

Sex - 1. Family Resources Survey, DWP, 2. Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2012, 3. Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey, ONS

Race - Family Resources Survey, DWP

Religion - 1. 2001 Census, 2. Scottish Household Survey, 3. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Disability - Family Resources Survey, DWP Labour Force Survey

Sexual Orientation - not available

Transgender Status - not available

Internal and external stakeholders were invited to attend two separate framing exercises which in turn fed into the development of the strategy.

Regular discussions also took place with internal policy leads in order to ensure that those with a relevant interest and contribution could shape the policy.

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The Ministerial Advisory Group on Child Poverty (MAGCP) advised on the development of the strategy, reviewing it on several occasions and providing feedback. The strategy was therefore influenced by their discussions.

Several members of the MAGCP gave evidence in front of the Health and Sport Committee which helped to highlight the areas where they felt more focus was required. This was mainly more robust reporting of the range of activity contributing to tackling child poverty in Scotland.

The MAGCP agreed that the approach of the revised strategy was sound and they noted that they were pleased to see more focus placed on particular areas including early years, education, employment and financial capability.

Key Findings

Age

Evidence shows that those aged between 35 and 44 experience the lowest risk of poverty with higher rates for both younger and older parents. This is particularly so for single parent families, where the risk is already greater than average. Families where the head of household is aged between 55 and 64 are also at an increased risk of poverty. Although 52% of children in poverty live in households with at least one working adult, having no adults in employment is a strong predictor of poverty.

The strategy is therefore more likely to positively impact those people out with the ages of 35 and 44. Those in the older generations who have no caring responsibilities for children are likely to be impacted least by this strategy, despite potentially being on low incomes or at risk of being in poverty. The 'social wage' will have an impact on this group.

The strategy outlines a number of initiatives which aim to get young people into employment or training including Targeted

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Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI), Youth Employment Scotland Fund, Community Jobs Scotland, Individual Learning Accounts (ILA), Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) and Opportunities For All. The strategy also encompasses measures which increase provision of childcare and raise educational attainment. All of which are intended to create equality of opportunity by assisting those who face barriers into employment which may contribute to the cycle of poverty.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) includes teaching financial capability in schools to aid children in understanding the importance of maximising household resources through the development of effective money management skills. There are also provisions in place to help those over school age maximise and manage their household resources.

Disability

Evidence shows that children living in households containing a disabled adult are at significantly higher risk of living in poverty. The level of poverty in this group is higher than the poverty level for Scotland as a whole. The employment rate for adults with a disability was 56.3% compared with 72.7% for those without a disability. The largest group within the economically inactive population are people who state they have a long-term sickness or disability.

Evidence shows that childhood disability is also related to child poverty. The rate of poverty for children in households where there is a disabled child is higher than for households without. A quarter of children in households where there is a disabled child are at risk of poverty. This compares to 16% for households with no disabled children.

The strategy therefore has the potential to positively impact on households where there is a disabled adult or child.

The strategy promotes supported employment through a network of Local Employability Partnerships as a successful approach to help disabled people into employment, and the Scottish Government has committed to work with DWP as it implements its Disability Employment Strategy, in order to ensure that any new services take account of the different structures and services in Scotland.

The targeted ERI provides incentives to support targeted young people with the transitions to sustainable employment. Targeted young people currently include: care leavers and looked after young people, ex-offenders, young carers and young people with additional needs or disability.

This is likely to have a positive impact by improving employment prospects and so giving those within the target groups the opportunity to gain quality employment which could reduce the likelihood of them living in poverty.

Carers and Young Carers

The strategy confirms the continuing implementation of the Caring Together – Carers Strategy for Scotland – 2010-2015 and Getting it Right for Young Carers – Young Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010-15.

Both strategies highlight the importance of tackling poverty and financial inclusion to ensure carers and young carers are supported in their caring responsibilities and have a life outside of caring. Increasingly, Community Partnerships are enhancing mainstream services which address income maximisation, debt advice and financial capability. Carers' centres, national carers' organisations and others provide advice on benefits and income maximisation. Where voluntary services are located in GP practices to advise and support carers and young carers, there has been a take-up in applications to benefits by carers.

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The strategy is likely to positively impact on both young carers and carers and includes specific elements designed to support them throughout their education and beyond.

Sex

Evidence shows that poverty rates for men and women are similar overall. However, when looking at households with children, particularly single parent households, there are significant differences.

Single parent households are at significantly higher risk of poverty. The vast majority of single parent families have a female head of household and so the impact of the higher rate of poverty among single parents affects women disproportionately.

The employment rate amongst female lone parents in Scotland was lower compared to all other female parents and to all women in Scotland.

The rate of females in Scotland not in employment and not seeking employment in 2013 was 27.9%. Of these 28.6% were not seeking employment because they were “looking after family/home”. This compares with 6.6% of economically inactive men in Scotland.

Appropriate provision of high-quality childcare can promote gender equality, enhance parental employment prospects and hence maximise household resources. It can also drive development in the early years, building children’s capabilities and capacities and improving their life chances.

Through the Strategic Group on Women and Work the Scottish Government is funding the evaluation of the employability training course delivered by Women onto Work, a training organisation offering women only support. The evaluation will

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provide an insight into whether gender specific training can help more women into work.

The strategy is therefore more likely to positively impact on single parents, particularly single mothers. The strategy encompasses measures which increase provision of childcare, raise educational attainment and open avenues to employment. All of which are intended to create equality of opportunity by assisting those who face barriers into employment which may contribute to the cycle of poverty.

The strategy is least likely to impact on men who do not have caring responsibilities despite the fact there is potential for them to be on low incomes and at risk of poverty. They may be impacted positively by 'social wage' and potentially by the Living Wage.

Race

Evidence shows that there are significant differences in poverty rates by ethnic group. Over the last 3 years, the poverty rate for families of “White – British” ethnicity was 15%. This compares to 31% for “Asian / Asian British” and 31% for “Mixed, Black / Black British, Chinese & other” ethnicities.

There are also differences in employment characteristics as well. While degrees are held by 43.5 per cent of people (aged 16-64) from ethnic minorities versus 23.6 per cent of all White persons, the employment rate for ethnic minority graduates is 69.7 per cent compared to 85.0 per cent for White graduates. Furthermore, the overall employment rate for ethnic minorities is 59.4 per cent, compared to 71.2 per cent for the White ethnic group.

The policies which contribute to providing an appropriate provision of high-quality childcare, access to employment and development in the early years can help promote race equality

by removing barriers which otherwise could have perpetuated the cycle of poverty.

The strategy is therefore more likely to positively impact on those from ethnic minorities.

Religion

Data on poverty rates by different religious groups is not available. Area deprivation data has been sourced to provide a proxy, while acknowledging that not all people living in deprived areas will be living in poverty.

Roman Catholics are more likely to live in the most deprived 15% areas of Scotland than other Christian religion groups.

People who described themselves as Muslims are more likely to live in both the 10% most deprived areas and the 10% least deprived areas.

Employment rates differ by religious group as well.

In 2001, Muslims were the least likely to be economically active. This increased for both Sikhs and Buddhists, and increased further for people who report their religion to be Church of Scotland. Roman Catholics were second most likely to be economically active.

Muslims have the highest unemployment, followed by Buddhists and those reporting Another Religion. The lowest unemployment rate is for the Jewish population. People from the Church of Scotland, Roman Catholics and Other Christian groups also have low rates.

It should be noted that there is an effect of gender on employment and unemployment rates (economic activity) for different religious groups. This is most notable for males and females in the Muslim religion group. There are also large

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differences between Hindu and Sikh men and women in terms of their economic activity rates.

The policies which contribute to providing an appropriate provision of high-quality childcare, access to employment and development in the early years can help promote religious equality by removing barriers which otherwise could have perpetuated the cycle of poverty.

The strategy is more likely to positively impact on those from Roman Catholic backgrounds who are most likely to experience deprivation. It is also likely to have a significant impact on Muslims who are most likely to not be economically active/employed.

Sexual Orientation/Transgender Status

There is insufficient data available to draw conclusions as to how the policy will impact on people in relation to sexual orientation and transgender status.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Stakeholder involvement has been crucial to highlighting the various programmes and projects which are outlined in the strategy and which can contribute to the desired outcome i.e. a reduction in poverty levels.

Stakeholder engagement confirmed that the approach taken in the strategy was sound. As such the headline aims remain. The revision has incorporated additional content in key areas that can contribute to the achievement of these aims of the revised strategy.

The EQIA has contributed to the development of the Outcomes Framework. The need for a robust way to monitor progress and explicit measures against which progress could be demonstrated was highlighted as a requirement on various occasions by stakeholders including those who gave evidence to the Health

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and Sport Committee and those involved in the MAGCP. The addition of the Outcomes Framework was viewed as a way to strengthen the strategy.

There have been no changes to budgets as a result of the EQIA.

The Scottish Government, in particular the Welfare Division (or any successor division), will monitor and review the impact of this policy through the progress made in delivering the outcomes set out within the strategy document. This progress will be reported through the Annual Reports and will also be a feature of future strategy revisions required under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Regular progress reports from the stakeholders who receive funding from the Scottish Government will help inform a review of progress made, and by extension, allow for monitoring of the equality issues set out in the EQIA with regards to the protected characteristics. This forms part of the regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place for the revised strategy.

Regular engagement with non-funded stakeholders and internal policy officials on the impact of the strategy will also be used as a tool to review progress.

The MAGCP will continue to act as the advisory body for the Child Poverty Strategy and the Annual Reports. It will also provide a forum for the discussion of evidence, dissemination of good practice and the development of new thinking to support the delivery of the strategy.