

## **Dundee Fairness Commission – Outline Conclusions, February 2016**

### **1 Housing & Communities**

The number of people in poverty in the private rented sector has risen sharply. They are experiencing high rents, lower quality and increasing social problems

People in social and private rented housing can experience greater isolation and mental health problems. Positive wellbeing services and support are required including more social prescribing

Some vulnerable tenants find themselves having to choose between housing and employment due to the high service charges for supported/homeless accommodation

There is often less community spirit, wellbeing and resilience in areas with high intensity of social rented or private rented housing

Social landlords can provide wrap-around services which address the wider needs of tenants including employability, benefit & debt advice & community learning and activity

Benefit changes will hit deprived areas and increasingly impact on people who are young, working and living in the private rented sector

### **2 Work and Wages**

The Living Wage is a crucial practical commitment which is needed across all sectors. Leadership is required from public sector in particular.

Poor terms and conditions (including zero hour contracts) mean that people in poverty are likely to be living in working households.

Flexible and affordable childcare is essential to enable parents (in particular women and female lone parents) to secure sustainable employment and meet claimant commitments

In work training and development is needed to enable people to progress to better pay and job security. Underemployment and part-time employment is causing many to remain in poverty.

Targeted support is needed for people of all ages further from the workplace and in, or at risk of, long term unemployment

Employers need to be supported to provide more training and employment opportunities

Waterfront and V&A development offers a chance to maximise job, training and learning opportunities for people in Dundee.

People with disabilities face particular obstacles in accessing secure, sustainable employment including childcare, access and wage levels.

### **3 Stigma**

The impact of stigma on employment due to poverty, disability or status has to be addressed in any new employability services.

People in poverty often do not receive the respect and understanding they should be able to expect from agencies and front line staff. Awareness raising training on poverty sensitivity is required.

A positive alternative narrative on the causes and consequences of poverty for people in Dundee is needed

### **4 Reducing the gap in Educational Attainment**

There are considerable hidden costs associated with attending school and the school holidays which exacerbate poverty, stigma and exclusion.

The attainment gap remains too high in Dundee while other non academic measures of success are needed.

Exclusions in Dundee schools are significantly higher than the national average.

Take up of school meals and uniform support is not maximised.

A multi-agency approach is required to meet all needs of the child from early years settings until education is complete.

Parental aspiration for children with lower attainment is high but action is needed to support parents and young people to turn these aspirations into reality.

Placing requests can impact on the success of a school by encouraging the most able pupils to attend schools out with their communities

Further education colleges often increase the academic and vocation success but funding is reducing the numbers of young people who can be enrolled.

Cultural and leisure facilities are often unaffordable for families with children on low incomes.

### **5 Food and Fuel Poverty**

There is a need to fully understand the circumstances which causes each person to have to use a food bank to avoid the need for further visits.

Prepayment meters apply an unjustifiable 'poverty premium' on people already on low incomes

Poor heating &/or insulation in rented properties can exacerbate fuel poverty and result in 'eat or heat' decisions.

District heating systems can offer a low cost alternative for tenants.