

# A Fair Way To Go

## Report of the Dundee Fairness Commission

May 2016

**DUNDEE**   
PARTNERSHIP

# Contents

	<i>Page</i>
1 Chair’s foreword by Councillor Jimmy Black .....	3
2 Executive Summary .....	4
3 Poverty in Dundee & Opportunities in Dundee .....	6
4 The Work of Dundee’s Fairness Commission .....	8
5 Hearing & Learning from You - Engaging with Communities .....	11
6 Findings and Recommendations	
a) Stigma .....	13
b) Work and Wages .....	15
c) Closing the Education Gap .....	19
d) Benefits, Advice and Support .....	23
e) Housing and Communities .....	27
f) Food and Fuel .....	29
7 Appendices	
1) Reflections by Commission Members .....	33
2) Organisations participating in community research .....	35



A full list of reference sources used in this report is available at:  
[www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission](http://www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission)

# 1 Foreword

Why are things so unfair? We can blame the austerity policies of the last few years or the failure to protect our industries from unfair competition. We can also point the finger at politicians, or globalisation, or alcohol and drugs or idleness. All of these things have an effect.

But I think the real answer is that prosperous people have stopped seeing the others who live in poverty. In their daily lives they don't see families living in poorly maintained, hard to heat, overpriced privately rented homes. The benefit cuts which hit unemployed parents hard have no visible impact on people in well paid jobs. Different schools located in different areas mean some pupils get far more qualifications and a head start in life while others are left behind.

Because there is such a separation in our city between the prosperous and the poor, some people explain unfairness by disbelieving disabilities, blaming the unemployed for getting sanctioned and disapproving of the single parent. Stigma is so corrosive and keenly felt by the people we heard from.

It's not always about money. It can also be about well meaning national and local bureaucracy failing to design services to suit the reality experienced by people who need to use them. The sheer complexity of the benefit system offers one example. Temporary homeless accommodation that no-one who works can afford to live in, is another.

This is why we needed a Fairness Commission. The idea was to bring influential and representative people together, let them listen to the real life stories and experiences of the people their organisations seek to serve, and let them hear from leading researchers and ground breaking groups and projects who work with people in poverty. We also arranged for the Commissioners to meet people living in difficult circumstances, caring for disabled or elderly relatives and living on very low incomes. We admired the resilience and sheer hard work that it takes to make ends meet while leading lives that must feel unremittingly harsh. The reality we found that hides behind faceless statistics prompted the kind of emotional response which can motivate real change. It certainly did for me.

We are now at the point where we say what needs done and who should do it. That's what this report is for. Many times over the last century, Dundee and its people have shown that they will care for and support their friends and neighbours who are struggling against poverty and we are confident that our citizens will again rise to this challenge.

I would like to thank my fellow Commissioners, who demonstrated a wealth of knowledge and expertise, open minds and a real willingness to find practical ways to achieve tangible change. Thanks also to Faith in the Community, Craigowl Communities, Shelter and Microdot Films for their professional approach and excellent work which greatly added to our understanding. And, finally, thanks to the officers of the City Council and the Dundee Partnership who have supported this process, and who will now consider and prepare the responses to our recommendations to make sure that Dundee is a city where no one is left behind.



Jimmy Black, Chair

May 2016

## 2 Executive Summary

To make sure that Dundee is doing all it can to achieve fairness across the city, the Dundee Partnership set up a Fairness Commission to:

- consider the nature, extent and impact of poverty in Dundee
- identify and investigate the key causes and consequences of poverty along with policy and practical measures to address these
- consider evidence of what has worked elsewhere to combat poverty and inequality
- assess the effectiveness of the efforts to date of Dundee City Council and the broader Dundee Partnership through the Fairness Action Plan for Dundee
- seek the views and involvement of those experiencing poverty first hand
- prepare a report for the whole Dundee Partnership with recommendations on additional priorities for action to tackle and reduce poverty in the city

We have worked over the last year to understand the challenges facing people in Dundee and to test out whether, as a city, we are doing everything we can to stop people from moving into poverty and giving them the best possible chance to move permanently out of poverty. Full details of all the meetings, presentations and reports can be found at:

[www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission](http://www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission)

We also tried hard to hear the views of people across Dundee by listening to participants, visiting community cafes and, drop in services for homeless people, holding a public discussion with the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and funding local research which has given a voice to many people who are experiencing real hardship.

As a result of our work we have concluded that the following key lessons and principles must underpin any work Dundee does from now on to reduce poverty and inequality in the city:

*Poverty is neither inevitable nor acceptable and Dundee must do more to challenge it and prevent it occurring in the first place. We must speak out to tell the truth about the causes and effects of poverty on our children, our families and our communities.*

*Support and resources must be targeted to people and communities experiencing the greatest deprivation. Priority must be given to improve the life chances of children in poverty, especially all children who have had experience of care.*

*Approaches must be found that reach the majority of people in poverty. This will include the hidden and large number of individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet even though they are in work.*

*All children in Dundee must enjoy the same life chances and good quality education is the essential first step towards a future with high hopes and aspirations.*

*All people, regardless of their income or other characteristics must be treated with respect in every aspect of their lives, especially when they are asking for support from public agencies.*

*Because of the high cost and limited availability of child care, part time working and low incomes, poverty is having a bigger impact on women, especially single parents. Our responses must take account of this and redress the balance.*

*People are particularly vulnerable when moving between jobs or between work and benefits. Services and employers must therefore be more sensitive and flexible to provide support which bridges this gap and stops people losing services or accommodation or running up debt.*

*Services must be better joined up to meet all the needs of individuals and families in poverty – in their localities wherever possible.*

*Because of the principle of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, every job in Dundee must pay the Living Wage at least. The Fairness Commission recognises a Living Wage as the rate calculated annually by the Scottish Living Wage Campaign (currently £8.25) as opposed to the rate referred to by the UK government as the national living wage.*

This report is for all our communities and everyone who cares about inequality in Dundee including all our public, voluntary and private sector partners. It includes recommendations for change at a national and local level for the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP) and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC).

## **We now call on the Partnership to:**

- work with the people of Dundee to prepare an action plan within six months setting out how they are going to implement our strategic recommendations relating to Stigma; Work and Wages; Closing the Education Gap; Benefits, Advice and Support; Housing and Communities; and Food & Fuel
- demonstrate how by working together, partners will more effectively reduce poverty and inequality than by acting alone
- publish a progress report annually until at least 2022 so that there is a clear and ongoing commitment to deliver improvements
- provide long-term funding and support to enable partners in the voluntary sector to work with people in poverty to influence the Partnership's plans by giving them an ongoing voice in efforts to tackle poverty in Dundee
- campaign for changes to the relevant legislation to end the punitive aspects of the welfare system and to introduce employability support which will genuinely help people into the sustainable employment which will lift their families out of poverty

# 3 Poverty in Dundee & Opportunities for Dundee

## Poverty Data for Dundee

- The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2012 stated that of the 144,290 people estimated to be living in Dundee City 42,125 people lived in areas ranked within the 15% Most Deprived in Scotland. This is just under 30% of the population, so Dundee City has the third largest percentage of its population living in the 15% Most Deprived areas
- 28% of children in Dundee are classed as living in poverty, the second highest percentage anywhere in Scotland. This equates to one in four children
- Based on income deprivation, 8,562 children (0-15 years) live in the areas ranked within the 15% most income deprived according to the SIMD. Dundee City is the Local Authority with the second highest percentage of its children (35.5%) living in areas within the 15% most income deprived in Scotland
- The % of working age population in Dundee claiming jobseekers allowance has increased from 4.7% in 2009 to 5.5% in 2012 and remains above the Scottish average
- Referrals to Dundee Food Bank increased by 18% to 4,368 in 2015/16
- 32% of pensioners in Dundee are in receipt of pension credit, almost twice the overall Scottish figure, ranging from 44% in Coldside to 14% in The Ferry
- Long-term unemployment in Dundee City has historically been higher than the Scottish national average. Since 2010, the number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) recipients claiming for more than 12 months has been substantially higher than the rest of Scotland, reaching 2% of the working age population of Dundee by 2012. Since 2012, visible long-term unemployment in Dundee City has been approximately twice that of the Scottish national average
- Between August 2014 and August 2015, the number of people claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) decreased from 11,430 to 10,940
- the Minimum Income Standard reported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2015 confirms that slow earnings growth and price increases have made households worse off compared to 2008 by a minimum of £450 and as much as £4,000 per year

## What you told us



“I just hope that children surviving (not living) in poverty are provided with things to meet their needs.”

“Living in Kirkton I see the daily struggles of families; including my own. I struggle to afford anything over and above the necessities and even then, barely managed to afford a new washing machine when my old one broke, that one I had managed to get from a free site out of the kindness of someone’s heart.”

“Having faith in all of our people and working in a spirit of genuine partnership will help in the fight against poverty.”

## Opportunities for Dundee

While employment is not yet the guarantee of a life free from poverty, it is still the best route available to provide households with a reasonable and sustainable income. That's why the development of the city's economy and the jobs it will create and protect are so important to the Dundee Partnership.

Despite the challenging economy and the austerity measures which are causing so many difficulties, Dundee continues to take ambitious action to transform the shape and the fortunes of the city with the intention of creating the jobs we need to provide real opportunities for our people.

The city remains committed to capture the opportunities from renewables energy investment in coming years, particularly in relation to operations and maintenance work. Dundee is also being positioned to take advantage of decommissioning work from the offshore oil and gas sectors

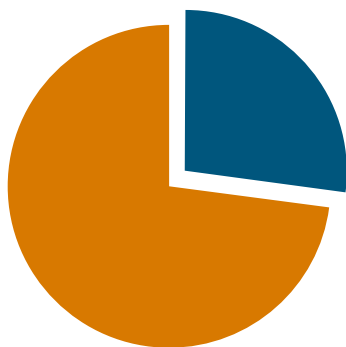
Dundee Waterfront, with the emerging V&A Museum of Design, has the potential to secure investors and create a significant number of jobs by attracting new companies to invest in waterfront sites

Dundee is strong in a range of employment and academic sectors including a well established creative industry sector which employed 2,800 people in 2014 and the UNESCO City of Design status shows that Dundee can build on our growing reputation in many areas such as the video games development industry. Over the last four years, the digital sector alone has doubled in size, contributing over £60m to the local economy.

There are already signs of real growth in tourism and hospitality jobs in the city as it becomes more attractive as a visitor destination. While some jobs in these sectors may not be the best paid initially, the city's new employability approach will aim to help people to move on from entry level jobs.

**“The number of semi-skilled jobs has fallen dramatically. A revolving door, rather than an escalator, is the experience of many low-wage earners.”**

**Jim McCormick, Joseph Rowntree Foundation**



28% of children in Dundee are classed as living in poverty



32% of pensioners in Dundee are in receipt of pension credit



Dundee households worse off by a minimum of £450 and as much as £4,000 per year

# 4 The Work of the Dundee Fairness Commission

## What was our job?

Despite enormous and ongoing efforts by people and organisations in Dundee, it is clear that the current economic climate and the process of continuous welfare reform are increasing levels of deprivation in Dundee. To make sure that the city is doing all it can to achieve fairness across the city, the Dundee Partnership set up a Fairness Commission for Dundee.

The Dundee Fairness Commission was asked to:

- consider the nature, extent and impact of poverty in Dundee
- identify and investigate the key causes and consequences of poverty along with policy and practical measures to address these
- consider evidence of what has worked elsewhere to combat poverty and inequality
- assess the effectiveness of the efforts to date of Dundee City Council and the broader Dundee Partnership through the Fairness Action Plan for Dundee
- seek the views and involvement of those experiencing poverty first hand
- prepare a report for the whole Dundee Partnership with recommendations on additional priorities for action to tackle and reduce poverty in the city

## Who are we?

The Fairness Commission has brought together elected members, community members and leading figures from voluntary and statutory organisations. Some have recognised experience and expertise in supporting people on low incomes. The causes and consequences of poverty are complex and any realistic response will inevitably require bodies from all sectors to play a full and active part. That's why the Commission was set up under the auspices of the Dundee Partnership which is the organisation that unites everyone in the city to work together to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives here.

All members of the Commission played a full and active part in its work. They have all reflected deeply and been inspired by the way that many people in Dundee on low incomes are struggling to get by in the face of public attitudes and policies and systems which can make difficult lives even harder. Full details of the members of the Commission are given in Appendix 1 where each member shares their thoughts on their experience.



## What did we do?

We have worked over the last year to understand what the challenges are facing people in Dundee and to test out whether, as a city, we are doing everything we can to stop people from moving into poverty and giving them the best possible chance to move permanently out of poverty.

In addition to contributions from our members, we took evidence from a range of experts representing national organisations like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland and the Poverty Alliance. We had presentations from leading academics from Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Strathclyde and University of Stirling. We heard of best practice from elsewhere in Scotland from the Wheatley Group, Renfrewshire Council and the Trussell Trust. Full details of all the meetings, presentations and reports can be found at:

[www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission](http://www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission)

We also tried hard to hear the views of people across Dundee. The next section of this report will tell you much more about it, but members of the commission have visited community cafes, drop in services for homeless people, attended meetings with the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and funded local research which has given a voice to many people who are experiencing real hardship. We are grateful for the honest and powerful personal stories that have been shared with us and these have motivated us to do everything we can do improve the way Dundee responds.

## What have we agreed?

Members of the Commission quickly realised that many of the most important factors that cause poverty in Dundee are not controlled by organisations in within the city. It became clear that policies like welfare reform, fit for work assessments and the provision of employment support are shaped by the UK and Scottish Governments. Unless some of these policies change, Dundee will be fighting an uphill battle to lift all of our people out of poverty. So where it is needed, we are recommending that Dundee campaigns to change national policies and legislation so that UK and Scottish Governments live up to their commitments to reducing child poverty and creating greater social justice.

But even without changes at a national level, we can do more in our city to improve our services and the practical support we offer. We are recommending that Dundee takes action across a range of issues that can be causes and consequences of low incomes – stigma; work and wages; closing the education gap; benefits and advice, housing and communities; food, fuel and household bills. We will consider each of them in detail later in this report setting out what we learned, what members of the public told us, what is working well in Dundee before making our clear recommendations.

But on top of these, we wanted to set out some of the key lessons and principles which must underpin any work Dundee does from now on to reduce the poverty and vast inequality in the city.

*Poverty is neither inevitable nor acceptable and Dundee must do more to challenge it and prevent it in the first place. We must speak out to tell the truth about the causes and effects of poverty on our children, our families and our communities.*

*Support and resources must be targeted to people and communities experiencing the greatest deprivation. Priority must be given to improve the life chances of children in poverty, especially all children who have had experience of care.*

*Approaches must be found that reach the majority of people in poverty. This will include the hidden and large number of individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet even though they are in work.*

*All children in Dundee must enjoy the same life chances and good quality education is the essential first step towards a future with high hopes and aspirations*

*All people, regardless of their income or other characteristics must be treated with respect in every aspect of their lives, especially when they are asking for support from public agencies*

*Because of the high cost and limited availability of child care, part time working and low incomes, poverty is having a bigger impact on women, especially single parents. Our responses must take account of this and redress the balance where possible.*

*People are particularly vulnerable when moving between jobs or between work and benefits. Services and employers must therefore be more sensitive and flexible to provide support which bridges this gap and stops people losing services or accommodation or running up debt.*

*Services must be better joined up to meet all the needs of individuals and families in poverty – in their localities wherever possible.*

*Because of the principle of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work every job in Dundee must pay the Living Wage at least. The Fairness Commission recognises a Living Wage as the rate calculated annually by the Scottish Living Wage Campaign (currently £8.25) as opposed to the rate referred to by the UK government as the national living wage.*

## What happens next?

This report is for the all our communities and everyone who cares about inequality in Dundee including all our public, voluntary and private sector partners. It includes recommendations for change at a national and local level for the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP) and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC).

## We now call on the Partnership to:

- work with the people of Dundee to prepare an action plan within six months setting out how they are going to implement our strategic recommendations relating to Stigma; Work and Wages; Closing the Education Gap; Benefits, Advice and Support; Housing and Communities; and Food & Fuel
- demonstrate how by working together, partners will more effectively reduce poverty and inequality than by acting alone
- publish a progress report annually until at least 2022 so that there is a clear and ongoing commitment to deliver improvements
- provide long-term funding and support to enable partners in the voluntary sector to work with people in poverty to influence the Partnership's plans by giving them an ongoing voice in efforts to tackle poverty in Dundee
- campaign for changes to the relevant legislation to end the punitive aspects of the welfare system and to introduce employability support which will genuinely help people into the sustainable employment which will lift their families out of poverty

# 5 Hearing & Learning from You – Engaging with Communities

## Gathering Experiences of Poverty in Dundee 2015

Ever since the Partnership decided to do more to make Dundee a fairer city, there has been an ambition to create a way to give a voice to those experiencing poverty in Dundee. The Commission followed through on this by asking local voluntary organisations to work together to engage with individuals, organisations and communities who could offer a crucial perspective to our work.

The small scale research project was co-ordinated by Faith in the Community Dundee supported by Shelter Scotland in Dundee and Craigowl Communities. Additional support was provided by the University of Dundee with technical support from Microdot Films and Richard Langton, Independent Service Design.

This project surveyed 147 people who use support agencies that are provided by a range of organisations in Dundee. In depth interviews with individuals were carried out along with focus groups and these complemented the findings of the original surveys. A series of short videos were produced to portray individual cases, telling their stories of living in poverty from different perspectives and life experiences.

The project ended with a joint seminar discussing the results with over 28 local people joining in a group of 70 participants including all the members of the Commission.

The Commission would like to thank all of the participants and organisations who took the time and effort to give us their views. A full list of the 18 projects that completed questionnaires with their clients is given in appendix 2

## Further Community Engagement

The Commission undertook additional on line and face to face engagement with other interested parties:

- monthly on line surveys – key themes emerged relating to homelessness, welfare reform, sanctions and finding work
- visits to Community Cafes in Lochee to meet clients and organisers
- study visits to Job Centre Plus and Triage to sit in on interviews and to meet clients and staff
- public discussion event with Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights
- a half day conference on awareness and recommendations with community representatives from across Dundee
- workshop by Poverty Alliance on local action to tackle poverty
- open meetings of Commission with public encouraged to play a full part

**Full details of this engagement are available on the Fairness Commission's website at:**

<http://www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission>



## What people told us

"I really felt listened to. They fed back what we said so I know they actually heard us. For the first time, I don't feel so alone."

"I think it's good that they talked to us, but they need to follow through on what needs to be done. People need to keep the pressure on them"

"It's all fine writing things on a notepad and getting emotional but we need to see change otherwise we're still in it all the time. What's the point?"

"We need feedback, an outcome, change."

*Poverty is neither inevitable nor acceptable and Dundee must do more to challenge it and prevent it in the first place. We must speak out to tell the truth about the causes and effects of poverty on our children, our families and our communities.*

# 6a Findings and Recommendations - Stigma

## The Facts

Over 80% of people in Scotland think that it is important to tackle child poverty and almost 90% believe there is some, or quite a lot of child poverty across Scotland. However, 87% of people mistakenly believe that this is caused by parents suffering from alcoholism, drug abuse or other addictions. Even worse, 29% believe that this is the main cause of child poverty.

People with physical disabilities are more than twice as likely as able bodied people to experience material deprivation. Where family members have a disability (either adults or children) average incomes are reduced and in particular the chances of having a good income are much reduced.

Families with a child with a disability experience higher levels of debt and social exclusion. Where childcare for children with a disability is available, it is more expensive; in some cases up to 5 times as much as for an able-bodied child.

Because of the extra costs of disability, the proportion of adults with a disability living in poverty is much higher. Those who are already disadvantaged are at greater risk of becoming disabled.

Poverty can trigger depression and anxiety. Mental health problems can be a major obstacle to being ready for and finding work.

## What we found

There has been a hardening of public attitudes to poverty in recent years as a result of an ongoing stream of mainstream media stories and programmes giving unrepresentative depictions of people receiving benefits and living on low incomes. This is having an impact on the daily lives of people in poverty due to the regular use of stigmatising language and behaviour.

A hearts and minds approach is needed in Dundee and throughout Scotland to change the views of anyone who believes that people choose or cause their own poverty. A different picture of why people find themselves in poverty and what it does to themselves and their families is urgently needed. People's stories can be the most powerful way to help people to better understand.

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 urgently required.

The Poverty Alliance's Stick Your Labels campaign gives a positive platform for tackling stigma. The Commission endorses the campaign's beliefs that poverty is not inevitable, that attitudes matter and affect how people on low incomes are treated, and that positive action across society will be needed to address the prevalence of such negative attitudes.

The impact of stigma on employment due to poverty, disability or status has to be addressed in any new employability services which are commissioned for people in Dundee or for Scotland as a whole.

## What is already happening?

Dundee City Council has signed up to the Poverty Alliance's Stick your Labels campaign.

Dundee Partnership is expanding its programme of poverty sensitivity training over the next year.

The Gathering Experiences of Poverty engagement, report and films are giving a direct voice to people in Dundee who are struggling against hardship.

The Dundee Drop In research work has highlighted the needs of people who are homeless and the most vulnerable and excluded.

## What people told us

“““

“A bit of respect wouldn't go amiss.”

“We are constantly disbelieved and treated like scroungers.”

“It is so depressing. Staff treat us like cattle. No compassion or kindness, just a number to be processed.”

“I was on a knife edge. I would've lost my family, lost everything”

## Recommendations

The Commission heard over and over again of the burdens that people in poverty and people with disabilities have to carry and how they can be treated day and daily. We stand in awe of them, not in judgement as is too often the case. Because of what we believe about the dignity, resilience and potential of all people in Dundee, we make the following recommendations to the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP) and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC):

- work with the media to paint an honest picture of life on low incomes in Dundee and challenge myths and negative stories about people in poverty (SG/DP/DCC)
- put the Stick your Labels campaign into practice and show real action to change bad attitudes (SG/DP)
- address the impact of stigma in the delivery of all services to the public including employability and benefit support (SG/DP/DCC)
- recruit Chief Officers of partners to commit to stigma free culture and practice in their organisations (DP)
- deliver awareness raising and poverty sensitivity training to all public sector front-line staff, voluntary organisations, businesses and the wider community (DP)
- provide peer support and volunteering opportunities to share experiences across groups and communities (DP)
- develop a way to measure improvements in public attitudes to poverty in Scotland and Dundee (SG/DP)

# 6b Findings and Recommendations - Work and Wages

## The Facts

- 31% of the working age population in Dundee is economically inactive, compared to 23% in Scotland.
- The largest group of benefit claimants in Dundee receive Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Incapacity Benefit (IB) – this is almost 10% of the working age population in Dundee.
- In Tayside, there are 4.5 unemployed people for every job vacancy
- 3,500 unemployed people receive Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) with 20% turnover each month.
- Long-term Unemployment in Dundee is higher than for the rest of Scotland.
- Since 1990, almost 10,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Dundee largely replaced by historically high rates of employment in the public sector including Dundee City Council, NHS Tayside, Further Education and Higher Education
- In 2013/14, 48% of working age adults in poverty before housing costs were living in working households, as were 56% of children in poverty.
- In 2013/14, 50% of working age adults in poverty after housing costs were living in working households, as were 56% of children in poverty.
- Dundee has lower gross weekly pay levels across full and part time workers than Scotland overall. The gross weekly pay for a full time worker in Dundee was £467 compared to £518 for Scotland.
- In 2014 almost 23% of people in Dundee East were earning less than the Living Wage as set by the Scottish Living Wage campaign. In Dundee West, it was lower at nearly 12 %

## What we found

From the excellent Good Work for All briefing by NHS Health Scotland, we learned that:

***Good work provides a decent income, widens social networks and gives people a purpose. The health benefits of good work extend beyond working-age adults to their children.***

***For working-age adults, not having a paid job is bad for health, increasing the risk of premature death by more than 60% and increasing the risk of illness, especially poor mental health.***

***Not all work is good for health. Up to one-third of jobs fail to lift families out of poverty and can increase workers' risk of illness, injury or poor mental health. For some people, working in these jobs may be no better for their health than being unemployed***

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

Due to the decrease in semi-skilled jobs, many people have to take lower skilled and lower paid jobs which increases the risk of poverty. Access to in-work training also decreases significantly when people are paid below the living wage and this can create a cycle of people trapped in low paid jobs.

At least one third of lower paid workers are currently in receipt of working tax credits, and this increases further where employees have a disability. Given the forthcoming changes to tax credits, their financial position is likely to become poorer.

Unemployment remains stubbornly high when compared with the rest of Scotland. This applies across the age groups, and is high across all age groups. The gap with Scotland widens with duration of unemployment and is at its widest for men over 50 in long term unemployment.

Compared to the other major cities in Scotland, Dundee has the highest proportion of people working part-time.

Overall, unemployed people in Dundee are further from work than in many other areas, and this has significant implications for the design and focus of a local employability service, and for the need to integrate or at least align the Work Programme after its devolution. Targeted support is needed for people of all ages further from the workplace and in, or at risk of, long term unemployment

There is evidence of a 'jobs gaps' in Dundee – in other words there is a mismatch between those seeking work and the numbers and types of jobs available. Similarly, there is a gap between the availability and demand for community learning and part-time courses at further education colleges to support adults who want or need to re-engage with work but lack confidence.

Employers need to be supported to provide more training and employment opportunities. The Waterfront and V&A development offers a chance to maximise job, training and learning opportunities for people in Dundee and establish best practice.

The Living Wage as endorsed by the Scottish Living Wage campaign is a crucial practical commitment which is needed across all sectors. Leadership is required from public sector in particular. People being paid below the Living Wage have less access to in-work training and development.

Making a commitment to the Living Wage is an integral part of the Scottish Business Pledge which encourages companies to adopt a range of modern business practices that embrace fairness and equality. Other components include not using exploitative zero hours contracts and investing in youth.

Flexible and affordable childcare is essential to enable parents (in particular women and lone parents) to secure sustainable employment and meet all too often unrealistic claimant commitments.

People with disabilities are at extra risk of low pay. They face particular obstacles in accessing secure, sustainable employment including childcare, access and wage levels.

Over a third of workers receiving working tax credits are in retail, health and social care jobs.

Additional factors affect low income including the number of working hours and other costs incurred relating to transport, childcare and food.

Volunteering can be a positive route towards work. This needs to be encouraged despite challenges caused by claimant commitments and the introduction of mandatory volunteering (commonly known as Workfare) which puts claimants at risk of sanctions and undermines genuine volunteering and job creation.

Membership of a trade union can enhance the wages, conditions and access to in-work training and development of employees.



## What is already happening?

Public sector partners are increasingly committed to securing community benefits like training, apprenticeships and local employment through the contracts they award using public money.

The city has embarked upon ambitious plans for a new, fully integrated 'world class' employability service.

Plans are progressing to attract a £400m City Deal for Dundee and the surrounding area.

The number of young people leaving school in Dundee who are going into training, education or employment is steadily increasing.

The Council and others are delivering on their commitment to help young people leaving care to find work through the Family Firm approach. This involves giving the young people the personal guidance and support that others might receive through their family members and connections.



31% of the working age population in Dundee is economically inactive, compared to 23% in Scotland.

## What people told us



"We need affordable childcare for working families. Both my husband and I work yet my work hours are restricted due to childcare issues. We have to rely on family and friends and they are not always available"

"Being honest, I haven't seen any support due to the fact both of us do work so we do not qualify for much."

"I am a hard working, conscientious worker who has a lot to offer. Yes, I have medical conditions that can at times make me unwell, however, I manage my condition well and can ensure I am able to carry out my work duties. However employers in Dundee seem to think they are doctors and have actively discriminated against me due to my conditions."

"I'm 59 and I'm on JSA. I go for interviews and compete with 100 young people - I have no chance. I have to apply for jobs that I'm not even qualified for in order to meet my job hunting quota of 15 per week. I'd be better off dead than living like this."

"I use Job Centre, Triage and Job Clubs. The jobs I can apply for are cleaning, posties etc. I'm 59 - no one wants me."

"We are made to apply for jobs we stand no chance of getting or face sanctions."

"No real jobs, no careers. Pointless! It makes me despair!"

# Recommendations

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a key to tackling poverty is to create good jobs, not just more jobs. While good employment can change lives, bad employment can harm lives. We are encouraged and uplifted by the efforts to create and maintain jobs in the city but we have also heard too many examples of where honest, hard work has gone unrewarded. Because of what we believe about a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, we make the following recommendations to the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP) and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC):

- make Dundee a Living Wage City and adopt a Fair Work charter for employers in Dundee (DP/DCC)
- demonstrate leadership by achieving Scottish Living Wage accreditation (DP/DCC)
- recruit more employers to the Scottish Business Pledge including commitments to the Scottish Living Wage and fair family practices (DP)
- campaign for an end to Zero Hours contracts (UK/SG/DP)
- all partners should increase the ratio of staff they employ who are resident in Dundee's community regeneration areas (DP)
- make the new, joined up employability service a reality and target greater support to those most at risk of long term unemployment and make demonstrable progress towards this over the next six months(DP/DCC)
- secure commitment from local employers to provide in-work training and development to allow people to progress to better pay and job security (DP/DCC)
- design and deliver employability and training to meet the needs of local companies who are committed to providing fair work (DP)
- demonstrate that construction and development of V&A and The Waterfront and other economic initiatives benefit local people through greater job, and accredited training and learning opportunities (DCC/DP/SG)
- provide support to excluded groups who face particular obstacles in accessing secure and well-paid work due to their disability, race or poverty (SG/DP/DCC)
- work with employers to pay flexible weekly wages to help people move securely into employment (SG/DP)
- encourage trade union membership as a means of tackling in-work poverty (SG/DP)
- increase availability of flexible, affordable and high quality childcare (SG/DP/DCC)
- campaign for the Scottish Government to replace the Work Programme with a service that will provide realistic and supportive help to enable the majority of people to move towards paid work (SG)
- campaign to end mandatory volunteering as part of claimant commitments and take measures to discourage companies and organisations from supporting it locally (UK/SG/DP/DCC)
- provide financial capability support to help people and their employers make the transition to Universal Credit and manage income and debt. (SG/DP)

## 6c Findings and Recommendations - Closing the Education Gap

### The facts

- 28% of S4 pupils in Dundee achieved 5 plus awards at level 5 (Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade) in comparison to the Scottish average of 40%. (2013/14)
- The percentage of pupils in S4 achieving 5 plus awards at level 5 in Dundee was 19% in the lowest performing school and 57% in the highest performing school. A difference of 40% between these two schools. (2013/14)
- The percentage of total school leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at level 5 was 46% in Dundee in comparison to a national figure of 56%
- The percentage of school leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at level 5 ranges across the City, the lowest percentage being in Strathmartine Ward at 33% of school leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at level 5, the highest percentage was 69% of school leavers in The Ferry (2014/15)
- Of the 4772 children aged between 3 and 5 in Dundee in 2014/15, only 3,530 took up their funded part time pre school education place
- Dundee's secondary schools have the highest rate of exclusions amongst Scottish Local Authorities – almost double the average for Scotland
- Compared to the rest of Scotland, fewer pupils from Dundee progress to university but more go to further education colleges.
- One in three children in Dundee attend schools outside their designated catchment area

### What we found

Living in a stressful home environment or family is closely associated with poverty and both of these can influence children's attainment.

By the time a child born into poverty reaches school, she is already trailing up to 15 months behind more affluent classmates in almost every aspect of life.

Other factors which can affect the attainment gap include; parental guidance, support and investment; teaching practice and expectations; the level of school exclusions; improved use and targeting of existing resources to pupils and schools that need more support; income inequality.

Deprivation continues to have a large influence on attainment. There are significant differences in attainment between pupils from deprived areas and those from more affluent areas in Dundee. However, some schools across Scotland have achieved better attainment results than their levels of deprivation would indicate, suggesting that the gap between the lowest and highest performing schools cannot be wholly attributed to different levels of deprivation.

Overall, the attainment gap remains too high in Dundee and more non academic measures of success are needed to enable pupils to achieve and demonstrate their worth to potential employers.

There are considerable hidden costs associated with attending school and during the school holidays. Significant extra costs for families include uniform, transportation, resources and extra curricular activities. These are some of the many ways that pupils from low income households can experience stigma and exclusion.

Take up of uniform grants and free school meals is not maximised and meals may not be available for children during school holidays.

Exclusions in Dundee schools are significantly higher than the national average and this will undermine the potential of young people who are lost to mainstream education.

A multi-agency approach is required to meet all needs of the child from Early Years settings until education is complete. This will involve the work of a broad partnership including schools, further and higher education, trades unions, employers and, crucially, parents and carers.

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

Placing requests can impact negatively 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 vocational success but funding is reducing the numbers of young people who can be enrolled.

The cost of travel and entry to cultural and leisure facilities are often unaffordable and in-accessible for low income families with children.

## What is already happening?

The Aspire initiative is promoting confidence and achievement through an artistic and creative programme in targeted schools across the city.

Over £2m for each of the next three years has been allocated to Dundee to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge which aims to tackle the gap in attainment between our most and least deprived communities. It will improve activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

All schools in Dundee are implementing measures which are already reducing the number of exclusions.

School clothing grants are to be increased in 2016/17 by up to 80% to £81 for primary and secondary pupils. The process of applying for school grants has been simplified and integrated with other Dundee City Council systems.

Funding from the Robertson Scholarship has been secured to provide 20 annual bursaries to secondary school pupils moving to university.

An additional 21 family support and development workers have been appointed to provide a broad range of assistance to pupils and families.

Additional Support for Learning staff have been targeted to schools in less affluent communities.

The Family Splash pilot is being expanded. This initiative gave families in Lochee cheap and supported access to swimming and family development opportunities in a fun, healthy setting.

## What people told us



“During holidays it is hard for families as there is no money to do things.”

“Holiday programme from Lochee Pathfinder helps as it gives free activity for kids and they get a meal.”

“People require engaging education that not only offers core academic skills but also life skills. These skills should include social skills, employability, budgeting, parenting, managing a home, lifestyle choices, cooking skills and the benefits of volunteering and being an active citizen.”

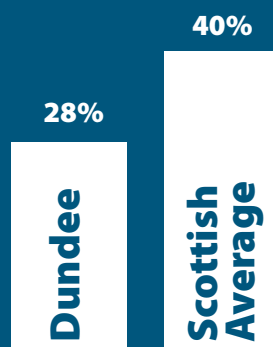
“Change the school clothing grant. Dundee has one of the lowest in Scotland. This has to increase.”

## Recommendations

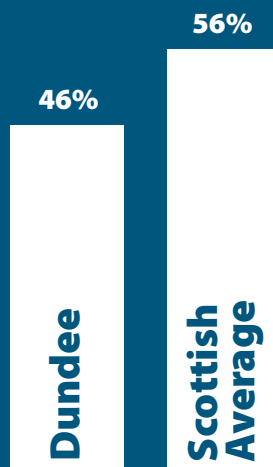
It is simply not right that by the time a child born into poverty reaches school age he or she is already trailing behind their more affluent classmates in almost every aspect of life. We believe that good quality education is the essential first step towards a future in which horizons are lifted for these children. This is currently undermined by the burdensome consequences of the cost of the school day. Because of what we have heard and what we believe we make the following recommendations to the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP) and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC):

- Commission a project to address the Cost of the School Day and Holidays to both reduce stigma and the hidden costs of attending school and associated activities in Dundee (DCC)
- Demonstrate that measures including the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding and projects are closing the educational gap by improving results for children and young people attending schools that serve less affluent pupils and families (DCC)
- Give greater priority to significantly reducing the attainment gap than marginally increasing average attainment for the city (DCC)
- Markedly reduce the level of school exclusions in Dundee from 0.08% to no more than the Scottish average of 0.04%(DCC)
- Improve school results and positive destinations for looked after children and those who have had experience of care in Dundee (DP/DCC)
- Examine the link between lower attainment for pupils and the relationship to poor mental health (DCC)
- Work with parents to take up pre school education and support their children to reach their best possible levels of attainment and promote parental learning(DP/DCC)
- Make sure that every eligible family receives the support with school meals and uniform grants they are entitled to (DCC)
- Recruit local businesses to work in partnership with every school and pupil to increase job readiness and employment aspirations (DP/DCC)

- Offer attractive and effective vocational school activities and programmes, including work experience, to provide a positive, alternative route to employment (SG/DP/DCC)
- Fund further education colleges to build the academic and vocational success of young people (SG)
- Expand free or affordable family learning and leisure opportunities (DP/DCC)
- Promote a national debate on the advantages and disadvantages of parental choice of schools. (SG)



28% of S4 pupils in Dundee achieved 5 plus awards at level 5



The percentage of total school leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at level 5 was 46% in Dundee

# 6d Findings and Recommendations – Benefits, Advice and Support

## Key Facts

For Dundee City the current estimate is that welfare reforms since 2010 have taken £56m out of the economy amounting to a reduction of £560 a year for every working age adult.

- In Dundee at August 2015, there were 17,540 benefit claimants.
- In relation to referrals for benefit sanctions (the partial or total withdrawal of a person's income), the decision to apply a sanction in Dundee City was at 40% in September 2014 and 51% in September 2015. The decision not to apply a proposed sanction increased from 25% to 32% over the same period.
- During the period September 2014 to September 2015 there were 3,249 JSA sanction decisions made for residents of Dundee City. The figure ranged from 403 sanctions in September 2014 to 210 in September 2015. In Scotland overall the figure ranged from 8,523 in September 2014 to 3,849 in September 2015. The number of JSA sanctions represents 6.9% of JSA Dundee City claimants and 5.8% across Scotland.
- During the period January to September 2015, the number of Scottish Welfare Fund applications in Dundee fell by 1,022 or 14% when compared to the same period in 2014. The number of applications in Scotland also reduced by 859 applications or 1%.
- The number of claims for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) continues to rise as this benefit replaces Disability Living Allowance. In September 2015 there were 1934 PIP claims, an increase of 1551 from September 2014.
- Over £12.7m in benefit payments were secured for clients by advice providers in the city. A further £7.7m in debts were rescheduled for clients.

## What we found

Benefit sanctions are having an enormous and detrimental impact on the incomes, lives and mental health of claimants and dramatically increase levels of absolute poverty. People told us that sanctions were applied unfairly, unsympathetically and erratically, and were neither effectively explained nor communicated to people who were about to lose some or all of their benefits.

According to feedback from local advice providers, common reasons for sanctions were reported as including failure to apply for enough jobs or completing job searches online; cancelling, being late or failing to turn up for appointments even when explained or caused by emergencies; letters not being received on time or at all.

At the same time, Council, voluntary sector and DWP colleagues are looking at ways to reduce the level and impact of sanctions. The approach taken to sanctions may vary between DWP and Work Programme providers. While levels of sanctions are steadily decreasing, any sanction will make it virtually impossible to afford the basics which any person requires to lead a safe and healthy life.

An independent review into sanctions for claimants on Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) carried out by Matthew Oakley on behalf of the DWP made many positive recommendations regarding alternatives to financial sanctions which should be implemented including the need to identify non-financial measures and agreement to the principle that no one should be left without any money to live on.

A broad range of measures are being implemented by Dundee City Council and partners (including DWP) to alleviate the consequences of welfare reform including:

- outreach advice to local communities
- additional digital on line access and support to manage claims
- support with form-filling, budgeting and fuel poverty
- early intervention pilots in Job Centre Plus
- welfare rights advisers being co-located in GP practices
- co-locating the CONNECT team in the Job Centre to raise awareness of Universal Credit and in-work entitlements for low paid workers
- ongoing commitment to Discretionary Housing Payments to provide assistance with rent costs
- administration of the Council's Hardship Fund

Additional challenges will be created by the introduction of Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments

There is an ongoing need to address the management of benefit claims to ensure that people understand what is expected of them and that agreed claimant commitments are fair, reasonable and achievable.

People feel very stressed and unfairly treated at fit for work assessments and would welcome advocacy support to attend assessments and to make appeals against unfavourable decisions.

## What is already happening?

Work continues to be undertaken by Dundee City Council and partners to alleviate the consequences of welfare reform.

Innovative early action is being taken locally to avoid sanctions and support is improving to help people to meet claimant commitments.

The expanding network of venues offering digital inclusion and access to online job search is helping more people to manage their claims.

Help is offered to access crisis payments and joining up with other support.

Advice services are reaching out to priority groups and finding ways to work better together. Long term planning and co-ordination of services is difficult due to short term funding received from a variety of sources.





## What people told us

"I feel like it is draining the life out of me. It doesn't matter how much you try to look for a job you still get sanctioned over the smallest thing. People at my age worry about will they lose their house and you feel like you have lost your dignity."

"The Scottish Government and DCC have both put things in place to soften the impact of these reforms, good on you. Show people you understand. Show compassion."

"I have had problems with complying with my client commitment as I'm 59 and lost my business and didn't have a clue about PCs or looking for jobs etc. I got sanctioned and all I really needed was help and time to enable me to understand all this new stuff."

"Any change in benefits can turn into a nightmare, as administrative errors lead to lost claim forms and delays in payment of the new benefit - all while the previous benefit goes out of payment. How are families supposed to live on literally nothing for a week, two weeks, a month?"

"We have been sanctioned a few times, also friends & family. Forever borrowing off family to make ends meet."

"My partner was sanctioned when I was in hospital as he was looking after kids. He was feeling ill with stress of signing on."

## Recommendations

The Welfare State was created in order to help people in times of trouble, society's safety net for citizens. We have heard harrowing tales of significant and growing holes in that safety net. To protect and care for all people in Dundee, we make the following recommendations to the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP) and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC)::

- Campaign to end the punitive sanctions regime and devolve decision making to create accountability at a local level(UK/SG/DP)
- Reduce high rate of benefit sanctions in Dundee
  - Help people to access all the benefits they are entitled to (UK/SG/DP)
  - Support people to avoid sanctions by meeting their claimant commitments (DP/DCC)
  - Work with partners to make sure that claimant commitments are understandable and realistic (DP)
  - Promote services that are available to assist individuals with advice on appealing sanctions (DP/DCC)
  - Put measures in place to provide practical help to people and families who have been sanctioned (SG/DP/DCC)
  - Provide advocacy and support to help claimants at hearings, interviews and appeals (DP/DCC)
- Campaign for fairer Fit for Work assessments (UK/SG/DP/DCC)
  - Provide advocacy and support to help people attend and be properly assessed (SG/DP/DCC)

- Support people who have been unfairly assessed to appeal against decisions (DP/DCC)
- Provide more and better co-ordinated advice and advocacy services which (SG/DP/DCC)
  - Map out the range and availability of existing provision
  - Work effectively together and make & share referrals
  - Offer quality advice to national standards
  - Highlight examples of unfairness and inefficiency in the benefits system to promote improvement
  - Are offered across the city and target community regeneration areas
  - Provide peer support opportunities
  - Receive long term public funding

**17,540**

Number of benefit claimants  
in August 2015

**£56m**

Taken from Dundee economy  
due to welfare reform

**£12.7m**

Over £12.7m in benefit  
payments secured

# 6e Findings and Recommendations - Housing and Communities

## Key Facts

- 27% of all households in Dundee receive Housing Benefit - the third highest rate in Scotland.
- Almost a quarter of private rented households in Dundee are in receipt of housing benefit.
- Average rents in the private sector have increased for all property sizes between 2010 and 2015, ranging from an increase of 6.7% for two bedroom properties to an increase of 19.3% for four bedroom properties.
- 3,470 households received Discretionary Housing Payments in Dundee (as at end September 2015). The average award was £562, the seventh highest in Scotland and £86 more than the Scottish average.
- Dundee had 1,439 homelessness applications in 2014/15, the sixth highest in Scotland.
- The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Dundee rose from 176 in 2010 to 279 in January 2015. The highest figure in that period was in January 2011 when there were 319 temporary households.

## What we found

People living in poverty have a higher risk of living in poor housing conditions than others.

The number of people in poverty in the private rented sector has risen sharply. While there are many responsible and fair private landlords in the city, tenants in the private sector often experience high rents, lower quality and increasing social problems. They may be more isolated and feel that they have less support because they don't have a social landlord to turn to.

Because of the higher risk of low incomes, people in social and private rented housing can experience greater isolation and mental health problems compared to home owners.

Social prescribing is an approach which allows GPs to refer patients to support workers who offer non-medical, community support. Social prescribing provides an effective response to poor mental health and wellbeing and social isolation and should be available to vulnerable communities across the city.

There can be less community spirit, wellbeing and resilience in areas with high intensity of social rented or private rented housing. The day to day experience of living in poorer communities in Dundee can have a negative impact on levels of confidence and wellbeing.

Experience from elsewhere in Scotland shows that social landlords can provide wrap-around services which address the wider needs of tenants including employability, benefit & debt advice & community learning and activity. These may, however, generate additional costs for tenants overall.

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

Some vulnerable tenants have found themselves having to choose between housing and employment due to the high service charges for supported and/or homeless accommodation in Dundee.

Homeless people experience the most extreme levels of poverty and deprivation. There are still too many homeless people in Dundee and more comprehensive and sensitive support is needed to ensure that they can rebuild their lives through sustainable housing solutions.

## What is already happening?

The Private Landlord Support project is a partnership between Shelter Scotland, the Oak Foundation and Dundee City Council that aims to improve standards across the private rented sector. It engages with landlords and offers advice and practical support to ensure that they meet their legal requirements. Close collaboration with colleagues ensures that there is an informal route to improve knowledge and practice among landlords while targeting tougher enforcement action towards those who are failing to maintain standards.

The Housing Options Team based at the East District Housing Office provides support to people to sustain their tenancies. It offers help relating to tenure, debt advice and mediation and makes links to other support agencies.

Tenants, community groups and agencies are working closely together to continue the major regeneration projects in Whitfield, Mill O'Mains, Lochee and the Hilltown.

The Dundee Partnership annual social survey records that satisfaction with the quality of life and local services remains high across the city although it is lower in community regeneration areas. Over 90% of social rented housing stock in Dundee passed the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

The Crescent facility in Whitfield is offering public and community services in a new model of joint working at the heart of the community. This is seen as the model for future developments in other areas.

The Community Asset Transfer process is well established and underway, most significantly, with the transfer of the major resource in Kemback Street to the Boomerang Community Centre.

The Community Regeneration Teams work with groups to improve confidence and community capacity to empower local people and give them a greater influence over what happens in their neighbourhoods.

Community Regeneration Forums made up of local people allocate almost £900,000 each year to activities which aim to increase community spirit and wellbeing and reduce the levels and impact of inequality.

The Equally Well approach is working with local people to improve community wellbeing in regeneration areas by addressing the causes of health inequalities.

The SOS Link Workers work with GPs to support patients with poor mental health and wellbeing to identify the causes and consequences of their condition and access a range of services and activities that can help. This is particularly effective at reducing social isolation.



**27% of all households in Dundee receive Housing Benefit**



**Average rents in the private sector have increased between 6.7% and 19.3%**



**Dundee had 1,439 homelessness applications in 2014/15**

# What people told us

“Yes, it was a struggle. For me, being homeless, you just don’t expect it to happen. No one wants to be homeless.”

“The effect of being on the street is dramatic on confidence, health and it places people - especially women - in really vulnerable situations.”

“It wasn’t for the help from social prescribing, I probably wouldn’t be here.”

## Recommendations

If you are insecure in your home, every aspect of your life is undermined. Rent and mortgage arrears mount up with frightening speed if illness or unemployment strike. Homelessness and sofa-surfing is no way to live, nor is having to choose between a home or a job. Because of what we have heard, we make the following recommendations to the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP) and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC):

- Increase the supply and range of affordable housing options in Dundee (SG/DP/DCC)
- Improve the quality of private rented housing in Dundee, raise awareness of recent legislative changes within the sector, campaign for fairer, affordable rents and explore potential for stricter licensing requirements and minimum quality standards(UK/SG/DP/DCC)
- Support private rented sector tenants to ensure their property meets the Repairing Standard and where it doesn’t, support them to report it to the new Housing Tribunal (SG/DP/DCC)
- Provide better options and support for homeless people and make sure that no one has to choose between a home or a job (SG/DCC)
- Work with social landlords to provide a wide range of services to tenants to help improve the quality of their lives including support to get a job, benefit and debt advice and community activity (SG/DP/DCC)
- Improve mental wellbeing for people and neighbourhoods by offering more community activities through the broadest range of groups and organisations including faith communities (SG/DP/DCC)
- Increase the availability of social prescribing to provide non-medical, community support to patients with poor mental wellbeing (SG/DP)
- Reduce isolation in communities, especially for older people & people with disabilities (DP/DCC)
- Provide affordable and flexible transport for people on low incomes so that they can access work, services or leisure activities through better use of relevant budgets and resources (DCC/DP)

# 6f Findings and Recommendations - Food and Fuel

## Key facts

Referrals to Dundee Food Bank increased by 18% to 4,368 in 2015/16 with 8,354 people receiving support.

22 % of all referrals to Trussell Trust food banks in Scotland are for people who are struggling with insecure work, low wages and high living costs.

In 2014/15, a total of 4,054 vouchers were issued for the Dundee Food Bank with more at other non-Trussell Trust food banks. At least 127 were to households/families where at least one person was in work.

Fuel poverty across all housing tenures has risen in Dundee City to 42% against the Scottish average of 36%.

Dundee City has the highest level of households in fuel poverty across all Scottish cities.

Extreme fuel poverty in Dundee has reduced from 11% in 2011-13 to 7% in 2015 and fuel poverty has reduced by 1% over the same period.

51% of those in fuel poverty in Dundee are living in the private rented sector.

66% of single pensioner households suffer from fuel poverty

38% of single parent households live in fuel poverty

## What we found

### Food Poverty

There is not a food crisis in Scotland. There is plenty of food to go round but some people can't afford it. Families in food poverty need social justice, not charity.

There are currently six foodbank centres operating within Dundee funded by the Trussell Trust. These have been operating since March, 2013, providing not just food but also advice and support to people in need of assistance. Foodbanks have also provided clothing in some circumstances, and are also giving support to refugees.

Foodbank use had increased dramatically over the last three years and is expected to increase for the next few years. Although there are many reasons for this increase, a significant factor has been welfare reforms. Up to a third of referrals across Scotland are caused by benefits sanctions, delays or mistakes. People with disabilities are being referred due to problems and delays in Employment Allowance claims.

An increasing number of food bank clients are in work but not earning enough to meet the cost of food for their families.

Many other local organisations are beginning to run independent food banks and soup kitchens. Members of the Commission acknowledge the community spirit and compassion that inspires people to reach out to help. That said, the Commission was not comfortable that established welfare arrangements funded by the state had to be replaced by charitable giving.

There is a need to move beyond emergency food to provide broader, preventative support relating to benefits, housing, health and community services. Data is being collected by Trussell Trust to ascertain who is using the foodbank and how often this is being done. Should more than three visits be made in a six month period, steps are taken to understand why the person/family are finding themselves in crisis and identify how this could be avoided.

Communities are interested in developing neighbourhood garden projects to provide food and, as importantly, positive social activities for local people.

## Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty affects health, educational attainment and increases the number of winter deaths.

Low income households are, understandably, most vulnerable to fuel poverty. Among the biggest groups are single pensioners, single parents and people renting in the private sector.

Within Dundee, the Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project (DEEAP) is helping to tackle this by:

- improving energy efficiency by giving advice, improving loft and cavity wall insulation and accessing free or low cost white goods
- increasing income by maximising benefit entitlement, renegotiating payments with fuel companies, and providing money advice in relation to fuel bills. DEEAP is the only advice centre on the Scottish mainland with approval to write off fuel debt on behalf of one of the biggest fuel suppliers in the City, SSE (Scottish and Southern Energy) which makes a huge difference to people struggling to pay rising bills alongside debt. £127,829 fuel debt was written off in this way in 2015/16 Fuel debt in the city stands at a value of £1.6 million.
- helping to reduce fuel costs, by accessing resources such as warm homes discounts of £140 per year to qualifying households, and negotiating fuel debts.
- maximising the take up of schemes financed by the utilities, such as white goods, warm homes initiative and fuel debt write off.

Positive action is being taken in Dundee to lower bills by improving internal and external insulation in social housing. So far this is reducing fuel consumption bills by up to 40%. Some barriers could still be in place i.e. private rental/payment meters however it was hoped that working with partners can help combat this.

Prepayment meters apply an unjustifiable 'poverty premium' on people already on low incomes. The recent announcements on the capping of the cost of prepayment meters by Ofgen give rise to hope on this issue.

District heating systems can offer a low cost alternative for tenants and have been used to increase the energy efficiency in selected multi storey blocks in Dundee.

**8,354**

Number of people receiving support from foodbanks in Dundee

**42%**

Fuel poverty has risen to 42% across all housing tenures in Dundee



66% of single pensioner households suffer from fuel poverty

## What is already happening?

There is great practical, financial and volunteering support for food banks from the general public in Dundee.

Food banks in Dundee are joining up with other service providers including advice agencies and access to the Scottish Welfare Fund.

Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project (DEEAP) is recognised as a best practice project in Scotland

Dundee City Council has invested in their housing stock to increase thermal efficiency by installing cavity/loft insulation, energy efficient heating systems and external wall insulation.

OFGEM, the energy regulator, has recently consulted on proposals to help prepayment meter users move to cheaper tariffs and to ensure that energy costs do not fall disproportionately on those who are least able to afford them.

## What people told us



“Cost of bills are through the roof. I’m worried I won’t be able to heat house over winter.”

“Foodbanks have been essential but this does not address the problem, it only gives temporary relief.”

“Dundee is primed and ready to act on food poverty” – Dave Morris, Trussell Trust

## Recommendations

Nothing illustrates the unfairness in our society more than the fact that in our relatively wealthy country there are citizens struggling to keep their homes warm or being unable to eat properly, often having to choose between the two. We make the following recommendations to the UK Government (UK), the Scottish Government (SG), all members of the Dundee Partnership (DP), and, where relevant, Dundee City Council (DCC):

- Maximise the number of households applying for and receiving warm home discounts (DCC)
- Campaign for fairness for people using prepayment meters which currently apply the most expensive gas and electricity charges and support OFGEM’s proposals to make these fairer(UK/DP)
- Expand the availability and viability of district heating systems, advice on changing supplier &/or other bulk buying schemes to reduce energy costs (DP/DCC)
- Campaign to introduce a minimum standard of energy efficiency in private tenancies (UK/SG/DP/ DCC)
- Ensure that anyone using a food bank is accessing all statutory sources of financial support , connect food banks to other services and address the cause of every food crisis for individuals and families (DP/DCC)
- Increase community gardens and projects for low cost food and to create social and community connections (DP/DCC)



# Appendix 1

## Reflections of members of the Dundee Fairness Commission

Full details of all the members can be found at :

[www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission](http://www.dundeepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission)

### **Gerry McLaughlin, Chief Executive, NHS Health Scotland**

The evidence given to the Fairness Commission of the daily challenges faced by people living on low incomes in Dundee will live with me for a very long time. The accounts I heard of the stigma they experience horrified me and was a powerful reminder to me that for all of the statistics we bandy about, each and every one represents a life blighted and a talent unfulfilled. We simply cannot accept that this is inevitable. It is both unfair and unacceptable. I hope the Commission's Report is the catalyst for a new and different approach for Dundee.

### **Mary Kinninmonth, Director, Dundee Citizens Advice Bureau**

I'm fuming that, in this day and age, people are still being forced to live in poverty and that a Fairness Commission needed to be set up in the first place. Having said that, I've been inspired by the passion, commitment and enthusiasm of fellow commissioners in wanting to work together to find collaborative solutions to make a real difference in Dundee, despite the weight of the austerity agenda working against this. I'm really glad that there is consensus that the work needed to make sure the recommendations of the Commission are followed through should include citizens who actually live in poverty. It's vital to continue to include people who through, no fault of their own, but through financial circumstances and stigmatisation are often excluded.

### **Erik Cramb, Dundee Pensioners Forum**

The path to the setting up of the Fairness Commission, for me, began with the woman who in a flat, matter-of-fact tone, told the Dundee Partnership, "When you are poor, you are treated as rubbish." Whatever else we have learned in the Fairness Commission is that nobody, whatever their status, should be treated as rubbish. Our report, above all, is a call for respect and decent relationships. But as we were warned, "It's all fine writing things on a notepad, but we need to see change... otherwise, what's the point?"

### **Elizabeth Kane, Community Representative**

I was surprised and honoured when I was chosen to be the Community Representative on the Fairness Commission. I was impressed by the range of organisations that were involved and their commitment.

Several of the meetings included presentations from other organisations. The ones that stick out for me are: Closing the attainment gap and cost of the school day; welfare issues; living wage and stigma campaigns. But the biggest impact was the stories of people experiencing poverty. Their experiences brought to life what the academics had been saying. People deserve better. We must assist them and have continued contact with them.

### **Drew Walker, Director of Public Health, NHS Tayside**

After working in public health for over 35 years I thought I had seen everything. That was before I became part of the Commission. Participation in its work has been a real eye-opener for me, and I think for many other people. No matter how much we read, there is no substitute for seeing and hearing people - many with a very different life experience from my own comfortable, middle-class background - sharing their passion, successes, disappointments, concerns, enthusiasms and commitment to tackle the many unfairnesses which surround us. I am a better person, and a better public health doctor, as a result. I will always be grateful to the Dundee Fairness Commission for giving me that opportunity.

### **Eddie Smith, Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland**

As police officers, many of us join the organisation in an attempt to improve the communities in which we serve; to protect and support the most vulnerable in society and those individuals, whose personal circumstances have left them in need of assistance. The work of the Dundee Fairness Commission has reaffirmed my commitment to those most in need of support and as set out in the Police Scotland values of Fairness, Integrity and Respect.

### **Douglas Robertson, Professor, University of Stirling**

Reading reports and analysing statistics - core parts of my day job - provides some insights into better understanding something like poverty. When you meet the reality that lies behind the reports and statistics on poverty, people living in poverty, another more personal, human dimension then opens up and the weakness of the statistics and reports becomes all so apparent. Poverty can be presented as facts or arguments, but it is fundamentally about people and their lives. Having that human contact, which in our increasingly unequal and polarised society can so

easily be avoided, both changes that understanding and enriches it. But on hearing these voices and their differing accounts of the actual experience of existing in poverty left me feeling both shocked and moved. Moved by the strength shown by those willing to offering up their personal experiences to us, but also shocked and equally angered by the callous indifference we as a society choose to show those in poverty. Nowhere was this felt more than in listening to the accounts of welfare reform, DWP sanctions and having to go to the food bank.

**Mike Arnott, Secretary, Dundee Trades Union Council**

I stand against benefits sanctions, workfare and zero hours contracts and for the Scottish Living Wage. The Waterfront is trumpeted as a golden future, but for ordinary Dundonians we must see returns in the shape of living wage jobs and access to training and career progression for those who'll be working in hospitality, retail and catering there, and indeed appropriate terms and conditions within the V&A itself. Stats on locals employed on its construction are widely mistrusted and must be independently audited for transparency and confidence.

**Denise McCaffery, Head Teacher, Sidlaw View Primary School**

Finding a way out of poverty shouldn't be difficult, and yet the barriers and challenges faced by people trying to achieve this are immense. The fact that these barriers often arise from the policies, practices and procedures of those who should be looking to support and help others in need is something we should all be aware of. I hope that this report goes some way towards addressing this and encourages all of us to look at the part we have to play in tackling inequality and levelling the field. The people who shared their experiences with us, showed tremendous dignity in doing so, and earned our respect. I wish them well in the future and hope that they can be shown that same respect by others.

**Councillor Laurie Bidwell, Dundee City Council**

The Fairness Commission has uncovered the extent to which the experience of day to day life in Dundee is profoundly unfair for too many of our citizens. The challenge ahead will be to carry on the conversations between the agencies that came together on the Commission with individuals with personal experiences of struggling with inequalities. Not only will this ensure that our recommendations are not just shelved but also that, we can respect the principle of "nothing about us without us". I believe, these processes should help to turn the Commission's recommendations into meaningful changes in policy and practice that will genuinely help to enhance fairness in our city.

**Ginny Lawson, Centre Manager, Brooksbank Partnership**

When I was first invited to be part of the Dundee Fairness Commission, I was unsure of what the commission could achieve against such hard times of austerity. However, I firmly believed it was better to have a go at pinning down the real issues that people face and if the commission could change even one thing which would make life better for even one person, then it was worth taking part. The journey over the past year has cemented for me that although the group can't enforce all the changes we want to see, it does not mean we should not try.

**James Thomson, Chair, Dundee Youth Council**

I am grateful to have been invited as a Fairness Commissioner to put forward my knowledge and thoughts on the discussions and recommendations produced by the Commission. It was humbling to hear first-hand the experiences of young people, families, the elderly and Dundonians, who have been directly affected by the many issues surrounding poverty. This has been a learning experience that I will not forget, and it is important that these recommendations are only the beginning. There needs to be an ongoing forum for identifying and resolving current issues experienced by the poorest and most disadvantaged across our City.

**Grant Ritchie, Principal, Dundee and Angus College**

Being part of the Fairness commission has felt like being part of a strong community determined to do something to highlight the need for change in the way we deal with inequality and poverty. Change in the way people are dealt with by agencies, change in the way benefits are provided, change in wage rates for low paid jobs, and change in the way that the rest of society perceive and stigmatise those affected by poverty. Change is hard, and the work of the commission will need to be consolidated and used to influence policy and the behaviour of agencies involved. The Commission must be seen as the start of something and not an end in itself.

**Satwat Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland**

It has been a real privilege to be part of the Dundee Fairness Commission. What stands out for me is the passion and determination of the people of Dundee to tackle poverty and inequality by working alongside those who have direct experience of the issues. Time and again we saw how services and approaches that we thought would make a positive difference just weren't reaching far enough or deep enough. Their voices and experiences have guided the commission and we hope will continue to do so as we begin the work of making Dundee a fairer and more equal place to live.

**Colin McCashey, Independent Convener, Dundee Adult Support and Protection Committee**

I thought I knew quite a lot about how inequality affected the most vulnerable people but it soon became clear that whilst I did understand some of the issues, I did not have any experience of it. The strength of the Commission was not people like me, it was the people who had real experience of unfairness, inequality, stigma, discrimination and, in some cases, poverty, and were willing to tell us about those experiences. I hope that we can make things better, that by the efforts of the Commission we can empower the most vulnerable, giving them the opportunity to take control and improve their lives.

**Alison Henderson, Chief Executive, Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce**

Over the past year we've heard some amazing stories of the courage of the people of Dundee who constantly battle with the effects of poverty in our city. Giving people a voice and a place to share their stories, and a belief that the Fairness Commission will make REAL recommendations for positive change – that's been hugely important to me. Dundonians have real strength - in themselves, their communities and in the social support groups they are part of. We must minimise the ways that people are mistreated and forced to live with the issues that poverty brings. There is NO place for that in a modern city and it's important that we all work together to bring about change.

## Appendix 2

### Organisations Participating in the Gathering Experiences of Poverty Research

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 The Connect Team                           | 11 Brooksbank Centre                |
| 2 Stay & Play Project                        | 12 Job Centre Plus                  |
| 3 The Bridge Café, The Friary                | 13 Citizens Advice Bureau Dundee    |
| 4 Hot Chocolate Trust                        | 14 Craigowl Communities             |
| 5 Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project    | 15 Shelter Scotland                 |
| 6 Dundee City Council Customer Services Team | 16 Lifegate Church Café             |
| 7 Dundee Food Bank                           | 17 Dundee West Church               |
| 8 The Cairn Centre                           | 18 Faith in Community Dundee        |
| 9 Amina                                      | 19 Community Family Support Project |
| 10 Home-Start Dundee                         |                                     |

**DUNDEE**   
PARTNERSHIP