

The First Minister
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Monday 24th June 2019

Dear First Minister,

Ahead of the Scottish Government's statement on Wednesday on the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we have come together to urge you to bring forward the introduction of the income supplement for low income families from the current delivery date of 2022.

All of our organisations strongly welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to the income supplement, and we share your belief in the need to use Scotland's social security powers to loosen the grip of poverty on people's lives.

However, as you will know, child poverty projections for the coming years are stark. The Scottish Government's own forecasts show that, without action, the child poverty rate is projected to rise to 35% by 2020/21. We will fail to meet the targets set by the Child Poverty Act unless more urgent and ambitious action is taken.

It is the firmly-held belief of our organisations that the urgent delivery of the income supplement must be one such action. The 240,000 children living in poverty in our communities across Scotland cannot wait until 2022 for the valuable lifeline that the income supplement can provide. For families in the grip of poverty right now who are struggling to pay their bills and put food on the table, 2022 is simply too far away. Families urgently need the anchor of the income supplement to prevent them from being pulled further into poverty.

This is particularly true for women, who are more likely to experience poverty than men. Women's poverty is inextricably interlinked with child poverty, as women have a disproportionate responsibility for caring for children and account for 91% of lone parents.

We are therefore writing to you to urge that the statement this week commits to four key actions:

- That legislation for the income supplement will be contained within the next Programme for Government and passed within this parliamentary session.
- That the Scottish Government will explore all options for delivering either an interim or streamlined version of the income supplement in advance of the passing of legislation.
- That an initial budget for the income supplement is announced as part of the budget process for 2020/21 and any spending review.
- That the income supplement be delivered at such a scale as to make substantive progress toward the government's statutory child poverty targets.

We recognise that the safe and secure delivery of devolved social security entitlements is a priority for the Scottish Government. But with the equivalent of one classroom of children a day - a school a month – being pulled into poverty in Scotland, we cannot afford to wait.

If we want to live in a Scotland where every child really does have every chance, we must act sooner than 2022. The statement on Wednesday offers the opportunity to make that happen, and we urge you to seize it.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Kelly, Director, Poverty Alliance

Satwat Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland

Jamie Livingstone, Head of Oxfam Scotland

SallyAnn Kelly, CEO, Aberlour

Jim McCormick, Associate Director for Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

John Dickie, Director, CPAG in Scotland

Russell Gunson, Director, IPPR Scotland

Hugh Foy, Director of Programmes, The Xaverian Missionaries UK Province

Marie Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Cranhill Development Trust

Lucy Mulvagh, Director of Policy and Communications, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

Marsha Scott, CEO, Scottish Women's Aid

Shaben Begum, Director, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Faye Keogh, Policy & Business Development Officer, Turning Point Scotland

Bill Scott, Director of Policy, Inclusion Scotland

Ian Morrison, Chief Executive, Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association Ltd

Dr Sharon Wright, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy, University of Glasgow

Craig Samuel, Scotland Representative, National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers

Frank Mosson, Bureau Manager, Bridgeton Citizens Advice Bureau

Tracy Gilmour, Warrior Mum Project & North Ayrshire Fair for All Commissioner

Anna Fowlie, Chief Executive, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)

Betty Stevenson, Convenor, Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Janis McDonald, Chief Officer, deafscotland

Liz McEntee, Director for External Affairs, GCVS

Anna Ritchie Allan, Executive Director, Close the Gap

Derek Mitchell, CEO, Citizens Advice Scotland

Kate Wimpres, Chair, SURF – Scotland’s Regeneration Forum

Nasreen Ali, Chair, Crookston Community Group

Jackie Brock, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

Professor Clare Cable, Chief Executive and Nurse Director, Queen’s Nursing Institute Scotland (QNIS)

Dr Hartwig Pautz, Lecturer in Social Sciences, University of the West of Scotland

Professor Chik Collins, University of the West of Scotland

Professor Mhairi Mackenzie, Professor of Public Policy, University of Glasgow

Pete Ritchie, Executive Director, Nourish Scotland

Dr Julie Clark, Senior Lecturer in Sociology & Public Policy, University of the West of Scotland

Claire Stevens, Chief Executive, Voluntary Health Scotland

Dr Gerry McCartney, Consultant in Public Health

Alistair Brown, National Director, Scottish Association of Social Work

Joanna McCreadie, Chair, Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland’s Committee on Care and Support for Young People

Bishop William Nolan, Bishop of Galloway and President of Justice and Peace Scotland

Honor Hania, Chair, Justice and Peace Scotland

Clare Simpson, Manager, Parenting Across Scotland

Mary Glasgow, Chief Executive, Children 1st

Alan Thornburrow, Director, Business in the Community Scotland

Professor Steve Turner, Scottish Officer, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Professor John McKendrick, Co-Director of the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University

Larry Flanagan, General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland

The Scottish Health Promotion Managers Group

Dr Anne Mullin, Chair on behalf of the Deep End GP Group

Suki Wan MSYP, Chair, Scottish Youth Parliament

David Walsh, Public Health Programme Manager, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Claire Telfer, Head of Scotland, Save the Children

Professor Adrian Sinfield, Professor Emeritus of Social Policy, University of Edinburgh

Dr Morag Treanor, Professor of Child and Family Inequalities, Heriot-Watt University

Fiona Forsyth, Trustee, CPAG

Mike Dailly, Solicitor Advocate, Govan Law Centre

Professor Stephen Sinclair, Co-Director of Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University

Matt Forde, National Head of Service, NSPCC Scotland

Dr Andrew Fraser, Chair, Scottish Directors of Public Health

Rt Rev Colin Sinclair, Moderator of the Church of Scotland

Joan M.M Cook, President of the Scottish Unitarian Association

Rev May-Kane Logan, Chair of the Congregational Federation in Scotland

Sally Thomas, Chief Executive, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

Paul Carberry, Director, Action for Children Scotland

Professor Nancy Loucks OBE, Chief Executive, Families Outside

Ewan Aitken, CEO, Cyrenians

Emma Ritch, Executive Director, Engender

Professor Jennifer Davidson, Executive Director, Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) and Inspiring Children's Futures, University of Strathclyde

David Eiser, Research Fellow, Fraser of Allander Institute

Chris Keates, General Secretary, NASUWT, The Teacher's Union

Norman Kerr OBE, Director, Energy Action Scotland

Lieut Colonel Carol Bailey, Secretary for Scotland, The Salvation Army