

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN:

The Poverty Alliance Annual Report 2012-13





CONVENOR'S STATEMENT

There has never been a greater need for the Poverty Alliance. Over the last year we have seen the continued attacks on our welfare system and those who use it. We have seen the rapid increase in the use of food banks, stubbornly high unemployment, destitution amongst people seeking asylum, and no improvement in the inequality that continues to scar Scotland. There really has never been a greater need for the Poverty Alliance.

This report highlights just some of the actions we have taken over the last year. It shows that we have contributed to policy, have helped make a real difference, but it shows also that there is more that needs to be done. And whilst the Alliance must find reliable sources of funding to deliver its work, it cannot rely only on funding to make a difference. What allows the Alliance to make a difference to poverty is the strength of our network.

It is only through a strong network that we have helped build the Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform, or led the call for a living wage, or brought together a range of groups to launch Scotland's first Challenge Poverty Week.

It is only by having that strong network that we make real demands for change, that we can push those in power to deliver more, and that ultimately we can shift that balance of power. I hope you can join us to make the changes we need in the years to come.

Jim Boyle
Convenor



DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

For many organisations that are involved in anti-poverty work the issue of welfare reform has always been important. Over the last 15 years there has been scarcely a time when we have not been involved in responding to some kind of change to the system. The scale of the changes that are taking place now, and the damage they will inflict on many people, is like nothing we have seen before.

For the Poverty Alliance, the issue of welfare reform has dominated our work, and has been a key concern for our members. Highlighting the reality of the impact of the changes being made has been one of the areas that we have worked hard on this year. Central to our approach, as it has always been, has been to provide opportunities for those who are affected by welfare reform and by the cuts being made to speak out directly.

There are a number of areas where ensuring that voice is heard has been critical. Over the last year we have had a number of engagements with the Scottish Government and Parliament where those affected by welfare cuts have been able to talk about their experience. Whether in the Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum, the Scottish Assembly for Tackling Poverty, through our work with local authorities such as Glasgow, West Lothian and Fife, real opportunities to engage with those who make decisions have been created.

Hearing those directly affected by poverty can help policy makers and those in power understand the need for different choices.

Few people who attended the launch of the research we carried out last year with lone parents from Fife could have failed to realize the impossible situation that so many people face. Anyone hearing the experiences of these women would have found it impossible to avoid the conclusion that different choices need to be made to our welfare system.

The strength of the Alliance over the last year, indeed always, has been that we draw together not just those at the sharp end, but the community and voluntary organisations, trade unions, faith groups, researchers, and policy makers. It is by making these connections that we can be a real force for change.

It has now been my privilege to have been Director of the Poverty Alliance for 10 years. Over that time we have had many changes at the Alliance, as all organisations do. And like other organisations we face some challenging times ahead, maintaining the resources we need to do our work. We will, as always, meet that challenge. But we can only meet that challenge if we work with others. And as always, I would urge you to join the Poverty Alliance and get active in it.

I would like to thank all our Board, the staff team, all our volunteers and the members who make the Poverty Alliance such an important organisation. I look forward to working with all of you again in the year to come, and to continuing to take forward the fight against poverty in Scotland.

Peter Kelly
Director



WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Working with people experiencing poverty, with grassroots groups and community organisations is the lifeblood of the Poverty Alliance. We have more than 20 years' experience of working with communities across Scotland and in 2012-13 we continued to build on that experience.

Poverty may be concentrated in West Central Scotland, but it is an issue that affects almost every corner of Scotland. We have worked right across Scotland in the last year, including the Western Isles, Fife and West Lothian. Inevitably much of our work is in the central belt, but we will always seek out opportunities to work in any community affected by poverty.

We have been proud of our work in Fife with lone parents involved with Fife Gingerbread. This project has been an important example of the approach the Alliance takes to ensuring that people with experience of poverty have their voices heard by policy makers at the highest levels. Working with a wide variety of other organisations has also sought to demonstrate this same approach in other parts of Scotland. These included Stirling CAB, COPE Drumchapel, Clackmananshire Kinship Carers, Women Refugee Strategy Group in Glasgow, Fife Gingerbread, Scottish Tenants Information Service, Bridging the Gap Gorbals, Karibu, Volunteer Action North Lanarkshire, Tea in the Pot Govan and St. Andrew's Young Mums Support Group in Dundee. Our work with these groups and organisations has allowed us to understand better the impact of poverty, especially welfare reform, and to carry out work to change public attitudes to poverty. It has given us vital evidence that we are then able to use in our lobbying work.

Our work with grassroots groups has also allowed the Alliance to provide evidence to policy makers on welfare reform, childcare and housing.

Over the last year we have continued our working relationship with West Lothian Council. The work was initially focused around engaging grassroots groups in the development of their anti-poverty strategy. This has developed to continue the grassroots engagement work both to raise awareness of welfare changes and to assess the impact of the reforms. 40 workshops were held throughout West Lothian reaching an audience of over 400 people. These workshops involved groups ranging from St. Vincent De Pauls, Knightsridge Tenants and Residents Association, West Calder Lunch Club, Addiewell Pit Stop, Strathbrock Family Unit, Armadale Mums Group, Blackburn Family Centre, Baby and Toddler groups across West Lothian and the What next? West Lothian Youth Inclusion Project. The impact of welfare reform changes is being assessed through developing a community based 'welfare trackers' initiative.

The Evidence Participation Change (EPIC) project came to an end in May 2013, but it has left a strong legacy, both for the Alliance in the way that we work with communities and in how we seek to influence policy. Some notable activity this year included organizing the 4th Scottish Assembly for Tackling Poverty in March 2013, delivering a series of seminars on community research, feeding into the developing of training materials for staff working on the new Scottish Welfare Fund.

BUILDING THE NETWORK

Building a network of civil society organisations, particularly focused on community and voluntary organisations, can be a real challenge when those organisations are often under threat. Despite the difficult situation that many in the voluntary and community sector work in, we have been pleased that membership of our network remains stable. The diversity of our network is one of its key strengths. All of our members are important and we will continue to seek ways to build the formal membership of the Alliance in the coming years.

One of the ways that we maintain a strong network is to ensure strong relationships with other parts of the voluntary sector. In particular we work with key partners such as the Scottish Drugs Forum, the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, Energy Action Scotland and the Scottish Refugee Council. Over the coming year we will be revising the way we work with all of our members, and will be seeking to develop even more inclusive and participatory ways of working with our members.

Our efforts to build a strong anti-poverty network have never been limited to only activity in Scotland. We recognize the need to connect with those working across the UK and across Europe to ensure that we can take opportunity to address change at all levels. In a time when austerity policies across Europe have pushed around 120 million people into poverty there is a real need to share our experience and knowledge and show solidarity with those struggling against poverty wherever they are. We have always maintained strong links with our sister networks across the

UK and Europe, principally through the European Anti-Poverty Network. We have continued to play a strong role in EAPN, contributing to discussions on the need to tackle in-work poverty and to developing participatory policy processes. The elections for the European Parliament in 2014 will be an important opportunity to continue the process of rebuilding the network across the UK. We expect to play a leading role in this effort.



CAMPAIGNING AND INFLUENCING CHANGE

Building a network, engaging with people experiencing poverty, is a futile endeavor if it is not focused on making real change. In the current context, especially where much of the UK agenda on welfare reform is most resistant to change, achieving real change can be difficult. Again, though we believe that the strategic coalitions and partnerships that we have been part of or have led have been of vital importance in making progress in our social policy objectives.

The Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform (SCoWR), which the Poverty Alliance was instrumental in establishing, has continued to feed into the development of the welfare reform agenda in Scotland. Members of the campaign, which was formally coordinated by the Alliance in 2012-13, made real progress in some areas. With the establishment of the new Scottish Welfare Fund, we have shown the importance of bringing networks of civil society organisations together. Rather than a postcode lottery system we have a national system to provide crisis funds to those who need them. Lobbying by the campaign also secured additional resources to top up the fund following cuts from the UK Government.

Poverty is, of course, not simply about those who are out of work. In-work poverty has become one of the key issues to feature in the anti-poverty agenda over the last two years. The Scottish Living Wage Campaign, which the Alliance coordinates, has continued to press for changes.

Much of our activity has focused on debates around the role of the living wage in procurement processes. Despite the strength of our arguments, there is still some way to go to convince policy makers that living wages should be a key element of procurement processes. This will be a discussion we will continue over the coming year.

There has been progress in getting more employers to commit to the Living Wage by becoming accredited living wage employers. We have been pleased at the widespread acceptance of the living wage amongst Scottish public sector employers. However there is a need to ensure that more employers are part of the living wage movement, particularly those in the private sector. Over the coming year we will continue to develop plans to ensure that more workers in the private sector begin to feel the benefits of the living wage.

In addition to our campaigning on welfare issues and low pay, we have continued to raise a range of poverty related issues through a number of other processes and forums. The Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum (TPSF) became one of the key ways for the Poverty Alliance to put our approach to participation and policy influence into action. As reported in previous years the TPSF brought together local and national Government officials with voluntary and community organisations and activists. The final meeting of the Forum took place in November 2012, and was attended by the Minister for Housing and Welfare Reform.

Over its four years of existence the Forum made an important contribution to debates about key issues in the anti-poverty agenda in Scotland, including the attitudes to poverty, fuel poverty, a variety of welfare issues and participation. We will continue to apply the lessons of the TPSF to ensure that dialogue is a key element of policy development in Scotland.

An important part of our work over the last year has been our efforts to influence policy at the local level, applying the lessons of our experience at the national level. Over the last year we have continued to work with Glasgow City Council, Dundee, Fife and West Lothian Councils. Even with the relatively limited resources at our disposal, we believe that we have an important contribution to make at this level. As the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill begins to make its way through the Scottish Parliament we will seek opportunities to ensure that our experience is fed into the process.

There is one issue that will come to dominate discussions over the next year: Scotland's constitutional future. In August 2012 we published a discussion paper on Constitutional Change and Poverty. This paper set out a range of questions on key poverty issues for both sides of the debate. We also joined with the STUC in their series of events around Scotland that discussed social justice and the referendum. The Scottish Assembly for Tackling Poverty in March 2013 featured a key plenary debate on social justice

and constitutional change. It is right that the Poverty Alliance and our members engage in the debate about our constitutional future. Too often issues of poverty and social justice and those who experience poverty are excluded from these debates. The debate about Scottish Independence provides, no matter whether you are for or against, an opportunity to decide what kind of Scotland we want to live in and how we get there. It is a debate that the Poverty Alliance intends to play an active part.



RAISING PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT POVERTY

Attempting to address public attitudes to poverty has been a long-standing concern of the Poverty Alliance. The debate in many parts of the media about welfare reform has served to reinforce negative attitudes to those who receive welfare benefits. Whilst political debate in Scotland has, to some extent, been less affected by the language of 'strivers' and 'skivers' it has undoubtedly had an impact of attitudes here. A range of organisations in Scotland, from the Church of Scotland and SCVO to CPAG, have increasingly raised the question of attitudes to poverty and welfare. The Poverty Alliance has continued to work on issues of public attitudes. Issues of stigma have come through very clearly in our work with lone parents in Fife and in our work through the Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum. As well as continuing to support the Stick Your Labels campaign, we have also sought opportunities to address attitudes to poverty in a number of other ways. In January 2013, we produced a short training video for the new Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF), based on the experiences of people who had direct experience of poverty. This was used to train staff delivering the SWF, to raise awareness of the issues that people accessing the fund may face. We have also been engaged with Jobcentre Plus, alongside the Scottish Drugs Forum, to begin developing a programme of training for frontline staff. We hope to further develop this work in 2013-14. We will also seek new resources to carry out a more substantial and on-going programme of work to engage more effectively with the media and to ensure that poverty is more accurately reflected.

FUNDING AND FINANCES

The year to March 2013 was a challenging one for the Poverty Alliance financially. Over the course of the year the Board and the staff team have been working hard to ensure that the organisation is able to carry out its work at this important time. This financial year was the first where cuts from our core funders were beginning to make an impact on the organisation. As reported in previous years, the Board of the Alliance have been aware of the impact that declining core funding may have on the ability of the organisation to operate effectively in the future. The work of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Board was focused on closely monitoring the finances of the organisation over the year and overseeing plans to make adjustments to expenditure if required.

There have been two key sources of core support for the Poverty Alliance for many years: the Scottish Government and Local Authorities. Glasgow City Council is now the only local authority that provides on-going support for our core work. However we have received funding from local authorities in Fife, Dundee and West Lothian for specific projects over the last year, and we hope to build on these relationships in the future. As in previous years, we remain grateful to Glasgow City Council and the other local authorities, for their continued support of the work of the Poverty Alliance.

FUNDING AND FINANCES

With the end of the Big Lottery support for the EPIC project, the Scottish Government is now a key funder for the Alliance's activities. Despite a decline in funding, the core funding from the Scottish Government brings real stability to our core funding. Over the coming year we will seek to build on that stability by increasing the project work that is undertaken by the Alliance. In 2013-14 we will have projects funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Shelter Scotland, Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board, EAPN and others. We also intend over the course of the next financial year to seek new funding for project activity based on our work in key areas such as low pay, welfare reform and attitudes to poverty.

At the same time as taking a range of positive steps to generate new sources of income, the Board of the Poverty Alliance recognises that difficult decisions may have to be taken to ensure that the Alliance remains a financially viable organisation. The Board will work with our staff team, our members and our existing and future funders to ensure that the Poverty Alliance continues to be able to deliver on its core aims in the future. As always, we thank all of our funders, including our members, for their support.

Nick Bailey
Treasurer

Income	2012-13	2011-12
Scottish Government	169,500	197,000
Local Authorities	52,524	35,690
EAPN	1,824	2,677
Big Lottery Fund	178,869	181,726
Oxfam	-	20,600
DWP/European Commission	-	3,428
JRF	-	4,020
Shelter	5,000	-
Membership Fees	6,935	5,160
Donation	215	-
Other Grant	-	1,500
Other Income	26,689	23,723
Bank Interest	236	205
Total	441,792	475,729

Expenditure		
Cost of generating income	31,075	30,432
Charitable activities	425,874	410,062
Governance costs	11,796	10,126

Total	468,745	450,620
Net Surplus	(26,953)	25,109
Balance b/fwd	217,046	191,937
Balance c/fwd	190,093	217,046

STAFF AND BOARD, APRIL 2012 - MARCH 2013

Peter Kelly, *Director*

Robin Tennant, *Fieldwork Manager*

Poe McHugh, *Administrator*

Kathryn Collins, *Administrative Assistant*

Twimukye Mushaka, *Fieldwork Development Officer*

Fiona McHardy, *Community Research Officer*

Laura Darling, *Assistant Development Officer*

Lynn Law, *Fieldwork Development Officer (p-t)*

Maggie Kelly, *Policy and Campaigns Officer (p-t)*

Eddie Follan, *Policy and Campaigns Officer (p-t)*

Sarah Welford, *Policy and Parliamentary Officer
(until December 2012)*

Board Members 2012-13

Jim Boyle, (*Convenor*) *Oxfam Scotland (co-opted)*

John Dickie, (*Vice- Convenor*) *Child Poverty Action Group*

Nick Bailey, (*Treasurer*) *University of Glasgow
(co-opted)*

Elizabeth Gore, *Energy Action Scotland*

Myra Mackenzie, *Tayside Social Inclusion Network*

Mary McLean, *Western Isles Healthy Partnership*

David Liddell, *Scottish Drugs Forum*

Dave Moxham, *Scottish Trades Union Congress*

Susan Archibald, *Archibald Foundation*

Thomas Sinclair, *Friends of Volunteering in Clydesdale
(resigned 27th April 2013)*

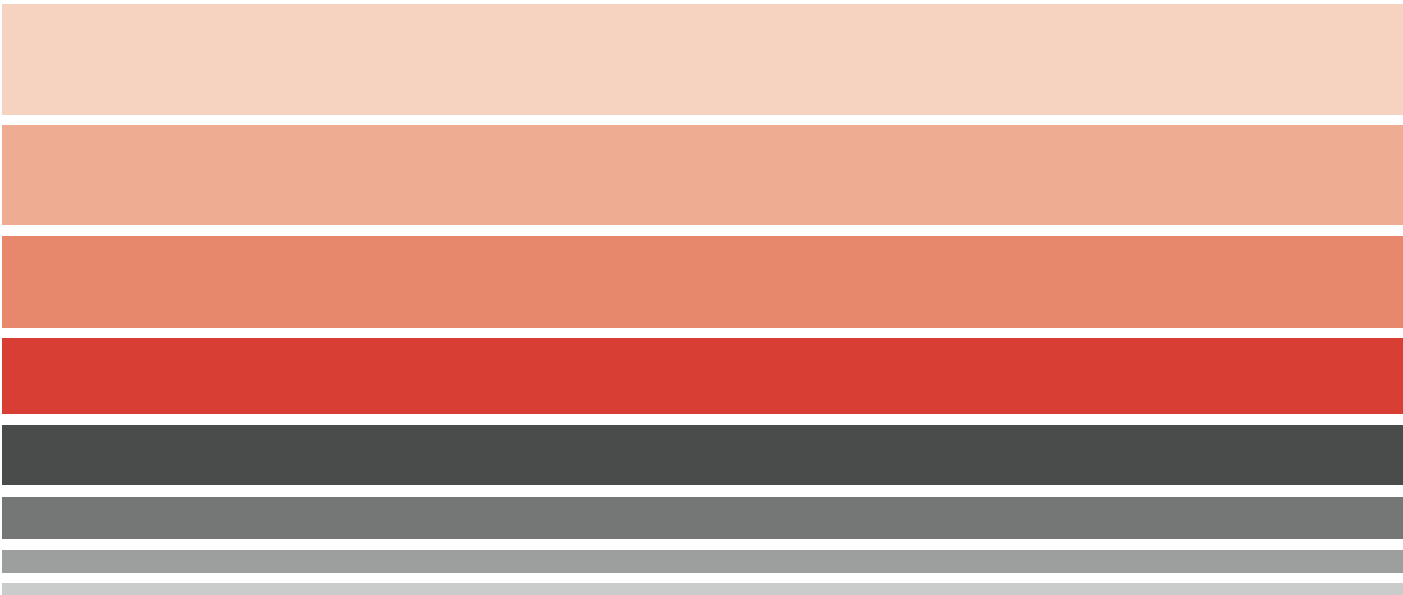
Satwat Rehman, *One Parent Families Scotland*

Claire Telfer, *Save the Children*

Murdo Mathison, *Shelter Scotland
(appointed 19 November 2012)*

Irena Paterson, *Moray Disability Forum
(appointed 19 November 2012)*





the
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