

**CHILD  
POVERTY  
ACTION  
GROUP**  
IN SCOTLAND

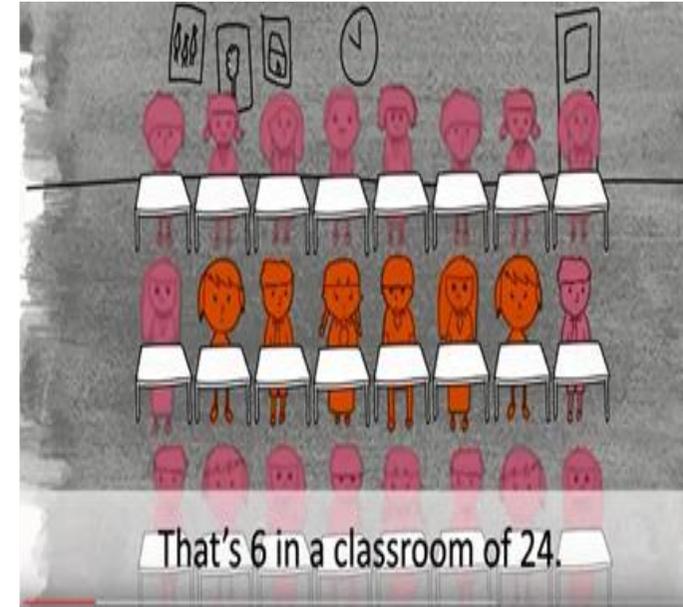
# Child poverty and a circular economy: joining the dots

Circular Communities Scotland  
Conference 2022



## Context: Scale

- 1 in 4 children in Scotland living in poverty
- below a poverty line less than 70% of minimum income needed for a socially acceptable standard of living
- two thirds of those children in working families
- across every part of Scotland [endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty/](https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty/)
- increasingly acute income crisis
- left families exposed to soaring inflation – little or nothing they can cut back on
- rising over last decade –driven by cuts to the value of child and wider family benefits, and increasingly precarious employment



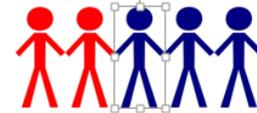
# Context: risk

## Some children at even greater risk

nearly 1 in 3 where affected by disability



2 in 5 where lone parent



Nearly a third in larger (3+) families



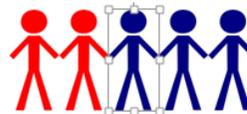
1 in 3 where youngest child under 1



Over half where mum under 25



2 in 5 in minority ethnic h/holds



# Impact

- in lowest income households:
  - almost four times more likely to have ‘fair’, ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ **health** compared to highest.
  - four times as likely to have poorer mental **wellbeing** as those in highest incomes
- by age 5 gap of 10 months in problem solving and 13 months in vocabulary **development**.
- by S2 pupils in areas of low deprivation twice as likely to be performing well on **numeracy**

If all of your friends or people you know go to the after school clubs, school trips, that kind of isolates you from them. You're singled out, you're not with them, just a spare person.

"we are low on funds....we sometimes can't afford food for our house.

I've experienced it [bullying] personally because I wear the same shoes since P7... they say you must be poor, asking if I have enough money.

I deffo think there is pressure to bring in enough money, I feel like I'm letting my class down.

# Cost of Living (or 'cost of surviving') crisis

- families with children face energy bills on average 30% higher than other households (CPAG analysis, Sept 2022)
- households with children are at greater risk of being pushed into poverty by the current crisis (Resolution Foundation, Sept 2022)
- despite energy price guarantee average family of four receiving Universal Credit will still need an additional £1,391 over the next six months to stay warm and fed (Prof. Hirsch, Loughborough Uni, Sept 2022)
- importance of all four statutory child poverty measures to understand impact as median incomes fall – especially material deprivation measure

# Cost of Living (or 'cost of surviving') crisis

'When I think of the hike in the gas and electricity it terrifies me and thinking of my children coming home getting cold and needing to wrap up, gives me anxiety thinking about it.' (Laura, Glasgow, in JRF 2022)

"Stress very much about food for the kids. Sleep is disturbed and anxiety is very high". Single parent, OPFS 2022

"I try to carry on as normal on the outside but inside I feel stressed and am constantly worrying about bills. How are these going to get paid, how much can we afford this week for food..." single parent, OPFS 2022

'[She asked] "Why can't we get more food Mummy?" and I broke down in tears and just left the room because I just couldn't answer her... But to have to explain to like your 5 year old why you can't buy more food is actually horrendous.'

(Alex, Fife, in JRF 2022)

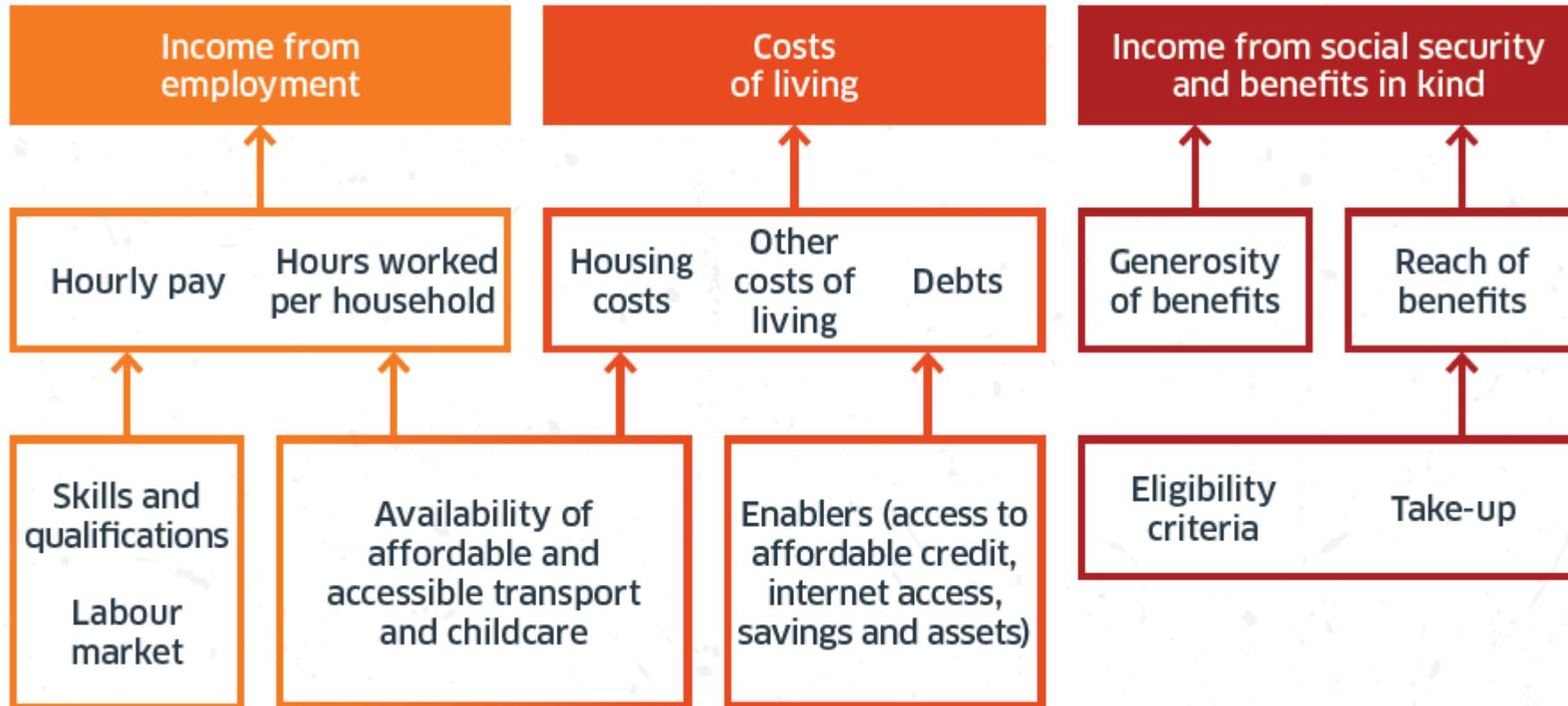
# Progress made: **Poverty is not inevitable**

- Real progress: 170 000 fewer children in poverty in between 1996/7 2010/11 (33% to 19%)
- Historically and internationally unprecedented
- Policy worked – at UK, Scottish and local level
  - NMW, childcare, child benefit and tax credits, employment support and rights, housing costs
- Measured indicators of child wellbeing improved (e.g. see Bradshaw 2012)
- Decade of austerity and cuts largely reversed that progress
- UK child poverty rising – est. 32% by 2026/27 (ResFo, Sept 2022)

# Progress being made: Poverty is not inevitable

- At least here in Scotland, turning a corner, shifting that upward curve
  - statutory targets, a national delivery plan, action at local and national level
  - backed up by policies and investment that make a substantive impact
  - not least the Scottish child payment - £25 per week for each eligible child
  - reduce child poverty by 50 000, reduces depth of poverty and protects more
  - best start payments, FSM, funded childcare and support for parents into work
  - interim target of less than 18% child poverty by 2021/24 is in reach
  - net [cost of a child in Scotland](#) reduced by up to 31% for low-income families
  - still a long way off meeting 2030 target of less than 10% child poverty

# Progress being made: Tackling the drivers...



# How can the circular economy and circular communities agenda contribute?

- Increasing income: what kind of jobs ? Secure? Family friendly ? Decently paid?
- Reducing costs? – but eliminating stigma, promoting dignity and choice. Not an economy for the poor.
- Key principle: Cash first – ensuring families have the income to make their own choices.

# What needs to happen? Some CPAG priorities...

## At **UK** level

- Restore value of family benefits
- End the benefit cap and two child limit

## At **Scotland** level

- Scottish benefits need to at very least hold value in real terms, including £25 SCP
- Ensure tackling child poverty at heart of budget process and of employment, childcare and housing policy
- End the need for foodbanks incl. eg enhanced SWF
- Remove financial barriers to education

See [cpag.org.uk/scotland/policy-campaigns/briefing/programme-government-2021-2026](https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/policy-campaigns/briefing/programme-government-2021-2026)