



Role of the Poverty & Inequality Commission



- **Monitoring** progress in reducing poverty and inequality in Scotland (Scrutiny)
- **Advising** Scottish Ministers on how best to reduce poverty and inequality in Scotland (Independent Advice)
- **Promoting** the reduction of poverty and inequality in Scotland (Advocacy)

Context the Commission is Operating In

Climate change – greatest threat facing us

Poverty and inequality fuelling that threat

Pursuit of growth and wealth at any cost – community cohesion, limited resources, degradation of environment

Massive growth in wealth inequalities –

The poorest 50%, of households, own just 9% of the wealth.

The richest 0.1% share of total wealth doubled between 1984 and 2013, reaching 9%.

Scale of the Problem?

In the period 2017/18 twenty-four percent (24%) of Scots children were living in relative poverty After Housing Costs (AFC). **UP**

In the same period 22% of Scots children were deemed to be in “absolute poverty”. **FLAT ---**

An estimated 14% of children were living in households on a low income and unable to afford basic necessities. **FLAT ---**

Seventeen percent (17%) of Scots children had been living in persistent poverty. **UP**

Destitution in the UK

1.55 million people were destitute in 2017. Destitution being defined as having insufficient to purchase one or more of -

Shelter

Food

Heating their homes

Lighting their homes

Of those who were destitute **650,000** (42%) were people with physical or mental impairments (when disabled people only make up 20% of the population)

Poverty and Gender

Poverty does not impact equally though.

Women more likely to be living in poverty than men.

Women are paid less than men.

They do the great bulk of the unpaid work in our society – raising children, caring for disabled and older relatives.

Work of untold benefit to our society but which the state places little or no value on

Links between Poverty & Transport



- Less than half of households with incomes below £15K a year have access to a car.
- 97% of households with incomes over £40K a year have access to a car.
- Nearly half (44%) of those with incomes below £10,000 a year travel by bus at least once a week.
- Proportion using public transport would be even higher but for increased car use by low income households in rural areas.

Transport Costs and Poverty

- The cost of transport can put significant pressure on low income households' budgets.
- Transport costs can be a barrier to taking up employment.
- Being unable to access or afford transport can prevent people accessing essential services (like the NHS), reduce their quality of life and lead to social isolation.
- Transport costs can thus increase inequalities linked to income, such as health inequalities .

Affordable Transport

- Transport should be affordable to everyone, no matter what their level of income.
- People should not have to make trade-offs between spending on transport and spending on other essential items such as food or fuel.
- People should not face a poverty premium on food and other goods and services as a result of a lack of access to transport.
- Transport policy should support healthy living and sustainability.

The Wellbeing Economy

In 2018 Scotland took the lead in establishing the **Wellbeing Economy Governments** group, bringing together the countries of Scotland, Iceland and New Zealand.

The purpose of this group is to challenge the narrow focus on GDP as a measure of economic performance.

“.....growth in GDP should not be pursued at any or all cost instead the goal, the objective of economic policy should be collective well-being: how happy and healthy a population is, not just how wealthy a population is”.

More Information

- Find out more about the Poverty & Inequality Commission and its work here - <https://povertyinequality.scot/>
- The full Poverty and Transport Report can be found here – <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Transport-and-Poverty-in-Scotland-Report-of-the-Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission.pdf>

Find out who's on the Commission here - <https://povertyinequality.scot/about/who-we-are/>