

VIDEO – Minister visits Dr Bell's to highlight government plans to tackle child poverty

The Communities Secretary Angela Constance visited Dr Bell's this morning to talk to parents and workers there about their projects.

This afternoon she will deliver a plan to set out ways the the Scottish Government will act to increase family incomes, reduce living costs and work towards meeting their child poverty targets.



Actions include plans to develop a new income supplement, which would provide financial support to families who need it most. A new £12 million employment support fund will help parents in work progress their careers and support unemployed parents into work.

Other initiatives include a new national entitlement for the

School Clothing Grant, to help with the costs of uniforms and sports kits, and new support for after-school and holiday childcare, helping parents work more flexibly and increase their incomes.

The Tackling Child Poverty Fund of £50 million will back a range of investment to meet these aims.

[Angela Constance visits Dr Bell's Family Centre](#) from [The Edinburgh Reporter On Vimeo](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The Minister told The Edinburgh Reporter that it is places like Dr Bell's that the government want to help.

She said: "Dr Bell's is fantastic family centre. It provides a range of services to families from all walks of life. But they work harder to reach those families who are most in need. I am pleased to say that Dr Bell's is a family centre that benefits from our Aspiring Communities Fund.

"I am very aware that funding local voluntary sector organisations is absolutely crucial to tackling child poverty in Scotland."



The Minister met young volunteers from People Know How a local charity

Anna Templeton Centre Manager at Dr Bell's said that the contribution from the Aspiring Communities Fund has allowed them to employ a development worker. She also explained what they try to do from the centre. She said : "We work with a number of families with our universal services such as our community café and some childcare sessions.

"Through our new project Breaking Barriers with Families in Leith what we are trying to do is specifically target families who are facing issues around poverty and inequality. These are families who are facing significant disadvantage whether that is physical or mental health issues, financial hardship or parenting support. We are looking to put on lots of different events with our funding to really target families who will benefit most.

Asked if poverty was increasing Anna agreed that the statistics suggest it is. "Within Leith there is a significant issue relating to poverty. Money has to be spent in many different ways and for us as a small charity it costs a lot to run and we would welcome any multi-year funding to help us continue to offer our range of services."



Alison Johnstone Green MSP for Edinburgh and Lothians

said: “One in four children in Scotland now lives in poverty, damaging their health, development and education. The level of child poverty in Scotland is predicted to rise, so we need to take urgent action to prevent this.

“Funding to roll out the Healthier Wealthier Children scheme is welcome, and shows that Greens are leading the change that is required to tackle child poverty. With the action plan we publish today, we make clear our priorities to lift people’s incomes, invest in our welfare system and local services.

“I would urge the Scottish Government to take a close look at these proposals, which would represent the best use of this Parliament’s existing powers to tackle poverty.”

You can read the full report here :



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