

Scottish Government investing in tackling child poverty

The Scottish Government says that it has invested £6 billion to support low income households across Scotland over the last three years. This week it will set out plans to use investment to tackle child poverty for the next four years.

In Edinburgh there are 80,000 people living in poverty, and one in five children in the city lives in poverty. The council's Poverty Commission reported in 2020 calling for action in six broad areas by the public sector, employers, third sectors, and residents. Their major call was for the "right support in the places we live and work", demanding that local access to many forms of support all under one roof is essential – and that it has to be within walking or pram-pushing distance. This will go hand in hand with Edinburgh's ambition of becoming a 20 minute neighbourhood city.

More than a third of the total government spending, around £2.18 billion, has directly benefitted children as The Scottish Government prepares to publish its Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2022-2026.

On Thursday Social Justice Secretary, Shona Robison, will update Parliament on the national mission to break the cycle of poverty for thousands of families.

The Delivery Plan for 2022-26 builds on the work of 'Every Child, Every Chance', published in 2018. It introduced a range of new supports through Social Security Scotland, including the Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grants, and employability services such as Fair Start Scotland.

Ms Robison said: "In the face of UK government austerity, combined with the deeply damaging £20 cut to Universal Credit, our investment over the last four years to support low income families has had a significant impact. But there is still more we must do to deliver the transformational changes we all want to see.

"Our second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan will be a plan for all of Scotland. All parts of society have a role to play in our national mission to end child poverty. This is a collective effort across society to deliver for our future generations and break the cycle of poverty once and for all.

"Our ambitious measures are already delivering considerable support to children and families compared with other parts of the UK – for example, through free childcare and employment support, maximising incomes and affordable housing and, of course, social security.

"We remain the only part of the UK to have five family benefits, including the Scottish Child Payment, which was designed to tackle child poverty head on. Combined with our three Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods, low income families receive up to £8,400 of financial support by the time their first child turns six.

"Our budgets may be fixed, powers limited, and the scale of the challenge as we emerge from the pandemic has increased. However, we are determined to do everything within our powers to give the children of Scotland the opportunities they deserve to succeed."