

Glasgow's Plan for Action

Contents

Executive Summary	2
Background	2
Tackling Poverty Together	2
What are we talking about?	2
Who are we talking about?	3
What we plan to do and why	5
Vision	5
Poverty Leadership Panel.....	5
Wee Panel	5
Changemakers	6
Working Groups.....	6
Action Plan.....	7
How we plan to do it	8
Principles	8
Themes.....	8
Theme One: Attitudes to Poverty	9
Theme Two: Child poverty	10
Theme Three: Credit and Debt.....	11
Theme Four: Welfare reform	12
Theme Five: Work and worth	13
Theme Six: Involvement of people with direct experience.....	14
Glasgow's Action Plan for Change.....	15

Executive Summary

This paper outlines the work that will be taken forward by the Poverty Leadership Panel. It explains:

- the background to the anti-poverty work,
- the structures that have been put in place,
- the proposed activity and the reasons for it, and
- the actions laid out in more detail [*in a table to be further developed, which will be considered by the Panel in October. An example of the layout of the plan is at page 15*].

The challenge facing Glasgow's public, private and third sector partners, particularly in the current context, is to ensure that Glasgow's unacceptable levels of poverty and inequality are addressed effectively. This will only be achieved by partners working together with those experiencing poverty, towards a shared vision.

The Panel's vision for Glasgow is:

The Panel's vision is that poverty is made a thing of the past. We want all of us across Glasgow to contribute to significantly reducing poverty and exclusion over the next decade, by acting now.

We want Glasgow to be a place where everyone agrees that poverty is an outrage, and where every person feels that they can be a part of Glasgow.

This paper is not the end of the work, but the beginning. By summarising the context and providing an outline framework for the Poverty Leadership Panel, this paper should act as a springboard for organisations, communities and individuals, collectively and separately, to identify their roles and play their parts in addressing poverty and its consequences in the city.

Background

Tackling Poverty Together

In February 2012, Glasgow Community Planning Partnership (GCPP) established a short-term Tackling Poverty Working Group comprising of GCPP representatives and people who struggle against poverty on a daily basis. The Working Group was chaired by Rev Dr Martin Johnstone, Chair of Glasgow's Third Sector Forum.

The Working Group produced a report which was approved by GCPP early in 2013. It is this report which has shaped the direction of the Poverty Leadership Panel's work. It lays the foundations for the following four year plan of activity, as described below in 'Themes' from page 8.

What are we talking about?

People in Glasgow are living in poverty when they don't have the resources to participate in the activities, or have the living conditions which are customary to Glaswegians. It means they are effectively excluded from ordinary living patterns.

Technically, a household is said to be in poverty if its income, after taxes, is less than 60% of the UK median for that year. When we talk about poverty however, we are not

only talking about money, but also more fundamentally, a matter of being able to live a life in dignity and enjoy basic rights and freedoms. Poverty includes a range of inter-related elements like social exclusion and lack of opportunity.

Over the last five years, Glasgow has weathered the impact of recession reasonably well in comparison to other British cities, but still has a disproportionately high number of its citizens on benefits and in poor health.

According to the latest statistics, Glasgow is continuing to reduce its share of Scotland's overall deprivation. Glasgow's share of the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland has continued to decline, as has the proportion in the bottom 5%. Since 2009, nearly 13,000 people have moved out of deprivation.¹ Nevertheless, in 2012, around one in five people in Glasgow were 'income deprived', and one in five of the working age population were 'employment deprived'.

There are also areas of extreme deprivation (18-20% of the city) that appear to be resistant to change and the rest of the city is moving away from these. Inequalities within the city are therefore widening.

This is a worrying trend given the UK's economic recovery still seems a long way off. Public spending in Scotland is not expected to achieve pre-crisis levels until 2023-24. Welfare reform will exacerbate the effects of this, not only affecting the flow of money into local economies, but also critically, individuals and families.²

Who are we talking about?

Poverty is often described in terms of statistics, but behind these statistics are people. When we talk about poverty, who are we actually talking about?

Overall, Glasgow's [population](#) is changing. Our population structure is different from other local authority areas - we have a greater proportion of single adult households and fewer older people, for example. The scale of migration and ethnic diversity is greater too. These issues, along with the job market and types of employment available, are directly relevant to what the city's priorities and responses should be.

We have identified some groups within our city who are more at risk of poverty, but of course, this isn't an exhaustive list: it's a starting point to focus discussion and action.

Women

Evidence demonstrates that women are at greater risk of poverty than men, and more likely to suffer recurrent and longer spells in poverty. There is, for example, a disproportionate number of lone mothers in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland. Some [black and minority ethnic group women](#) may face a particularly high poverty risk.

Women are also the main managers of family poverty within the home and it's important to make the link between women and children's poverty. In acting as its shock-absorbers as they try to shield their children from poverty's worst effects, they themselves feel these effects more keenly.

As a result of welfare reform in particular, poverty and social exclusion, especially amongst single parents is expected to increase. Any sustainable poverty solution will need to focus on women.

People with long term illnesses and disabilities

¹ The proportion of Glasgow's [datazones](#) that fall within the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland, has continued to decline from 54% in 2004 to 42% in 2012, as has the proportion in the bottom 5% which has fallen from 33% in 2004, to 21% in 2012.

² Around 13,000 full time posts and 5,000 part time jobs might be vulnerable as a result of welfare changes. Retail is the largest single sector that may be affected.

There is a well-established relationship between poverty and ill health. People experiencing poverty are less likely to live long, healthy lives; and experience of ill health, in turn, also increases the likelihood of people moving into poverty. It is a vicious cycle which needs to be broken.

Around [a third of all disabled adults](#) aged 25 to retirement are living in low-income households. This is twice the rate of that for non-disabled adults. The main reason that disabled working-age adults are more likely to be in low-income households is because they are less likely to be in work.

The proportion of people with a work-limiting disability with degrees or equivalent who lack, but want, paid work is almost as high as the proportion for people without a work-limiting disability with no qualifications.

A report by [Glasgow University](#) found that there has been an increase in the number of articles documenting the claimed 'burden' that disabled people are alleged to place on the economy – with some articles even blaming the recession itself on incapacity benefit claimants. There has been a significantly increased use of pejorative language to describe disabled people, including suggestions that life on incapacity benefit had become a 'lifestyle choice'. As a consequence, disabled people are feeling threatened by the changes in the way disability is being reported and by the proposed changes to their benefits.

People from ethnic minorities

All minority ethnic groups in Scotland are disadvantaged on one or more poverty indicators. The interaction between poverty and ethnicity is complex, but some groups appear to be more at risk than others. People of Pakistani/Bangladeshi origin and black households have [higher rates of poverty](#) than other ethnic groups.

To date, relatively little attention has been paid to the causes, experiences and routes out of poverty among [minority ethnic groups in Scotland](#).

Glasgow has the most ethnically diverse population in Scotland - approximately 9% (or 50,000 people) living in a [Glasgow household](#) belong to an ethnic minority. Another 25,000 people are from 'any other white background'. This figure has risen substantially over the last few years, partly due to the number of Eastern Europeans migrating to Glasgow.

In-work poverty

According to the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#), in-work poverty is the most distinctive, and rapidly growing, characteristic of poverty today. For the first time it outstrips the levels of poverty in workless households. Similarly there is a rise in people in part-time work who want to work full-time.

People need continued support so that once in work, employment is a genuine route to self-improvement and higher income.

What we plan to do and why

Vision

It is the Poverty Leadership Panel's vision that:-

Poverty is made a thing of the past. We want all of us across Glasgow to be involved in significantly reducing poverty and exclusion over the next decade, by acting now.

We want Glasgow to be a place where everyone agrees that poverty is an outrage, and where every single person feels that they belong to Glasgow and that Glasgow belongs to them.

Poverty Leadership Panel

We have established a Poverty Leadership Panel whose job is to make this vision a reality for every person in Glasgow.

The Leadership Panel will discuss poverty issues on a city-wide basis and will generate and maintain momentum around the city's anti-poverty work.

The most important job of the Panel is to provide leadership by articulating how each member will contribute to the Panel's vision and goals. As a group, it will advise on how to develop a city wide anti-poverty strategy and to make sure it translates into action.

More specifically, the responsibilities of the Leadership Panel include:

- Making practical recommendations for policy and action to reduce poverty in Glasgow.
- Improving co-ordination and co-operation between organisations working to address poverty locally.
- Supporting the practical and meaningful participation of people living in poverty.
- Supporting individual members to act as champions for communicating the Panel's work to colleagues and communities.

Membership of the Panel is drawn from people across Glasgow, and in some cases, Scotland. The Panel is co-chaired by the Leader of the Council and a person with direct experience of living in poverty. It will meet bi-annually.

The relationship of poverty to all other aspects of city life is acknowledged. Action on poverty is not something separate from organisations' core agendas (whether health, housing, employment or education for instance). Rather, without addressing poverty in the city, these other responsibilities can't be delivered effectively and fairly. Glasgow cannot be a prosperous city as long as a significant number of its citizens is not able to prosper.

Wee Panel

People with direct experience of poverty are members of the Leadership Panel. They have called themselves the 'Wee Panel'. In addition to the wider Panel's responsibilities, they have agreed to further tasks, including:

- Helping produce a constructive environment for conversations between the Wee Panel and the broader Leadership Panel

- Providing real expertise to the problems of poverty
- Being part of the solution.

Changemakers

Each Community Planning Partner has nominated a lead person to work within their organisation to help steer this work. They are senior and respected members of their organisation. They will be the principal points of contact and have a vital role to play in terms of influencing their colleagues and shaping the work for the Panel.

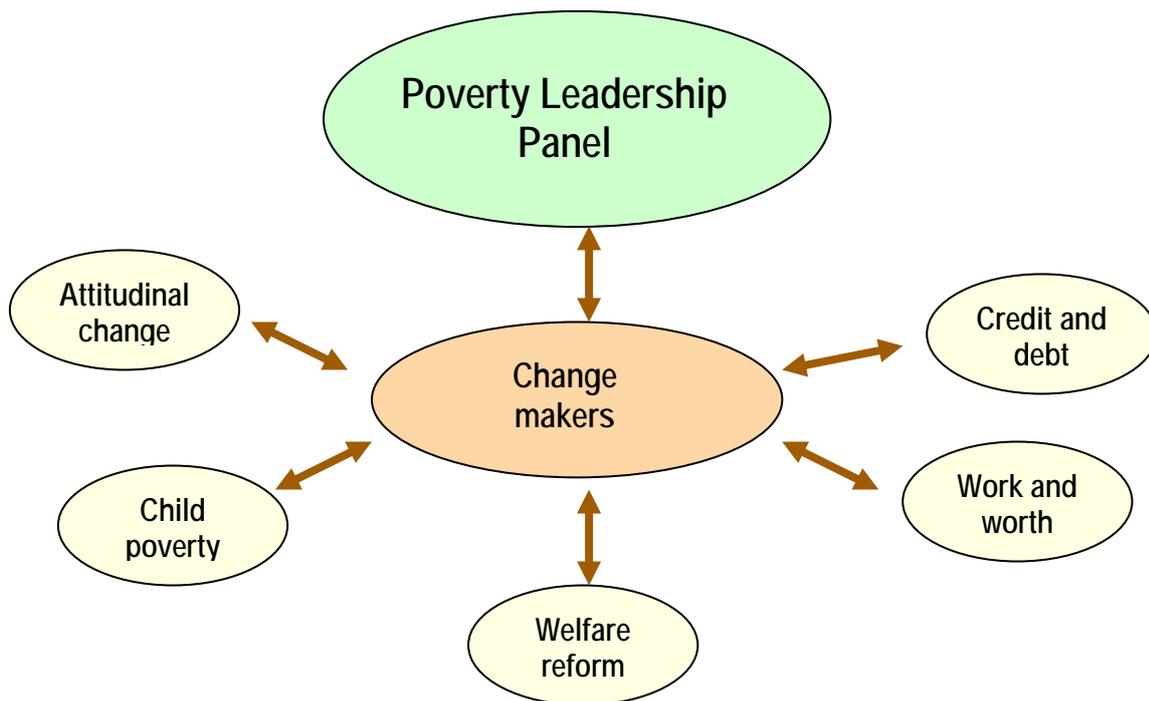
This group will meet more regularly than the Leadership Panel and will be one of the accountability mechanisms for this work.

Working Groups

The Tackling Poverty Together Report identified five inter-related themes as a focus for our city-wide work. These five themes provide the framework for the Action Plan. These themes are: *Attitudinal Change; Child Poverty; Credit and Debt; Welfare Reform; and Work and Worth.*

Representatives from relevant organisations, and people with direct experience of poverty have been identified to form working groups and are starting to develop action points around each theme.

A diagram which outlines how these groups will interact is below:



In building on the community, management and leadership capacity of the city, and encompassing the wealth of organisational knowledge, the comprehensiveness of this structure is unprecedented. It reflects the various organisational levels needed to make a real difference to poverty and importantly, indicates the high level of commitment to the task.

Action Plan

The key output of all this work will be the ongoing development of an Action Plan. The Action Plan is found from page 15 onwards. This will not be a static strategy document, but a 'to do list' for partners in the city.

The Council has identified funding to employ 'Tackling Poverty Assistants' to help with the administration of this work. We will recruit individuals who may not necessarily have much work experience, but who have personal experience of unemployment and social exclusion. Part of their job will be to talk to local people about their experiences and to feed this into the Action Plan.

How we plan to do it

Principles

The Tackling Poverty Together Report highlighted five core messages which it believed, if adequately addressed, would make the city's efforts to tackle poverty much more effective. These messages are:

- **Dignity** has to be at the heart of any framework. Poverty is a denial of human rights and needs to be addressed as such.
- **People struggling against poverty** need to be seen as part of the solution. If poverty is to be adequately addressed in Glasgow, the knowledge and expertise of those struggling against it on a daily basis needs to be far more effectively harnessed.
- More effective **coordination** of anti-poverty work across the city. There is a great deal of good practice already underway but it is often poorly reported and badly integrated both within and across partners.
- Public sector **spending must be targeted** on tackling poverty and inequality. The fact that public sector spending in Glasgow is under extreme pressure makes it even more critical that available resources are used to tackle poverty.
- **Welfare reform** necessitates action now.

These principles will be woven through delivery of the Action Plan.

Themes

The following pages provide context for the city-wide Action Plan. For each of the five themes, there is some introductory context and importantly, what we plan to do.

The focus on this is about being realistic, but aspirational. We want to identify what we can do *in addition* to what already happens.

At this time of profound change, our response to tackling poverty needs to be fundamentally different to what has gone before.

For instance, there is [evidence](#) that middle class, affluent individuals and groups are often advantaged in their use of local public services. However, there is only limited evidence on the scale of this advantage and the extent to which it 'matters' in a fundamental sense both for the winners and losers. We need to be certain our responses appropriately accommodate everyone's needs.

Theme One: Attitudes to Poverty

Every day, people who are struggling to make ends meet are demonised and [blamed for their poverty](#). The Child Poverty Action Group reported in 2012 that people 'despised poverty, and felt despised by others and by themselves for being poor', and that this stigma creates 'a sense of powerlessness'.

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that fewer than one in eight news stories about UK poverty feature stories about people's actual experiences. The media frequently creates – or feeds into – an environment of blame.

There are important consequences of this stigma. For instance, because of the stigma attached to receiving benefits, many people fail to take up benefits they're entitled to (particularly amongst older people for example). Stigmatisation can even lead to [hate crime](#).

This broader view filters into the services that people receive. People living in poverty can be subject to discriminatory attitudes by agencies and people simply because they are 'poor'. These attitudes can be conscious and unconscious. The [Poverty Alliance's work](#) with women in Fife confirms that people are less likely to use a range of public services when they have had a bad experience with a service.

We need to build on the excellent work already undertaken by organisations like the Poverty Alliance through their [Stick Your Labels Campaign](#). One of the principal conclusions from this work was that there must be leadership to challenge entrenched views about why people find themselves struggling against poverty.

What we plan to do

The goals of the Action Plan reflect the need to look at this issue both internally within the public sector, and externally around general public attitudes.

The goals therefore include:

- Making public sector service delivery more responsive to the needs of people living in poverty
- Ensuring people living in poverty are not stigmatised by other residents in Glasgow

Theme Two: Child poverty

The Child Poverty Act 2010 legislatively sets out targets to eradicate child poverty in the UK by 2020. It has specific targets around reducing the number of children who experience income and material deprivation.

[Figures](#) published this year provide a child poverty map of the whole of the UK, and are broken down by parliamentary constituency, local authority and ward. Glasgow North East parliamentary constituency has the third highest levels of child poverty in the UK. As a local authority, Glasgow has the 7th highest rate in the UK.

The [Child Poverty Action Group](#) lists those children at greatest risk of poverty to be those in lone parent families, large families, as well as children with disabilities, children growing up in social housing and black and minority ethnic children.

[Data suggest](#) that maternal unemployment has a negative effect on child poverty and that as women's employment rises, child poverty is reduced. There is also evidence to suggest that mothers are more likely to spend household income on children, and are more likely to defer their own consumption to that of their children.

Any efforts to reduce child poverty therefore must acknowledge that a focus on increasing the opportunities for mothers to access work is of particular importance to child poverty reduction goals.

There has been work on child poverty at a city level in Glasgow through the Child Poverty Working Group (NHS, GCC and partners). The Working Group has produced an action plan and is now looking for organisational support for its implementation. This work is interwoven into the Leadership Panel's Action Plan.

What we plan to do

Because of the inter-relation of child poverty to women's and family poverty, many specific tasks are streamed into other areas of the Action Plan. The Child Poverty theme though does have two specific goals to:

- Establish child care which supports parents' aspirations to take up training, education or employment
- Translate the aspirations of the UK Child Poverty Act into measurable local actions

Theme Three: Credit and Debt

Financial exclusion is both a symptom and a cause of poverty.

Much progress has been made in attempting to address financial exclusion in Glasgow but it still remains stubbornly high. The table below provides some indicators around financial exclusion in Glasgow, in comparison to Scotland.

Indicator	Glasgow (2009-10)	Scotland
% with access to bank account	86%	92%
% coping well or very well financially	41%	49%
% with some savings	51%	67%

The economic downturn has had a direct impact on the demand for financial inclusion services as more citizens are affected by redundancy, shorter working hours, increased evictions and repossessions, unmanageable debt and insolvency. Moreover, the changes to the welfare benefits system will have a massive impact on Glasgow. [Sheffield Hallam University](#) has estimated that in total £269 million per year will be taken from the city's most vulnerable citizens who are reliant on welfare benefits.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in payday lenders both on the 'high street' and through the internet. A number of local authorities, including Glasgow, have begun to challenge some of the worst practices within these organisations as part of a broader programme to increase affordable credit and to tackle high levels of debt.

What we plan to do

The goals in the Action Plan are to ensure that:

- The 'poverty premium' involved in accessing financial services is reduced
- Personal debt is not a reason for people to exit paid work
- Household expenses are minimised
- People, in particular young people, have the information to be able to make informed decisions about their finances
- People requiring specialist services, in particular domestic abuse victims, are provided with timely and appropriate financial advice

Theme Four: Welfare reform

By now, most people working in this field are aware of the changes and challenges of welfare reform. This is a radical programme with transformation of concepts and systems and sharp cutbacks for many categories of benefit recipients.

In this context one clear [projection](#) up to the end of the decade is that poverty – for working age people as a whole and for families with children – will rise. Research indicates that women will be hit hardest by welfare reform. The freeze in child benefit, cuts to the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and even the ‘benefit cap’ will disproportionately affect women.³

The [Institute for Fiscal Studies](#) expects that the substantial progress in cutting child poverty in the first half of the previous decade will be undone. It anticipates that by 2020, absolute child poverty in Scotland, after having accounted for housing costs will have risen from 24% in 2011 to 33% in 2020.

There is much excellent work being undertaken across the city to try to mitigate the worst excesses of these reforms. The city’s housing associations are, in particular, working to prepare for the changes. There is also considerable work in lobbying for changes to the UK policies.

What we plan to do

The key to this theme is adding to work that is already being done. The Leadership Panel’s work will not replicate work currently underway. Rather, it will complement the work and try to fill in the gaps that may appear as the welfare reforms are implemented.

A key element of this work will be establishing a communication channel with groups of benefit recipients so that partners can access qualitative and ‘real time’ information on the consequences of the reforms.

The goals in the Action Plan are that:

- All benefit recipients understand the personal impact of welfare reforms
- The burden of welfare reforms for those living in poverty is publicised, as well as mitigated
- People challenging decisions about their benefit entitlements are appropriately supported
- Families’ disposable incomes are maximised

³ The number of adults affected by the cap will be 80,000, of whom 55,300 are [women](#).

Theme Five: Work and worth

In the last 20 years, Glasgow's economy has been transformed. A period of strong employment growth saw 75,000 more jobs in Glasgow between 1995 and its employment peak in 2008. The recession has, however, hit the city's labour market.

A report commissioned by the Council into employment in the city for 2012-17 suggests that Glasgow faces a shortfall of just under 9,500 jobs on an annual basis. This means that those people who are most remote from the labour market will find it even more difficult to secure employment in the coming years.

Much of the city's employability strategy is based on the pre-2008 economic environment and needs to be significantly rethought in the light of the current economic context. There is an urgent need to develop new employment models.

In Glasgow, 20% of people are paid less than [£7 an hour](#). The Living Wage in Glasgow is £7.50. This is considered to be the level of income needed to provide an acceptable standard of living in Glasgow to ensure good health, adequate child development and social inclusion. Increasing the uptake of the Living Wage needs to be part of any anti-poverty work.

But 'work' should not only refer to paid work. There is a lot of activity that goes on in the city which is unpaid and undervalued. For some, volunteering needs to be valued in and of itself – through volunteering, people are contributing to the life of the city.

There is a lot of activity that goes on in the city which is unpaid and undervalued: there are an estimated [56,392 carers](#) who provide regular unpaid care for a relative, friend or partner. In addition, around a quarter of adults (115,165 people) provide unpaid help to organisations or groups (formal volunteering).

Sixteen percent of adults in lower incomes in the city regularly volunteer, compared to nearly twice that (28% of adults) in other areas of Glasgow.

Through volunteering, people are contributing to the [life of the city](#). But, as well as delivering huge benefits for others, volunteers themselves benefit from improved mental health, self-worth, skills development and social connections.

If we are to genuinely value the contribution of carers and volunteers, we need to make sure those people who want to do these activities can, and any barriers to participation are removed.

What we plan to do

For these reasons, the goals are that:

- People living in poverty are integrated into economic developments so they can equally compete for work and business opportunities
- Paid work provides a wage sufficient to enable an adequate standard of living in Glasgow
- Parents, particularly lone parents and those with preschool children, receive sufficient support to participate in paid training or work
- Volunteering is promoted as having value in itself and the barriers to participation are removed

Theme Six: Involvement of people with direct experience

One of the consequences of living on a low income in Scotland is a sense of powerlessness that people can feel over decisions that affect their lives. The [Poverty Truth Commission](#) laid down a challenge to those concerned with injustice not only to talk about those who are marginalised but to support them to bring about change. It is the Commission's clear understanding that poverty cannot be adequately addressed until those with direct experience are directly involved in the development, delivery and evaluation of policy.

Involving people with direct experience of living in poverty is an overarching theme which will inform all of the Panel's work. It is what makes this work so distinctive. If we can involve people with direct experience of poverty in a meaningful and sustained way, as policy is actually being developed or implemented, we will all be leaders in this field.

Work by the Poverty Alliance through their [EPIC project](#) has demonstrated the positive impact that involvement of people with experience of poverty can have on the policies and decisions developed to address poverty.

Creating an environment in which communities feel more in control can lead to other positive changes, such as enhanced quality of life and improved health and wellbeing.

Analysis from [GoWell](#) suggests that community 'empowerment' appears to be underpinned by people's sense of community more broadly. The more people feel a sense of inclusion and belonging, have social connections with neighbours and trust in their co-residents, the more likely they are to also feel collectively empowered. In addition to anything that is done around formal community consultation, broader actions to support a sense of community among residents can contribute to a stronger sense of empowerment.

What we plan to do

The goal of the Action Plan is that:

- People living in poverty are included in the processes and decisions that shape Glasgow's future

Example

Poverty Leadership Panel

Glasgow's Action Plan for Change

This plan outlines the main pieces of work that Glasgow's public, private and third sector partners will do, with the aim of reducing poverty in Glasgow.

Theme One: Challenge negative attitudes about people living in poverty					
<i>Partners will never discriminate against people living in poverty, and will challenge discrimination by others.</i>					
Goal	What we will do differently across the city	What success will look like	How we will measure this	Links to major partner initiatives	Timeframe
Public sector service delivery is more responsive to the needs of people living in poverty					
People living in poverty do not feel stigmatised by other residents in Glasgow					

