

Karen Adam MSP, Convenor of Education & Gaelic Committee
Katie Haggmann MSP, Convenor of Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee
Craig Hoy MSP, Convenor of Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee

The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

18th June 2026

Dear Convenors,

We are writing to you as a group of children's charities and anti-poverty organisations with significant concerns about the progress being made towards meeting Scotland's legally binding child poverty targets. As we embark on the seventh Scottish Parliamentary session since devolution, despite welcome commitments to end child poverty by successive First Ministers and very real progress in that time, Scotland remains a country where 1 in 5 children are growing up in poverty.

The Scottish Parliament plays the primary role in holding the Scottish Government to account on what we believe to be *the* most important policy commitment it can make – ending child poverty. Therefore, we are calling on you, as Convenors of those Parliamentary Committees which we believe must have a key focus on Scottish Government's efforts to reduce child poverty and to meet the 2030/31 targets, to come together to establish a Parliamentary Cross-Committee with a clear and undistracted focus on ending child poverty.

We welcome the significant steps that have been taken by the Scottish Government to date to reduce the number of children and families living in poverty. Evidence shows the very real difference the Scottish Child Payment in particular is making in the lives of Scotland's poorest families.

However, most recent child poverty statistics show this is still not enough. With over 200 000 children continuing to grow up in poverty, Scotland's children and families deserve and demand much more. The Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2026-31 simply does not show how it will meet Scotland's statutory child poverty targets by 2030/31. An [analysis](#) published earlier this month by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that the plan is arguably not compliant with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and is potentially open to successful judicial review.

The Scottish Government has been presented with this analysis, and we have called on the First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government to provide an updated and more ambitious child poverty delivery plan that does meet the demands of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

We believe there is more the Scottish Parliament could do to hold the Scottish Government to account and to help maximise efforts to reach Scotland's child poverty targets. Parliament has the power to ensure that government is making every effort to reach those targets and lift as many children and families out of poverty as it can. Children have a right to grow up and live free from poverty, and Parliament, as well as government, has a duty to uphold that right through ensuring that legislation and policy in Scotland is consistent with duties contained within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The First Minister has repeatedly stated it is his government's number one priority to “*eradicate child poverty*”. We believe, therefore, that scrutiny of whether or not that ambition is met, or that at the very least every effort possible to do so is being exerted, should equally be reflected as the number one priority of the Scottish Parliament. In our view, oversight of the ‘national mission to eradicate child poverty’ in this crucial period between now and 2030/31 requires more attention than it will otherwise receive sitting within a broader programme of work of a single Parliamentary committee with multiple and competing priorities.

The commitment to end child poverty is a shared one, unanimously supported by all Parliamentary parties at the passing of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, and restated by the majority of Parliamentary parties in manifestos and during this year's Scottish Parliament election. We believe a Cross-Committee working closely together with shared oversight and scrutiny would demonstrate the cross portfolio and urgent nature of ending child poverty, as well as provide a clearer structure and mechanism for accountability that reflects the vital role that Parliament has to play in helping make Scotland a country where no child grows up in poverty.

It is vital that the voices of children and families are central to shaping how Scotland responds to the impact of poverty on children, families and communities, and in making sure that policy solutions reflect what they tell us will make difference in their lives. Therefore, we also ask that the Scottish Parliament considers establishing a People's Panel on ending child poverty. This would ensure that, beyond the formal structures and processes of committees, children and families can directly inform and influence the work of the proposed Cross-Committee and the broader work of the Scottish Parliament on ending child poverty.

We are happy to meet with you to explore this further and discuss how the Scottish Parliament can work alongside civil society organisations, like ours, to make sure Scotland spares no effort in lifting children and families out of poverty for good.

This must be the Parliament where we prioritise ending child poverty above all else.

We have copied this letter to each of the named Committee Convenors and corresponding Committee Clerks.

Yours,

Justina Murray, CEO, Aberlour Children's Charity
Michele Janes, Director of Barnardo's Scotland
Claire Burns, Director, CELCIS
John Dickie, Director for Scotland, Child Poverty Action Group
Nicola Killean, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
Judith Turbyne, CEO, Children in Scotland
Mary Glasgow, CEO, Children First
Kaushik Mistry, Executive Director, Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights
Nancy Louks, CEO, Families Outside
Laura Millar, CEO, Gingerbread Fife
Eliza Waye, Strategic Lead for Scotland, Home-Start UK
Louise Hunter, CEO, Includem
Sabine Goodwin, Director, Independent Food Aid Network
Chris Birt, Associate Director for Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Satwat Rehman, CEO, One Parent Families Scotland
Amy Woodhouse, CEO, Parenting Across Scotland
Peter Kelly, CEO, Poverty Alliance
Claire Telfer, Head of Scotland, Save the Children
Mandy Morgan, CEO, The Scottish Pantry Network.
Sara Cowan, Director, Scottish Women's Budget Group
Cara Hilton, Senior Policy & Public Affairs Manager (Scotland), Trussell