

**Taking Forward the Government Economic Strategy:  
A Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland**

**Analysis of Consultation Responses**

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## Executive Summary

1. The analysis of the responses to the *Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty Inequality and Deprivation in Scotland* showed overwhelming support for the principle of the document and for a renewed effort to tackle poverty in Scotland. Respondents shared the Scottish Government's analysis of poverty as a multi-faceted problem and a problem that has a negative impact on Scottish society.
2. In total 138 unique responses were received, 106 from people representing organisations and 32 from individuals. Most of the organisations who responded were from the voluntary sector, with 18 local authorities responding and six local NHS Boards.
3. Almost all respondents shared the view that inequality does not always lead to poverty, but suggested that inequalities in Scottish society must be reduced if poverty is to be tackled. Because of the multi-faceted nature of poverty, and the wide-ranging discussion within the document, the opinions of respondents on possible policy solutions varied.
4. Many respondents shared the view that paid employment was the most effective way to tackle poverty. There was an emphasis that these jobs had to be good quality and well paid with opportunities for people to increase their skills. If this approach is to be pursued, respondents suggested that the barriers to accessing employment for many would have to be reduced, such as benefit disincentives and discrimination. Support for those entering employment would also have to be improved. A number of respondents supported the idea of a Scottish Living Wage.
5. Other respondents favoured tackling inequality and maximising income as the key way to tackle poverty. Many of these respondents did not feel paid-employment was suitable for all people and argued that there should be a viable alternative and a basic living income for all.
6. The majority of respondents said that leadership was needed from the Scottish Government to ensure that the Solidarity and Cohesion Golden Rules remain central to the GES. This leadership should use plain and clear language to communicate to Scottish society that poverty needs to be tackled. Local authorities sought leadership in how efforts to tackle poverty could best be implemented through community planning and SOAs.
7. Joint-working between all tiers and sections of government was recognised as the best way to tackle poverty, including joint-working between the Scottish Government and the UK Government, particularly the DWP, on work to tackle poverty. Many respondents felt the benefits system and JobCentrePlus did not effectively help people back into work or help alleviate poverty.
8. Those who stated a preference believed that poverty could be more easily tackled if control over the benefits system was extended to the Scottish Parliament. Many respondents cited examples of the perverse incentives created by the benefits system and the way in which changes to devolved policy create conflicts with the benefits system, for example the withdrawal of Attendance Allowance after the introduction of free personal care.
9. There was general similarity of views across a wide range of organisations and few clear lines of division between types of respondents and their opinions. Where there were significant differences in opinion, or key groups such as local authorities responded similarly, these are highlighted.

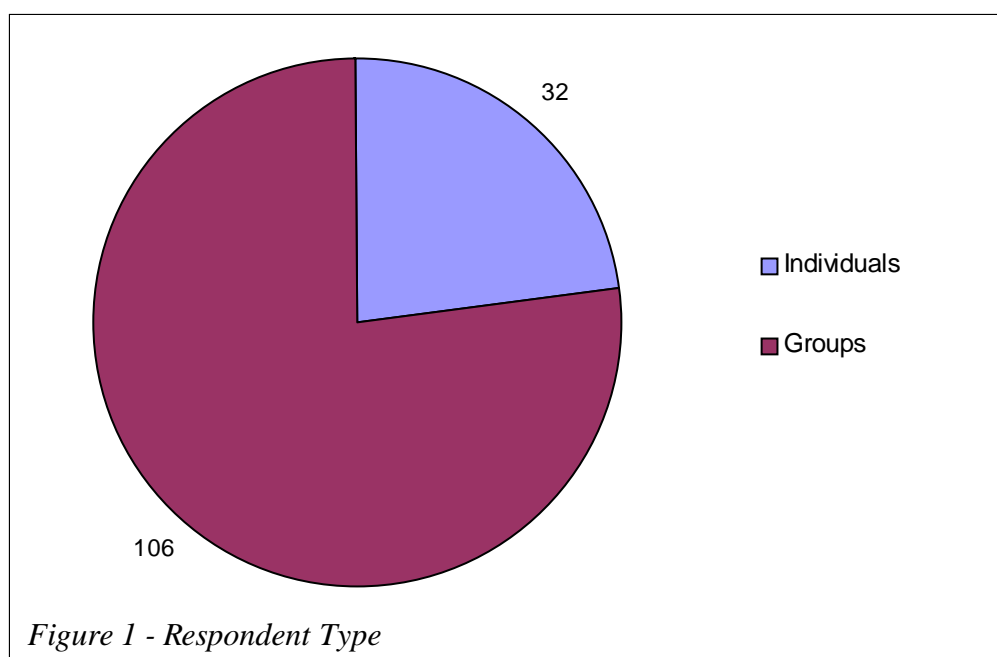
## Consultation responses

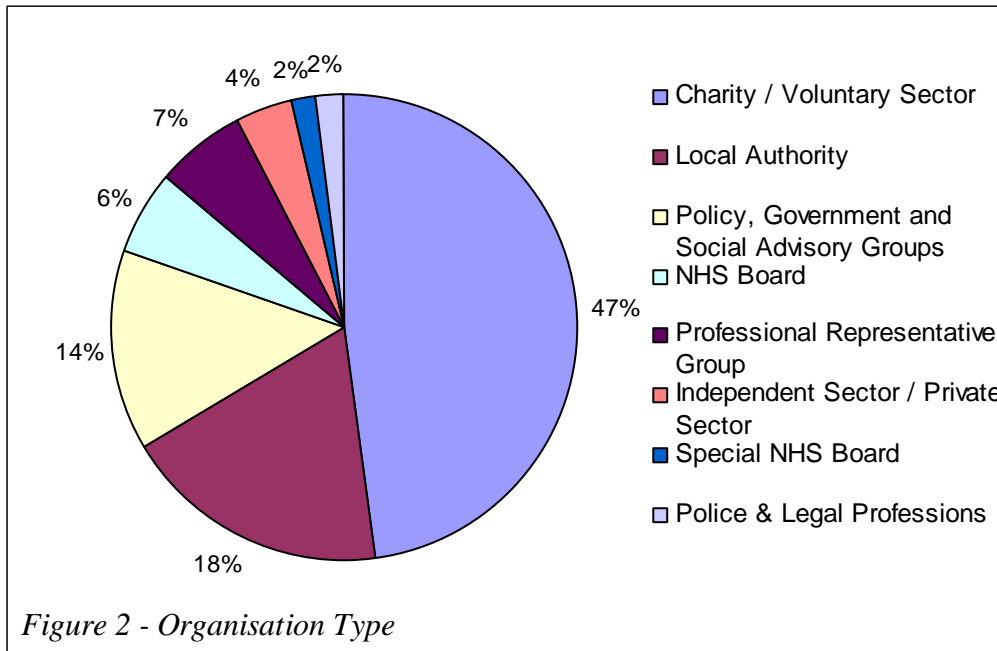
10. In total 138 unique responses were received to the consultation: 128 responding to the main discussion document and 10 responses to the *Making Scotland Better* report. All respondents welcomed the opportunity to comment on this discussion document. The importance a new anti-poverty strategy was recognised and respondents were pleased that tackling poverty was so central in the GES through the Solidarity and Cohesion Golden Rules.

11. In total 106 responses were from organisations and 32 from individuals (Figure 1). Most of the organisations which responded were from the charity or voluntary sector; table 1 indicates the broad range of issues these charities cover. From the statutory sector, 18 local authorities provided 20 responses (two each from Glasgow City Council and Aberdeen City Council) along with six local NHS Boards and five non-departmental public bodies (Figure 2).

*Table 1 – Examples of charities that responded; examples are illustrative only*

<b>Campaigning area</b>	<b>Example</b>
Representative organisations	Scottish Council for the Voluntary Sector
Poverty	Child Poverty Action Group
Child Welfare / Protection	NCH Action for Children
Carers	Carers Scotland
Long term illness	HIV Scotland
Community regeneration	North Edinburgh Trust
Homeless	Shelter
Disabilities	Royal National Institute for the Blind
Older people	Help the Aged
Women	Engender





12. The analysis below follows the consultation questions as set down in the discussion document. Although not all respondents followed this format, the questions cover all the issues raised in the responses. Where quantitative phrases are used (i.e. ‘the majority’) this should be taken to mean the majority of respondents who commented on that particular issue, unless otherwise stated.

## **Q1 – Where can the Scottish Government contribute most to tackling poverty?**

13. All respondents shared the view of the Scottish Government that poverty is a complex, multi-faceted problem related to more than lack of income and income inequality. At the same time, the majority of respondents also acknowledged the centrality of income inequality in leading to poverty and recommended tackling this. There was a division between respondents who favoured holistic approaches to supporting individuals experiencing poverty, and those who emphasised the structural causes of poverty and the need to tackle these.

14. Although the document was intended to provoke discussion on the new framework, some respondents explicitly stated it was too vague on policy proposals. The majority of respondents, and especially local authorities and voluntary organisations, said there was a need for the Scottish Government to offer stronger leadership to statutory agencies, civil society and wider society in tackling poverty.

15. For example, there was concern regarding the Solidarity Golden Rule and especially the associated target. Without an explicit commitment to increase the share of wealth earned by each of the three bottom deciles it was felt this could lead to concentration on one decile to the disadvantage of others. Age Concern highlighted that many pensioners are in the third decile, so policy efforts concentrated at the bottom two deciles could lead to increase in the relative severity of poverty experienced by people receiving pensions.

16. The growing problems of fuel poverty were mentioned by many respondents. The consultation responses suggest this is a particular problem in rural areas and for older people on fixed pension incomes. That the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum had been restarted was therefore widely welcomed. There was a concern that long term solutions to this problem will be difficult to tackle under the current devolution settlement, although improvements to housing quality, particularly insulation and damp-proofing, were cited as examples of ways to help.

## **Q2 – To what extent are current policies and programmes fit for purpose?**

17. Three respondents made the general comment that the framework could lose the parts of the *Closing the Opportunity Gap* approach that were producing results. One respondent highlighted the way in which the cross-departmental targets meant *Closing the Gap* had ownership at the Scottish Government level which focussed departments on promoting social inclusion. Another respondent cited the utility of *Closing the Gap* target C ‘public sector and large employers to tackle aspects of in-work poverty by providing employees with an opportunity to develop skills and progress in their career’ and suggested the NHS response to this as an example of good practice.

18. The voluntary sector were particularly concerned about the ending of ring fencing for local government grants. Without direction given to local authorities and CPPs in drafting their SOAs, it was felt that the targeted help provided through ring-fenced funding may be lost. For example, one housing association suggested that the end of Supporting People Funding could lead to a reduction in the services for the roofless and socially excluded as housing providers sought to meet their duties under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2003.

19. The rural local authorities that responded, Scottish Borders, Highland, Argyll and Bute and Aberdeenshire Councils, along with Highlands and Island Enterprise and Scottish Natural Heritage all felt present policies were not appropriate for tackling rural poverty and future policies should be ‘rural proofed’. Highland Council suggested that the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation could not measure deprivation and poverty in rural areas. All rural respondents also suggested the rural

experience of poverty was different – with fuel poverty and seasonal employment patterns major problems.

20. Urban authorities, such as Glasgow City and Renfrewshire, suggested that the scale of the problem of urban poverty and deprivation was still not fully understood or accepted.

### **Q3- How should the Scottish Government maximise the impact of these policies and programmes?**

21. The majority of responses stated there was a need for leadership and strategic direction from the Scottish Government in tackling poverty through local activities. It was felt there was great scope within devolved powers for poverty to be tackled effectively.

22. The main priority for respondents was income maximisation, particularly through the benefits and taxation system. A number of respondents referred to ‘the poverty premium’ – that basic services such as banking and energy cost a great deal more for people experiencing poverty through practices such as pre-payment meters.

23. Besides this, the need for financial inclusion was highlighted by many through financial education and the provision of affordable credit through banning doorstep lenders and increasing the role of Credit Unions. Rent and insurance schemes were also mentioned by some respondents, although research is required as to why schemes such as these have such low take-up. Childcare was a particular cost burden highlighted, especially for single parents. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation cited evidence that unemployment among parents increases during school holidays, and one respondent suggested policies could encourage a better work-life balance.

24. The discussion document suggested there was a need for excellent basic universal services, and targeted services to top-up provision for those in greatest need. Among responses there was no consensus on this issue. Supporters of better universal services suggested this approach reduces the stigma that exacerbates poverty, reduces structural inequalities and recognises that poverty is usually a phase which many people may pass during their life.

25. One response cited evidence that for those in the bottom fifth of the income distribution, the value of public services is equivalent to 49 per cent of their real income, compared with 20 per cent for the average household and just 8 per cent for those in the top fifth. Public services for the most deprived should therefore be protected and enhanced to be most effective in tackling poverty.

26. Local authorities and voluntary groups in particular welcomed the recognition that there was a need for targeted effort. Some local authorities suggested there was a need for intensive support and work with people experiencing poverty to support them through pathways to employment. Workforce Plus initiatives were often used as examples of this happening successfully. Similarly, some voluntary organisations supported the ambition to improve the internal capacity of individuals through targeted investment and work.

27. The majority of respondents suggested all future policy should be ‘poverty proofed’ and Poverty Impact Assessments were seen as a tool to achieve this. One respondent suggested this should be as one of a number of impact assessments, including Equalities, Environmental, and Health Impact Assessments, that all policy should be subject to. Another respondent recommended that close attention should be paid to producing these to ensure their efficacy.

28. The voluntary sector repeatedly asserted the need to speak to people experiencing poverty to fully understand how public policy can exacerbate or alleviate this experience, with Oxfam

suggesting a Poverty Committee with 50 per cent of its members being people currently experiencing poverty.

**Q4 – Do you consider there are gaps in these policies and programmes that need filling? If so, how should they be filled?**

29. Many respondents responded to this question by highlighting the gaps between service provision which it was felt many people experiencing poverty may fall through. In particular local authorities and the voluntary sector highlighted difficulties working with the DWP and the benefits system.

30. It was recognised both that there was a need for specialism in service provision, especially from those representing specialist groups such as the NHS, and that such agencies should work together better to provide holistic care. Those with experience of the frustrations of partnership working suggested this can be difficult and Robert Gordon University also cited evidence that partnership working led to many agencies crossing professional boundaries and duplicating effort.

31. Responses from local authorities were particularly concerned about life transitions and how these can lead to poverty. For example, many highlighted the need for joined-up working at the transition from compulsory schooling to employment through the *More Choices, More Chances* agenda.

32. All respondents from health providers emphasised the links between poverty and ill health, recognising that this is a two-way relationship and identifying causation was difficult. It was felt that this had not been tackled by previous policies and there was a need to improve health and wellbeing, particularly mental health and wellbeing, through partnership working and individual support to help people back into work.

33. Information was a gap in all policies to tackle poverty. One respondent used a comparison of English and Scottish statistics available to local authorities to highlight the need for further work on the SIMD to provide good evidence of where need is concentrated and evaluating policy interventions. Those who advocated engaging people experiencing poverty in policy stated that not enough was known by the Government as to how poverty was experienced and how public policy can make the experience of poverty worse.

34. Rural authorities and agencies highlighted the lack of knowledge of the extent of rural poverty and understanding as to how poverty is experienced in rural areas.

**Q5 – How best can the Scottish Government achieve both economic growth and reduced poverty and income inequality?**

35. All respondents were concerned as to whether this balance could be achieved. Most respondents welcomed the recognition by the Scottish Government that increases in economic growth do not automatically lead to reduction in poverty. Many responses cited the need for a different kind of economic growth to create greater equality – although there was a lack of detail as to what this might be. The RTPI suggested that the definition of sustainable economic growth could be widened to include social sustainability.

36. There was consensus that strong leadership from the Scottish Government was required to ensure the Solidarity and Cohesion Golden Rules remained central in the GES. This would ensure all agencies would be working towards achieving the national targets. There was concern expressed

by some that the present economic climate could lead to the government concentrating solely on promoting economic growth to the detriment of tackling poverty and inequality.

37. The international comparison was commented upon by a number of respondents, and Ireland was particularly cited as an example of the social and policy outcome Scotland needed to avoid. A small number of respondents felt that more should be made of these comparisons, with specific evaluations carried out as to how countries such as Denmark do achieve equality in outcome and economic growth.

38. A substantial minority were more sceptical that economic growth and poverty reduction were possible joint aims. They suggested that the primary goal of policy should be to redistribute wealth and tackle poverty. Two respondents highlighted how unequal Scottish society is compared to the other nations in the UK and internationally, both on measures of decile ratios and on the Gini Coefficient.

39. Those who argued for tackling income inequality suggested in-work poverty was prevalent – the statistic that 50 per cent of people experiencing poverty are in work was cited by many. These respondents, including trade unions, suggested this was an area for Scottish Government leadership through best practice, as many of the poorest-paid work in the public sector. There was widespread support for a Scottish Living Wage, with many supporting the findings and recommendations of the Scottish Affairs Committee's report into poverty in Scotland. This could be promoted through local contracts between the public sector and the private sector. One local authority, while being sympathetic to this view, suggested it may not be compatible with statutory Best Value duties.

40. A smaller number felt income redistribution through the taxation and benefits system was the most effective way to tackle inequality and poverty. This could be achieved either through lobbying and joint-working with the UK Government or through the devolution of taxation powers to the Scottish Parliament. One respondent highlighted the need for political leadership to promote fiscal devolution and fiscal redistribution to the Scottish public.

**Q6 – How should the Scottish Government and its partners balance their efforts between the three areas for action outlined at paragraph 43 of the discussion paper?**

41. There was broad welcome to all three areas for action and the consensus was towards prioritising them equally. Some respondents suggested that in practice it is difficult to distinguish between the three priorities; for example groups representing women said measures that alleviate women's poverty could act to prevent children experiencing poverty.

42. The priority of early intervention was supported by the majority of those who expressed a preference. It was recognised that only through efforts to prevent poverty would the number of people experience poverty decline over the longer term. It was acknowledged that measures to prevent poverty are difficult and require long-term commitment. One respondent suggested this policy would require widespread political support so it can be maintained over a number of years to provide the greatest impact.

43. Voluntary organisations representing individual groups, such as the elderly, long-term sick or disabled, were concerned that a focus on poverty prevention could reduce resources devoted to alleviating poverty and lifting people out of poverty. For example, it was suggested the elderly are often in poverty and cannot work to lift themselves out of poverty so alleviation measures are required to maximise their income. Some voluntary organisations also suggested the end of ring fencing and SOAs would make it difficult to get the correct balance between these priorities at a local level without Scottish Government leadership.

**Q7 – With respect to the set of key principles detailed at paragraph 33 of the discussion paper what are your views on the following:**

*Are they the right principles?*

44. There was broad support from all respondents to the principles outlined. There was also widespread support for policies to encourage Scottish society to realise poverty is a social problem that anyone can experience during their life. One respondent suggested it was hard to disagree with any of the principles and the difficulty was now developing a framework to put them into action, with another respondent suggesting a hierarchical ordering of the principles to prioritise efforts.

45. Most local authorities welcomed the emphasis on work as a means to lift people out of poverty, with some already viewing their new powers in economic development policy as the way to achieve this. The major issue was therefore barriers to work and overcoming these. Key barriers highlighted were: benefit traps; the need for good quality work that is well paid; and policies to encourage those in work to increase their skills to tackle in-work poverty. One respondent suggested there was a need to work with employers to increase the demand for well paid labour.

46. Groups representing the disabled, or other marginalised groups, welcomed the commitment to paid employment, but emphasised the greater boundaries to entering employment. One respondent cited evidence from the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development that employers will not employ those on Incapacity Benefit because of negative perceptions of claimants. Some respondents also suggested working with trade unions to increase work place protection for the most vulnerable.

47. The emphasis on paid employment was not universally welcomed. Those representing groups such as carers and the elderly suggested there should be viable non-work alternatives for those for whom paid employment is either impossible or inappropriate. Respondents representing carers and women felt that the economic benefit and value of care was not fully recognised by present policies, particularly the benefits system. The aim of policy should be to maximise income and provide a basic living income for all.

48. There was also concern from some that the second principle may add to the stigma of the poor as undeserving by placing a burden on the individual. It was felt this failed to realise the structural barriers are faced by people in poverty that prevent them leaving, or aspiring to leave, poverty.

*Are there others that the Scottish Government should be adopting?*

49. All respondents welcomed the proposal for a gendered analysis of poverty and policies to tackle poverty. However, the majority of respondents said this should be extended to include the different issues, and separate barriers faced because of class distinctions and discriminations against groups such as black and minority ethnic communities; people with disabilities; those suffering long-term illness; single people; those with counter-normative gender identities or sexualities; the young; and older people. For example, one voluntary organisation suggested the expectation on new migrants to return money to family abroad often meant these people experienced greater poverty.

*Is there potential for some to compete with others?*

50. Very few respondents dealt with this question. Those who provided a specific answer did not feel they would compete.

51. Across all the consultation responses there were divisions between those who favoured early intervention, and those who favoured poverty alleviation and measures to lift people out of poverty; and between those who favoured paid employment as the key route out of poverty and those who favoured income and wealth redistribution.

*How should the Scottish Government ensure that they are in turn adopted by key delivery bodies and agencies?*

52. Most respondents felt there was a need for greater joined-up working between all levels of government, led by the Scottish Government. Local authorities particularly sought direction in how the Solidarity and Cohesion Golden Rules should be implemented through SOAs. Glasgow City Council also wanted greater local flexibility to develop their own policy responses.

53. Voluntary organisations sought reassurances that local authorities and CPPs would be made to target poverty alleviation, with one respondent suggesting that local indicators relating to poverty should be included within the SOA basket of indicators.

54. Nearly all respondents mentioned the need for better joined-up working between sections of the Scottish Government. Particular comments were made on the following policy areas:

*Housing* – all housing associations and Shelter highlighted the need for increasing the supply of affordable housing where it is needed. The RTPI suggested the NPF could be used to redress the imbalances between East and West Central Scotland in housing supply. There was also a concern that reductions in HAG would lead to rent increases, exacerbating poverty.

*Education* – a small number of respondents suggested *Curriculum for Excellence* would be a key tool in tackling poverty by engaging students with the education system and providing vocational skills sought by employers.

*More Choices, More Chances* – For those engaged in the MCMC agenda there was concern that the links between the two strategies were not explicit. There was also concern that the MCMC strategy focuses too much on school-leavers and less on older young people who may be experiencing unemployment and poverty.

*Spatial Planning* – The RTPI and Glasgow Works highlighted the need to link economic development to areas of concentrated poverty with Glasgow Fort cited as an example. Three respondents were also concerned that regeneration was not discussed as it was felt this could be effective at tackling concentrations of poverty.

*Local Income Tax* – Glasgow City Council suggested that SG should consider whether LIT would have a disproportionate impact on low-income households and whether it may act as a further disincentive to work.

**Q9 – What are the key barriers to partnership working? Can you give an example of how these can be effectively overcome?**

55. All local authorities were confident that SOAs and CPPs would provide the structure and leadership to develop effective partnership working. The NHS boards that responded also shared this confidence in existing partnership structures, with CPPs, CHPs and JHIPs providing effective tools to tackle poverty.

56. One respondent suggested that the proliferation of partnerships makes this work difficult and there was still a need to rationalise partnership working further.

57. A small number of respondents suggested partnerships only developed successfully around ring-fenced funding and this had led to a proliferation of partnerships, many of them successful.

Others mentioned how difficult the process of establishing partnerships could be and suggested there was a need for effective leadership for successful partnership working.

**Q8 & Q10 – Do you think that reserved and devolved programmes currently complement each other effectively and are there any areas where cooperation can be improved? And Do you consider that there are any areas where enlargement of the devolution settlement could improve the seamless provision of support and achieve a greater impact on poverty and income inequality?**

58. Nearly all respondents to the consultation commented on the devolution settlement. The majority suggested that there was always a need for close joint-working between the Scottish and UK governments, particularly on benefits. As examples, a number of respondents raised the problems with Attendance Allowance following the introduction of free personal care, the possible loss of Council Tax Benefit with the Local Income Tax proposals, and the possibility that higher Kinship Care Allowances would reduce benefit entitlement.

59. For those who favoured extending the devolution settlement, there was widespread support for the Scottish Government to have more control over the benefits system and JobCentrePlus. Many respondents mentioned benefit traps, such as the immediate reduction in Housing Benefit on return to work. Rules regarding the amount of voluntary and paid work those on Incapacity Benefit could carry out were also seen to create perverse incentives. A small number had concerns that the proposed reforms to Incapacity Benefit and Single Parent Benefit would increase the compulsion and conditionality of the benefits system, exacerbating poverty and stigmatisation, and would not be suitable in the Scottish context. Others suggested that the proposed regionalisation of DWP policy means the department is becoming involved in devolved areas.

60. Many responses, particularly from those who identified themselves as working with, or as having direct experience of, poverty suggested that benefits advisors needed to be trained better and this could only occur with greater devolution. It was suggested that the only priority of staff was to get people into work and they often do not let people know what services and benefits they are entitled to. One respondent suggested that the efficiency savings programme of the DWP was reducing the quality of the service provided and would lead to a longer term dis-savings as people struggled to return to work. Glasgow Works recommended community animators are employed to improve benefit take-up and income maximisation.

61. Many respondents working with vulnerable groups suggested that the increasing use of means testing and Tax Credits is making the benefits system overly complicated. Organisations such as Help The Aged said that many older people find the process of means testing intrusive and humiliating. Other organisations suggested that the language surrounding benefits meant many people did not feel they could ask for extra help to which they were entitled.

62. A small number of respondents supported wider fiscal devolution to allow for a redistributive, fairer taxation system, with one respondent highlighting the imbalance of the incidence of taxation – that the poorest pay more of their income as tax. Two respondents who shared this view were concerned that fiscal devolution may lead to support for a reduction in taxation across the board to promote economic growth leading to wider inequalities.

**Q11 and Q12 With which constituencies within Scotland could the Scottish Government do more to influence thinking and action on tackling poverty? And How should the Scottish Government best go about engaging with the wider public in its efforts to tackle poverty in Scotland?**

63. Specific marginalised or minority groups suggested the need for greater involvement in policy development, such as the disabled, carers and black and minority ethnic communities. Many of the groups were represented by the voluntary sector, who welcomed having been part of the discussion, particularly through the Poverty Alliance activities, and were keen to continue this engagement.

64. Local authorities suggested there was a need for all community planning partners to be signed up to tackling poverty. Many local authorities also welcomed the central role the voluntary sector had played in the consultation and also wanted this to continue and for the third sector to play a key role in CPPs efforts to tackle poverty. One housing association said it was increasingly difficult for housing providers to engage with community planning processes with the loss of Communities Scotland as a community planning partner.

65. The key constituency that many respondents did feel had to be involved was those experiencing poverty themselves. These respondents, including a number of NHS Boards, favoured extending funding to community development work to enable poverty alleviation. Those organisations, such as Oxfam, that worked with those in poverty wanted to see them engaged directly with the drafting up of the policy framework.

66. Whereas local authorities saw community planning as the way to achieve this, many independent groups felt local authorities viewed community consultation as a ‘bolt-on’ to community planning. It was felt that local authorities did not fully appreciate the resourcing and skills needed among staff to fully develop community engagement.

**Q13 – What kind of language should the Scottish Government use in order to communicate effectively on these issues?**

67. Only one respondent welcomed the fact that the language of Solidarity and Cohesion meant that the link to the GES was made explicit. Even this respondent felt that the language used in the GES and the discussion document was too complicated.

68. A small but substantial number of respondents felt the Government should produce explicit definitions of concepts such as poverty, inequality and cohesion that are used in the discussion document. Some respondents felt that the previous language of social justice, social inclusion, poverty, and closing the gap was clearer than language of the GES. Whereas the concepts of solidarity and cohesion needed a lot of explaining, the meaning of the terms used previously was more obvious.

69. There was widespread consensus for using plain English in policy documents, particularly so those experiencing poverty could be successfully engaged. Some respondents did not welcome the tone of the document of “doing policy to the poor”. Many who were responding as individuals found the discussion document very difficult to read and the questions confusing, limiting their ability to engage effectively. Many respondents also recommended that the policy should be in other formats such as Braille and pictures.

70. The majority of respondents supported highlighting the economic and social costs of poverty on all of Scotland, and moral persuasion, as the best way to gain widespread support. However, research by the Scottish Policy Information Unit suggested this would not work. They recommended that the language used should highlight the universality of poverty experiences – that many people experience poverty in their lives – and public policy to prevent and alleviate poverty could therefore benefit all individuals. In this way the policies could gain similar support to the NHS and state education.

## **Conclusions**

71. The consultation showed a broad consensus on the need for public policy in Scotland to tackle poverty effectively. There was also a consensus on the need to tackle inequality in Scottish society to help tackle poverty. Leadership from the Scottish Government was seen as the key way in which this could be achieved.

72. Given the multi-faceted nature of poverty, and the definitions provided in the consultation document, there was less consensus on the means to tackle poverty. Some respondents favoured using work, and well-paid, good quality jobs as the primary policy options. Others favoured income maximisation through a more generous benefits system and some favoured fiscal redistribution. Devolution of control over the benefits system to the Scottish Parliament was widely supported.

73. There was widespread support for engaging people who experience poverty, the third sector, all community planning partners and all government departments in efforts to tackle poverty. Although respondents welcomed the fact that the commitment to tackling poverty was so central to the GES, all thought that the language could be clearer and simpler.

74. It was also widely recognised that the support of all of Scottish society had to be developed to enable poverty to be tackled effectively.