

Professor John H. McKendrick

The Big Picture

Local opportunities for anti-poverty action in troubled and uncertain times?



Scottish Facilities Management Seminar

APSE

Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld

20 November, 2018

Outline of talk

- **Where I stand**
- **What Scots think**
- **Poverty in Scotland: direction of travel**
- **Falling in love with poverty/social justice in Scotland**
- **Poverty in Scotland: policy responses**
- **Towards a local action agenda**
- **Local priorities**
- **A cautionary note as a conclusion**



Poverty in Scotland: Local opportunities for anti-poverty action in troubled and uncertain times?



Where I stand



University for the Common Good



Brighter futures begin with GCU



Vision of the optimist

Poverty is an inevitable (but unproblematic) social ill

Poor people are to blame

Our anti-poverty interventions have not been sufficiently effective to tackle poverty in Scotland

Vested interests create and maintain poverty

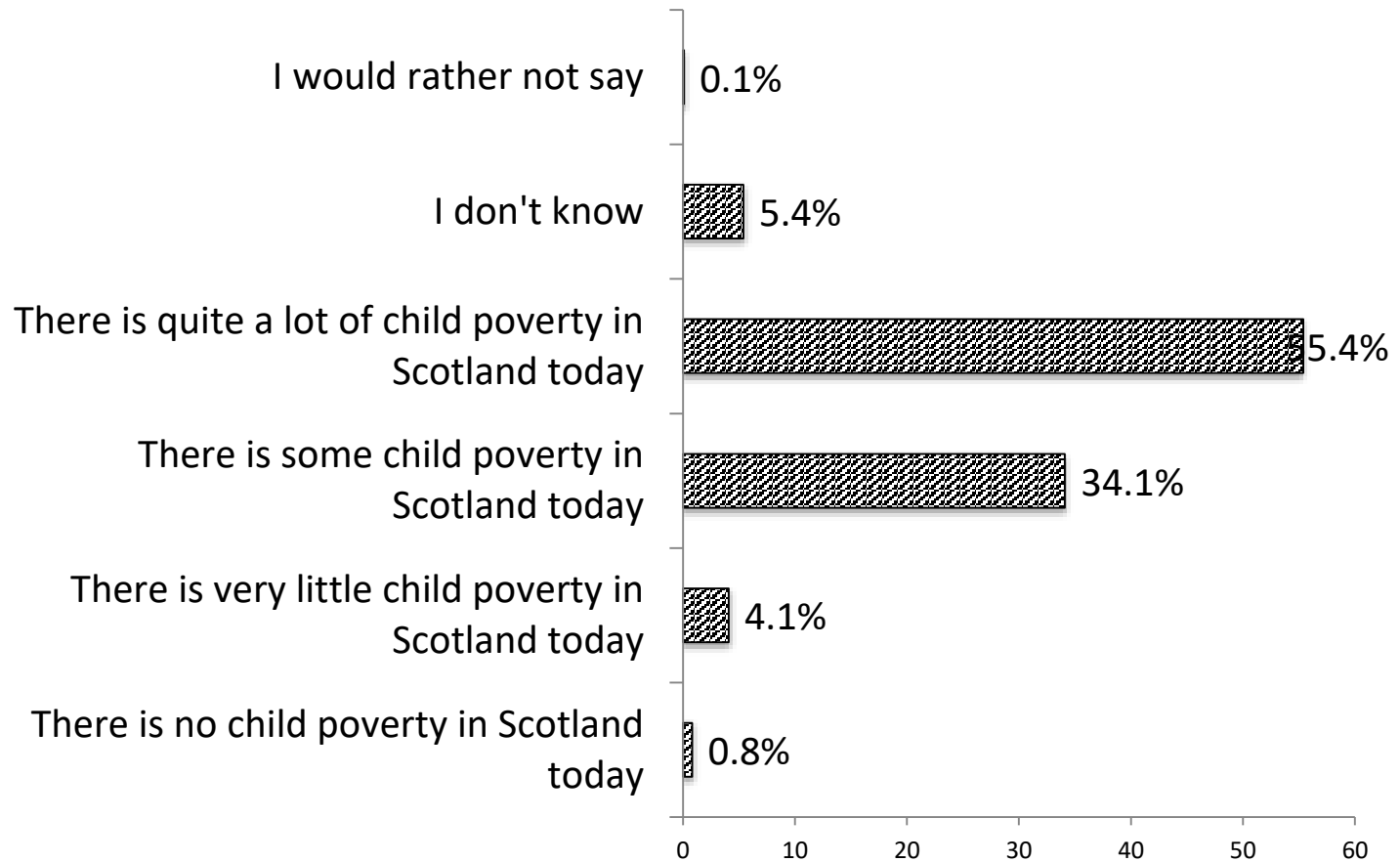


Poverty in Scotland: Local opportunities for anti-poverty action in troubled and uncertain times?

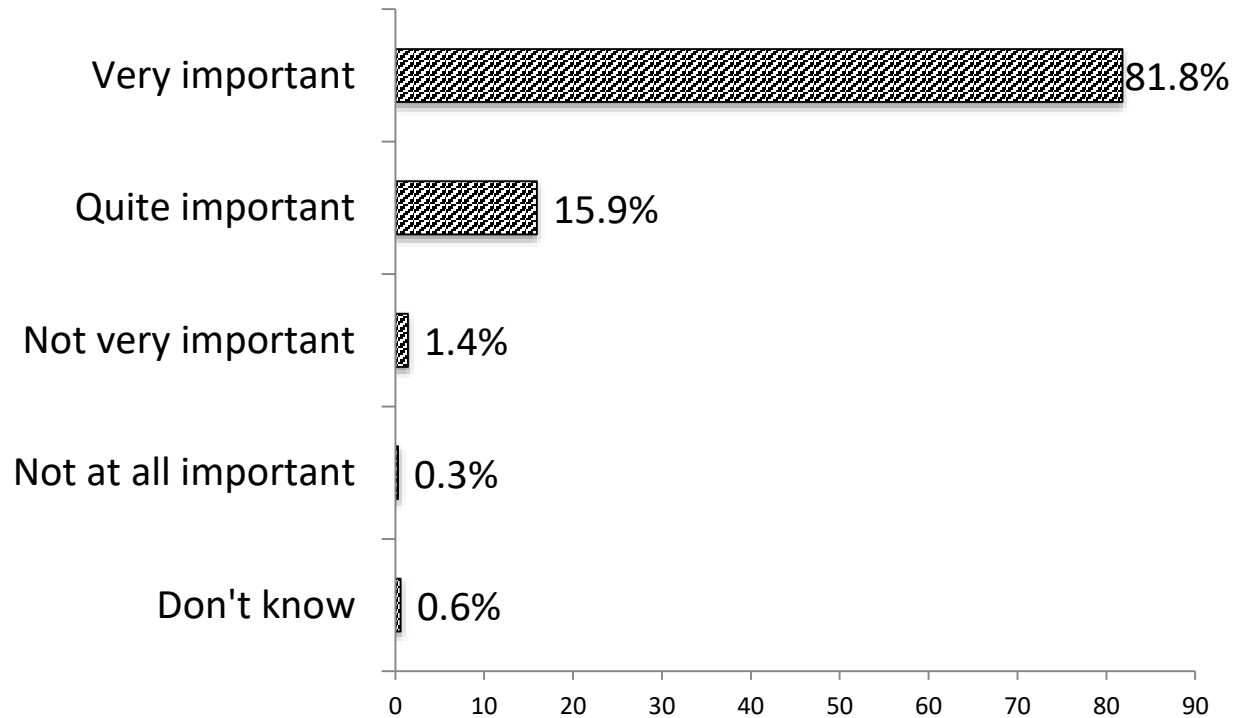


What Scots think

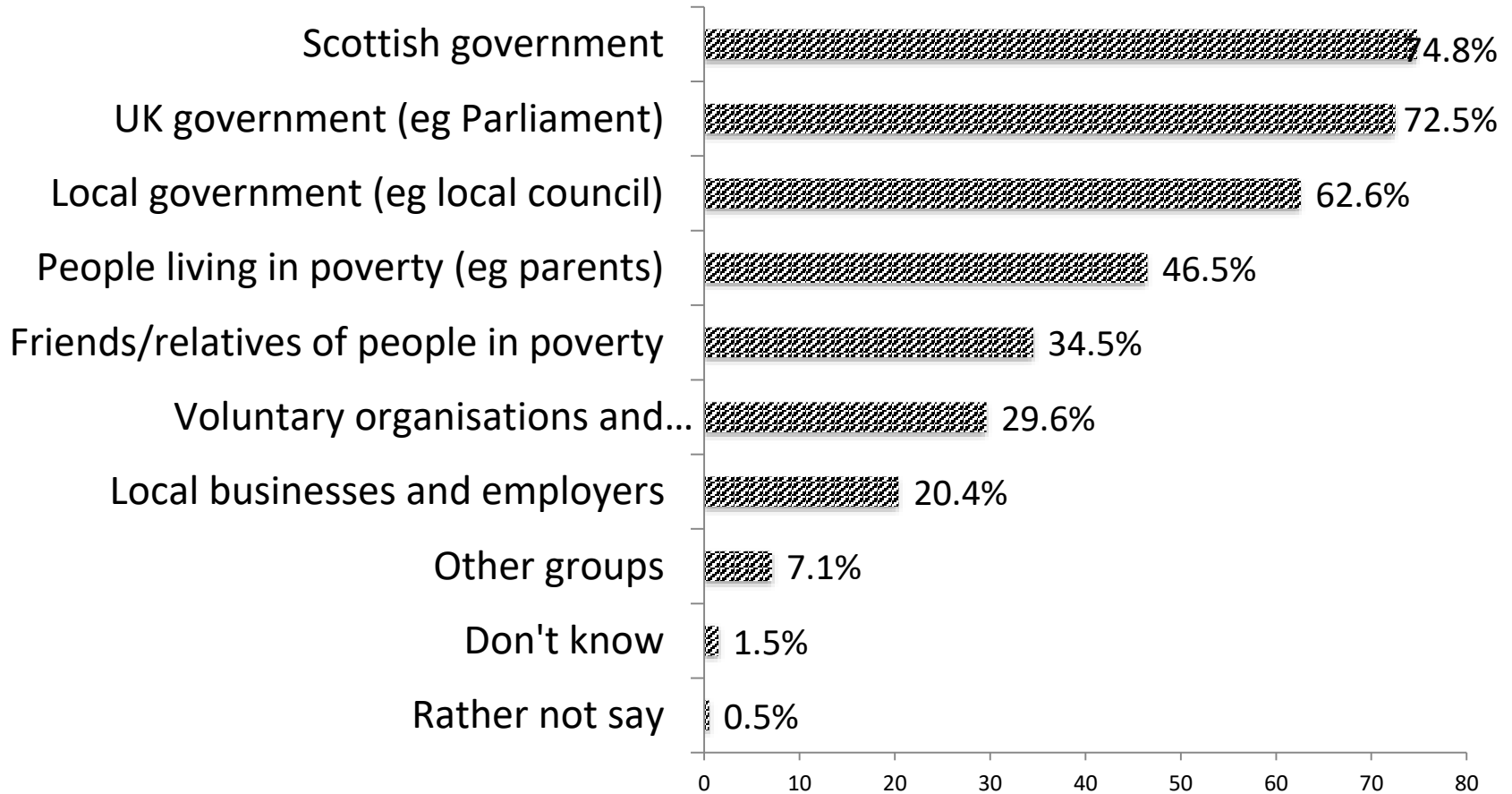
Scots accept that child poverty exists in Scotland



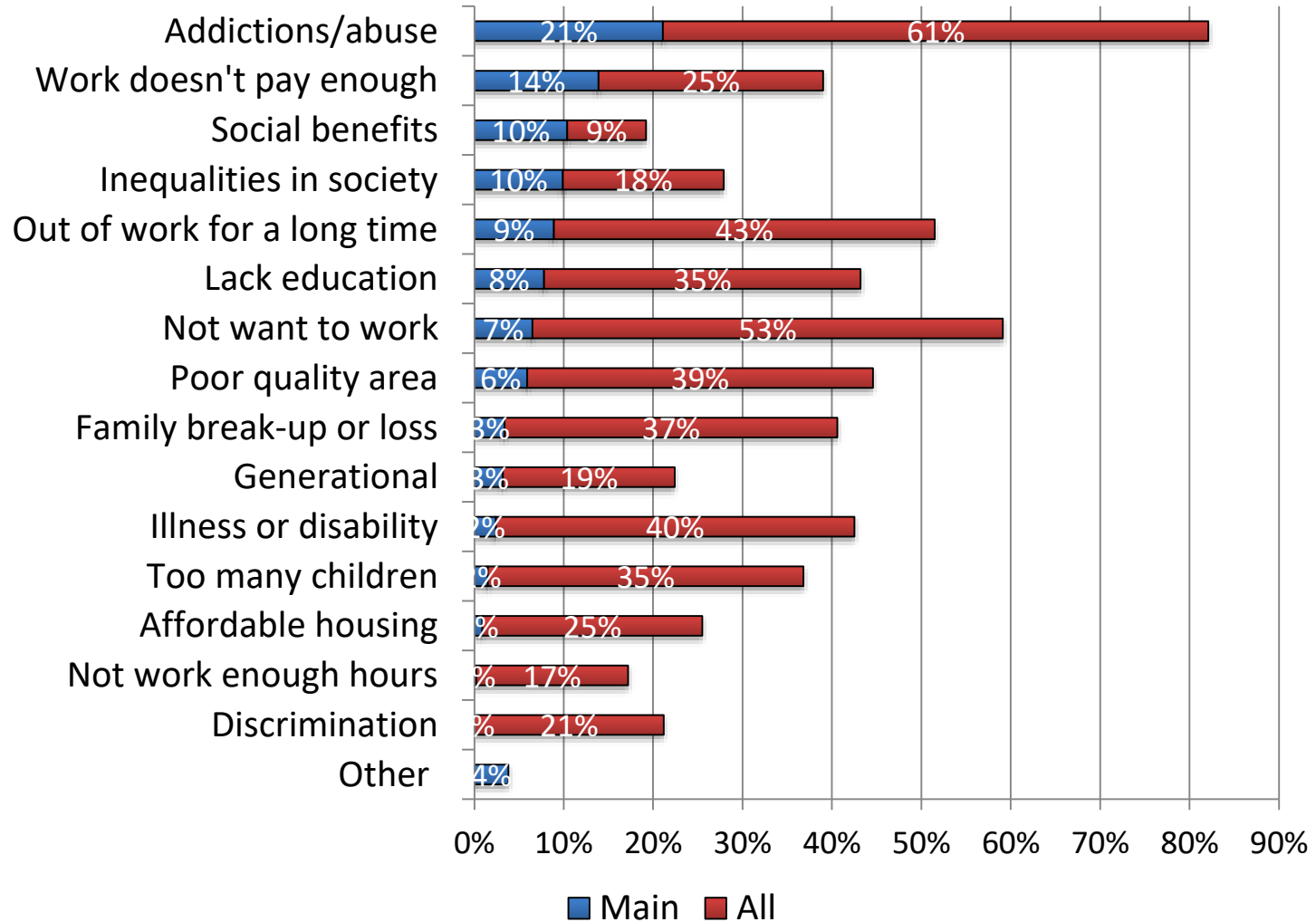
Scots think that it is important to tackle child poverty



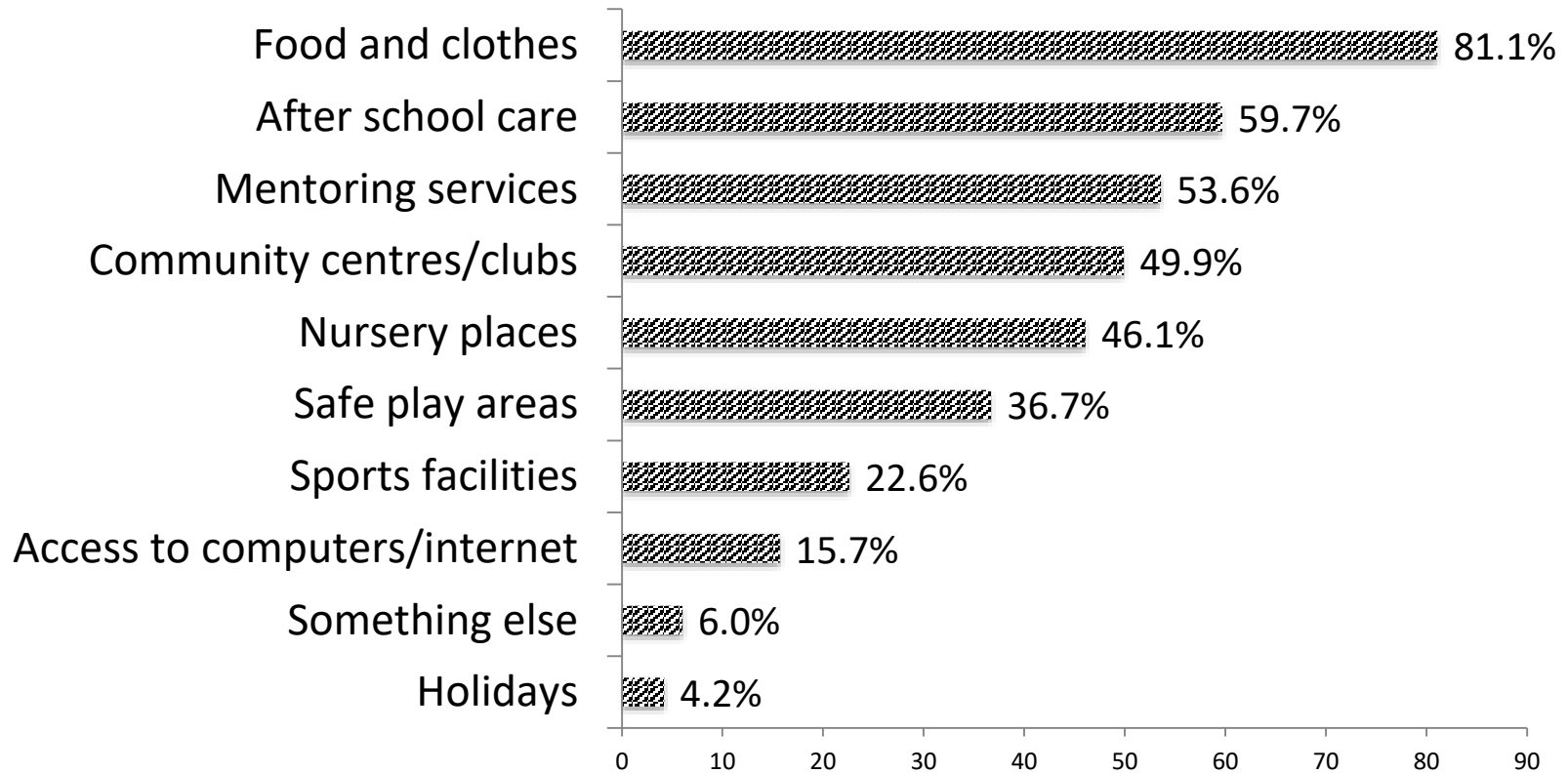
Scots think many have a role to play in tackling CP



Why poverty exists

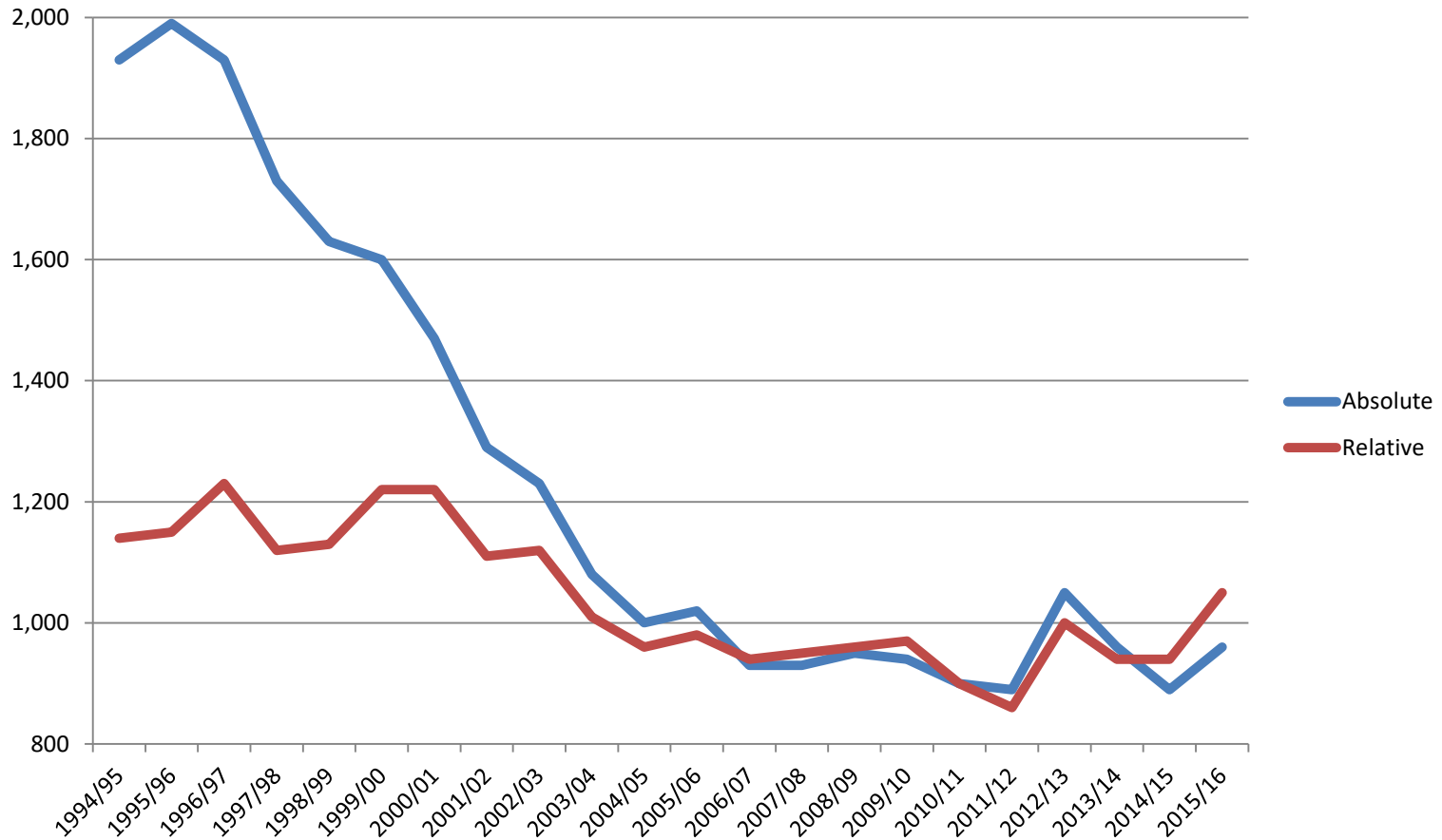


What Scots think should be done

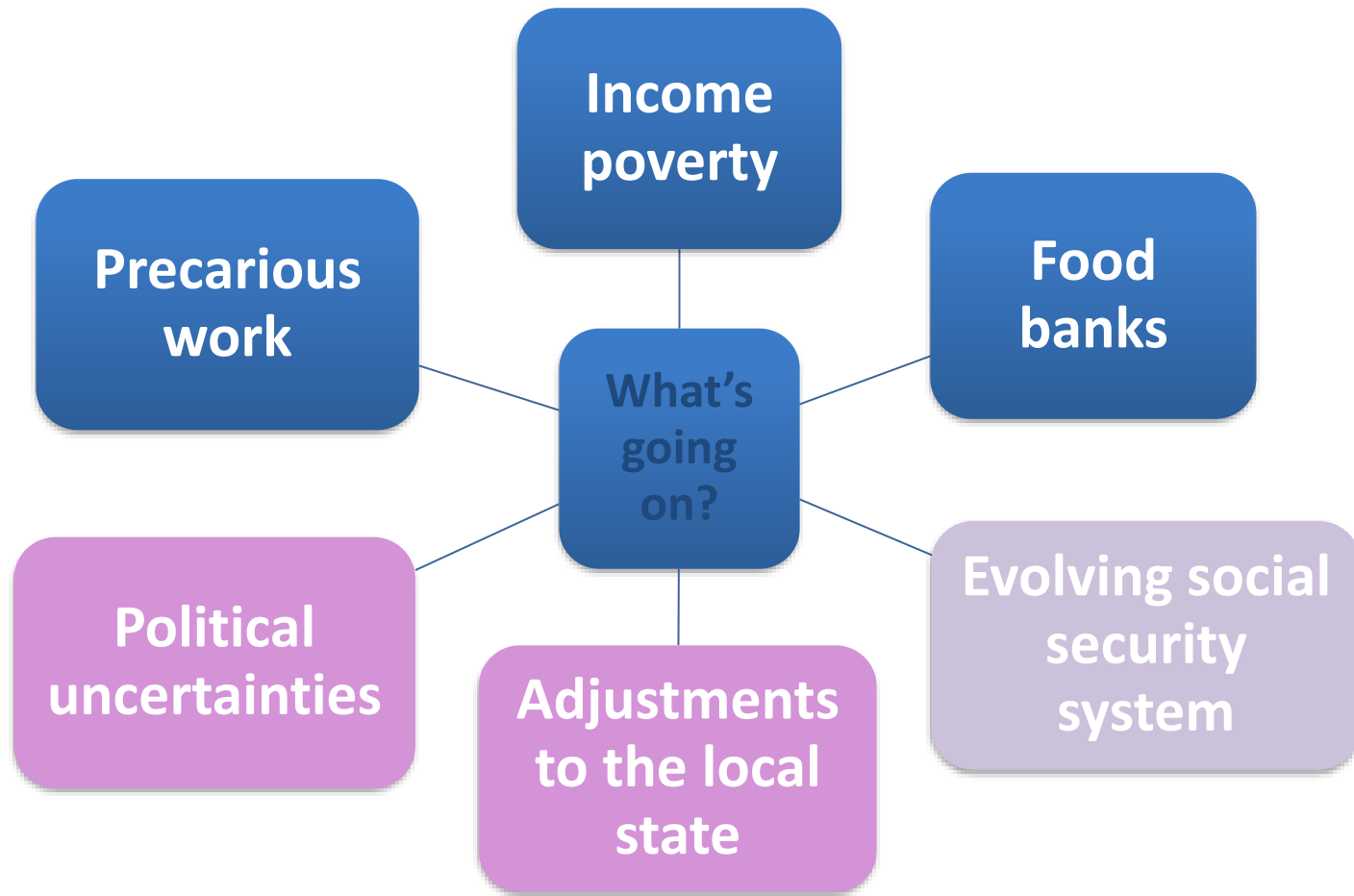


What is Poverty in Scotland? – Direction of Travel

What has passed (AHC)



Our Wee Home in 2018



People in poverty in Scotland (2014-17)

1,000,000

(or 860,000, BHC)



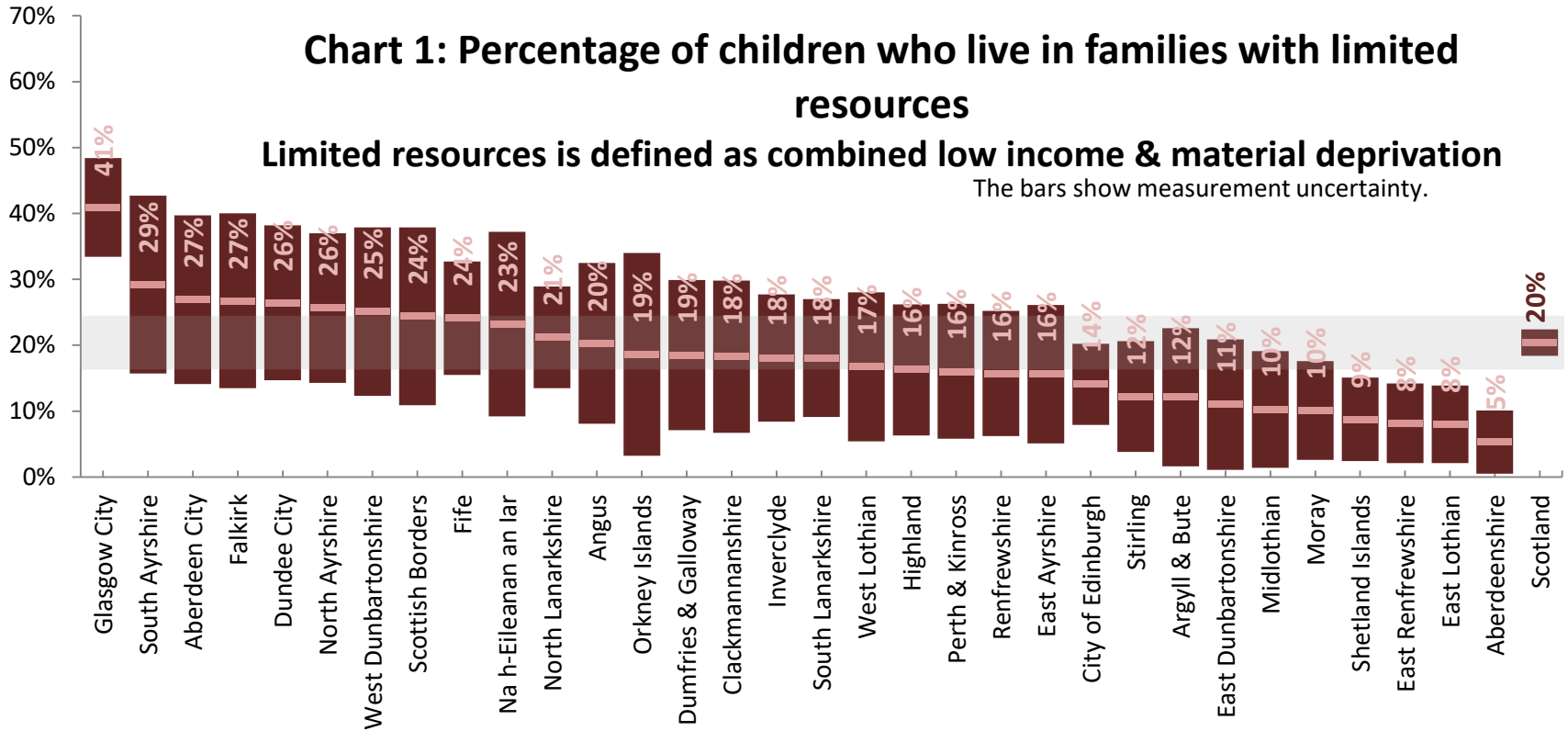
Children in poverty in Scotland (2014-17)

230,000

Two thirds living in a household with an least one adult in work
(or 180,000, BHC)



Children in families with limited resources

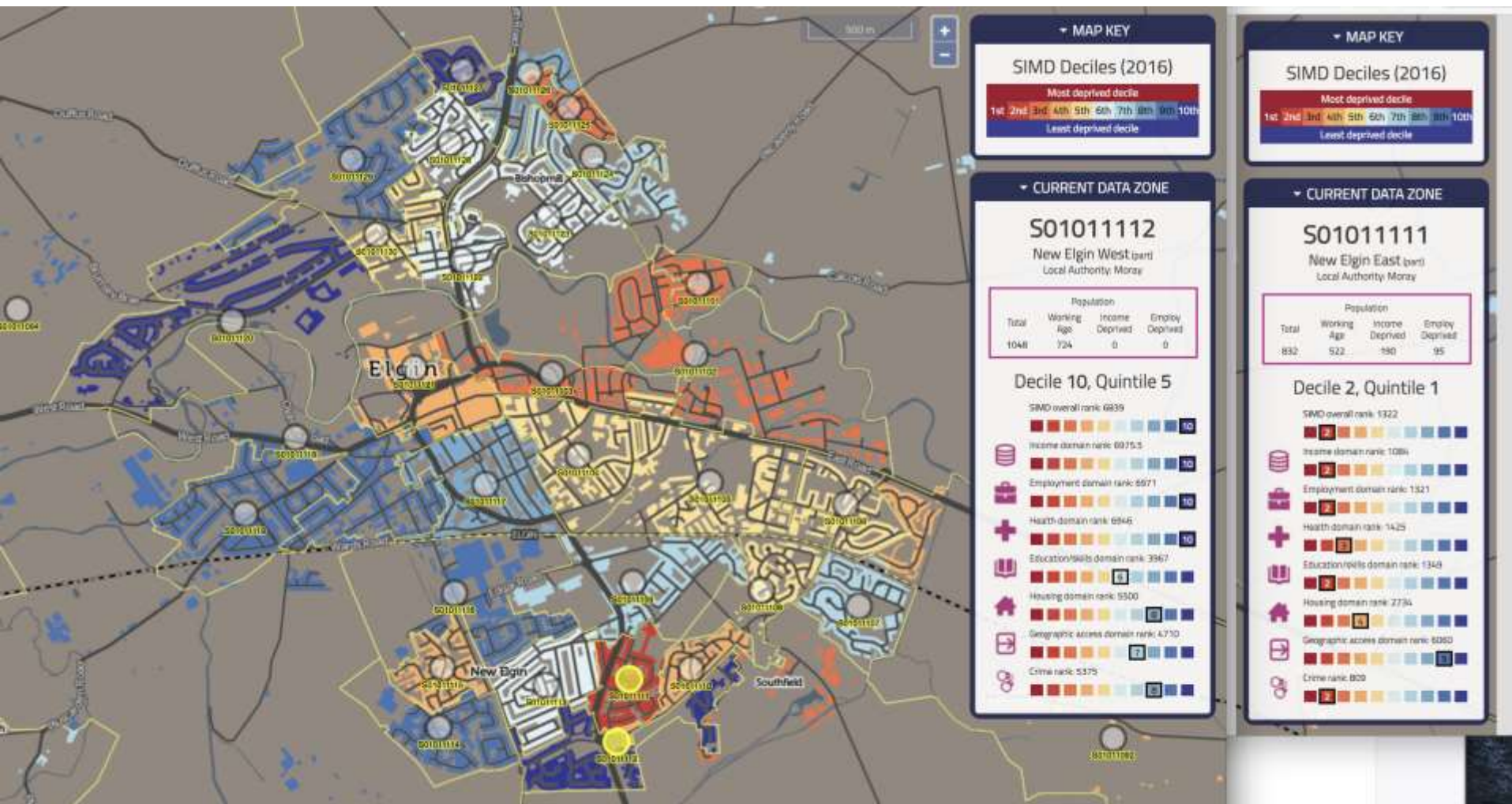


**A local
problem –
Children in
low income
families
local
measure
(Nov. 2016)**

Forres South West and Mannachie - 04	34.7%
New Elgin East - 05	29.6%
Lhanbryde, Urquhart, Pitgavney and seaward - 04	29.4%
Elgin Bishopmill East and Ladyhill - 05	26.5%
Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove and Pinefield - 01	26.0%
Heldon West, Fogwatt to Inchberry - 02	24.9%
Buckie Central East - 05	24.0%
New Elgin East - 01	24.0%
South Speyside and the Cabrach - 01	23.6%
Forres South West and Mannachie - 07	22.8%
Buckie Central East - 03	22.7%
North Speyside - 04	22.3%
Forres South West and Mannachie - 03	22.2%
Forres South West and Mannachie - 06	22.2%
Keith and Fife Keith - 04	21.3%
Forres South West and Mannachie - 05	21.2%
New Elgin West - 04	20.7%
Lossiemouth West - 06	20.3%

Heldon West, Fogwatt to Inchberry - 05	2.3%
Lhanbryde, Urquhart, Pitgavney and seaward - 02	2.1%
Lossiemouth East and Seatown - 02	1.4%
Forres Central East and seaward - 04	1.3%
Elgin Bishopmill West and Newfield - 02	1.0%





It's always been everyone's business



**Falling in love with poverty /
social security / social justice**

Drivers

- Sense of self as socially just
- It's what we do
- Strong anti-poverty sector
- Anti-poverty sector with government
- Availability of local data / SIMD
- Child Poverty Act 2010 becomes Child Poverty Bill 2017
- Austerity induced changes locally
- Nationalist politics



Our National Purpose

To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through *increased wellbeing*, and sustainable *and inclusive growth*



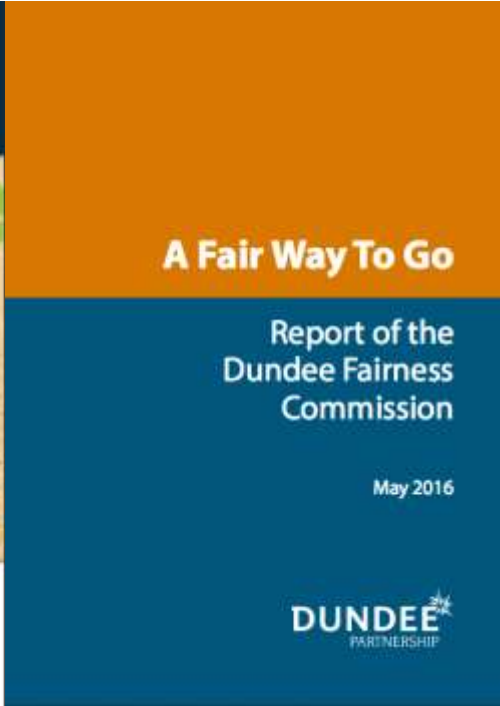
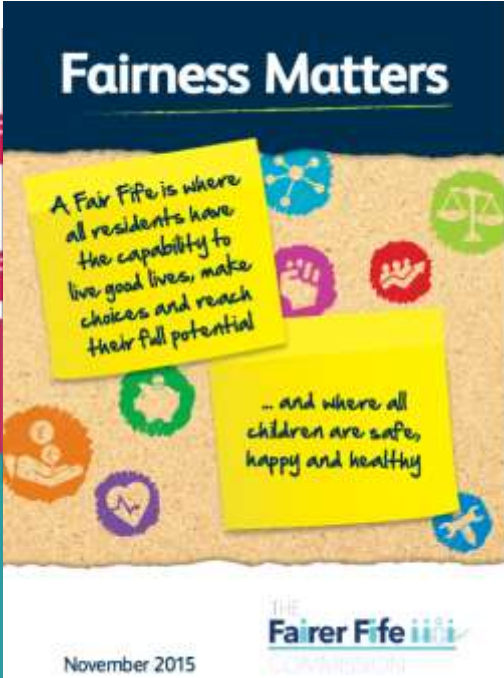
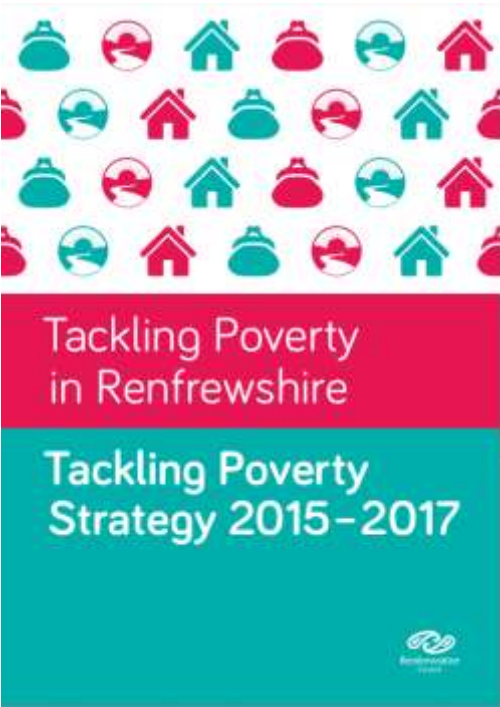
Growing Scottish Local Government Interest

1. Scottish Borders
2. Renfrewshire
3. Falkirk
4. Perth & Kinross
5. Dumfries and Galloway
6. East Lothian
7. Fife (Fairer Fife)
8. Dundee (Fairness Commission)
9. Aberdeenshire

10. Local Government Committee Forum Against Poverty



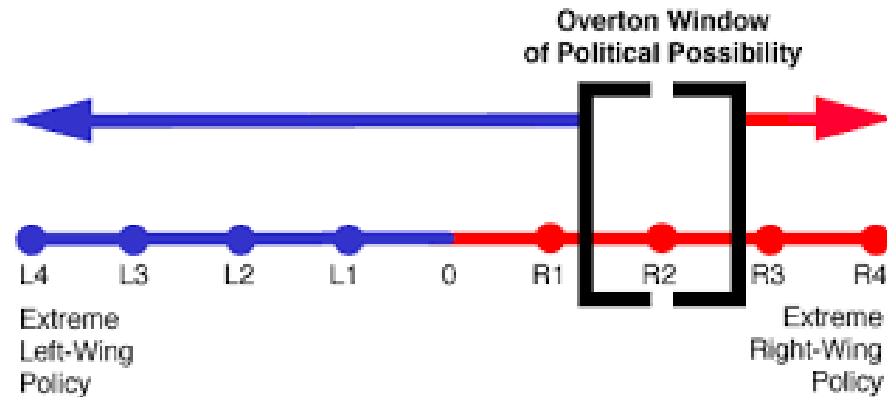
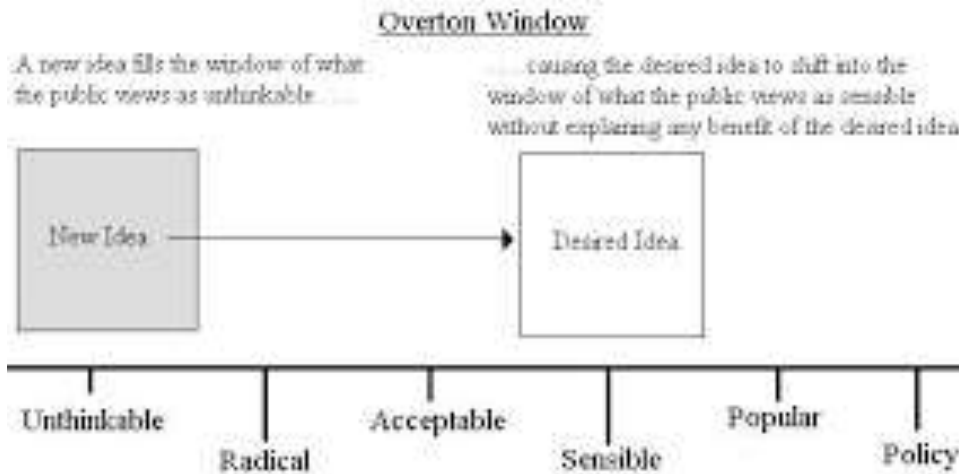
Growing Scottish Local Government Interest



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Shift to the left of the 'Overton window'



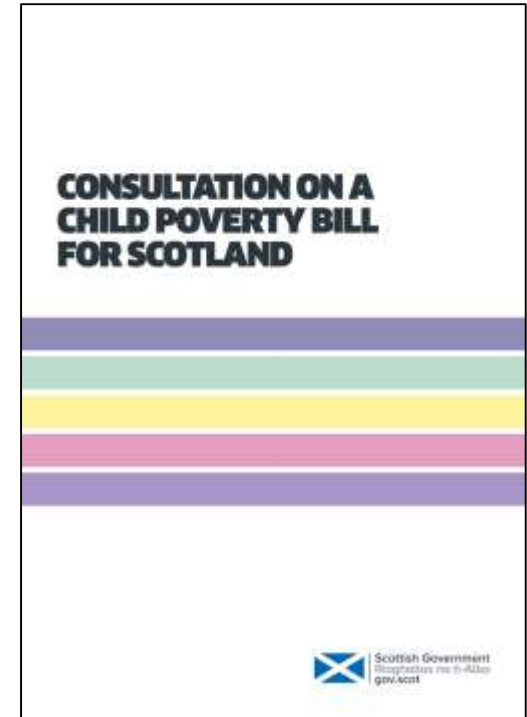


Scottish Conservatives



Child Poverty (Scotland) Act

- Sets out four statutory goals
- Passed unanimously
- Annual report by Ministers
- Reporting mechanisms / delivery plans for April 2018, 2021 and 2026
- Duties on Scottish Government, local authorities and health boards
- Establishes a Poverty and Inequality Commission (chaired by Douglas Hamilton)



Poverty in Scotland: Local opportunities for anti-poverty action in troubled and uncertain times?



Poverty in Scotland: the *local* policy response

Local investment through Child Poverty Act

- Extension of Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland programme
- Expanding SAAS Outreach programme
- New FE initiatives in local areas
- Tailored learning support on Gypsy/Traveller sites
- Strategic local investment through Innovation Fund
- Strengthen links between City Region / Regional Growth deals

- National Child Poverty Co-ordinator (Improvement Service)
- SPIRU analytical partnership
- Voices local people into decision-making



The national as local in the Child Poverty Act

- 32 local plans (LCPARs)
- Drivers of change
 - Employment
 - Household costs
 - Social security
- Fourth dimension ... conceptualising 'quality of life' provisions and 'ameliorating impact' as preventative actions
- Legislating annual planning and reporting for LAs and HBs



Poverty in Scotland: Local opportunities for anti-poverty action in troubled and uncertain times?



Local priorities

What are the options?

- **Enabling people not living in poverty to increase the opportunities for more people to live a poverty-free life**
- **Reducing the number of people living in poverty**
- **Preventing people on the margins of poverty from falling into poverty**
- **Enabling people living in poverty to increase their chance of living a poverty-free life**
- **Protecting those living in poverty from the worst excesses of living with poverty**



(Only) aiming to reduce the number of people living in poverty is a problematic central purpose for community/local anti-poverty strategies



What is the problem with aiming to reduce the numbers living in poverty?

- Nothing (in principle, or for those with control over the key levers)
- The local state (and indeed the Scottish Government) cannot control the key levers
- Reducing numbers tends to be interpreted as a work-first approach and ...
 - Work, per se, does not eradicate poverty
 - (Job) supply is insufficient to meet demand
 - Local state is scaling back on the number it employs



What works for a local strategy?

Core aims should be to:

- **Protecting those living in poverty from the worst excesses of living with poverty**
- **Enabling people to increase their and others' chances of living a poverty-free life**



Why?

It is already what you do

- It would give more explicit acknowledgement of tackling poverty activity
- More likely to engender wider internal support for tackling poverty

It may, by default, become the most important function of the current tackling poverty interventions of the local state

- Rising demand for core services
- Contraction of activity in employment/employability

It is within the realm of local control

- No confounding/intervening factors (it could be argued)



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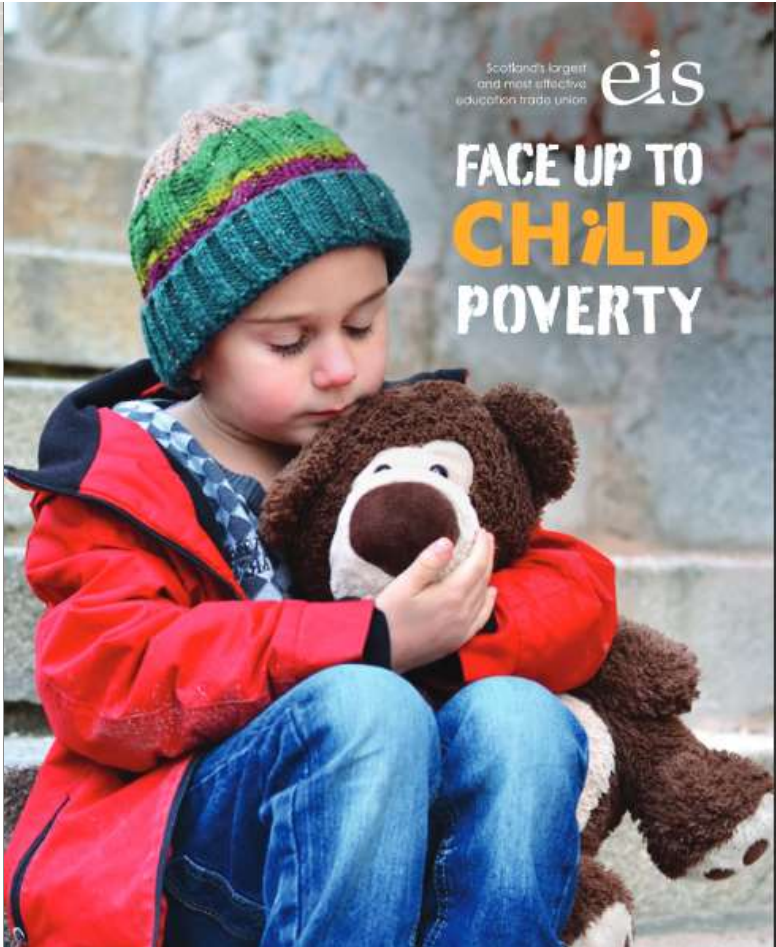
Conclusion

Some food for thought ...

- **Scotland is unique, but lessons can be learned**
- **There is a move toward more localised approaches in Scotland at the current time (although we have the lowest rates of child poverty among UK regions)**
- **There is the basis for what could be public support for tackling poverty: disconnect between attitude and policy strategy**
- **Need to rethink the role of community action in light of changes to the local state**


Communities of interest

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



Thank you for listening.

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