Poverty and Inequality in Scotland
Report of expert seminars and stakeholder feedback on the relationship between equality and poverty

Ali Jarvis and Pippa Gardner

Unify

**Equality and
Human Rights**
Commission

Poverty and Inequality in Scotland

Report of expert seminars and stakeholder feedback on the relationship between equality and poverty

Ali Jarvis and Pippa Gardner
Unify

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH REPORT SERIES
The Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report Series publishes research carried out for the Commission by commissioned researchers.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Commission. The Commission is publishing the report as a contribution to discussion and debate.

Please contact the Research team for further information about other Commission research reports, or visit our website:

Research Team
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Arndale House
The Arndale Centre
Manchester
M4 3AQ

Email: research@equalityhumanrights.com

Telephone: 0161 829 8500

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

You can download a copy of this report as a PDF from our website:
www.equalityhumanrights.com

If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Communication Team to discuss your needs at:

communication@equalityhumanrights.com

Contents

Acknowledgements

Executive summary

Research aims and methodology

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) in Scotland contracted Ali Jarvis – Unify to explore the relationship between poverty and equality and to determine whether the Commission has a valuable role to play in poverty work given its equality mandate. The specific objectives of this research were to:

- understand the relationship between poverty and equality, including the benefits and challenges of linking these two concepts together
- understand where research is needed to fill gaps in knowledge, and
- make recommendations on how the Commission might use its equality expertise to add value to existing anti-poverty work and to enhance understanding and approaches to tackling poverty.

Two seminars were held in Scotland with experts from the equality and poverty fields. In addition, a number of in-depth interviews were held with key organisations and academics in both Scotland and Britain. Focus groups were also held with relevant departments in Westminster and the Scottish government. This study primarily focuses on the Scottish context; however, the wider effect of issues such as taxation and benefits were also considered.

The relationship between poverty and equality

A key part of understanding the role that the Commission can have in anti-poverty work is to understand how equality and poverty fit together.

The policy context

Participants felt that a key institutional barrier to progressing equality within the poverty agenda in Scotland is the approach that the Scottish government takes to anti-poverty strategies. The Scottish government's first poverty strategy in 1999 – A Scotland where everyone matters – contained some equality analysis. This equality approach was gradually eroded in subsequent strategies through shifts in language and policy.

In general, participants thought that the conflation of equality with the term 'social justice' has resulted in policy approaches which fail to take into account the differences that exist between people living in poverty and the different policy interventions that may be required to lift people out of poverty. When anti-poverty strategies do use the term 'inequality' it is often to mean income inequality. While there is some policy consideration given to equality groups on the basis of age, for example children or pensioners, there is currently little rigorous or substantive analysis taking place for other equality groups within anti-poverty policy.

The benefits of linking poverty and equality
Participants at the seminars felt that by linking poverty and equality together more effective policies could be designed and delivered. In general, participants felt that the most effective policies take into account different starting points and the different needs of service users.

Equality analysis acts as a lens to view poverty and is therefore a useful tool for understanding some of the reasons people fall into poverty and the different reasons they remain there. It may also give insight into how best to break entrenched cycles of deprivation. An equality approach can help design policy interventions which alleviate the symptoms of poverty, for example by providing suitable childcare to support women back into work. It may also go further and help policymakers look beyond short-term aims and see the larger issues that contribute to poverty in the first place – in this case issues around gender and the division of caring responsibilities. Equality analysis is therefore useful for tackling poverty in both the long and the short term.

The challenges of linking poverty and equality
Participants felt there were some challenges in bringing together poverty and equality. An equality approach was seen as having the potential to be divisive by artificially splitting individuals into different groups or creating competition for resources along equality lines. There was concern that an equality approach would entrench arguments of the deserving and undeserving poor, with people who were not clearly in an equality group being seen as 'undeserving' while other groups receive support. Linked to this was concern that a hierarchy would be created with some equality groups attracting a higher level of support than others. A discussion on the relative merits of means tested and non-means tested benefits also highlighted how targeting of services might lead to some groups being prioritised over others or a perception that this is the case.

Participants were also concerned that by asking the government and policymakers to take a different approach to poverty, work would be delayed while policies are reviewed and new approaches designed. Some participants felt that the introduction of a new approach would be used to justify inaction in certain areas. Others felt that using an equality analysis to approach anti-poverty work would make the task too complex, or that the lack of data looking at both poverty and equality would hamper progress. There was also concern that this lack of evidence could cause confusion for policymakers about the right approach to take.

The Single Outcome Agreements mean that decisions around how poverty is tackled are now taken at a local level. While this approach may bring certain benefits it also means that there is no longer any consistent national programme for tackling poverty. This may affect the poverty data that is generally available. It may also mean that it is harder to identify and share good practice and to evaluate the policies that are in place. This context adds to the challenge of linking equality and poverty, and many

participants doubted that local capacity exists to understand the relevant equality issues and to design effective policies in light of them.

The Commission's role in anti-poverty work

There was a common view that the Commission does have a role to play in anti-poverty work and that the Commission's value in this area is its expertise in equality. For this reason, the Commission should aim to work with other organisations with poverty expertise to enhance the anti-poverty work that is delivered in Scotland. The Commission should ensure that a good understanding of equality exists among policymakers, poverty experts and the general public. This would help reduce the perception that equality is divisive or a minority issue that only affects a small number of people. Equality analysis is a way to understand the experiences people have and the policy interventions needed to lift people out of poverty.

Participants felt that the Commission's statutory powers are a key tool for tackling poverty in Scotland. For example the effective enforcement of equal pay legislation would benefit low-paid women across Britain and help lift families out of poverty. In addition, building poverty into equality impact assessments would help the government at both a local and a national level design more effective policies for people in poverty. The proposed equality bill, which may contain a socio-economic duty, is also an important opportunity for the Commission and others to influence and strengthen the legislative framework that exists for equality but also for anti-poverty work.

The Equality Measurement Framework (EMF) is another important tool that participants felt could be used in anti-poverty work. The EMF will help people understand how equality issues are progressing in Britain: are things getting better, getting worse or staying the same? This tool already makes the link between poverty and equality with 'standard of living' included as one of the domains of life where equality will be measured. The EMF, therefore, should help policymakers understand how members of different equality groups become susceptible to poverty and act as a guide to the relationship between poverty and equality. This removes some of the complexity associated with linking these issues together.

Filling research and evidence gaps

Some data sources on poverty rates for certain equality groups are available at present, particularly for gender, age and disability. Limited information is also available for ethnicity; however, this is difficult to apply at the Scotland level. What data is available is limited by technical issues around collection and analysis but also by political priorities and decisions around the sort of evidence that should be collected. For example no data is currently available for sexual orientation.

Many participants felt strongly that there are significant amounts of data that is not being used effectively. Data sets are collected for a variety of purposes, but not always analysed or made available to other organisations. Organisations or

policymakers often commission new research without a clear understanding of what is already available or what untapped resources already exist.

There is work that can be done to collect and analyse these existing data sources. It is important that an equality analysis is applied to all existing data so that a better understanding of the relationship between poverty and equality can be developed.

Conclusion and recommendations

Using equality as a lens to analyse poverty will help to develop more effective policies that both prevent people from falling into poverty and help lift people out of poverty. The Commission has a valuable role in promoting the use of equality analysis and ensuring that the relationship between poverty and equality is widely understood. Participants thought that the Commission could add value to anti-poverty work in Scotland in three key ways:

1) Use its expertise in equality to further develop anti-poverty work by:

- exploring ways to develop a clear public message around the benefits of a more equal society for everyone in Britain
- developing a clear narrative that describes the intersection between equality, human rights and poverty
- encouraging the Scottish government to review its equality strategy
- using its statutory powers to support the anti-poverty agenda
- analysing the ways that different ideological approaches tackle poverty and how this impacts on equality groups, and
- using its influence to ensure that any future socio-economic duty in the equality bill applies in Scotland.

2) Enhance understanding and approaches to tackling poverty in a way that reflects group-based inequality by:

- conducting a review of the effectiveness of government anti-poverty strategies for promoting equality
- analysing whether such strategies have affected equality groups differently in Scotland, England and Wales
- exploring how international instruments to tackle poverty might be used more effectively in Scotland, and
- focusing on understanding the causes of and solutions to the entrenched cycles of deprivation that different equality groups face.

3) Develop useful working partnerships around poverty and inequality by:

- working with established anti-poverty organisations or research teams to look at where poverty and equality intersect

- working closely with the Scottish Human Rights Commission to develop a coherent and relevant approach to poverty in Scotland
- developing guidance on the relationship between poverty and equality that is targeted at equality groups and service / support providers, and
- exploring opportunities to work with the Improvement Service to ensure equality and poverty expertise is being developed to deliver Single Outcome Agreements at a local level.

In addition research and evidence could be developed to fill gaps in knowledge. To achieve this, the Commission should:

- pull together existing data in relation to poverty and equality in Scotland, and make it more readily useable and accessible
- develop practical guidance and case studies to demonstrate how equality impact assessment and the statutory duties could tackle poverty and inequality
- work with other relevant partners to make available the 'grey literature' that exists around poverty and equality
- conduct new research focusing on the intersections between poverty and inequality where little is currently known, and
- encourage policymakers and service providers at a local level to gather and use relevant information on poverty and equality.

Recommendations for other organisations
- The Scottish government should update its equality strategy and use this to reappraise its approach to tackling poverty.
- UK, Scottish and local government policymakers should conduct equality impact assessments on all anti-poverty strategies and policy initiatives.
- In Scotland, national and local government should ensure policy outcomes on poverty and inequality are properly reflected in Single Outcome Agreements.

Section 1: Context

1 The background context to the research

1.1 Aims of the research

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) in Scotland contracted Ali Jarvis – Unify to explore how equality and poverty are related and how equality can be used as a lens to analyse poverty and the reasons for low income. Specific objectives were to:

- understand the relationship between poverty and equality, including the benefits and challenges of linking these two concepts together
- understand where research is needed to fill gaps in knowledge, and
- make recommendations on how the Commission might use its equality expertise to add value to existing anti-poverty work and to enhance understanding and approaches to tackling poverty.

These objectives were to be met through developing and facilitating two expert seminars. A number of in-depth interviews and group discussions were added to augment information gathered through the seminars. The interviews were conducted with key organisations and academics in Scotland and in Great Britain, and group discussions were held with relevant departments in Westminster and the Scottish government. The work was focused on the particular Scottish context but needed to recognise and include the wider policy effects of UK-level decisions on issues such as taxation, benefits and other welfare initiatives.

In Appendix A some issues with conducting research on poverty and inequality are explored.

1.2 The project at a glance

Two expert seminars	- Twenty participants at each seminar - Participants had expertise in poverty and / or equality - Participants included public and voluntary sector policymakers and academics - Speakers at the seminars were: - John Dickie – Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland - Morag Gillespie – Scottish Poverty Information Unit - Dr Jim McCormick – Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Dr Carlo Morelli – University of Dundee - Prof. Sheila Riddell – Edinburgh University

Six interviews	• Antonia Bance – Oxfam UK • Dr Tania Burchardt – London School of Economics • Peter Kelly – Poverty Alliance • Philomena de Lima – UHI Millennium Institute • Prof. Ruth Lister – Loughborough University • Dr John McKendrick – Scottish Poverty Information Unit
Group discussions	• Scottish government • Department for Work and Pensions • UK Government Child Poverty Unit • HM Revenue & Customs

A full list of organisations that attended the seminars is in Appendix B.

1.3   The Equality and Human Rights Commission's starting point

The Commission's aim is to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society. To deliver this, the Commission's strategy increasingly focuses on equality across three dimensions:

- equality of outcome
- equality of process, and
- equality of autonomy (relating to individual's choice and control)

As a mechanism to track and analyse these three dimensions of equality, the Commission has developed the Equality Measurement Framework (EMF) (Alkire et al, 2009). This is a tool that will enable the Commission, other public and private organisations and (eventually) the general public to consider the three dimensions of equality across 10 key areas of life. Each of these areas will be informed by data in the form of 'spotlight indicators'. Using a three dimensional matrix, it will be possible to break down these 'spotlight indicators' to consider any variable impacts according to race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

Of the 10 key areas of life that the EMF covers, poverty and inequality are most closely linked to those entitled 'standard of living' and 'productive and valued activities'. They also show strong correlation with 'health' and 'physical security'. Additionally each of the three dimensions of equality, equality of outcome, equality of process and equality of autonomy are relevant when considering people's routes into poverty and the types of initiatives needed to lift them out. It is clear from this that poverty and inequality are integral to people's real-life experiences and for this reason they both play a role in the Commission's EMF.

The good relations and human rights aspects of the Commission's mandate offer further dimensions within which to explore poverty. Good relations can often be

correlated directly with a society's gap between rich and poor both in terms of income and status differentials. While more traditional perspectives on poverty tend to focus on the poverty threshold (that is to say who is above and who is below a nominal poverty line), there is an increasing body of research into the social and community cohesion implications that having a wide income gap has on society. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) highlight how more unequal societies are bad for almost everyone: rich as well as poor. They demonstrate that nearly every modern social and health problem – obesity, lack of community life, violence, drugs, mental illness and large prison populations – are all more likely to occur in a less equal society.

Taking a human rights approach to poverty is often linked to the idea of an individual's **socio-economic rights** – in other words, that as human beings we are all entitled to expect a certain basic minimum standard of living. To date, such an approach has proved most relevant when addressing issues of absolute poverty more common in the developing world, than the relative poverty that we face in a UK context. The right to a basic minimum standard of living is not explicitly included within UK law (beyond the core provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998) but is increasingly an approach being developed internationally. A socio-economic rights perspective therefore has the potential to affect the UK through international instruments such as the United Nations draft guiding principles on poverty and human rights although it is not yet clear how such approaches might work in practice when applied to relative poverty in the UK. Some work is currently being developed on this by the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

The Commission's business plan for 2008/9 includes concern with 'narrowing the poverty gap and realising social inclusion'. This concern was informed both by stakeholder research and by the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee report on Poverty in Scotland (2007). As the Commission in Scotland develops its work plan for 2009–12, it has already identified that there are clear links between belonging to particular equality groups and a higher risk of living in poverty.
This is the case, for example, for lone mothers, pensioners and disabled people. There remains, however, a need to gain a deeper understanding of the specific links between poverty and group-based inequality, and more importantly, how to break those links. The Commission's starting point is the desire to understand the group-based inequality that both leads to and arises from poverty. As such, the Commission's equality remit is the primary focus in this research. While human rights and good relations are important, they are not explored in great depth in this study.

1.4   The policy context
In the last 10 years, since the UK government announced its intention to eradicate child poverty within a generation, there have been numerous policy and legislative advances to tackle poverty in both reserved and devolved contexts, including: welfare and benefits, employment and education initiatives, and social inclusion and community planning. Most initiatives with a direct impact on individual income are the reserved responsibility of the UK government. Over this period, the National

Minimum Wage, Child and Working Tax Credit, and a variety of benefits and pension policies have all sought to raise the household incomes of people in poverty.

As public policy issues, poverty and equality both straddle the division between reserved and devolved accountabilities. This means that legislation, strategies, activities and indeed political focus have to be considered on a number of levels. At times these may be in total alignment, at other times there may be tension between them. New strategies and approaches are being developed by local, devolved and central government to accelerate current progress in tackling poverty. Such initiatives affect support mechanisms for people once they are in (or at risk of) poverty, such as the benefits system or approaches to income maximisation (through benefits take-up or debt management). They also seek to address factors that lead to poverty such as low skills, lack of appropriate employment opportunities and unemployment – and through this minimise the number of people falling below the poverty threshold in the first place.

At a UK government level an age and disability focus has been evident in the child poverty strategy, initiatives around pensioner poverty and specific work on disability (such as disabled living allowances and welfare to work). Less consideration has been given to exploring the particular impacts of poverty on other equality groups.

In Scotland, during the three parliamentary sessions to date, there have been three distinct strategies to tackle poverty that have incorporated equality to a greater or lesser extent:

- A Scotland Where Everyone Matters (Scottish Executive, 1999).
- Closing the Opportunity Gap (McKendrick et al, 2007) – launched in 2004.
- Achieving our Potential (Scottish Government, 2008a).

In March 1999, the Scottish Office (1999) set out its long-term inclusion strategy, Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland. In November 1999, 'Social Justice ... a Scotland where everyone matters' (Scottish Executive, 1999) detailed the targets and milestones against which the Scottish Executive would measure progress. Annual reporting occurred against these social justice milestones between 2000 and 2003, which was seen as a valuable way of bringing together a number of poverty and inequality indicators. The Scottish Social Inclusion Network was set up in 1998 to help develop and coordinate social inclusion strategies. Early on, the network recommended a 'joined-up' approach to address gaps, including an equality audit of social justice milestones, and building an equality perspective into all social inclusion and anti-poverty work.

From 2004, the social justice strategy was refocused with the introduction of 'Closing the Opportunity Gap', which introduced new targets to replace the original social justice milestones. In evaluating this policy, McKendrick et al (2007) undertook some

limited analysis of the circumstances of specific equality groups based on the evidence that was available.

In January 2008 the Scottish government published a discussion paper on tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation (Scottish government, 2008b), followed in November 2008 by 'Achieving our Potential', a framework to tackle poverty and income inequality (Scottish government, 2008a). These publications arise directly from the Scottish government's overarching purpose: 'creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth' (Scottish government, 2007b, p. 1).

The intention is that everything the government does is directed at, or contributes to, the achievement of this central purpose of economic growth. While there are case-study examples of progress within 'Achieving our Potential', there are no specific targets set. By linking its poverty strategy directly to the overarching purpose by means of the Government Economic Strategy (Scottish government, 2007b), the national performance framework becomes the key measurement tool. Within this performance framework, outcome 7 is to have 'tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society'.

Across these three strategies in Scotland and in wider UK government initiatives, common objectives and principles in relation to poverty have been expressed in slightly different ways in publications and policy statements. This variation in language can lead to different focuses and the prioritisation of different issues depending on the context.

When used in relation to poverty, the word 'inequality' often refers simply to income inequality and seldom to the differential experiences and life chances of different groups in society. But in the Scottish government's framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland – 'Achieving our Potential' – there is a commitment to promote equality and tackle discrimination by: 'challenging stereotypes, building on public sector equality duties and supporting individuals so that all can meet their potential' (p13). The report explicitly recognises that 'people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled people and those with caring responsibilities, for example, can be at a particular disadvantage'(p10). The public sector equality duties currently cover race, disability and gender. The new equality bill proposes extending these duties to cover the other protected grounds of age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. This development provides a legislative incentive to make the link between poverty and group-based inequality.

Overall, however, the Scottish government strategy, 'Achieving our Potential', is not consistent on its use of the terms 'equality' or 'inequality'. While it makes direct reference to some equality groups and their experience of poverty, this appears as an addition to the main thrust of the framework for action and is not well-evidenced or supported by measurement frameworks. Following the concordat between the

Scottish government and local government (Scottish government, 2007a) much of the implementation responsibility and budget for action arising from the poverty strategy now lies within the Single Outcome Agreements and therefore is the responsibility of local authorities.

Section 2: Discussion and findings

Section overview

Key findings from the seminars, interviews and discussion groups have been collated thematically:

- where group-based inequality and poverty intersect
- the strategic direction and ideology of poverty and equality
- research, evidence and measurement
- identifying the policy levers, and
- the challenges of effective delivery.

These themes are taken forward in Chapters two to six. Inevitably some of the issues raised through the seminars, interviews and research relate to the challenges of tackling poverty in itself. Where such issues are relevant to the Commission's interest in group-based inequality, they have been included; otherwise they have been deemed outside the scope of this report.

Chapters two and three explore some of the principles underpinning our understanding of both equality and poverty in Scotland and highlight where there are competing views.

Chapters four and five consider the current research and policy contexts, and explore opportunities to enhance the understanding and integration of equality thinking within these contexts. Finally Chapter six looks specifically at delivery and the barriers and enablers to improve implementation and progress in this area.

2 Where group-based equality and poverty intersect

2.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this research is to consider poverty through an 'equality lens'. It is, therefore, necessary to start by exploring participants' current perceptions of the relationships between poverty and equality. From the outset this raised significant debate about what is meant by equality and equality groups.

There was wide agreement in the seminars, interviews and workshops that if significant advances are to be made in addressing poverty experienced by different social groups, then the concept of equality needs to be seen as something that is of benefit to everyone in society. This could be through a wider recognition that everyone is potentially a member of an equality group and that equality is not simply about 'minority interests'. It could also be achieved though promoting a form of enlightened self-interest for those who believe they are personally unlikely to suffer disadvantage or discrimination. This approach focuses on demonstrating how a more equal society enhances everyone's overall quality of life and well-being through, for

example, health improvement, crime reduction, social mobility and economic attainment. It would show why it is worth investing in equality and anti-poverty measures, even for those who are not the direct recipients of support.

While it is agreed that equality should be made relevant to everyone, there are widely differing perspectives as to how to do this and what the actual level of intersection between poverty and equality has been to date. Different reasons were offered for this differing level of focus on poverty and equality in the policy process including priority, focus, resources, data, motivation and political will.

> 'Policy leads still tend to start from the perspective that "I work in poverty not equalities", whereas equalities people know that poverty has a differential impact on different groups.' (Government respondent)

> 'One of the things that poverty analysis routinely does is look at the differential risk rate of poverty on certain groups and some of the equalities groups have forever featured.' (Interviewee)

> 'An example of that is the equalities bill where I feel [our organisation] and most other poverty groups have been off the ball and haven't had nearly the level of engagement in the development of the bill as we should have done.' (Interviewee)

> 'It has always been a desire, in anti-poverty work, to look at injustices and inequalities across different groups so equalities is theoretically always at the heart of an anti-poverty agenda. It is just that there are sometimes data limitations that don't allow that to happen.' (Interviewee)

> 'A final point to raise is that of political will. When questioned at a recent event, the deputy first minister, when asked to characterise the attitude to equality of the Scottish government, said it was "strong and unshakeable". Would that were the case... Now there has been a further shift and drift in terms of both equality and anti-poverty policy and programming. Equality has almost disappeared from current Scottish government discourse.' (Written feedback post-seminar)

2.2   A common understanding and expectation of 'equality'

All research participants cited common understanding, expectation and language around 'equality' as essential to properly understanding poverty and to moving the agenda forward, yet there is no clear vision of what this looks like. It was seen as the responsibility of the Commission to develop some clear definition of 'equality' that is generally accepted and widely used, although there was also a recognition that with people coming from very different starting points, it is not as easy a task as it might seem. There was a widely held perspective that the equality dimension is increasingly being lost from governmental thinking around anti-poverty policy both in

Scotland and at UK level. While poverty and social policy researchers remain interested in this area, there is a sense that such interest is no longer driving (or even informing) policy.

> 'In terms of "Achieving our Potential", things seem a lot less clear about what that involves just now and I couldn't say with any degree of certainty the extent to which equalities issues are at the forefront of the agenda. They are going to be there, they can't not be there, but I wouldn't be sure how strongly they are fronted!' (Interviewee)

A number of reasons were suggested for this perceived decline in the focus on equality in anti-poverty policy. The following four reasons received most attention and wide endorsement from participants at the seminars.

The conflation of equality and social justice
The first reason relates to how successive Scottish governments have conceptualised poverty in the three main poverty strategies since 1999. Anti-poverty policy became framed as social justice in 'A Scotland where everyone matters' (1999). Equality analysis and impact analysis are very much seen as an add-on in this approach and were often carried out after anti-poverty policies were developed. There is a strong belief that even the limited analysis that was done at this stage was only as a result of sustained lobbying from the Scottish Social Inclusion Network.

There is a sense that a key institutional barrier to progressing equality and challenging inequality within the poverty agenda in Scotland has arisen from an ongoing conflation of the concepts of equality and social justice. Significant shifts in language and underlying policy mean that the limited equality focus in 'A Scotland where everyone matters' was gradually eroded in the two successive poverty strategies since 1999. Additionally, this conflation of equality and social justice led to an equal treatment focus resulting in a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to analysis. Interpretations of structural and social inequality analysed by different equality groups – for example, gender or race – are, as a result, difficult to secure or conduct.

Equality as shorthand for unequal income
The second reason given for the declining focus on equality is that the equality discourse has moved almost entirely to one of economic equality and income equity. As the current Scottish government has brought all its priorities under its over-arching purpose – 'to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth' – access to a 'fair' share in Scotland's economic growth is now the driver. Inequality is framed here as divergences between geographic communities, income levels and health outcomes, which will be addressed through fostering greater social cohesion and solidarity. While this has some (at least rhetorical) fit with the good relations remit of the Commission, the approach does not address substantive differences on the

protected equality grounds or the experience of discrimination and the causes and effects of poverty.

> 'We look at things too much from a purely economic stance. There's an important part of the equation that's about people and why they are different.' (Seminar participant)

The absence of any clear government equality strategy
The third reason identified as contributing to the loss of equality focus relates to an absence of overarching strategic thinking around equality. At the start of the Scottish parliament, the establishment of 'equal opportunities' as a founding principle was felt to be well supported through the work of committees and the development of the then Scottish executive's equality strategy. An important opportunity for the Commission is to influence the reworking of the Scottish government's equality strategy to make it more relevant and fit for purpose. Participants felt that the insights emerging from the discussions they were having around poverty and inequality could now be better reflected in an updated equality strategy than was possible even five years ago. This belief results from a sense that there is deeper understanding and a greater social visibility of some equality groups which creates the opportunity for policy to reflect more targeted and less generalised approaches. An updated equality strategy would help create the common framework of understanding that everyone agreed is needed and enable the analysis and evidence to identify exactly what are Scotland's significant inequalities.

The lack of statutory drivers and enforcement
The fourth reason given for the perceived declining focus on equality is linked to the legislative underpinning and its enforcement. This issue tended to divide opinion with many believing that until there is seen to be a legal downside for not meeting statutory duties or equal pay legislation there would be no major shifts. Others felt, however, that the law is currently too blunt an instrument to make lasting difference. Clearly responsibility for the equality duties and for discrimination law lies with the Commission and there is wide support for a higher profile for this, whatever tactical approach is taken. There was also acknowledgement that when using the law as it stands (in advance of any new equality bill) it is challenging for the Commission not to let single agenda politics (such as whether poverty is most relevant for older or disabled people) overshadow what are complex and overlapping issues. This is a tightrope that becomes even harder to walk when resources are limited and declining and when the wider public perception of 'equality' may be losing its lustre due to lack of political clarity or leadership on the issue.

Among all participants, the achievement of a common understanding of equality (both in its own right and how it specifically relates to poverty) is almost universally felt to be an essential next step in making progress. What is needed now is agreement around clear and simple messages. There is felt to be a real opportunity to capitalise on public perceptions of people's experience of poverty being about

groups and circumstances, and not about individuals as either 'victims' or 'architects of their own misfortune'.

> 'The intersection between social group inequality and socio-economic inequality is just **crucially** where the EHRC should site itself.' (Interviewee [interviewee's emphasis reflected in bold])

A final area that prompted wide discussion but little new insight or agreement was where the human rights approach fits alongside the overarching messages about equality that were debated. Some felt that human rights are a bigger concept than equality and that the whole debate should be placed in this context. Others (who had come from expert backgrounds in human rights work) see it in more concrete terms as being much more willing to apply and enforce the various human rights tools and articles in a more legislative approach. Other participants felt that the human rights arguments are either discredited (by right-wing social commentary) or insufficiently nuanced to understand why certain people's experience of poverty is different – and how then to address that. There was a minority view that explicitly introducing a human rights dimension is just another reframing of the same old issues and only provides more excuses for those with responsibility for tackling poverty to claim ignorance and go back to the beginning of the problem.

The original brief for this work recognised that human rights are an important part of the poverty picture and indeed of the Commission's overall remit, but that the primary focus of the seminars should be on group-based inequality. If a more in-depth human rights analysis is required, then specific work bringing together a different range of expertise is needed. For the purposes of this report, the human rights perspectives arising from the research have been included but are not the primary focus.

2.3   Commonality and difference among equality groups

A widely shared perspective is that anti-poverty organisations or researchers would support research looking at the experience of people in poverty within different equality groups. To date, however, funds have not been available to deliver robust evidence. Many of the interviewees are interested in the intersections and overlaps between different characteristics. This covered both the effect of belonging to more than one equality group as well as the distinctions that arise **within** the protected grounds. For example, what is it that makes some ethnic minority groups (or certain people within those groups) have different experiences of poverty than others? At this stage, some consideration was given to the issue of life-triggers as being a determinant within groups that could lead to very different outcomes for different people. It was acknowledged that with people's experiences being so different across and within each equality group, the key to making sense of differing outcomes comes from having the depth of evidence that enables a real insight into cause, consequence and experience. It was felt that the development of the Commission's Equality Measurement Framework (EMF) would be a helpful step and would provide

some examples and comparators for poverty in relation to defined groups that different people can understand.

> 'When you understand poverty to be caused structurally rather than through individual factors (the choices that people make about their own lives), it becomes much more easy to see how growing up as a woman or from an ethnic minority really impacts on your life chances, your outcomes, your chances of living in a low income household. If, for example, you control for all of the other characteristics that are likely to be prevalent in black and ethnic minority households then you are still left with an ethnic penalty that can't be explained by the other factors such as differential family formation – that is what I think is missing from many of the more traditional understandings of poverty in the UK.' (Interviewee)

Concern was, however, expressed that the often cited problems of data gaps would mean that certain indicators had little validity for some groups.

Many participants have particular expertise in relation to one or more equality groups and were keen to outline the specific poverty risk factors they believe make those individual groups more or less vulnerable. While this is useful to inform the background knowledge base and to indicate where there might be research or evidence gaps, the purpose of the seminars and interviews was not to try and analyse the experiences of individual groups, but rather to look at the overall relationship between poverty and group-based inequality. For that reason such points have only been included where they illustrate a wider issue.

A significant number of participants drew attention to the need to recognise the risk of discrimination between equality groups (creating hierarchies driven by popularity, pressure, political influence or other factors unrelated to need). The point was also raised that we need to be careful not to discriminate between those who are perceived as being in equality groups (that is to say protected by discrimination legislation) and those who are not. Further discussions on this latter point underline the problematic perception that equality is necessarily about minorities and that 'most people' don't come under an equality group. It was also highlighted that the statutorily protected equality grounds do not cover other identifiable groups where poverty may be a highly relevant issue such as refugees and asylum seekers, ex-offenders, carers and migrants. Behind all these concerns is a real and widely recognised fear that by 'focusing on' some groups, others are necessarily excluded. There was a divergence of views as to whether approaches should be put in place to avoid such focusing or whether this is a necessary reality of identifying and then prioritising resources to those that are most disadvantaged.

As more thought was given to the implications of looking at poverty and group-based inequality together, people recognised that potential advantages of this approach include more focused analysis and needs-led support, a recognition of commonality

of experience and the building of solidarity (both in relation to group identity and the narrowing of income gaps). However, potential disadvantages are that it could lead to increased segregation (a comment was made about 'poor, black ghettos in America's southern cities'), or be divisive by confronting some less attractive social attitudes head on. Several respondents even suggest that some decision making in this area around research or policy priorities is influenced to an extent by political or practical expediency from the outset.

> 'We don't have any data on sexual orientation, gender reassignment and some other things – these are on the agenda for the National Equality Panel – but it is going to be difficult to say anything about it, partly because these are categories that are not reflected in any official data. We are starting to get data on same-sex couples but that is only one part of sexual orientation. There is perhaps a wrong presumption that it isn't really a poverty issue (for example "pink pound") so there hasn't been any incentive to really have a look.' (Interviewee)

> 'Data is one issue but even beyond that some equalities groups are always going to be more likely to get more public support for issues than others, for example disability will always get more support than sexuality.' (Interviewee)

> 'I imagine that the anti-poverty lobby would be quite selective about how they would present their arguments and present their cases in order to not make life more difficult – again. That is not a criticism of the anti-poverty lobby and I am not speaking on behalf of them but from a distance, I can understand public opinion and how that works [... on the topic of looking at poverty by equality group].' (Interviewee)

2.4   Is poverty an 'equality group'?

As seminar participants and interviewees explored the relationships between poverty and group-based inequality, there was some support for the idea that poverty or, even more broadly social class, should be brought within the statutory definitions of an equality group. For some advocates of the idea this is a pragmatic approach to integrating different areas of work.

> 'I think there are live arguments to be had about the extent to which the EHRC can or should take on the poverty agenda on top of the other equality strands or exactly how they integrate that into the equality strands that they do have to deal with.' (Interviewee)

For others it is about the status that the issue would then get or the fact that the inclusion of poverty as an equality group would challenge some wider social perceptions that 'equality' is just a way of protecting the vested interests of particular (minority) groups.

No conclusion was reached on this. It was agreed that inequality does not necessarily imply or entail poverty. It was also recognised that currently the protected equality strands are all inherent personal characteristics and poverty is not part of an individual's identity in the same way. This latter point adds weight to those calling for social class to be defined as an equality group. However, there is then no clarity on how you might define or measure it or how you allow for social mobility. There is also no clarity on whether class necessarily correlates with income or wealth or whether class actually exists or is simply a social construct. This demonstrates the multi-layered complexity of class, poverty and equality and shows how little common understanding currently exists on their relationship.

The fact that a socio-economic duty is being considered in the equality bill is widely felt to be a positive step forward although significant concerns were expressed about the fact that this is not likely to apply in Scotland. The point was made by a few individuals that the Scottish government's 'golden rule of solidarity' is designed to have the same effect. However, there is little confidence among participants that it would have any impact without the statutory underpinning, clear and consistent measurement structures and the mechanisms for enforcement that would accompany legislation. Since the seminars were held, the Scottish government has started consultation on extending the proposed socio-economic duty to Scotland.

2.5 Key findings on where group-based inequality and poverty intersect

- The concept of equality needs to be seen as relevant and of benefit to everyone in society if it is to have a positive impact in tackling poverty.
- There is currently only limited shared understanding and language to describe how equality, human rights and poverty intersect. Clear public and institutional messages are needed to provide leadership on the issue.
- The conflation of equality and social justice over the last 10 years is confusing.
- Equality is increasingly presented within poverty strategy as being only about income equality.
- There is a sense that the government has lost focus on its equality strategy and that a fundamental review of this would help progress.
- Despite the public sector duties on equality and the legislation on equal pay, it is not felt that the law has been sufficiently enforced to have real impact on tackling different groups' experience of poverty.
- The Equality Measurement Framework should help people understand how and when members of different equality groups become more or less susceptible to poverty.
- Clear evidence is needed to drive the decision-making process and ensure that policy hierarchies are not created between different equality groups or people not covered by equality legislation such as ex offenders, carers, refugees and asylum seekers.
- As poverty is not an intrinsic part of an individual's identity, it should not be seen as an 'equality ground' in its own right. Social class is a more complex

concept that can correlate with poverty and is not felt to be fully reflected in current approach to equality.

- A socio-economic duty in Scotland is seen as a positive opportunity.

3 Strategic direction and ideology of poverty and equality

3.1 Introduction

Evidence presented at the seminars by two of the expert speakers demonstrates that overall, Scotland is not a poor country. It enjoys high levels of wealth but at the same time suffers high levels of income inequality and has a poorer performance in addressing this than the rest of the UK. The long-term trends in this area are not showing any rapid or significant rate of improvement. When exploring Scotland's relationship with poverty the term 'ideology' was introduced by research participants to describe the underlying values, beliefs and political drivers that inform and motivate the government's and others' choice of strategic policy direction. Although the broad objective of this research was to look at the relationship between poverty and group-based inequality, it must be recognised that for many experts in both fields, the ideological drivers behind their views on poverty or equality are a deep-seated and powerful influence.

Since devolution, there has been significant focus and resource directed at poverty and income inequality in Scotland. As noted in Chapter 1, three key poverty strategies have been developed by successive governments. Considerable time was spent in the seminars and with some interviewees discussing the strategic directions that have been followed to date, the effectiveness of the range of approaches that have been implemented and whether or not such approaches have been set against an appropriate ideological basis.

3.2 A diverse range of strategic directions

Seminar and interview participants commonly described thinking by successive UK and Scottish governments as lacking in consistent application over time. There was a sense that different strategies since devolution have not always been clear on how their component parts come together to address poverty and income inequality generally or more specifically, the impact they might have on different equality groups.

Varied examples of different approaches to tackling poverty were discussed. These fell broadly into two groups: those that are about raising individual income levels through increased employment and tax incentives (generally seen to be faster acting), and those that are about supporting people through welfare and benefits (often seen as longer term). While it is acknowledged that there is potential for overlap between the two broad approaches, there was a strong belief that urgent action is needed to avoid confusing them. This stemmed from perceptions that interventions driven through taxation are seen by the government as more financially attractive than those driven through welfare, where the government's focus is perceived to be all about cost minimisation.

While over the last 10 years there has been common agreement between the UK and Scottish governments that work is the best route out of poverty, this is commonly felt to be a gross oversimplification that risks concealing key issues. It was pointed out that the majority of people in poverty in Scotland are actually already in work. Much greater attention therefore needs to be given to job security, sustainability of employment, occupational segregation and low pay, so that the 'work as a route out of poverty' strategy does not simply perpetuate poverty, or cause a 'no pay' / 'low pay' cycle. The 'work as a route out of poverty' approach was also felt to take little long-term consideration of people who are unable to work or indeed the experiences of children in poverty.

Where equality group considerations have been taken into account in poverty strategies – for example for age – this approach is often felt to be inconsistent. For example age is not only about 'pensioner poverty' as different points in a person's life bring different challenges. In addition an individual's choices or experiences at 18 or 40 may prove to be the key determinant of whether they will be poor in later life.

Many people, particularly those who have worked in the anti-poverty arena for a long time, recognise that within both Scottish and UK administrations, there appears to be a certain amount of disheartenment and frustration about the successive approaches taken to tackling poverty. Many people commented on the variety of strategies and initiatives that have come and gone without leaving any significant legacy of improvement. This can also negatively affect public attitudes on the issue if it is felt that significant investment is being wasted. Against such a backdrop, a small minority felt it was a risk to introduce the further dimension of equality groups into the poverty debate. They felt that seeking a more structured integration of equality thinking into the government's anti-poverty strategy simply placed further expectations on the government that they would be unlikely to deliver against. This might add to the perceived sense of frustration and defensiveness among officials.

> 'I think they think that they have done an awful lot and not an awful lot seems to have changed.' (Interviewee)

3.3   Universal versus targeted approaches

Much of the perceived strategic confusion of previous years was felt to be around the targeting of resources and the best focus for achieving sustainable improvements with finite amounts of money. There was no common view as to whether government strategy has been aimed at those who are hardest to reach and therefore who have the lowest take-up or aimed at helping those with the greatest need and therefore having the greatest impact.

Linked to this were the lengthy discussions in both seminars around the relative merits of universal or targeted provision of support. Within this universal versus targeted theme, participants referred to two different aspects. Firstly, they explored the relationship between means-tested and non-means-tested benefits. Secondly

they considered how targeting might mean prioritising certain groups as being in greatest need – whether or not any subsequent support is then subject to means testing. This latter point is particularly relevant in relation to the specific needs that might be identified by equality groups. There was no settled view on whether Scottish government strategy should tend towards universal or targeted provision. However, more disadvantages than advantages inherent to universality were identified and the last government's flagship policy of free personal care for older people is felt to have done little to alleviate poverty.

Disadvantages
- Universality impacts on people unequally – it does not pick up those who need it most and can widen the gap between the most and the least well off.
- Universality brings significant opportunity costs in the provision of extensive services especially when there is tension between budgets or a tightening of resources in recession.
- There is a danger that what some perceive to be the politically driven policies of universal benefit actually further privilege the articulate and informed middle classes, thereby diluting what goes to those in greatest need. For example, free personal care for older people and free school meals for all pupils.

Advantages
- Universal approaches can save resources by avoiding the costs and complexity of administration.
- There has been high effectiveness of universal services in reaching key groups. For example when comparing Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit, the direct payment of Child Benefit has brought significant advantages. However, even this 'universal' benefit is in fact targeted in that it only applies to people with children and doesn't consistently cover, for example, children of migrant workers.
- Universal provision avoids means testing which tends to further stigmatise the poor and often leads to low take-up among those in greatest need.

In addition to these pros and cons, to be genuinely universal, support must be socially accessible and recognise different access needs. It was suggested that currently much support is often 'ostensibly universal but in reality inaccessible'. This is because many people (for example, older people, disabled people, those with low literacy levels) find it almost impossible to navigate through the administrative maze to reach the support they are entitled to. It is important also to be clear on terminology as support that might be described as 'universal' is in reality already targeted in that its access is limited to certain groups; for example, winter fuel payments for people over 60.

3.4 Redistribution versus economic growth approaches

'Redistribution – isn't this the elephant in the room? If we really want to be clear about what poverty looks like and how it affects our society, then we also need to be clear what wealth looks like – who are the rich people? What are their shared characteristics?' (Seminar participant)

Although the research did not set out to explore redistribution as an ideology for tackling poverty, this issue came up consistently with significant shared support from seminar participants and interviewees alike. There is a strong belief that there is a poverty of aspiration around the poverty agenda. This affects the attitudes of people working in this area and the steps that are defined to close the poverty gap, and can result in a certain level of defeatism or defensiveness. Such poverty of aspiration was felt to be demonstrated at many levels: by governments who are perceived to focus on dealing with the consequences of poverty while unprepared to address its root causes, by voluntary sector bodies who get drawn into individual problems but have insufficient resources to work on longer term change and by society in general where there is felt to be a growing acceptance that poverty will always exist. Subsequent discussions then explored what was really meant by a more equal and fair society and how this links to the good relations and community cohesion interests of the Commission. There were conflicting views around whether the focus should be on establishing a 'Scottish living wage' that is a fair foundation for everyone in society or whether the priority should be to tackle the size of the gaps between people's income – not simply to get people above a basic minimum. This is based on the belief that a healthy society is one where everyone feels they have an equal stake and where there is not an enormous discrepancy in the size of either an individual's contribution to that society (for example, through taxes or employment) or what they get from that society (through welfare, benefits, social care or services).

As the idea of how a more redistributive approach might work in practice was explored, a staged approach was outlined to illustrate the practicalities of how this might be achieved. This hypothetical example suggests that over a given period, such as 20 or 30 years, there would need to be a widely communicated and public approach to redistribution. Such an approach would need to redistribute the top end of income, plan for increased gain, in terms of income but equally increased contributions in terms of taxation by those currently in poverty and ensure that the costs and timings are known and publicised in advance to allow long-term planning. For example the national minimum wage would be increased by a publicised amount per year over the first 10 years.

This approach to redistribution requires significant changes in social attitudes. The ongoing relationship between 'rich' and 'poor' people is critical to maintaining social balance and to resolving the issue of poverty in a sustainable way. There is some recognition that if these categories of 'rich' and 'poor' overlap consistently with certain social groups then any exercise in redistribution, if not carefully presented, could contribute to increased tension and discrimination. For example if certain groups are

always perceived to be recipients of benefits this may lead to resentment from those who perceive they are paying for it. Participants recognised the political implications of linking redistribution and equality and the political confidence and sensitivity needed to go down this route.

> 'The government and society's perception of competition between the equality groups is a key barrier to the redistribution debate. The EHRC must be aware that there is a real danger of "divide" on this agenda so all work around poverty and group-based equality must build social cohesion, not simply reinforce existing or new divisions. We have to recognise the difference between "fairness and special pleadings".' (Seminar participant)

While there was much enthusiasm for a more redistributive approach, there were also strong minority voices of caution and scepticism about the feasibility of achieving this. A suggested alternative to trying to shift the status quo in one go (however attractive that approach might seem) would be to establish a clear route to a more redistributive approach, with a strong economic justification for each required step. Such a strategy might not address some of the attitudinal issues head on but it would recognise that a far more informed critique is needed in this area if measurable benefit is to be demonstrated to those who would lose, those who would gain and to society as a whole:

> 'We need to be much more sensitive about hitting the top. "Banker bashing" is easy but the real top is quite wide and redistribution needs to make both practical and emotional sense to those who perceive they will lose.' (Seminar participant)

As an additional piece of information in this discussion around approaches to economic redistribution, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation outlined the findings of their modelling of child poverty projections from February 2009 which suggested that the cost of the redistribution needed to meet the 2020 child poverty target was around £4.5 billion a year.

3.5   Key findings on strategic direction and ideology of poverty and equality

- Despite three major anti-poverty strategies over 10 years from successive governments, progress is felt to be slow and initiatives lack ambition.
- The focus on work as the main route out of poverty overlooks the issues facing the 'working poor' and those who do not work such as children and pensioners.
- Expert views on poverty are often tied to social and political belief systems or ideologies that can be in conflict with each other. Areas of polarised views include:
    - the use of universal support mechanisms versus more targeted approaches

- favouring economic redistribution as a way to alter the balance of wealth in society or focusing on economic growth for society as a whole that will reach the poorest through a 'trickle down' effect, and
- focusing on those in 'greatest need' versus the expectation of a 'living wage' for everyone.
- Where equality thinking intersects with ideologies around poverty further complexity is seen, specifically around who is perceived to 'benefit', whether this is seen as fair and how you might evidence or prioritise need.
- There are major political and policy challenges inherent in some of the more radical approaches to tackling poverty and group-based inequality.

4 Research, evidence and measurement

4.1 Introduction

While the need for 'more research' is often a knee-jerk answer to the question of how we move forward on poverty and inequality, responses show that this issue is more complex. It is not simply a question of the absolute availability of data on poverty (disaggregated by equality group or otherwise) but also the ability of different people and different groups to access, use and interpret the data that is currently available.

Some participants expressed frustration that there is a constant demand for more data rather than being creative and taking action with what is already available.

> 'I feel that there is a lot of talk – I've had enough of people saying that we need to have better research and more data. I think just commissioning ever more research is a way of avoiding putting the resources where they need to into resolving issues.' (Interviewee)

Data availability appears to have risen in importance recently. This is because of the move to an outcome focus approach by central and local government and specifically, the increased role of Single Outcome Agreements under the government's concordat with local authorities. In general, such an outcome focus (intended to measure the actual **effect** of policy interventions, rather than simply the **delivery** of them) is seen as positive. However, participants were only too aware of the type of evidence base that is required for this to be effective as well as the cultural shift that will be needed for this to be delivered. This is tied to a widely held perception that for local authorities this means moving away from measuring process (for example, considering what money has been spent or how many people were involved in an initiative) to assessing what has actually changed as a result of their work and what is the long-term impact.

4.2 Availability of data

Among seminar participants, interviewees and group discussants alike, the first priority is to make better use of the data that exists. How people define 'better use' varies. Some see the need to undertake applied social statistical analysis while others focus on the opportunity to identify and use some non-traditional information sources. For example looking into data sets that exist by default rather than design and re-polling them in the light of the poverty debate. An example of such data is the NHS payroll data for a cohort of some 60,000 nurses in Scotland. There is clearly a willingness to be creative and a belief that by being prepared to look differently at data that is available, there are new insights to be gained.

There is a growing acknowledgement that all the conceivable data we might need is not available (and possibly some of it never will be). We need to accept that some information in some circumstances will give the whole picture but more often we will

have to combine a number of elements to extrapolate an individual's unique experience and then become more confident in using this to illustrate wider trends. Some individuals with a strong policy and implementation focus expressed considerable frustration around the poor use we make of the information that does exist.

> 'A lot of little studies have been done but what has been missing is maybe taking something strand-by-strand and doing a meta-analysis of these pieces of work to identify what it is that we know, what it is that we don't know and how we should be developing things further. We seem to forget that some pieces of work have been commissioned and we have people doing the same sort of work over and over again with no one taking a strategic view of where it is all going.' (Interviewee)

There is a high degree of anticipation around what the Equality Measurement Framework might deliver as a tool; bringing together a consistent range of indicators across all equality groups. The caveat frequently expressed though is that the data fields across each of its dimensions will need to be populated and it will have limited impact if it exists in isolation and is not embedded into mainstream Government review and evaluation frameworks.

There is still a need to conduct new research as there are clearly some discrete areas where very little base data is available, either on equality groups or on their relationship to the experience of people in poverty. Most often mentioned are sexual orientation and gender identity, and issues relating to the additional 'costs' of disability. There is, however, recognition of the cost, time and resources needed to undertake new research. The overriding message from participants is to make careful judgement and prioritise what new empirical research needs to be commissioned, but more importantly, to better use and act on the evidence that is already available.

4.3 Measuring progress

Two key issues arise repeatedly around the measurement of progress on addressing poverty and group-based inequality.

The first of these concerns headline progress towards poverty targets and the overall national picture. The UK government's child poverty strategy sets 2020 as a target date for achievement while the Scottish government's 'Achieving our Potential' sets the slightly earlier target of 2017 by which to have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society. This seems to put all the emphasis on the medium term – with very real potential for significant political change within that timeframe.

> 'All the emphasis in the UK right now is around "medium term" poverty ... and everyone is talking in that sort of timeframe – it is pushed by the policy process. All those in the sector are interested in all timeframes and all

strategies that have to take place but I think there is an in-built bias at the moment on focusing in the medium term.' (Interviewee)

A degree of anxiety was expressed in some quarters that this medium-term timeframe is not long enough to embed sufficient equality data and effect the level of change needed (particularly for the Scottish government having only published its strategy in 2008), but at the same time it is too long for there to be any real sense of urgency within any single parliamentary term around policy interventions.

Essentially a range of macro-economic targets were felt to have been developed by the Scottish government but little focus is placed on how policy and performance contribute to these outcomes. There is no clarity on how the 'golden rules' of solidarity and cohesion will be measured in terms of what has made a difference to the numerical indicators and how they link to spending (both in relation to reducing poverty and reducing group-based inequality). It was even suggested by one participant that 'Achieving our Potential' is little more than a regrouping of pre-existing initiatives under one new banner with no new strategic foundation. The Scottish government strategy as it stands was described as being:

> 'Patchy and inconsistent in its inclusion of equality – with greatest focus on gender.' (Government respondent)

Despite the attraction of the decision-making process now being carried out in the local area, which potentially makes decision makers more aware of and responsive to local needs, Single Outcome Agreements were viewed by many as a passing-on of responsibility by the Scottish government. Questions were posed (and left unanswered) around whether any meaningful evaluations would take place at local or national level, whether there would be the local capacity to understand the relevant equality issues, and how performance would be measured and funded. There is widespread concern that we will no longer be able to evaluate progress at a national level (as it would simply be an aggregation of a wide and disparate range of local initiatives and outcomes) and that as such it will be difficult to have a national Scottish focus with leadership that is accountable for tackling poverty and inequality. Devolution to the local level, while good in theory, is seen as having the potential to cause significant problems in practice.

> 'What I think will become more difficult now [that delivery is at a more local level] is ascertaining what the drivers are and the successes are with the anti-poverty agenda in Scotland.' (Seminar participant)

> 'What do I think of Single Outcome Agreements? What is going to be really interesting is in relation to the Fairer Scotland Fund money and how it is not ring-fenced as of next year. Those monies that are currently channelled through the Fairer Scotland Fund are going to be mainstreamed and at that

point we will have a much clearer idea of just how seriously local government is going to treat "tackling poverty".' (Interviewee)

4.4 Key findings on research, evidence and measurement

- Although it is frequently suggested that more research is needed, a lot is already available which could be better used.
- Currently many audiences find it hard to access and understand the variety of mainstream and alternative data sources.
- The Equality Measurement Framework should help understand how and when members of different equality groups become more or less susceptible to poverty but its use needs to be integrated into policymaking.
- There are some clear gaps in evidence, common examples being sexual orientation, gender reassignment and the additional living costs associated with disability.
- Where new research is commissioned there needs to be careful judgement around what the priority issues are and where evidence is already available.
- Accurate performance measures on poverty and group-based inequality become particularly important in relation to Single Outcome Agreements.

5 Identifying the policy levers

5.1 Introduction

One advantage identified in building group-based inequality into poverty policy is that policy works most effectively if it is designed in response to specific circumstances and needs. Particular groups in society (because of their identity or experience) might have similar circumstances or needs, and policy interventions designed through an 'equality lens' can be closely aligned to those needs. In this way return to work support for third-generation unemployed young men is likely to be different from the return to work support needed for young mothers. However, this then raises the likelihood that different policies might be required for different equality groups raising issues of cost, prioritisation and practical delivery. Some people felt that this is a trap that the debate around poverty and inequality keeps falling into.

> 'There has been a cyclical feel to the discussion (cause, effect, consequence) and we need to really understand where to break the link so that we can develop appropriate, relevant and impactful policy as effective intervention.' (Seminar participant)

Linked to this is the recognition that poverty is often found at the intersection of a number of discrete policy areas such as employment, health, education, welfare and criminal justice. The suggestion was made that instead of adopting a retrospective approach and starting from people who are already in poverty, it would be more effective over the longer term to build an anti-poverty focus automatically into core policy areas, therefore taking on a 'mainstreaming' approach. By effectively using equality impact assessments and poverty impact assessments as tools to shape a different future, we might not get stuck finding solutions to problems that are already entrenched. There was clear agreement that governments and policymakers find this difficult and there are very few examples of where this has been done effectively – particularly across policy areas, for example health or education, where the complexity of the relationships between issues can rapidly escalate. Many felt that more partnership working between equality and poverty experts both outside and within the government could help develop ways to conduct this kind of analysis more effectively. This could be beneficial in terms of changing attitudes and demonstrating benefits. While the Equality Measurement Framework is seen as an important tool in assisting this, there were still significant reservations about how to overcome the challenge perceived around policymakers' narrow views of data usage and alternative evidence sources.

5.2 An 'equality lens' to consider poverty policy and interventions

From the outset, participants saw the benefits of effective equality impact assessment and saw this as an important tool that the Commission has a specific remit to influence.

Given the perceptions of the current difficulties in terms of competence, take-up and commitment around equality impact assessment, it was proposed that there should be a two-stage approach to using equality impact assessments as an 'equality lens' to analyse and develop poverty policy. An initial use of an 'equality lens' might need to first deal with the wider understanding that people have of the term 'equality' rather than focus on specific equality groups. The 'equality lens' also needs to be applied to the right problem with an understanding that outcomes can be measured in a variety of ways – not all of which are purely numerical. There is a need at an early stage when evaluating policy to recognise that there are significant differences between anti-discrimination (making sure current plans do not have an adverse impact) and genuinely creating a different future through proactive approaches. Policymakers also need to become more conscious when looking at short- and long-term results of how some policies might actually impede substantive equality. For example, more childcare provision in the short term might enable more women to work their way out of poverty but it does not address the deeper social issue of why women are still expected to carry by far the greater caring responsibilities.

> 'Unfortunately any government strategy of rewarding care within the family risks incentivising perverse outcomes.' (Seminar participant)

One concrete suggestion for how to more systematically apply an equality lens was to replicate the approach to 'ring fencing' of health monies in Westminster enabling an equality perspective to be tied directly to agreed political priorities. Under this approach it would be possible to develop an equality perspective that analysed the issues, opportunities, interventions, costs and benefits in relation to key policy areas. These might include new policy approaches disaggregated by and designed for different equality groups, in a variety of areas; for example in early years, education, health, criminal justice or employment. This would have the advantage of more directly linking the equality agenda with mainstream political priorities. While such an application of an 'equality lens' seemed to many self-evident, there is widespread disappointment around similar attempts to date to build equality into the Scottish budget – where there was felt to have been limited progress and little political will. In direct contrast, the more recent exercise started by the Scottish government to 'carbon footprint' or to conduct an environmental impact assessment on the Scottish budget, was perceived to have strong political backing. One reason given for this is that 'carbon footprinting' is perhaps an easier and more approachable task in the eyes of the government, as they perceive a danger in taking an equality approach in case they are seen to pit equality groups against each other. Carbon footprinting does not have the same potential for conflict between 'perceived winners and losers' and is more easily 'sold' as being to everyone's benefit in the long term.

5.3   Whose role is it?

Significant questions arise from interviewees and seminar participants over the competence, capacity and commitment of the government at UK, Scotland and local authority levels, to 'mainstream' an equality approach into anti-poverty strategy and

policy. However, the policy challenges do not just lie with the government. There is generally felt to be a lack of consistency in approach from a wide range of non-governmental agencies with specialised interest in poverty. This was perceived as being due to factors such as: a lack of understanding of the equality agenda and the differential poverty experiences of different groups in society; an unwillingness to make what is already a difficult task even harder and more complicated; a fear of unleashing group-driven competition for resources; insufficient resources overall; or simply being reactive to whatever influences they are under at any point in time.

> 'The issues that we work on [as a body working on poverty strategy] will be determined at the time by who is engaging with us and who we are engaging with.' (Interviewee)

Addressing these perceived gaps is seen as an opportunity for the Commission to work in partnership with specialist anti-poverty organisations. Within any such partnership there would be room for greater clarity around roles, particularly who is doing what and the wider context of accountability and influence.

> 'I am not sure what competence the EHRC has to work around this level because obviously poverty isn't one of the defined equality strands and I am not sure that they have the competency from their status or how wide their brief can go … but if we were to get information from the EHRC on the equalities remedies to some poverty issues, that would be beneficial.' (Interviewee)

5.4 Key findings on identifying the policy levers

- Tailoring policy interventions according to the needs of different groups is most effective.
- It currently requires greater understanding of the different causes and effects of poverty to understand how best to break entrenched cycles of deprivation for different equality groups.
- Poverty intersects with many policy areas (education, health, justice, etc) and there is little evidence of cross-cutting approaches being taken.
- Equality impact assessment and poverty impact assessment are essential tools to help policymakers tailor their delivery.
- Policy development around poverty should do more to promote future equality and not simply ensure the avoidance of discrimination.
- Some policy interventions can alleviate the symptoms of poverty in the short term but fail to address the underlying issues that are driving the problem. For example, increased childcare support allows women to work but does not address the issues around gender and caring responsibilities that contribute to poverty in the first place.
- There is a perceived lack of expert equality understanding among poverty specialists.

- It is felt that policymakers may avoid an overt equality dimension to poverty policy as it makes a difficult task more complicated, risks creating competition for resources and may result in tailored solutions that are more costly.

6 The challenges of effective delivery

6.1 Introduction

Effective delivery that results in measurable improvement for poverty and inequality is seen by respondents as a series of delicate balances. It is important to be clear on the specifics of the task, the scope of any individual intervention and the many partnerships needed for a joined up response. There is an understanding of the need to set measurable and realistic timeframes to ensure progress is felt. There is also a desire from those working in the area to build in aspirational targets over the medium term and to be more radical.

> 'You want to try and do things to change the structure of society but you also want to do things that have an immediate short-term impact – so that you are not waiting for the great leap forward.' (Interviewee)

It was widely felt that some key points of leverage that the Commission could use to shape future policy delivery around poverty and group-based inequality include:

- Enforcing equality impact assessments or any future socio-economic duty. This comes with the important caveat that if benefit is not quickly perceived from doing this, there is the potential for 'legislation fatigue' and the development of a tick-box mentality resulting in a loss of impact.
- Campaigning on and promoting the social benefits of looking at poverty and group-based inequality together in order to change the attitudes of the public and policymakers.
- Building the skills and capacity of those working on the poverty agenda in the government, the wider public sector or the third sector to identify and understand where group-based inequality impacts on poverty.
- Building the capacity of those experiencing poverty to express what their experience means to them and to engage proactively in positive resolutions.
- Focusing on areas where the Commission's input is unique and where, through its expertise, it can evidence impact; for example where equality groups might be likely to be badly affected by the welfare reform bill.
- Exploring the broader human rights approach and setting Scottish and UK work on poverty and inequality more within a European context. This may offer the benefit of a more focused use of existing international instruments.

The seminars also provoked substantive debate around the implications and potential impact of the current difficult economic climate which sets an important time period for delivery in this area. Professor John Hills, from the London School of Economics was cited by several participants as suggesting that the last decade has been 'as good as it gets to pursue the poverty agenda'. This implies that if we have failed to make sufficient progress during the last decade then we are likely to be facing tougher times and greater challenges ahead. Examples discussed in the

seminars that support this proposition include the recent political suggestion that a recession is not the time to make progress on flexible working – effectively undermining progress that has been made in this area over recent years. It is clear that any future approaches undertaken by the Commission and others will need clear strategies to navigate the immediate and possibly longer term economic situation. This leads to the question of how organisations can plan for economic recovery without falling into the same trap of recent years, when even in the so-called 'boom times' only very limited progress was made on addressing the causes of poverty or effectively alleviating the impact. For many people, this situation offers another argument for taking the more radical wealth redistribution approach discussed in Chapter 3.

6.2   A political challenge

Seminar participants and interviewees had no shared confidence that the political will exists at a Scottish or UK level to really take on the hard issues that are perceived as important in addressing some of the causes of poverty. For the working poor, these include mandatory pay audits (particularly looking at the reality of low pay in the public sector) and the issue of flexible working for men and women that is perceived to be held back by what was described as a 'presenteeism culture' (a sense that it is about being there and putting in long hours rather than measuring outcomes) that puts men off sharing care. There are also the wider challenges of the division of labour – both in relation to labour market job segregation and to work–life balance. To address poverty for those not able to work, the hard issues facing the government include the relationship between welfare and taxation, the concept of a 'living wage', society's perceptions of the 'deserving versus the undeserving poor' and the fundamental question of redistribution.

Shaping public opinion in relation to poverty and inequality
The concept of the 'deserving versus the undeserving poor' came up frequently as a perceived risk to looking at poverty in relation to group-based inequality. A widely shared perception across the groups and the interviewees is that support for an anti-poverty agenda is more likely if it is linked to child poverty, disability poverty and sometimes women's poverty than if it is linked with other equality groups. This then raises the question about whether the priorities of the anti-poverty agenda are on simply addressing poverty where it exists or whether social prejudices influence how policy decisions are made. If this is the case, it is also necessary to consider whether this is driven by the views of individuals or if it is a reflection of institutional norms and the prevailing wisdom of where poverty exists.

> 'It depends what your end goal is – is it strategic or is it fundamentally trying to challenge some of the problematic misperceptions that we have around about equalities groups?' (Interviewee)

> 'Those of us who believe in an equalities perspective have a job to do – we need to point out that there are people who would like to contribute but are not

in a position to do so, and not because of the choices that they have made. We have people that want to contribute but because of the barriers that they face are not in a position to.' (Interviewee)

6.3   Devolution and decision making at a local level

UK and Scottish approaches

The seminars, group discussions and interviews generated mixed views on devolution as it relates to Scotland and the UK. This is likely to some extent to be shaped by individuals' political perspectives. There is commonality around the basic principle that for devolution to work it must offer consistent benefit. There also needs to be an acceptance of the interdependence of governments, the need for early discussion and consultation at all levels of government, and the need for strong delivery partnerships that focus on outcomes. From the sessions with government representatives, however, there was limited evidence that these principles are either widely understood or applied.

Most agreed that there has been a high degree of consensus between the Scottish government and Westminster since the devolution settlement, with divergence only visible at the margins. However, there were mixed interpretations of the effectiveness of this for tackling poverty and inequality. Some felt that it shows sensible and measured responses to economies of scale, with Scotland still having the opportunity (and money) to implement national initiatives such as free personal care for older people. Others felt that wider opportunities to do things that offered specific benefit to Scotland had not always been taken and that there has been a lack of aspiration. It was also noted that it is not always about the difference in policy between Scotland and Westminster, but the way in which it is implemented. For example, fuel poverty and transport policies fail to take into account the implications of living in some of Scotland's most remote island or Highland communities, which are very different from rural experiences in other parts of the UK.

Since May 2007 with different political parties in power in Scotland and the UK, there has been greater divergence in many policy areas. Where poverty is seen as being closely linked to reserved issues (such as welfare, benefits and pensions or employment) there is a need for more overt collaboration between policymakers and budget holders, north and south of the border.

The Scottish government's National Performance Framework, while seen as positive in prioritising and giving focus to the relationship between the Scottish government and local authorities, was not universally felt to connect to anti-poverty work going on at Westminster. This was seen by some as a risk as welfare is an important reserved issue. There was no settled view on the best way to address this risk but some fears were expressed that the poverty agenda would get increasingly politicised over the next parliament.

At its most effective, devolution between the UK and Scotland is felt to enable better local support to more effectively meet national need. A more pessimistic view is that it results in fragmentation of effort, parochialism and higher costs.

> 'We currently seem to be in a real state of flux with no one taking an overall strategic leadership perspective [in relation to UK / Scotland responsibility for poverty work].' (Seminar participant)

Some organisations and individuals in Scotland who are engaged in anti-poverty work acknowledge that working on an agenda that straddles both reserved and devolved areas puts extra pressure on their internal resources.

> 'We do also work directly with Westminster but it is a fragile relationship that has been difficult to maintain. The impact of devolution is that all eyes turn north and we tend to focus on what is happening here, even though things like welfare reform allow us the motivation to have that UK focus and UK emphasis, but I think it is very difficult to maintain both a focus on Scotland and lobby effectively at the UK level.' (Interviewee)

Scottish local authorities and Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs)
As much time was spent considering the increased 'devolution' of powers within Scotland (from the Scottish government to local authorities) as was spent looking at the devolution of powers from the UK parliament to the Scottish parliament . The term 'double devolution' was introduced in the first seminar to describe the increasing devolution of power from the Scottish government to local authorities, particularly since the 2007 concordat with local government. This concordat is widely seen as leading to significant challenges in respect of delivering coherent anti-poverty work and affecting people's experience of poverty in Scotland. The concerns are at two levels: whether nationally there is the retention of sufficient oversight and strategic direction on the big issues and their implementation; and whether locally there is capacity, expertise and consistency for effective policy delivery.

> 'SOAs are an absolutely crucial challenge now for the Scottish government that seems to be getting away from them. I don't get any great sense of coordination, of any real effective monitoring that can be highlighted to people; for example we are making progress in this area or not in this area. It does seem a bit too loose, too flexible of an approach so it will be interesting to see how that is all pulled together at some point, and when.' (Interviewee)

> 'How will Single Outcome Agreements impact on rural poverty? There was a review of Rural Policy and Rural Development in Scotland by the OECD recently – one of the things that came out was the proliferation of different organisations with overlapping agendas and that there was fragmentation and a lack of coordination at a local level: this seems to be an overarching issue

affecting rural policy delivery (whether on poverty or anything else).'
(Interviewee)

Organisations and individuals working on poverty and equality at a Scotland level are now faced with trying to develop relationships and influence policy across 32 different local authorities. There is widespread uncertainty as this work is developed and delivered around where the power really lies between the government, local authorities and the third sector. This is reinforced by some people's perceptions that the background context for the concordat is becoming ever more politicised.

'We have to constantly consider the implications of this new environment of "continuous party politics", which isn't just at Holyrood but is happening even at a local authority level on day-to-day policy decisions.' (Seminar participant)

Performance indicators and management have also been devolved from central government and there is a widely held perception that the performance management expectation has not been reduced; it has just dropped down a level or shifted to the service deliverers (whether they are public, private or third sector). Currently there are training programmes for local staff to enable them to deal with this but this work is occurring within the context of a recession and shrinking budgets.

'SOAs are clearly a useful mechanism for making local bodies more accountable and based on impact / outcome but I'm not at all sure of the current capacity or skill of public bodies to collect the evidence to demonstrate that impact / outcome effectively.' (Seminar participant)

Possible practical responses to this include: a greater role for the Improvement Service, for example in providing a route map for local authorities; greater clarity around wider contracting and procurement responsibilities; better use of legislation; and good practice case studies to influence improvement.

6.4   Ensuring capacity for change

Anxieties around direction and delivery were consistently expressed by seminar participants and interviewees (particularly those working on poverty and equality in the third sector). In principle, they are supportive of power being devolved to a local level assuming that local level bureaucracy works effectively. Some participants thought that a 'postcode lottery' currently exists around whether Community Planning Partnerships and local authorities either understand or take on board the poverty agenda (particularly where it intersects with group-based inequality). There is little sharing of good practice although the Tackling Poverty Network is felt to be starting to develop this.

'It feels like a game is being played; that is, councillors are championing issues but we never quite feel like we know what is currently popular and what was being championed. I think the third sector is feeling more vulnerable

around our ability to make long-term plans or even about the potential for short-term loss of funding.' (Seminar participant)

Those working in local authority or Community Planning Partnership roles recognise their leadership responsibility but admit that many across the 32 local government areas are unaware of the information available and have little experience on the intersection between poverty and equality. There is some recognition that those who are in poverty and the local agencies that might offer them support need to engage in the consultation and policy development process but there is no established mechanism to shape that or to build their wider capacity.

There is a widespread sense that as more autonomy is pushed out from central to local government through the concordat, more delivery of local poverty and equality support will be expected to shift to the third sector. This generated a number of concerns from participants in the seminars and interviews. Firstly, most third-sector organisations are perceived to be insufficiently prepared. While some big groups like women into science, engineering and construction (WISE) are able to compete for and deliver large procurement contracts – such as the recent multi-million pound Department for Work and Pensions work – other smaller organisations have the community insight but perhaps not the commercial or delivery capacity.

Secondly, accelerated by SOAs, there is a perceived trend towards voluntary organisations converting to social enterprises to enable funding relationships with local authorities. The feeling is that this is unlikely to be the right solution for most bodies but funding may become contingent on such a structure.

Thirdly, in a move to a 'contracting culture' there is a risk for third-sector organisations that local authority service demands take short-term priority over more long-term preventative work around poverty. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) are looking at more sustainable funding agreements. Third sector input is also required in the service design of SOAs so that relationships do not simply become transactional.

Finally, there are likely to be problems of consistency as well as service gaps or duplications. Standards or availability of support and expertise could be very different between local authority areas. For example Glasgow has identified that there are between 200–300 third-sector organisations that could contribute to delivery of their SOAs and shared efficiencies will have to be developed.

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) has recognised that developing resilience in the third sector over the next 10 years is a key priority. There is also a need to develop shared services between the public and third sectors where a genuine partnership decides the strategic direction of the service.

6.5 Key findings on the challenges of effective delivery

- There was a widely expressed desire for more aspirational targets to be developed by policymakers.
- The current economic downturn is a risk in terms of the future availability of public finance but may also be an opportunity to develop approaches which drive more fundamental change.
- Effectively addressing group-based inequality and poverty brings some political challenges for the government and may not be popular. Social attitudes around the 'deserving versus the undeserving poor' may influence government policy priorities.
- Devolution has not been seen to bring significant change to the poverty agenda in Scotland.
- The increased responsibility of local authorities to deliver on poverty through the Single Outcome Agreements is seen as high risk because there is little national oversight and limited local capacity or accountability.
- Many third-sector organisations lack the resources and capacity to fulfil the new roles expected of them by local authorities that are commissioning them to do work on poverty.
- There is a fear that the national focus on anti-poverty work is being lost and replaced by inconsistent and poorly measured local work.

Section 3: Conclusions and recommendations

7   Delegate feedback to the Commission from the seminars

7.1   Introduction

As an individual exercise at the end of each seminar, delegates were invited to offer specific responses to three questions on the possible future role of the Commission in poverty work in Scotland. These were:

- Can the Commission add value to the poverty agenda in Scotland?
- What might be the Commission's key areas of influence?
- Where are the data gaps? And / or, how might existing data be better used?

All participants submitted their answers prior to the final group feedback discussion of the day. The responses are detailed below, grouped according to theme. For the first question, a weighting (high, medium, low) is given in brackets after each point to indicate how frequently this point was made. This broad indicator demonstrates the level of commonality and consistency in responses to the first question across both seminar groups. While this direct feedback informs the overall recommendations from this work, these are individual (and sometimes personal) responses and the suggestions in this chapter should not be read as formal recommendations.

7.2   Can the Equality and Human Rights Commission add value to the poverty agenda in Scotland?

'I am really, really pleased that the EHRC has taken poverty as part of its remit and I think that in itself is significant. For example, the work that we did within the Women's Budget Group was because government just seemed to ignore the gendered nature of poverty, so it is very valuable to have an official body like the EHRC just reminding government and others that there are these links between poverty and the equalities agenda, and producing evidence around that.' (Interviewee)

All participants agreed strongly that the Commission could add value to the poverty agenda in Scotland (only one person qualified the unequivocally affirmative responses with the caveat that the Commission should only try and add value in areas where it has expertise). These initial responses can be grouped into a number of common areas.

- strategic involvement
- legal enforcement
- bringing specific expertise in group-based inequality
- awareness raising and social attitudes
- developing a human rights approach to poverty strategy and delivery

- building partnerships, and
- welfare and welfare reform.

Strategic involvement (high)
It was widely felt that the Commission's input and expertise should be seen as intrinsic to the poverty agenda and always should have been. Indeed some expressed surprise that there was even a need to ask this question. The Commission has the opportunity to add value by being non-partisan – looking through an 'equality lens' and opening up wider debate about possible causes and solutions to different people's experience of poverty in ways that are perhaps not currently popular or on the political agenda. It was also felt that the Commission should not only contribute its equality expertise to the poverty debate but that it should routinely do more to highlight poverty within the equality debate.

Legal enforcement (high)
Enforcement of existing legislation (particularly around equality impact assessments) was widely highlighted as an area of specific expertise for the Commission and one where it has a unique remit that others cannot take on; for example, legal inquiries. Some also felt that the Commission could be doing more to help people in poverty access their rights as there was a view (particularly in relation to disability and sometimes linked to welfare) that the onus is now too much on the individual. Others, however, felt that any legal enforcement should focus on establishing where poverty sits with the rights of citizenship, that is to say, a 'common floor' of rights and standards shared by all, not equality of outcome for specific individuals which might be unrealistic or risk becoming very narrow rather than universal. What was clear was that even people with significant and senior expertise in poverty often had little understanding of the legal structures around which equality considerations could be framed.

> 'I often get a sense that there are aspects of the experience of poverty or some of the policy decisions that come out around poverty that could well be challenged on the basis of equalities legislation – and some of us in the poverty sector are not expert enough to identify this – this is where we need bodies like the EHRC to identify these issues.' (Interviewee)

Bringing specific group-based inequality expertise (high)
Again this was an area that was almost universally seen as important for the Commission. By bringing greater insight and expertise into the ways that poverty affects different groups and the tailored interventions that might be needed to raise different groups out of poverty, the Commission could add significant value. There was a strong sense that more tools and targeted expertise are needed to find out more about the causal links between poverty and equality strands, as well as how to develop more effective interventions (particularly in areas where not much is known, such as ethnicity and sexual orientation, and in areas where there is a perception that the work has been done, such as gender).

Responses and discussions highlighted the different levels of understanding about what 'equality' and 'equality groups' mean in reality. A few cautious voices suggested the Commission would need to be careful not to exclude people from their work who may be experiencing poverty but do not fall into 'equality groups'. The example given here was around generational poverty where individuals may not be in poverty because of their group identity but because they were born into a family that has been in poverty for several generations. Some feared, however, that by placing increased emphasis on 'equality groups', then blame for being in poverty can somehow be laid upon people who do not fit these groups.

Awareness raising and social attitudes (medium)
Awareness raising is needed to encourage understanding of the intersections between poverty and inequality by both those working in the poverty or equality sectors and the general public.

For those already engaged in poverty work there is a recognised need to better explain concepts such as group-based equality, equality strands and capabilities. Tied to this is the need to increase understanding of specific ways in which poverty correlates with equality generally and with equality groups. It was suggested that joint research and / or campaigns with organisations working on poverty might help develop this.

In relation to the wider public, campaigning and policy work to raise awareness of discrimination and address its impact on different groups is needed. There remains a sense among some that discrimination is still seen as an individual issue with little recognition of the structural factors that might result in some groups experiencing poverty. Some individuals stressed the need to increase focus on the 'rights-based approach'.

> 'The EHRC could help us to change our society's traditional "charity-giving" approach to one of helping people to access their rights and recognising that it is not because of the individual that that they are in poverty but because of the way the system sees that individual.' (Seminar participant)

Developing a human rights approach to poverty strategy and delivery (medium)
Comments around the Commission's need for a human rights approach reflected either a belief that human rights should provide the overall framework for poverty work or a perception that an 'equality approach' misses out certain groups.

> 'I would like to see a more broad-based human rights approach adopted and promoted to tackle poverty, using access to rights: participation, dignity, employment, education, health, housing, etc. Equalities are important but the access to rights argument cuts across all of these issues and more.' (Seminar participant)

'I think EHRC can in some ways act as a hub for human rights issues at the domestic level.' (Seminar participant)

Building partnerships (medium)
The Commission's potential role in developing strategic partnerships and connecting different areas of expertise was felt by many to be important at both a policy and community level. Particular suggestions for action were made with regard to information provision, campaigning and supported advocacy of equality groups.

Welfare and welfare reform (medium)
Poverty and group inequality were perceived to be core to the welfare reform agenda. Welfare reform generally – and specifically the welfare reform bill – is seen as an area where the Commission could add immediate value. This includes helping build a wider understanding of the impacts of welfare / welfare reform on different groups. Some people also see the Commission having a role in supporting organisations and equality groups to know and claim their rights on the basis that effective enforcement makes the issue real in the eyes of the government and the public.

7.3   What might be the Commission's key areas of influence?
Having given a broad view on whether there is a role in poverty work for the Commission, delegates were asked to offer some perspectives on where the Commission's influence might most effectively be targeted. Again there were some quite generic and overarching observations that in some cases reinforced the answers to the previous question. Participants consistently felt, however, that the Commission could have greatest influence in shaping strategy and policy responses, enforcing existing legislation and explaining the intersection of poverty, equality and human rights.

Strategic involvement
> 'The first year interim strategic plan was absolutely great – it understood, it looked at a gaps analysis, it knew what was missing, it understood that you started with the poorest and the most marginalised first. I thought it was great and it gave me real hope for the future of the EHRC. Those of us who were sceptical about the amalgamation of all of the commissions really believed that there was going to be value added from that holistic understanding and that understanding to start with the people furthest on the right[1] first regardless of their equality strand membership. However, the new strategic plan takes a much more separate group analysis of the problem (here is our gender objective, here is our disability objective) and it just feels like we are going backwards. Who actually cares that female bankers in the City are not on equal pay when classroom assistants in Glasgow are being paid 10p over the minimum wage?' (Interviewee)

Shaping strategy, improving policy
The Commission was seen as having the potential to influence strategy and implementation, as well as acting as a bridge to policymakers for a number of other agencies. There is a sense that many organisations working in poverty and equality need access to policymaking but that there also needs to be a layer of objective independence – the Commission could potentially provide that leverage. By using its understanding of equality, the Commission could help policymakers in central and local government develop better anti-poverty policies, including policies designed to move people out of poverty. This might include equality budgeting, impact assessment and developing internal structures such as procurement and tendering guidance. At a legislative level, there is significant support for the Commission exercising its influence to assist the integration of socio-economic perspectives into the statute and guidance for the equality bill.

Enforcing existing legislation
Equality impact assessments were consistently raised as being an area that is directly linked to the Commission's underpinning legislation. If effective progress could be made here, it would result in significant improvements in knowledge, delivery and the impact of anti-poverty policy. Linked to this is the need to work with community or intermediary groups on the collation of data and case studies.

Improving the relationship between equality and human rights
> 'The Equality and Human Rights Commission has from its statute a key role in the human rights agenda. We have to remember the link between poverty and human rights – human rights also obviously involves equalities issues so it isn't some separate thing. I think the more that they can bring them together, the better, as they are so connected. I think it would be a mistake to bracket out the human rights from the equalities element in the EHRC's role going forward.' (Interviewee)

While individual motivations for reiterating the human rights dimension of this issue might have been different, there was a consistent view that poverty and group-based inequality could not be artificially separated from human rights. What this means in practical terms is less clear. A first step is seen as being related to the awareness-raising and compliance role of the Commission. The Commission should increase awareness of economic, cultural and social rights in relation to poverty. It should seek to enforce UK and Scottish government compliance with international commitments and obligations in this area and should ensure the development of a practical plan to implement them. A number of international linkages were cited that could help inform this process and consider the wider issue of redistribution; these include the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW).

7.4 How might knowledge and data be expanded or better used?

The final question of this three-part exercise asked participants to specifically consider data and evidence. The availability, scope, quality and accuracy of knowledge, evidence and data were issues that arose frequently. Participants' contributions on this ranged from the very specific identification of particular gaps to wider opinions on what is needed and how it could be accessed. Strongly held beliefs that limited data availability is simply used as an excuse for inaction were expressed frequently.

Two broad areas of priority were identified in relation to data and evidence. First collating and getting better use from and evidence that already exists, and second supporting new research into poverty and equality.

Pulling together what exists and making it useable
At early stages in the development of this project, a widely prevailing perspective was that more large-scale quantitative research was needed. However, participants gradually acknowledged that the real issue is to more effectively use what is already there. This linked to the information needs of specific processes such as equality impact assessments – where there was a suggestion that the Commission could develop practical case studies to help organisations know how to use the equality duties in relation to anti-poverty policy and strategy.

Strong support was also expressed for the Commission collating some kind of overall 'gazetteer of poverty in Scotland' that covers issues in-depth. An example offered was to have data that covers levels of education by age and gender from 0–80 in all learning environments and then split this information by other equality groups such as by ethnicity or disability. It was also recognised that where some information potentially falls between the responsibilities of different agencies (between UK and Scotland, for example) the Commission could have a powerful advocacy / enforcement role. It is possible that such an approach might be taken in the Equality Measurement Framework.

Supporting further research into poverty and equality
Some suggested that despite significant poverty research and equality research, the intersection between the two is not seen as an attractive area for academic study (either through lack of commissioning or because it straddled established study areas). It was suggested that the Commission could influence academic involvement.

Participants recognised an urgent need to develop a robust and compelling narrative of how poverty (and socio-economic class) intersects with equality groups.

> 'Where the EHRC can really add value is where the data is really weak in terms of the interrelationship between equalities and poverty, so we are not just talking about black people and poverty or women in poverty, but the interrelationship. The more that the EHRC can look at how all of these things

either reinforce each other or mitigate each other would be really helpful'
(Interviewee)

It is perceived that the Commission could play a valuable role building a clearer evidence base around the potential options and approaches to redistribution. Redistribution was raised frequently and discussed at length across the two seminars and by some interviewees, and there was wide agreement that a much clearer picture is now needed to move this from an ideological aspiration to a structured and evidenced option. It was suggested that international comparators and academic studies could start the process of modelling the practicalities and costs of such an approach. This could include identifying who would benefit and what the possible levers and methodologies for implementation might be. One participant enquired whether this might be a valid topic for a formal investigation linked to the potential for a socio-economic duty in Scotland.

It was identified that there is significant 'grey literature' in existence that could be cleaned, collated and made more widely available. All participants also acknowledged that there are certain areas where there is currently very little data around experiences of poverty. Such areas include sexual orientation and gender reassignment, some faith groups, the intersection of socio-economic class and group-based inequality and where rurality overlays on group-based inequality.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Conclusions: The Commission's role in poverty and inequality work

'I want it to start to see as its mission the ending of the poverty as it differentially affects the six strands that it has to deal with. That understanding of the holistic nature of poverty and the way that increasing equality between these social groups can help end poverty is what the EHRC should be doing. I want to see the EHRC focus on the most vulnerable and the most marginalized rather than on recently well-off communities who may or may not all be able to access all their rights. I think you could get onto that in a couple of years but start with the poorest first.' (Interviewee)

There is widespread and enthusiastic support for the Commission's involvement in work on group-based inequality and poverty, as demonstrated in the key findings from each chapter and seminar participants' responses to specific questions about the Commission's potential involvement. The Commission is seen to bring benefits around its:

- equality expertise
- wider human rights remit
- research capacity
- statutory compliance powers
- ability to facilitate partnerships and share knowledge
- profile and status, and
- influence (particularly around the government).

Where any concerns were voiced (and only from a minority of participants) they related to the:

- Commission being careful to focus on equality as its entry point rather than seeking simply to address poverty
- Danger that adding too great an equality dimension to the poverty debate might risk creating hierarchies within 'equality groups' or further building prejudices around the 'deserving versus the undeserving poor.'
- Need to focus on the intersections between poverty and group-based inequality, not just to focus on improving the circumstances of certain groups over others.
- Importance of recognising the effect that being a member of a number of equality groups may bring to a person's experience of poverty, for example being an ethnic minority woman who is also disabled.

8.2 Recommendations for the Commission

The Commission should use its expertise in equality to add value to anti-poverty work. To achieve this, the Commission should:

- Develop a clear narrative that describes the intersections between equality, human rights and poverty. Current confusions between group-based inequality and income inequality and the increasing conflation of the concepts of equality and social justice need to be directly addressed.
- Explore ways to develop a clear public message around the benefits that a more equal society brings to all people in Britain.
- Encourage the Scottish government to review and update its equality strategy so that it is fit for purpose and better reflected in their strategy to tackle poverty.
- Review how it might more effectively use its statutory powers to support the anti-poverty agenda.
- Analyse the ways that different ideological approaches to tackling poverty might affect equality groups (such approaches include redistribution versus economic growth and systems of universal versus targeted support).
- Use its influence to ensure that any future socio-economic perspectives built into the equality bill are effectively reflected in Scotland.

The Commission should enhance understanding and approaches to tackling poverty in a way that reflects group-based inequality. To achieve this, the Commission should:

- Conduct a retrospective review of the effectiveness of government anti-poverty strategies over the last decade using an 'equality lens' to assess how group-based inequality has been affected by those strategies.
- Analyse whether such strategies have affected equality groups differently in Scotland, England and Wales.
- Highlight issues of poverty within the 'equality and human rights arena' by exploring how international instruments to tackle poverty might be more effectively used in Scotland.
- Focus on understanding the causes of and solutions to the entrenched cycles of deprivation that different equality groups face.

The Commission should develop useful working partnerships around poverty and inequality. To achieve this, the Commission should:

- Seek opportunities for joint working with established anti-poverty organisations or poverty research teams to explore in more depth the areas where poverty and group-based inequality intersect.
- Work closely with the Scottish Human Rights Commission to develop a coherent and relevant approach to poverty in Scotland.
- Develop guidance on the relationship between poverty and equality that is targeted at equality groups and service / support providers (from welfare support through to benefits providers). Such guidance could be used to

'broker' relationships between equality groups, anti-poverty campaigners and service providers. It could also help to build the capacity of different groups experiencing poverty to express how that affects them.

- Explore opportunities to work with the Improvement Service to ensure that the necessary expertise around poverty and group-based inequality is being developed to deliver Single Outcome Agreements.

There is both a strong desire and a widely perceived need to bring together key experts around poverty and equality. The Commission (and others) have detailed insight into the equality sector and equality issues but do not have expert knowledge of the poverty context. Likewise organisations with expertise in tackling poverty may have some understanding of equality issues but not necessarily the nuances, the politics or the depth of issues that are driving inequality.

> 'I would like to see a meeting of minds rather than the equalities sector thinking they have to take responsibility for an anti-poverty agenda or the anti-poverty agenda saying, 'wait a minute, this is our job – we deal with tackling poverty and we will take forward the equalities issues within that'. Working more closely together is something that I would strongly advocate – whatever shape or form that might take in the way of commissioned research, joint activities, conferences, etc. I am not yet sure what the best, most fruitful way to progress that would be, but by working more closely together, that will come to light. Both sectors are working towards common goals – rather than trying to tread on each others' toes, there will be fruitful ways that they can work together and be productive.' (Interviewee)

Research and evidence is needed to fill gaps in knowledge. To achieve this, the Commission should:

- As a first step, focus on pulling together data that already exists in relation to poverty and group-based inequality in Scotland and make it more readily usable and accessible. This initial stage should be linked to the ongoing development of the Equality Measurement Framework.
- Develop practical guidance and case studies to demonstrate how equality impact assessment and the statutory duties could reflect issues of poverty and group-based inequality.
- Develop a project with other relevant partners to clean, collate and make available the 'grey literature' that exists in this area, and also to more effectively review other secondary data sources for poverty and inequality insights (even if this data is initially gathered for other purposes).
- Conduct new research focusing on the intersections between poverty and inequality where little is currently known. This includes sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and the additional living costs associated with disability.

- The Commission should explore ways to encourage policymakers and service providers at a local level to gather and use relevant information to enhance their usage and understanding of poverty and equality data.

8.3   Recommendations for other organisations
- The Scottish government should update its equality strategy and in the light of this reappraise its approach to tackling poverty.
- UK, Scottish and local government policymakers should ensure anti-poverty strategies and policy initiatives are equality impact assessed.
- In Scotland, national and local government should ensure that the Single Outcome Agreements properly reflect policy outcomes on poverty and group-based inequality. Impact should be measurable nationally and locally in relation to outcome seven of the national performance framework 'to have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.'

Appendix A: Background on existing poverty data and research in Scotland

Evidence is critical for determining priorities, setting targets and measuring achievement. When data gives a compelling picture that change is needed and demonstrates the actions that can be taken to achieve this change, policy initiatives tend to be developed. But when information and evidence is absent or unclear it becomes hard to determine need, difficult to make a case for resources and almost impossible to measure the relevance or effectiveness of any particular policy. Evidence is therefore important for our understanding of poverty and group-based inequality and for driving policy initiatives around this.

The following issues are therefore explored further below:

- The balance between British, Scottish or local poverty data.
- The relationship between national and area-based information.
- What we are really measuring when we measure 'inequality'.
- The disaggregation of poverty data by equality group.
- Analysis through an 'equality lens'.

The balance between British, Scottish or local poverty data
Most data on welfare and benefits is held at a GB level as this is a reserved issue. Within this, Scottish specific data is not always subject to the same secondary analysis as data in England and Wales. Where policy activity on the back of such secondary analysis may fall into a devolved area (such as community regeneration or economic participation) this can risk disappearing in a 'devolution gap'. In some areas of interest, there is simply an absence of quantitative data at both a GB and a Scotland level. Additionally even when data is available at a GB level sample sizes can be too small when disaggregated to the Scotland level. Finally, it can also be difficult to compare local authority level information with national and GB data. All of these issues severely limit our understanding but it is also likely that best use is not being made of local and national level data sets in Scotland.

The relationship between national and area-based information
A much used source of government administrative data in relation to poverty is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). This comprises 37 indicators across seven domains: current income, employment, health, education, skills and training, housing, geographic access and crime. Because this index reports at a very local level it allows local areas of deprivation to be identified. This level of detail can, however, prove problematic. It can fail to pick up individuals living just outside an area classed as having high multiple deprivation or it can lead to universal area-based investment which may be accessed by individuals who are not living in deprivation. For best results SIMD needs to be compared against a national picture but also overlaid with specific information about individuals in the area in question.

The SIMD is regularly updated and therefore enables ongoing analyses. With many of the national performance outcomes now being delivered through local service provision, area-based studies such as the SIMD are a vital source of information for both local authorities and central government. The Scottish government's report (2008c, p.8) on longitudinal analysis noted, however, that:

> 'The balance needs to be struck between what is a valid indicator for local evaluation purposes and what is needed for national evaluation to make valid comparisons across Scotland.'

This is particularly relevant as local authorities may have quite different approaches to analysis as they seek to tackle poverty in their area.

What we are really measuring when we measure 'inequality'
The seventh of the government's 15 national performance outcomes,
'we have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society', is a cross-cutting outcome that links to all the policy areas covered by the other national outcomes. The inequality focus within the Scottish government's strategic objective, 'Wealthier and Fairer', is, however, only focused on income inequality and relative household income. Available longitudinal data sources give some insight into income but do not measure individual characteristics of the people earning that income. As such they risk missing potentially important commonalities about experiences that may lead in or out of poverty.

The disaggregation of poverty data by 'equality group'
There is significant data available in relation to poverty but much of it cannot be disaggregated by different 'equality groups'. Age, gender, parental responsibilities and disability are the most common areas of data disaggregation but these are not applied consistently in either data collection or analysis. When attempting to disaggregate by 'equality groups', there are significant issues around household-based measurement approaches. Household measures are more widely available but tend to mask inequality as they do not reflect the true nature of who is in the household. Individual data is needed to properly understand the cause and effect of relationships between household members, their 'group identity' and their experience of poverty (for example, for female pensioners; white men aged 16-18 in the More Choices, More Chances group; working-age Pakistanis; or Irish-descent Catholics).

Where individual characteristics may have resulted in discrimination, prejudice or harassment that has shaped the person's experience of poverty, it is important to be able to identify the nature of that discrimination and measure it (for example, in the case of low educational attainment as a result of homophobic bullying). Over time, as analyses of the top-level indicators of relative income are carried out, it should also be possible to see whether, at the level below, other correlations between indicators such as earnings, employment rates and educational attainment are increasing or

decreasing in relation to characteristics such as race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Analysis through an 'equality lens'
Even given some of the constraints in relation to the core data available, it appears there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of different equality strands which would allow an interpretation of group-based experience and outcomes around age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation within the overall data sets. This is relevant at both a national and local level. Qualitative data can be used up to a certain point to enhance understanding of the broad statistics or to give some specific insight where there might be wider quantitative gaps. However, this approach tends to be ad hoc and is rarely supplemented by long-term sustainable remedies to address the data gap. In its discussion paper; Taking Forward the Government Economic Strategy, the Scottish Government (2008b, p. 5) states:

> 'The poverty indicator will be … disaggregated to show progress for children, working age adults, and pensioners. We will also disaggregate the statistics, **as far as we are able**, to show how the incidence of poverty breaks down within and across Scotland (for example, for key equality groups, for urban and rural Scotland, and for the most deprived communities.) This will help to determine whether, and where, efforts need to be targeted at a sub-Scotland level.' [bold accents added]

The Scottish government has set up a website, Scotland Performs,[2] to enable progress on its key indicators to be measured, but this contains very little consistent information on group-based inequality in relation to any of the 15 national performance outcomes.

Appendix B: Organisations represented at the seminars

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland
Close the Gap
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
Edinburgh City Council
Edinburgh Partnership
Edinburgh University
Employment Research Institute (ERI)
Engender
European Structural Fund Programmes for Scotland (ESEP)
Faith in Community Scotland
Glasgow City Council
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Leonard Cheshire Trust
Office for Disability Issues, DWP
Oxfam
Poverty Alliance
Save the Children
Scottish Centre for Social Research
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
Scottish government
Scottish Poverty Information Unit (SPIU)
Scottish Refugee Council
Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF)
Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)
University of Dundee

Bibliography

Alkire, S, Bastagli, F, Burchardt, T, Clark, D, Holder, H, Ibrahim, S, Munoz, M, Terrazas, P, Tsang, T and Vizard, P (2009) Developing the Equality Measurement Framework: Selecting the indicators, Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission. Available at: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/fairer-britain/equality-measurement-framework/ [Accessed 28 October 2009]

House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee (2007) Poverty in Scotland. London: The Stationery Office. Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmscotaf/128/128.pdf [Accessed 28 October 2009]

House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee (2009) Work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Scotland, London: The Stationery Office. Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmscotaf/176/176.pdf [Accessed 28 October 2009]

McKendrick, J Sinclair, S, Mason,D, Smith, N, with Gillespie, M, Bivand, P, Moley, S, Tyler, D (2007) Closing the Opportunity Gap Programme, Phase 1 Evaluation. Edinburgh: Scottish government Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/206218/0054797.pdf [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Scottish Executive (1999) Social Justice, a Scotland where everyone matters. Edinburgh: Scottish executive. Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158142/0042789.pdf [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Scottish Government (2007a) Concordat between the Scottish Government and local government. Edinburgh: Scottish government. Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/concordat [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Scottish Government (2007b) The Government Economic Strategy. Edinburgh: Scottish government. Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/12115041/8 [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Scottish Government (2008a) Achieving our Potential: A framework for tackling poverty and income inequality. Edinburgh: Scottish government http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/20103815/6 [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Scottish Government (2008b) Taking forward the Government Economic Strategy: A discussion paper on tackling poverty inequality and deprivation. Edinburgh: Scottish government. Available at:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/02/01150409/18 [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Scottish Government (2008c) Use of longitudinal research in the evaluation of the Scottish Government's national outcomes. Edinburgh: Scottish government.
Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/25160140/0 [Accessed 28 October 2009]

The Scottish Office (1999) Social Inclusion, Opening a door to a better Scotland. Edinburgh: The Scottish Office. Available at:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w7/sima-00.htm [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009) The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better. London: Allen Lane.

Endnotes

---

[1] Interviewee was referring to a metaphorical scale that had been introduced earlier in the interview, with the most disadvantaged on the right side and the least disadvantaged on the left side of it.

[2] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/purposestratobjs [Accessed 28 October 2009]

Contacts

England

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RRLL-GHUX-CTRX
Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3AQ

Main number   0845 604 6610
Textphone   0845 604 6620
Fax   0845 604 6630

Scotland

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RSAB-YJEJ-EXUJ
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DU

Main number   0845 604 5510
Textphone   0845 604 5520
Fax   0845 604 5530

Wales

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RRLR-UEYB-UYZL
3rd Floor, 3 Callaghan Square, Cardiff CF10 5BT

Main number   0845 604 8810
Textphone   0845 604 8820
Fax   0845 604 8830

Helpline opening times:

Monday to Friday: 8am – 6pm

Calls from BT landlines are charged at local rates, but calls from mobiles and other providers may vary.

Calls may be monitored for training and quality purposes.

Interpreting service available through Language Line, when you call our helplines.

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language please contact the relevant helpline to discuss your needs. All publications are also available to download and order in a variety of formats from our website

www.equalityhumanrights.com

This report explores the relationship between poverty and equality to determine whether the Equality and Human Rights Commission has a valuable role to play in poverty work given its equality mandate. There are three main objectives: to understand the relationship between poverty and equality; to identify where further research is needed, and to consider how the Commission might use its equality expertise to enhance understanding and approaches to tackling poverty in Scotland.