



## The Socio-Economic Duty A Consultation

### RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

**Please Note** this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual  
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

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The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes  
 No

Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) supports best practice in community development across Scotland. The organisation works across sectors and with a wide range of professions to support community engagement and community capacity building in any context and at strategic and practice level.

We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to introducing a socio-economic duty for public service authorities. We are pleased to contribute a community development perspective to the consultation, believing community development to have an important role in tackling inequality at both a local and national level.

## Socio-economic duty consultation response

**QUESTION 1 - Do you agree that the definitions of these terms are reasonable and should be included within the Scottish Government's forthcoming guidance on the socioeconomic duty?**

Yes, we broadly agree with these definitions and think they should be included.

**QUESTION 2A – Do you agree that the socio-economic duty should apply to the Scottish public authorities named here? If not, please specify which authority you do not think it should apply to and why?**

Yes

**QUESTION 2B – Do you think the duty should apply to any other public authorities, similar to those listed in the Equality Act 2010? If so, please name them and explain why you think the duty should apply.**

Our view is that in addition to listing organisations, the Scottish Government should follow the precedent set in human rights legislation and read across to Public Sector Equality Duties (See [R \(Weaver\) v London and Quadrant Housing Trust](#)) by applying the socio-economic duty to public bodies' functions that are of a public nature and that are devolved, even in instances where the body is not listed.

**QUESTION 3A – Do you have any comments on the steps set out in SECTION 3?**

We broadly support the steps outlined, and advocate the involvement of communities and support for them to participate, not only in understanding inequalities, but in each step along the way towards meeting the duty.

Public authorities will know better than anyone else the strategic decisions they have to make (**step 1**). However, as the definition of 'inequality of outcome' on p10 of the

consultation recognises, inequalities of outcome may result from the fact that no adequate strategy is in place. The identification of alternative strategies or strategies that have not yet been considered cannot be entrusted only to the public authorities who have neglected to put them in place already. A central part of public service reform is the recognition that the people who use services have an important contribution to improving these services, including helping to come up with new and better ways of doing things. Communities experiencing negative outcomes resulting from socio-economic inequality will be well placed to help public authorities identify different ways of doing things at a strategic planning level.

The discussion paper recognises the valuable contribution communities with direct experience of poverty can make to understanding inequalities of outcome (**step 2**). We have provided some examples of this in practice to our answer to question 3D. In terms of approaches to identifying community views, needs and aspirations, we advocate the use of [community-led action research](#).

Community-led action research involves people asking their own questions about the issues they experience, getting the information and evidence they need and testing out the solutions they come up with. In community-led action research communities decide the issue to be researched, the way the research will be carried out and how the research results will be used. It is based on the view that first-hand experience of an issue puts people in a strong position to research that issue and to put learning into practice.

As policy developments from the Christie Commission to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act have recognised, the participation of people in the issues that matter to them has many 'spin-off' benefits in addition to developing better understanding and policies. Evaluations of SCDC's community-led action research programmes initiatives found that:

- individuals reported increased skills and confidence;
- groups reported greater confidence and capacity and a higher degree of focus and connection to their own communities;
- several groups successfully used the evidence they gathered to achieve changes in the services provided to them, or obtained funding to provide better services or facilities for their community; and
- many groups used their research and findings to support successful funding applications to extend their work.

There are many reasons, then, for community groups and organisations of all types to become more competent and confident in generating knowledge and acquiring and using insight effectively. However, communities with less experience in these areas require support to be able to conduct their own research, and this is something that a socio-economic duty should take account of.

Efforts to address poverty and inequality through co-production, community empowerment and treating people as assets mean little without entrusting decision making to people who experience these issues first-hand. The emphasis in **step 3** on exercising the duty during decision-making should be on the participation of people on whom these decisions are most likely to impact.

To an extent, some recent policy developments have recognised the need for communities to be involved in strategic decision making. Part 2 (community planning) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act requires community organisations representing disadvantaged communities to be involved at every stage of community planning, from identifying priorities to reporting on progress. Similarly, the new integrated health and social care structures are designed to involve service users and communities to varying degrees in localities, strategic planning and at integrated joint board level. Participatory budgeting is now being seen as a way to give communities direct decision-making power over parts of mainstream public budgets. The Socio-economic duty should include a similar emphasis on the participation of communities experiencing inequality in decision making.

We agree that monitoring impact (**Step 4**) should not lead to more measurement frameworks. That said, monitoring of policies and strategies can be improved in regard to community involvement. Those who experience worse outcomes as a result of inequalities are once again well-placed to help establish whether or not strategies to reduce inequalities are working. Monitoring and evaluation should feed back into the planning cycle and should help identify which strategies are working and which are not, as well as help understand the extent and nature of inequalities of outcome. Put simply, meeting the socio-economic duty should involve a cycle of putting learning into action, and communities need to be able to contribute to this.

**QUESTION 3B - What other actions could public authorities take to demonstrate that they are meeting the duty?**

We believe that public authorities should apply, where possible, community development approaches to addressing the causes of inequality. Community development has a key role in reducing socio-economic inequality, particularly through supporting people and organisations to work together to address the underlying issues that create inequality. Community development can assist communities to understand and engage with public policy and service delivery issues. It can also help people to assess or make development proposals on the basis of whether or not they are in the socio-economic interest of their communities.

Community development brings people together around a common purpose, increasing community and individual wellbeing as well as equipping people to collectively influence change. Many communities contain active networks of local groups, clubs, societies and informal connections that complement public services. They provide personal support, social networks and learning opportunities, and are the social conditions within which the activities of government can best flourish. It is these activities and opportunities, sometimes termed 'social capital', that often provide people with the first steps towards thinking about and addressing injustices.

Part of a community development approach to tackling inequality should involve public services and agencies working closely with local community organisations to identify issues and priorities, and better ways of addressing them. Many community organisations already use community development approaches within the areas of poverty and inequalities, as well as associated areas such as regeneration, health,

employment and education. Good community organisations understand local issues and can address the priorities of local people in communities, including those who may not be reached by mainstream services due to complex needs and social exclusion.

This approach fits with ideas of asset-based approaches and co-production, where lived experience is valued as making an important contribution to service design and decision making. Given the unequal power relationship that has traditionally existed between officials and professionals, on the one hand, and communities and service users, on the other, it is important that people are supported and encouraged to challenge, and act on, dominant socio-economic norms where this is necessary in addressing inequality.

A related point is that community organisations should be able to engage with political and civil society organisations to explore the issues and/or maximise their influence in terms of the structural socio-economic issues which affect the lives of the people they represent. Public authorities have a role in enabling and legitimising these connections, as community organisations have limited access to this type of contact, often due to a general lack of funding for campaigning organisations. Added to this, community organisations may perceive that such activity will hamper future funding applications and may damage relationships with public sector partners. In meeting the socio-economic duty, public authorities should be encouraged to support this legitimate wider-level engagement.

### *Capacity building*

Community capacity building is an important element of a community development approach. Community capacity building is based on the following principles:

- An assets approach, implying respect and recognition of the individuals and families involved, working with them in understanding issues and developing their own solutions to unemployment and related issues they face.
- A long-term commitment to communities, recognising that a sequence of short term projects that are the typical experience of deprived areas do not work and do not enjoy the trust or confidence of the community.
- The key aims of the commitment being to build solidarity within the community, an atmosphere of attachment and cohesion, and the sense of coherence that is the foundation of a healthy and fulfilling quality of life, and the foundation of empowerment, employment and engagement in civic life.
- A focus on working with people at the most critical life stages and transitions in their lives regardless of age.
- The development of a greater sense of self-worth, confidence and heightened aspirations in relation to participating in community life and broader economic activity.

Community capacity building is needed because not all communities have the infrastructure in place that allows them to respond to demands to engage effectively or to become partners in local initiatives. This is especially true of our most deeply deprived, marginalised and fragmented communities, which are the very communities whose direct experience of poverty and exclusion should inform

strategies to tackle inequality. The consultation paper rightly highlights that there are many people experiencing disadvantage outside the 'most disadvantaged' areas and that this can be as a result of a range of equality issues.

Although skills, knowledge and opportunities exist within all communities, investment in community capacity building is essential for socio-economically disadvantaged communities and communities with identified equality characteristics (including ethnic minorities, asylum seekers and refugees, LGBT and disability) where there is a need to support those communities to engage effectively as equal partners. Communities experiencing multiple disadvantage (a combination of the above) may be particularly in need of support.

The activity of capacity building must be firmly rooted in working with communities to recognise the assets they already have at their disposal and to identify what skills, processes and systems they need to develop in order for them to achieve their vision independently. Community capacity building should bring people together to establish stronger social networks and to help them organise around the issues which are important to them, their families and the wider community. Capacity building should also be provided to groups and organisations which are already established but who have limited resources to enable them to achieve their ambitions.

Without this targeted support, policies aiming to empower communities could in fact deepen inequality by further empowering the best organised communities at the expense of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Rebalancing power in favour of the least powerful is more important than a broad-brush intention to empower. We recommend that priority is given to supporting disadvantaged communities to enhance their power and influence.

SCDC has developed a model to help understand the contribution community-led approaches can, and do, make to wider efforts to address socio-economic inequality. We have attached this model as an appendix.

**QUESTION 3C – Could you offer suggestions as to how public authorities could improve budgetary analysis and reporting so as to take better account of inequalities related to socio-economic disadvantage?**

Budgeting by public authorities is, to some extent, where the real decisions about public services are made. A focus on preventative approaches to improving outcomes is largely undermined if budgets continue to over-prioritise 'downstream' service provision at the expense of proper investment in addressing underlying causes of poor outcomes. The socio-economic duty should therefore apply to budgeting as much as anywhere else in public service planning.

In the situation of cuts in public spending, we endorse the recommendation of the research carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Glasgow Caledonian University ([ref. p39](#)) that 'social and community risks should be considered early in the planning process and linked clearly to creative risk mitigation'.

One way of helping to ensure this is to adopt a more rights based approach to budgeting, such as [Human Rights Budgeting](#), which puts advancing equity at the heart of budgeting. By applying this form of budgeting, needs and priorities dictate spending adjustments. This can be contrasted with budgeting approaches in which spending decisions are decided based on available revenue. Through basing financial decisions on need, Human Rights Budgeting would make it more likely that spending would fund initiatives targeting and involving those most negatively affected by socio-economic inequality.

Building on our response to question 3A, and for the same reasons outlined there, communities should be involved in budgeting decisions, particularly communities experiencing poverty and exclusion. The value of directly involving people in budgeting has been recognised in the development of participatory budgeting in Scotland. Through the Community Choices programme, the Scottish Government has worked with local authorities and other organisations to implement participatory budgeting in communities across Scotland, particularly communities experiencing poverty and other forms of disadvantage. Evaluation is ongoing, but the benefits of entrusting communities with such decision making have been widely reported. These include bringing communities together, increased understanding of budgetary constraints, investment in local communities and more relevant and responsive public services.

**QUESTION 3D – Can you offer examples of how public authorities and others have made best use of the expertise of people with direct experience of poverty?**

There are some relatively well-known examples of engaging people experiencing poverty at a policy level. Glasgow City Council's [Poverty Leadership Panel](#), Faith in Community Scotland's [Poverty Truth Commission](#) and the Poverty Alliance's [EPIC project](#) have all brought together people first-hand experience of poverty with policy makers and politicians to discuss what matters to them and to contribute to developing better approaches to tackling poverty.

Some of the best examples of making use of the expertise of people with direct experience of poverty come from smaller community-led organisations, who are based in communities experiencing poverty and follow community development approaches. We have highlighted two examples below:

***COPE Scotland***

COPE Scotland is a community-led health organisation in Drumchapel that supports more than 2000 people every year to recover from and/or self-manage mental and emotional distress either through individual support, training or through population based wellbeing work. In recent years Glasgow City Council has funded around 75% of COPE's running costs through its Integrated Grant Fund. This reflects a strong working relationship with the local authority over several years.

Drumchapel has some of the highest rates of income deprivation, child poverty and unemployment in Scotland, and an important focus of COPE is on the impact inequality has on mental health. COPE provides a range of holistic services around mental health and the factors that influence mental health, including financial hardship, benefits and employment. It is the people with lived experience who attend COPE that decide the direction of the organisation and what money should be spent on, which results in an ever-adapting flexible menu of services. In this way, COPE can help to address whatever issues are salient in people's lives.

For COPE, co-producing the organisation's own services isn't enough, and a big focus is on supporting people to influence wider services. Focus groups have been held on matters ranging from the GP's Out of Hours Review to Health and Social Care Integration, with COPE feeding results back to relevant decision makers in Government or other bodies. Through COPE's support, people feel someone is listening and taking them seriously. By involving people in making decisions about COPE, and supporting them to have their say in wider decision making, COPE treats people as assets – not simply service users with an issue to be addressed. The willingness of statutory agencies to embrace risk, relinquish control and have trust in community-led approaches enables organisations such as COPE to flourish and develop according to community priorities.

See more at <http://www.cope-scotland.org/>.

### ***Govan Community Project***

Govan Community Project is a community based organisation working in south west Glasgow. Govan Community Project works with asylum seekers, people who have sought asylum, people who have gained refugee status and/or right to remain, migrant communities and anyone else who is marginalised and excluded. The project began in 2000/2001 in response to Glasgow City Council's decision to become part of the then Labour Government's dispersal programme. The local authority used to provide around half of the organisation's income, but now provides 20% towards charitable activities.

The overall purpose of the work is to achieve social justice in Govan and Craigton by building a strong community based on equality, mutual respect, support and integration. In addition to providing services, events and support, Govan Community Project facilitates forums bringing together public, voluntary and community organisations to help plan public services, find solutions to local issues and to build bonds and links within and between communities.

Govan Community Project has recently embarked on a Participatory Action Research project with the aim of increasing participation and influence by volunteers and service users. People with experience of the asylum system designed the research questions and carried out the research. The aim from the organisation's perspective is to better inform the type of services it provides.

See more at <http://www.govancommunityproject.org.uk/>.



**QUESTION 3E - What kind of guidance and support on meeting the duty would be most useful for public authorities?**

*The National Standards for Community Engagement*

If involving those with lived experience of poverty is recognised as crucial to addressing socio-economic inequality, public authorities will need to conduct good and well-planned community engagement. Guidance in community engagement will be required by many public agencies so that engagement is genuine, planned and relevant, starting from where communities are. Public authorities should be encouraged to adopt the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#).

Our view is that it is too often the case that there is a lack of investment in engaging communities at an early stage in identifying what actions are needed to achieve positive change. In addition to this, prior to the implementation of Part 3 (participation requests) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, there has been limited opportunity or mechanism for communities to proactively bring their own agendas to the table.

*Training and support for staff*

The move to greater involvement of people in strategies to address socio-economic inequality requires a 'letting go' of professional authority and control. We believe that there is a requirement for new guidance, training and skills development for public sector staff at both strategic and practice levels on new ways of working which involve service users and local communities.

**QUESTION 3F – Do you have a view on whether public authorities should use existing monitoring frameworks to track whether the socio-economic duty is making a difference to outcomes over the long term?**

The issue of monitoring the outcomes of the strategies of public authorities is not something we are familiar enough with to enable us to give a direct answer to the question.

That said, we believe that a related issue is that monitoring of impact should not be restricted to longer-term outcomes. There is value in measuring 'intermediary' outcomes such as increased participation, social capital and socio-economic literacy. Not only are these valuable outcomes in themselves, but the links between these outcomes and longer-term impacts on health, wellbeing and SIMD indicators are now understood.

Monitoring these intermediary outcomes would have the added benefit of reducing the risk of effective strategies being abandoned due to a lack of evidence of long-term improvements to broader outcomes in terms of health, wellbeing and reducing poverty. Changes to these latter outcomes may take a long time to happen and the benefits of particular local strategies may be counteracted by other social, political and structural change. On this note, attribution will be an ongoing challenge.

Changes to levels of participation, social capital and socio-economic literacy, on the other hand, are likely to occur at an earlier stage and can be monitored locally.

Although thought will need to be given to how best to measure these outcomes, there are strong reasons for including them in how public authorities track social change.

**QUESTION 4A - Once the socio-economic duty is introduced, the Scottish Government is keen for public authorities to look strategically across all planning processes in place to maximise their impact. What could public authorities and the Scottish Government do to make sure that the links between the different duties are managed effectively within organisations?**

We believe it should be relatively straightforward for public authorities to apply the socio-economic duty to the work they are already doing to meet existing duties. By doing so, these wider duties are more likely to be effective.

An example is the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, which has an emphasis on tackling socio-economic inequality, mainly in parts 2 (community planning) and 3 (participation requests). At the same time, there are legitimate questions around the Act regarding which community organisations are likely to take up the opportunities it provides. Specifically, if people experiencing poverty find it hard to take advantage of the legislation, will the Act unintentionally serve to widen inequality? A public authority could apply the socio-economic duty to the implementation of different parts of the Act. For instance, it could actively promote opportunities in the Act to people with direct experience of poverty and support them to take up these opportunities. In relation to participation requests, Section 24(3)(d) of the Act requires a public authority to consider, when reaching their decision, how a participation request contributes to reducing “inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage” as well as how it contributes to the participation of “people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.” By combining this requirement of the Act with the socio-economic duty, a public authority can help to ensure that participation requests, and the Act more widely, empower all communities and not just community organisations who are already well positioned to take advantage of the Act.

Our response to Q3 sets out why participation and community development support should be at the heart of efforts to meet the socio-economic duty. Helpfully, the connections between inequality, participation and prevention are also recognised in many of the duties named. Moreover, similar connections are found in other legislation and policy developments, including the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, the CLD Regulations 2013 and Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP). Given that the participation of communities is central to much of the above legislation, public authorities should be advised to co-ordinate their community engagement as well as support to community organisations.

This could be done through developing overarching participation plans which make the links between different legislation and identify where responsibilities lie. These plans would also indicate how support for community organisations would be provided. The plan would set out outcomes, indicators and actions for community participation and specify timeframes for engagement. It should be developed and carried out in adherence with the revised National Standards for Community

Engagement. Thus, local communities would be supported to be involved in the development of the plan itself. Detail would be given on how each of the new standards is to be met.

A cohesive strategy linking requirements in the various duties will help to ensure that engagement, and support to engage, is well-planned and properly resourced. In addition, the plan will make it easier for communities to hold local authorities and other public bodies to account over whether or not they have met the requirements of the different duties.

**QUESTION 4B – Can you offer examples of good practice in taking an integrated approach to issues such as poverty, equality, and human rights?**

We are aware of campaigns that have taken an integrated approach to the above issues, such as Nourish Scotland's [Right to Food Campaign](#).

In addition, the following examples demonstrate the value of building the capacity of people to collectively take such an integrated approach to address issues that affect them:

***Edinburgh Tenants Federation***

In partnership with the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Belfast based Participation and the Practice of Rights organisation, Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF) supported tenants to make practical use of human rights to address housing problems across the city.

As part of Scotland's National Action Plan on Human Rights (SNAP), a group of residents were supported by ETF and the SHRC to learn about human rights indicators and monitoring. They also learned how to take a participatory action research approach to show how issues such as dampness and poor insulation contravened the Right to Adequate Housing. The evidence was presented to Edinburgh City Council.

Although progress has been slow, residents have continued to work together taking a human rights-based approach to tackling housing issues.

See more at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrSOxT6FUPE>.

***Glasgow Disability Alliance***

With over 3500 members, Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA) is the largest member-led organisation for disabled people in Scotland. The organisation supports disabled people individually and, when they are ready, collectively, to put their voices and expertise at the heart of tackling the barriers they face, and to work with partner agencies to plan solutions.

Members take the lead in GDA's campaigning and policy work, which highlights the connections between disability and poverty, and often approaches issues from the perspective of equality and human rights. For instance, GDA's Manifesto for Action argued for Glasgow City Council to sign up to an Independent Living Strategy on the grounds of basic human rights. This has led to the establishing of Glasgow's Independent Living Strategy Group, which GDA co-chairs. The work of the strategy is based upon the 15 rights for Independent Living as detailed in Article 19 of the UN Convention on human rights.

Furthermore, GDA has established Drivers for Change (DfC), a group of GDA members who campaign for equality, rights and social justice for disabled people. The group consists of disabled people who are community activists, volunteers, and those who simply want to have more control over their lives. Working at both local and national levels, GDA Drivers have been involved in setting equality outcomes with Glasgow City Council, and have fed into community planning structures.

Read more at <http://gda.scot/>

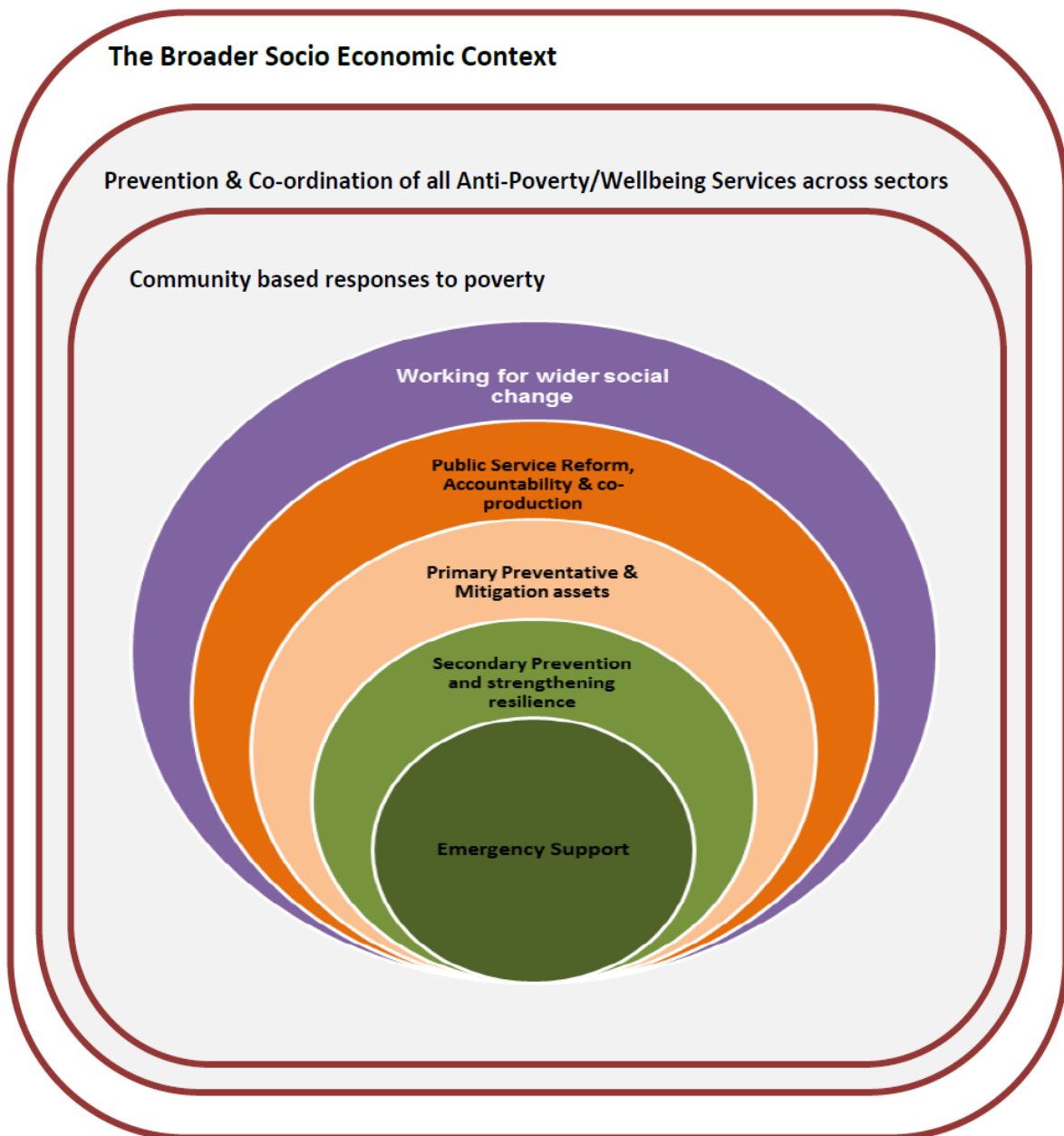
## Appendix: A potential model for community development and anti-poverty work

We suggest that the following model helps illustrate the role which community-led approaches can contribute to helping communities and public authorities collaborate in addressing socio-economic inequality. The model explores a spectrum of activity: from community-led responses to acute and immediate need, to how community development can shape policy, service design and wider attitudes towards poverty and inequality.

It situates the vital community based income maximisation and other mitigation activity in a wider context which includes how communities are addressing closely linked issues such as, improving opportunities for education; delivering meaningful employability support; creating better health and wellbeing outcomes; and co-production of relevant services in ways which work for people themselves.

The model seeks to demonstrate how community development support for a wide range of community responses contributes more holistically to promotion of justice, wellbeing and collective resilience in many communities.

## A Systems Map & Practice Model



### 1. Notes on using the model

The model is primarily a way grouping together, categorising and understanding how community development activities ameliorate poverty, support asset-development and increase participation and influence. This includes work conducted by groups, projects and agencies with an overt community development and by a wider range of partners in response to community engagement or other ways of determining need and community support.

The overarching systems map shows how community based responses to poverty are framed by the wider socio economic context and are also an essential aspect of prevention based public policy and public sector reform. Their value is in helping people experiencing poverty and inequality cope with its worst aspects, increase their chances of overcoming them and contribute to delivering wider social change. It is therefore very important to remember that community based responses should therefore not be judged on their ability to change wider socio-economic policy and its impacts on their own.

Within the community based response to poverty section of the map the model is a nested graphic representation of the types of activity which communities are developing in doing this, with community development support in many, though not all, cases.

The types of activity described are not necessarily all discrete responses or specific initiatives. It should be noted that many organisations will be active in more than one segment of the model and/or move between them to participate in particular campaigns or initiatives. This is why the boundaries between the segmented categories of activity are represented by dotted lines. This also illustrates the overlapping and connected nature of community based practice. For example, the development, support and promotion of credit unions enabling community based saving and access to credit often helps increase financial literacy in communities. More broadly, Credit Unions offer a socially just, sustainable and community based alternative to large financial institutions. Their boards are often those who have experienced poverty themselves and may contribute to both emergency responses such as food banks and to broader campaigning in the anti-poverty arena

The layout does not describe the work in order of importance but does, to some extent, illustrate a hierarchy of need affecting individuals and families from the central segment outwards – but not necessarily a hierarchy of importance or relevance to communities (or indeed wider society and government). Generally, the need for services closer to the centre should be reduced by successful activity in the outer rings. However, it cannot be overemphasised that the impact of welfare “reform” and sanctions in particular are very difficult to influence in the current policy environment and force communities into responding with alternative community based welfare provision. Since the impact of these “reforms” is pernicious for individuals, families and communities in the short, medium and long term highlighting the injustice of it is an entirely legitimate political objective for communities and worthy of support in a healthy democracy.

## 2. A Potential Categorisation

### 2.1 Emergency Support

Welfare provision should help protect household and individuals from external shocks and unforeseen events as well as maintain a dignified standard of living for those unable to work. The current reforms have a coercive role in forcing people into low paid and often inappropriate work. Interactions with the welfare system are likely to be increasingly problematic often leading to periods of absolute poverty and/or deliberate administrative destitution - as in the punitive sanctions regime. Such

conditions make it extremely difficult for people to plan for the longer term and achieve routes out of poverty. The focus on day to day survival often leaves individuals and families with choices between the 'least worse' options – for example whether to buy fuel or food.

This can initiate or exacerbate spirals of disadvantage - with particularly damaging impacts on social groups such as young people, lone parents or people with disabilities. In these circumstances, individuals and families suffer from persistent and damaging social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts which undermine their life chances and those of their families and communities.

#### *The community development role*

Communities increasingly feel that they must respond to pressing and immediate needs. Key examples include: food banks and emergency furniture and clothing redistribution. It also includes emergency benefit advice and advocacy or charitable activity such as Xmas toy appeals for asylum seekers or other particularly marginalised groups. In the longer-term it is not sustainable for communities themselves to be manoeuvred by circumstances into providing alternative social welfare provision for the most vulnerable and to do have to do so is a retrograde step.

Part of the community development role is in helping communities to think through whether they want to play these roles and in what circumstances since they are challenging and difficult to sustain. Community development can support individuals and communities to respond to the crisis in the short term but should also seek to use these conditions as a trigger to focus wider community concerns – leading to development of social capital and engagement in networking or campaigning around the issues in line with activities in the outer segments of the model.

## 2.2 Secondary Prevention and strengthening resilience

Some families and individuals, whilst surviving in the benefits system with its associated traps, manage adverse circumstances by juggling demands and responsibilities and can find themselves in regular need of emergency support. For many, experience of work is absent or very limited and often precarious, poorly paid and unrewarding with many households relying on in-work benefits to make up the shortfall. Their interactions with the welfare state are also likely to be problematic. Unexpected events still pose a risk, and options for training, development, borrowing money, and finding ways out of poverty are still limited.

#### *The community development role*

Community-led activity can help communities prepare for these traps and develop services which reduce the impact on those affected by them. Some of these are specific, with an example being targeted work with minorities such as asylum seekers. More broadly focused activity would include assisting with the development of money advice, family support work, or community health responses helping families with issues which sometimes accompany inequality and poverty such as



addiction or mental ill health. Community-led institutions like credit unions are important to support sustainable finance for those often excluded from access to credit through the banking system. This work can create conditions, formally and informally, for the development of more individual and collective resilience and the development of skills, knowledge and mutual support in communities. It can lead to development of networks of complementary services which together can reduce isolation and time spent in crisis situations. Where community development activity is supporting work of this kind, it can begin to assist local people to move from a reactive role, orientated around survival, towards a strategy concerned with prevention of the worst adverse circumstances and building towards more sustained improvements in outcomes for local development.

### 2.3 Primary Preventative & Mitigation assets

Building on individual and communal assets to grow development can increase access to life chances locally and fuller participation in economic, social and cultural life. Outcomes of this approach may include local economic or project development leading to increased local employment with improved household income for local people – as well as the development of important services which make communities more liveable and sustainable places. Such approaches can reduce the impact of poverty-producing policies and practices to some degree. They also help improve individual and community wellbeing and increase the ability to make more confident and informed choices.

#### *The community development role*

In this context, community development work focuses on delivering opportunities which maximise human potential and overcome barriers to greater life chances for people of all ages – particularly in areas where disadvantage is already recognised. Community based support for informal learning is a significant feature and participation in more formal accredited learning may also increase. Exemplar practice in this category includes developing opportunities for individuals and groups to build confidence and skills in themselves and their organisations which in turn help them envision a different future and how it might be achieved.

The development of good quality work with young people, such as active and productive volunteering and flexible community based learning services are features of this work. Appropriately calibrated, community based employability support based on local proximity to the labour market and access to skills is key to this as are community transport schemes which enable people to take up sustainable employment. Local training for work in housing associations or other local community projects are examples of where opportunities for work are being generated in communities themselves. These can make an increasingly important contribution to achieving more sustainable, positive destinations for young people and those experiencing longer term unemployment – particularly if it can be combined with other forms of investment from employers or colleges as is evident in regeneration contexts where physical, environmental and social investment combine to provide relevant and sustainable opportunities. Community-led organisation of these activities also can also provide real opportunities for co-production of this kind of

initiative directly with local people and for increasing awareness of the broader policy landscape.

#### 2.4 Public Service Reform, Accountability & co-production

There are many services and agencies engaged in what is sometimes seen by those in poverty as an industry which treats them as “problems” to be fixed rather than people with aspirations, rights, opinions and innate strengths. In most cases service users have very little control over what these agencies do and whether it really amplifies or inhibits their life chances.

In traditional models of service delivery, communities can be seen as passive recipients or consumers of policies, programmes and services. Recognising the value of their first-hand experience and insight, community development approaches offer the possibility of articulating the reality of private struggles and expressing these as public issues.

Beyond service accountability, and in accord with wider policy agendas, co-production of service design and delivery offers opportunities to move towards increasingly well designed and appropriate action to tackle poverty. Enabling community contributions to developing alternative approaches and to the design and evaluation of poverty mitigation measures is a key role that community development can play. An example of this is the involvement of young people and those affected by poverty in the design of work to poverty-proof the school day in Glasgow.

This is an area of work which is very underdeveloped with insufficient emphasis on the accountability to and participation with those experiencing poverty. This is particularly the case with the DWP but also extends to other public services intended to mitigate or ameliorate poverty and inequality. Challenging this is entirely consistent with the principles of the Scottish Approach to service reform and the First Minister’s stated desire to co-produce a better welfare system for Scotland.

##### *The community development role*

At all levels of policy and decision-making, community development has a role to play. Research designed and carried out and analysed by the community has the potential to offer powerful and profound insights into poverty, inequality and its impact whilst maintaining rigour and robustness. Well executed and well-designed community led research not only offers the potential to help shape delivery by and for those experiencing poverty, but also increases the connectedness, capacity and confidence of individuals and communities to join in dialogue and deliberative debate. The new Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act should help to increase community and service user scrutiny of many public services and the requirements to “plan for place” with people in the community planning processes could widen this further.

The development of new participation mechanisms for a wider range of public sector organisations, including large public sector employers and employability agencies, could also increase community voices in policy and service development and deliver

tangible changes in the way services are organised. The community development role in this context involves supporting communities to identify and prioritise their own issues, engage constructively with public agencies, make proposals for development based on their experience and challenge activity which worsens the situation for those in immediate or potential need. Support activities could also include helping communities strengthen their lobbying, negotiation and wider campaigning skills where required.

Community development approaches are pivotal to facilitating this co-production approach to building better public services. Although not synonymous with co-production, community development *values*, *techniques* and *practices* are essential elements in the development of community capacity and the design and delivery of effective co-productive work.

## 2.5 Working for wider social change

Achieving wider social change relates to the wider social, economic, cultural and political factors which generate and maintain inequality. Whilst the term community is often used to imply the local, or the neighbourhood, the ethos of community development seeks to widen and deepen understanding of these and explore opportunities for local people to influence them. Negative perceptions of those affected by poverty in general, and recipients of welfare in particular, cause great harm and create an atmosphere hostile to the development of progressive empowerment, supportive, active, inclusive, influential and prosperous communities. Community development offers opportunities to support the development of knowledge and skills in communities, to take part in wider public action which addresses the causes of inequality as well as that which simply helps people live with the symptoms.

### *The community development role*

Community development's commitment to the values of *empowerment*, *democratic participation*, *full citizenship* and *collaboration* offers a constructive framework which communities can use to critique power structures which produce and re-produce inequality. Although currently less common, work of this kind should be supporting communities to reflect on the context and circumstances which frame their daily lives and consider how they may wish to join with others to make the case for broader and deeper change. This includes the development of civic education and participation initiatives and of opportunities for involvement in deliberative governance e.g. participatory budgeting and alternative policy development.

Historically, it has also included citizen-led inquiries and commissions exploring lived experience of issues such as poverty, the treatment of asylum seekers or people with disabilities. Such work is designed to assist communities - and the wider networks they form - to articulate the changes they think are relevant and develop informed and authentic alternative proposals as a basis for co-production, negotiation or campaigning.

Community development activity can encourage this at local levels in community planning or other anti-poverty planning processes, but they can also help communities to consider and frame wider solutions and to build and maintain the

wider alliances needed to ensure that community led alternatives have real space in wider discourse. Part of achieving this goal lies in widening the base of support for progressive approaches by supporting work which tackles myths and stereotypes and creates encounters and social solidarity between people experiencing poverty and others whose empathy and support will be required to deliver change and invest in services.

To some extent all work on poverty and inequality has the potential to encourage critical reflection of this kind and in small ways it takes place right across the model. Such an approach is crucial to ensuring that work to mitigate poverty and inequality does not become instrumental in replicating it and is therefore very pertinent to Scotland's current conversations on preventing poor outcomes for people and communities and creating a Fairer Scotland.