

# Fairness Matters

A Fair Fife is where all residents have the capability to live good lives, make choices and reach their full potential

... and where all children are safe, happy and healthy

November 2015

THE  
**Fairer Fife**   
COMMISSION



The Fairer Fife Commission was established by Fife Council in September 2014 to take a strategic overview of the scale, scope and nature of poverty in Fife and the effectiveness of activity currently undertaken to address such poverty. The Commission was tasked to report with recommendations to Fife Council and Fife Partnership by November 2015.



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# ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Fairer Fife Commission was established by Fife Council in September 2014 to provide independent advice and insight into the priorities for tackling poverty and inequality in Fife.

*The Commission's remit was to:*

*Take a strategic overview of the scale, scope and nature of poverty in Fife and the effectiveness of activity currently undertaken to address such poverty. To report with recommendations to Fife Council and Fife Partnership by November, 2015.'*

## The membership of the Commission:

**Martyn Evans** (Chair), Chief Executive, Carnegie UK Trust

**Brendan Dick** Director, BT Scotland and Managing Director, BT Regions

**John Dickie** Scotland Director, Child Poverty Action Group

**George Dodds** Director of Health Equity, NHS Health Scotland

**Professor Duncan MacLennan CBE** Professor of Strategic Urban Management and Finance, St Andrew's University

**Satwat Rehman** Director, One Parent Families Scotland

**Professor Carol Tannahill** Director, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

**Dr. Katherine Trebeck** Policy and Research Advisor, Oxfam GB Global Research Team

**Pam Whittle CBE** Chair, Scottish Health Council Committee

**Nicholas Young** Stakeholder Manager (Scotland), Working Links

**Jim McCormick** Scotland Advisor, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (advisor to the Commission).

Steve Grimmond, Fife Council Chief Executive, attended Commission meetings as the representative of Fife Council and Fife Partnership, but he was not a Commissioner.

This report contains the views and judgements of the Commissioners and does not necessarily represent the views of their individual organisations.

The Commission met six times between January and November 2015. Meetings were structured around four themes: paid and unpaid work; place; being well; and life courses and transitions. The Commission took oral evidence at these meetings.

A 'Call for Evidence' exercise ran from April 10 to May 22, 2015 and was targeted at public sector, voluntary and academic organisations. The Commission undertook community based visits to collect personal testimony from other residents. These visits were hosted by third sector support agencies and were designed to hear evidence from people who have direct experience of poverty.

# CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

I was very fortunate that all the Commissioners invited to join the Fairer Fife Commission agreed, without hesitation and without exception, to spend their very valuable time with us. I am grateful for their serious and effective commitment to our many meetings, hearings and visits. Also for their hard work in crafting a report that sought to balance being accessible alongside a strong evidence base.

The Commission benefited greatly from written evidence and personal testimony. Our report has been enriched by those taking the time to contribute their thoughts and experience. This was a critical part of the process and helped our understanding enormously. We have included direct quotes from these responses and personal testimonies in our report. We received written evidence from a large number of people and organisations based around our key themes. We have listed individuals and organisations who responded to the Commission's call for evidence, and also the organisations Commissioners visited to receive personal testimony from clients and service users.

We also had excellent verbal evidence at the Commission meetings, again we have listed all those who attended. The Commission was impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of the staff and members of the Fife Partnership and wider. I would particularly like to express my gratitude to the looked-after children from Fife who, supported by the Scottish Children's Parliament, spent the morning with us and provided outstanding evidence on what is important for all children. Their view was that all children should be 'safe, happy and healthy'. We have included their ambition in our definition of fairness.

The Commission's secretariat was led by Robert McGregor, Sustainable Communities Programme Manager at Fife Council, and supported by Dr William Penrice, Team Leader, Planning, Performance and Diagnostics at Fife Council; Coryn Barclay, Policy Co-ordinator at Fife Council; Patricia Spacey, Policy Officer at Fife Council; Lisa Hemphill, formerly Community Education Worker at Fife Council; Susie Cairney,

Communications Officer at Fife Council; Jacqui Prokes, Lead Officer, Business Support at Fife Council; Lauren Pennycook, Policy Officer at the Carnegie UK Trust and Genna Nelson, Corporate Services Officer at the Carnegie UK Trust. The team worked hard to support the detailed business of the Commission and all its logistical requirements. Our designer, Lucy Boyd, gave us excellent service and rapid turnaround in design drafts.

Steve Grimmond, Chief Executive of Fife Council, consistently gave us his valuable advice and support and made available the resources of his staff.

Finally, I would like to record the professionalism, energy and enthusiasm of Jennifer Wallace, Head of Policy at the Carnegie UK Trust. She led the challenging strategic data-sifting and drafting process. Douglas White, Head of Advocacy at the Carnegie UK Trust; Lauren Pennycook, Policy Officer at the Carnegie UK Trust; Jim McCormick, Special Advisor to the Commission and Robert McGregor Sustainable Communities Programme Manager at Fife Council were critical in the process of detailed and frequent re-drafting of our report. The Commission was fortunate to have this outstanding team support our work and turn the vast amount of information plus what we heard and what we thought into a published report.



**Martyn Evans**  
Chair Fairer Fife Commission  
CEO Carnegie UK Trust

# VISUAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If we work together .....

with real ambition .....



## Analysis

The Commission takes the view that ever widening inequality is neither natural nor intractable.

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are...

## Ways of Working required:



- Open and transparent
- Data driven and knowledge rich
- Citizen focused
- Mega-community response



## Ambitious

Inspiring and effective leaders on improving fairness over the next 15 years



## Poverty-free

Eradicating deep and persistent poverty for individuals and families



## Fair work

Championing work as a route out of poverty and to progression and advancement



## Affordable

Tackling the cost of living crisis to ensure everyone has sufficient resources for a decent and fulfilling life



## Connected

Driving the universal availability and access to the opportunities and benefits offered by digital technology



## Empowered

Engaging and offering local control as the key to improving local public services and delivering better outcomes for citizens



## Skilled

Protecting and promoting the life chances of young people to escape a generational poverty cycle



## Healthier

Strengthening the understanding of what works in reducing health inequalities and scaling up and sustaining proven activities

plus a focus on individuals' wellbeing

we will have a substantial impact

**Fife is in the top five**  
Scottish local authorities  
for fairness measures

**6,488**  
people taken out of fuel poverty

**1,402**  
fewer long-term unemployed

**£55.30**  
a week increase in median pay

**3,008**  
more internet users

**35,494**  
more volunteers

**15,340**  
more people with qualifications

**9,530**  
people with a better mental health

## Outcome



A Fife where all residents have the capability to live good lives, make choices and reach their full potential and where all children are safe, happy and healthy.

# OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

A Fairer Fife is Fife that is:



## Ambitious

1. Fife Partnership should make a clear commitment to the fairness ambitions set out by the Commission.
2. The Third Sector Strategy Group in Fife should develop an agreed strategic approach to the community and voluntary sector's role in tackling inequality and promoting fairness.
3. Fife's business community and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are invited onto the Fife Partnership. Fife's business community (individually and collectively) should develop and invest in their role in tackling inequality and promoting fairness.
4. Fife Partnership should commit to reporting in a regular, accessible, and timely fashion on progress towards a Fairer Fife.
5. Fife Partnership should establish a Knowledge Hub to become a centre of excellence in translating data on fairness in Fife into practical action.



## Poverty Free

6. Fife Partnership should strengthen the partnership with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to rapidly improve function of welfare system in Fife, critically to include greater trust between job seekers and job centres.
7. Fife Partnership should rebalance its employability programmes to primarily focus on those with physical or mental health challenges (with lead responsibility resting with NHS Fife/the Health and Social Care Partnership) and those requiring basic adult-learning support (with lead responsibility resting with Fife Council).

8. Fife Partnership should rapidly develop social approaches and parent-led childcare in communities, with highest concentrations of low-income families based on need rather than ability to pay market rates, and designed to support parents attend learning and training and jobs.
9. Fife Partnership should consider further development of a localised approach to employability including devolution of the delivery of the Work Programme to Fife.
10. Fife Partnership should select a town in Fife to test and evaluate a highly innovative 'Basic Income' pilot, learning from leading practice around the world.



## Fair Work

11. Fife Partnership should set the ambition of becoming a living wage region.
12. Fife Partnership should commit to exploring a fairness in self-employment hub in Fife, with Business Gateway and the Fife Economic Partnership to help self-employed workers structure their work and enterprise arrangements to maximise their earnings and work security.
13. Fife Partnership should invest in and promote enhanced social enterprise development capacity for Fife to work in tandem with existing agencies such as Business Gateway.
14. Fife Partnership should refocus the geography of economic development activity from a 'Fife-outwards' perspective, to one that focuses on the assets within Fife, for example through a Fife 'Towns Deal' supporting towns to attract 'good jobs' to Fife.



## Affordable

15. Fife Partnership should pilot a 'Living Rent' programme in partnership with the Scottish Government, where average rent-setting is linked more closely to local median wages.
16. Fife Partnership should host accessible, inclusive cross-party summits on availability of land in each of Fife's five Scottish Parliament constituency areas to identify barriers to meeting its affordable housing targets and identifying innovative solutions to improve housing supply.
17. Fife Partnership should design advice and support services for those living on low incomes for maximum usage by being based in places and services that people already use.
18. Fife Partnership should continue to develop a business case and plans for a social enterprise lending organisation (Community Developed Finance Initiative) to offer borrowing and money advice to low income, high-risk groups who would otherwise use higher cost alternatives.
19. Fife Partnership should implement a harm-reduction policy for benefits sanctions, ensuring people have the information and support needed to avoid sanctions, challenge sanction decisions and apply for DWP Hardship Payments if they are sanctioned.
20. Fife Partnership should introduce income maximisation checks at key points through statutory service provision – health facilities and services, and education services.
21. Employers in Fife should take a lead in considering how they can support credit union membership on behalf of their employees, either through establishing work-based initiatives or making links to existing credit unions.
22. Fife Partnership should carry out a cost-benefit analysis for the introduction of free travel cards – targeted at low income families – with particular consideration for cards for those seeking work and recently moving into work (extension of scheme to support people attending food banks).



## Connected

23. Fife Partnership should establish a network of Digital Business Hubs across Fife to support employees of non-Fife based organisations to work and locate locally.
24. Fife Partnership should develop plans in collaboration with Housing Associations for non-commercial tariff for digital broadband to be made available to all social housing tenants.
25. Fife Partnership should extend the availability of free, public Wi-Fi across community and public buildings throughout Fife.
26. Fife Partnership should continue the deployment of superfast broadband technology to ensure availability for all households and businesses across Fife.
27. Fife Partnership should invest in digital champion and volunteer approaches, building on successful models already developed in Fife, to support many more people to help their friends and family develop basic digital skills.



## Empowered

28. Fife Partnership should rapidly implement poverty-training and workforce development for Fife Council staff and those in partner organisations.
29. Fife Partnership should invest in a strong local pilot for devolution by identifying a local area to receive significant public expenditure to be devolved to locality level and use participatory budgeting to guide spending.

## Skilled

30. Fife Partnership should require all schools in Fife to develop and deliver a plan for significantly reducing the educational attainment gap in their school based on what is proven to work and with dedicated financial and in-kind support.
31. Fife Partnership should be inspired by the Glasgow Cost of the School Day project and invest in a local programme to reduce financial barriers affecting participation and experiences at school for children from low income households.
32. Fife Partnership should commit to establish an apprenticeship for every £1 million of public expenditure. This should be augmented by the development of an apprenticeship scheme for public bodies to sponsor apprenticeships in SMEs.
33. Fife Partnership should work with the business community to provide more support for skills development, focussing on those at particular risk of labour market marginalisation – including women, lone parents, people with disabilities and some ethnic minority groups.
34. Fife Partnership should consider further methods to refresh links with the University of St Andrews, particularly on big data, innovation in digital civic engagement and the use of science.

## Healthier

35. Fife Partnership should continue to support the joined up approach provided by the Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance, strengthening the understanding of what works in reducing health inequalities and scaling up and sustaining proven activities. The knowledge hub should provide a forum for the sharing of learning and good practice, and the use of health inequalities impact assessment.
36. Fife Partnership should invest further in the local voluntary health sector to support their work on reducing health inequalities and in co-producing community-based services.
37. Fife Partnership should consider establishing a pilot project on reducing stress and supporting resilience for those of working age who are living alone.
38. Fife Partnership should develop a clear focus on health and employment, to increase employability capacity and sustain employment for people with health problems.
39. Fife NHS Board should contribute to a reduction in inequalities over and above the obvious provision of public health services and integration agenda (e.g. as an employer, a procurer of goods and services and strong partner).
40. Fife Partnership should maximise the potential impact of its collective (and skilled) workforce to carry out simple interventions (e.g. income maximisation) when interacting with citizens and not only focus on the issue at hand, but seek to understand household circumstances.

# INTRODUCTION

We are at a time when the concepts of fairness, poverty and participation are at the top of the political agenda in Scotland, as they are in many other countries.

An unusually gradual recovery from a deep recession has coincided with rising demand for public services at a time of national austerity. The result has been a deepening of inequality and challenging levels of low-paid work. Our welfare state, designed on assumptions of finite need and very different expectations, is struggling to cope, particularly given the context of an ageing population placing further strain on services. Meanwhile, austerity policies have eroded the social contract between the state and citizens. New approaches are needed to reverse seemingly widening social inequalities. The impetus for action to address these challenges is urgent. However, translating concepts of social welfare developed in the mid-20th century to our very different world today takes a great deal of time and thought.

The Fairer Fife Commission was set up to contribute its time and thought to the particular needs of the citizens living in Fife. It follows in the footsteps of reports such as the Christie Commission on the Future of Public Services (2011), the Expert Group on Welfare and Constitutional Change (2014) and the Commission on Housing and Wellbeing (2015).

## A Fairer Scotland

The Commission's work was carried out at the same time as the Scottish Government launched its National Discussion on a Fairer Scotland. Following the launch in June 2015, the Scottish Government hosted events across the country during the second phase of the National Discussion to engage the public in the policymaking process and to further discuss key themes around fairness. The final phase of the National Discussion will take place from December, 2015, until February, 2016 and will see the Scottish Government develop a series of

recommendations on how all sectors can work together to create a fairer Scotland by 2030 and draft a Social Justice Action Plan through a Citizen's Forum. We have aligned our own timescale to that of the Scottish Government to provide for synergy between the Scottish and Fife approaches to fairness.

The Fairer Fife Commission has looked at findings and recommendations from the many other Fairness Commissions that have taken place across the UK. Our intention has been to learn from the work of others and use their insights to deepen our understanding of the possible, but also to build on these findings and expand the potential. While we have sought to draw on relevant national policy developments and other local initiatives, our conclusions are firmly rooted in the realities of Fife and the evidence that we have heard from people living there.

## Our definition of fairness

Despite the current interest in fairness, there is no universally agreed definition of what this concept means, in theory or in practice.

We arrived at a wider working definition of fairness that suited our purposes. We did not spend a great deal of time debating the academic merits of various definitions. What we wanted to achieve was a definition which was both optimistic and much wider than material deprivation. Part of our observations as a Commission was that defining terms and describing the problem have become the primary objectives for too many. We wanted to move quickly to explore practical possibilities and the opportunities for change. In future, we need to place practical action and the resident and service user voice much closer to the heart of the debates and decision-making.

The Commission defines a Fairer Fife as:

A Fife where all residents have the capability to live good lives, make choices and reach their full potential and where all children are safe, healthy and happy

## The concepts underpinning our definition

For some, fairness simply means a lack of injustice. It is '*impartial and just treatment or behaviour without favouritism or discrimination*' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015). This is often referred to as procedural fairness. Our definition goes much further than this.

We link fairness to distributive justice, whereby individuals' wellbeing (their income, wealth, housing, health, education, safety and so on) is not determined by factors outwith their control, such as race, gender, social class, age, disability and household composition. Our approach places citizens, families and communities at the forefront.

Distributive justice concerns the nature of a socially just allocation of goods in a society. A society in which incidental inequalities in outcome do not arise would be considered a society guided by the principles of distributive justice.

(Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA), 2004)

Unfairness exists when inequalities are allowed to interrelate and compound, which results in those experiencing disadvantage in one area of

their lives too often experiencing others. In our society, income and wealth inequality is strongly correlated with inequalities in education, health, housing and our environment. For this reason, tackling income and material deprivation is a critical aspect of our definition in fairness.

However, our interest in fairness goes far further than material deprivation. We see the eradication of deep poverty as a necessary, but not sufficient, indicator of fairness.

## Capabilities Approach

The existence of systemic and long-term poverty within families and neighbourhoods erodes the ability of citizens to experience a level playing field. In developing our thinking, the Fairer Fife Commission has been influenced by the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen (Sen, 1999) and Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 2011). Rather than focusing solely on the distribution of resources such as income, qualification or rights, the capabilities approach requires us to consider what people are actually able to do and be (carrying out meaningful work, for example, or participating in democracy). The approach stresses the concept of agency; the freedom to choose and to act rather than just the availability of resources.

Children's life chances are shaped and influenced by the conditions into which they are born and develop.

(OECD, 2013)

Finally, our report is based on the belief that success in creating a fairer Fife must be understood in terms of the real outcomes for people, not just improvements in processes or inputs.

It is through the interaction between each of the principles in our definition – for example, capabilities via the set of opportunities actually available; inclusive goals being measured in terms of outcomes, not just intent – that progress towards a fairer Fife can be measured most clearly.

## Implications of our definition

A consequence of our definition is that achieving a fairer Fife may require different levels of resources, with an explicit commitment to social justice as part of the approach. Improving fairness requires everyone to make changes in how we think and act, whether we are public sector employees, charities, businesses or citizens.

For opportunity to be fair, it must do more than simply exist. If those experiencing unfairness are to benefit from opportunity, their circumstances and capabilities must be properly recognised and understood. Processes need to be free from intended or unintended bias and direct and indirect exclusion. People must feel enabled, supported and confident to access the opportunities available.

The case for improving fairness in society has a moral imperative, which is clearly articulated by many working in the voluntary sector and by those in public life representing those experiencing the worst effects of inequality. This moral imperative is central to our approach.

However there is also growing evidence that lack of fairness in society is an economic problem. The OECD is a recent and strong advocate of the argument that **inequality is both a moral issue and a severe drag on the economic performance of a society**. The economic effects can be direct, for example, by creating a sense of social anxiety, or indirect through low economic productivity and the cost of public services (see for example, Wilkinson and Pickett, Dorling and Alain de Botton). This means that a fairer Fife would bring economic benefits for all.

Questions of inter-generational fairness matter as well. There was a significant achievement of poverty reduction for older people over the past two decades. But, as poverty rates fell gradually for all other age groups, young adults (aged 16-30) faced a growing rate of poverty. This reflects the position of young people in the

labour market, but also the impact of housing insecurity. More than a third of homeless applicants in 2014/15 in Fife were under 25 years old.

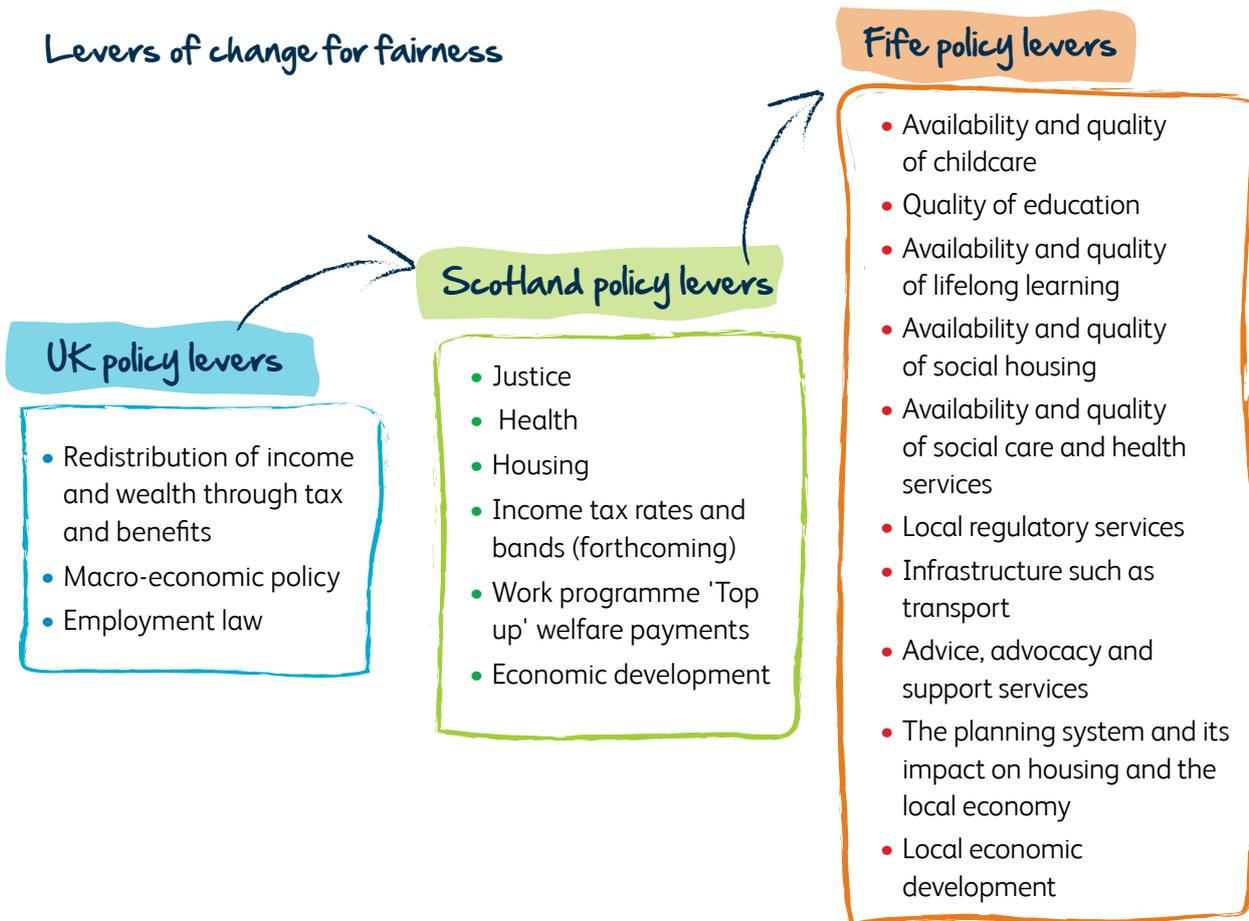
A substantial reduction in poverty for tenants in the social rented sector (especially among older people) has been accompanied by a marked rise in poverty in the private rented sector. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015). Work by the Leverhulme Trust demonstrates how housing wealth patterns can reinforce inequalities and reduce social mobility.

In terms of future prospects, the growth of low-paid jobs might be less of a concern if most people worked at this level for short periods before progressing to jobs with better pay and prospects. However, the UK as a whole is now marked by very low rates of progression for low-paid workers. Over the last decade, only one in four of those regularly in work over the period moved into better jobs (Resolution Foundation, 2014). For Scotland, we also know that access to in-work training is lower for part-time employees, those paid below the living wage and those with few or no qualifications.

## The policy context for fairness in Fife

Widening inequality in Scotland and across the UK is a result of labour market changes, housing market changes, and cost pressures on household incomes already stretched (notably for energy, childcare and travel) as well as social security changes. **The Commission takes the view that ever-widening inequality is neither natural nor intractable**. Fairness in Fife is affected by many global, macro-economic, social, technological and environmental trends. But, it is also affected by the policies and decisions taken by government at different levels. Achieving a fairer society is a shared agenda across these different tiers of decision-making.

## Levers of change for fairness



## The UK Context

The impact of economic and welfare policy, whether set by the UK Government or Scottish Government, largely determines the context within which Fife Council and its partners are operating.

The best-case scenario is that policies determined at UK and Scotland level on employment, housing, social security and tax work seamlessly with local action in Fife to add value at every juncture, reducing unfairness. However, where citizens in Fife are experiencing hardship and inequality as a direct result of policy decisions made elsewhere, Fife Council and its partners have a duty to ensure those decision-makers are aware of the impact of their decisions. The worst case scenario is that Fife spends a great deal of its limited (but still very considerable) human and financial resources on trying to mitigate the effects of policies it does not make, reducing its own capacity and available resources for tackling unfairness in the process.

When deliberating the role of Fife Council and its partners in developing a fairer Fife, the Commissioners regularly debated the extent to which local decision-makers are able to alter the impact of macro-level policies on their citizens, or whether Fife can go further and lead the way in developing a fairer society at a time of growing inequalities. We concluded that all the evidence pointed to an optimistic view. As the Joseph Rowntree Foundation said: *'Services can help reduce the burden of poverty-close health inequalities and close the gaps in attainment between children from poor backgrounds and their better off classmates'* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014).

The fiscal crisis and subsequent recession have de-prioritised, at least at UK level, policies that lead to progressive redistribution of income and wealth. Many of those we spoke to with recent experience of deepening inequality saw it as directly linked to changes in the welfare state, and there is a broad consensus that the changes to UK tax and welfare policy have disproportionately affected the least well off in our society.

A recent analysis of the 2015 UK Summer Budget shows that living standards will fall further below an accepted minimum income standard for many households because the benefit of a higher national minimum wage will be more than undone by other changes including reduced tax credit payments and scrapping of the work allowance within Universal Credit for single/couple claimants without children (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015).

The UK Government argues that by combining in-work and out-of-work benefits in a single system with a single set of rules, the system will be easier to administer and people will be clearer on their entitlements. They argue that for those in work, wages will rise and taxes will be lower to fill the gap.

Phasing in of Universal Credit will begin for new claimants in Fife from April, 2016. From that point, Scottish local authorities are expected to provide support for those applying for Universal Credit under contract from the Department for Work and Pensions. We await with interest the evaluation findings from Universal services Delivered Locally pilots in Dundee, Argyll & Bute and other locations in Britain. We also note the change from housing benefit into a housing element within Universal Credit, which will reduce and eventually remove a key processing function from local government.

## Macro policies

There is broad agreement in the academic literature on the macro redistributive policies that could improve fairness. These include, but are not limited to:

- A commitment to pursue policies that would achieve full and fair employment (defined as unemployment of 3% or less, where a declining share is experienced as long-term), these include welfare to work schemes which guarantee employment at the living wage.
- A commitment to a progressive approach to income tax and property and wealth taxes.

- A commitment to a Living Wage.
- A capital endowment (minimum inheritance) paid to all at adulthood (18 years old).
- A progressive, property-based tax system replacing Council Tax that ensures sustainable funding for local government services.
- A social security system that offers a springboard into learning, training and work, as well as adequate income protection when unemployment, disability, sickness and caring responsibilities reduce or prevent income from paid employment (derived from Atkinson, 2015, Picketty, 2014 and Wilson and Pickett, 2010).

It is very uncertain the extent to which the macro-economic and welfare policy in the UK as a whole will move in this direction during the timescale that the Commission has set itself – the 15 years to 2030.

## The Scottish Context

The much-anticipated devolution of welfare powers to Scotland in the Scotland Bill (currently going through the UK Parliament) means that in future, the Scottish Government will have greater control over some – though not all – of these policy levers. This will likely have an effect on the context for fairness in Fife.

Most significantly, the Scottish Government will be able to set up its own employment programmes to help the long-term unemployed and disabled people into work, in effect replacing the Work Programme and Work Choice. A considerable amount of DWP support to job seekers currently delivered by centrally-contracted providers – such as the Work Programme – is being devolved.

Help for long-term unemployed and disabled people currently makes up 95% of DWP's budget for centrally contracted employment support delivered through providers. In future, services should be decentralised and delivered by a more diverse set of providers. Together with

its partners, Fife should seek to take advantage of any local flexibilities in the successor arrangements to the Work Programme to be introduced by the Scottish Government.

In addition:

- The Scottish Parliament will have the power to *‘introduce discretionary top-up payments to people in Scotland who are entitled to a reserved benefit. These top-up payments could be paid on an individual case-by-case basis or to provide ongoing entitlement to specific or all benefit claimants’* (Scotland Bill, 2015-16).
- Control over benefits affecting some of the most vulnerable members of society will be devolved to the Scottish Parliament. This includes benefits like Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments, Carer’s Allowance, Attendance Allowance, and industrial injuries benefits. This means the Scottish Parliament will have wide-ranging powers to make provision for Scottish versions of these benefits – with the ability to change the rules, or even replace these benefits with new ones or other payments and services.
- The Scottish Parliament will also have the power to make its own provision for Winter Fuel Payments, Cold Weather Payments, Sure Start Maternity Grants and Funeral Payments. It will also be able to create new benefits in this area if it wishes.
- Discretionary Housing Payments will be devolved in full. This will give the Scottish Parliament the power to support Housing Benefit and certain Universal Credit claimants who need help with their housing costs, once Universal Credit replaces Housing Benefit.

Universal Credit remains reserved, but the Scottish Government will have new powers to determine how often claimants are paid, how payments are shared within households and whether the housing allowance within Universal Credit is paid direct to the landlord. Scottish Government Ministers will also be able to vary the housing costs covered by Universal Credit for people in rented accommodation.

## Delivery system for welfare

There has not been as great a focus on the detailed, complex and technical area of effective delivery to benefit recipients.

Few would disagree with Scotland aspiring to introduce a modern user-focused service delivery model, as well expressed by the Poverty Alliance: *‘The future delivery of social security in Scotland must be built around what works for people, and all decisions must be based around how we achieve the best outcomes for people reliant on the system’* (Poverty Alliance, 2015).

There are broadly two options for welfare delivery in Scotland. The first is to contract with the UK Government to use its current systems. The second is to create a separate Scottish delivery system. The contracted service option is likely to be far less flexible in accommodating policy changes required by the Scottish Government. A new service will be very challenging to establish in the time frame. The Commission urges a clear decision with public consultation on the options.

However, both options run a very similar primary risk: *‘Our evidence has also shown that there is a risk that the transfer of responsibility for the delivery of services is not always matched by a transfer of funds to fulfil the task’* (Social Security Advisory Committee, 2015).

## Principles for fair devolution

Taken together, the devolution of these areas will provide Scotland – and its local authority areas, including Fife – with the opportunity to develop policies that seek to protect the most vulnerable in society, but they will be doing so within the context of the wider fiscal and welfare policy determined for the UK as a whole. The principles that should shape social security decentralisation (England and Wales) and devolution (Scotland and Northern Ireland) are not settled. The Social Security Advisory Committee set out five principles for devolution:

*'We believe that developments in social security policy and delivery should be:*

1. *oriented to meeting the needs – and developing the capacity – of claimants;*
2. *sustainable – that is to say, they should be appropriately resourced;*
3. *consistent with minimum standards of both adequacy and quality;*
4. *designed and presented with clarity, accuracy and simplicity in mind; and*
5. *clearly and transparently 'owned' by an appropriate authority.*

*We recommend that these five principles be followed by the UK Government, the devolved administrations and all local authorities in the appraisal, development and application of the localisation of social security' (Social Security Advisory Committee, 2015).*

The Commission strongly supports these principles.

## The challenge and opportunity for Fife

The Commissioners concluded that there is scope for Fife to both mitigate the impact of macro-level policies and play a leading role in developing a fairer local society, but that it will require a concerted effort. This report sets out why this is the case, through a detailed review of fairness in Fife, what activity is currently taking place, and how it can be improved to have the maximum impact on people's lives. The levers of change that the Council and its partners hold are highlighted in the schematic later in this report. In addition, Fife's public sector organisations are both the largest employers and very significant procurers of goods and services. They can provide leadership on being fair employers and use purchasing power to drive wider change.

We have not examined options to change the way local taxation works. The Commission on Local Tax Reform has been established to undertake that task. That Commission's remit is to *'identify and examine alternatives that would deliver a fairer system of local taxation to support the funding of services delivered by local government'* (The Commission on Local Tax Reform, 2015). Their findings will be critical to helping build a fairer Fife.

**The limited scope of local government to raise tax revenues.**

*The current system (of local taxation) is almost entirely top-down, the assumption being that central government is better placed, perhaps even better suited, to resource generation. The current council tax freeze illustrates this. Central government controls the methods by which local government receives the overwhelming majority of funds: it decides the tax system and base; controls the reallocation of non-domestic rates; and can impose conditions on resource receipt.*

*Local authorities then have only reserves and charges as own-source revenue sources. Spending allocations, too, are subject to central government scrutiny, with 'failing' local authorities subject to central government censure. The only real censure for central government is national elections. Local government is driven to being functional rather than dynamic because it is so constrained in what it can do.*

(University of Glasgow Policy Scotland Evidence to the Commission on Local Tax Reform, 2015)

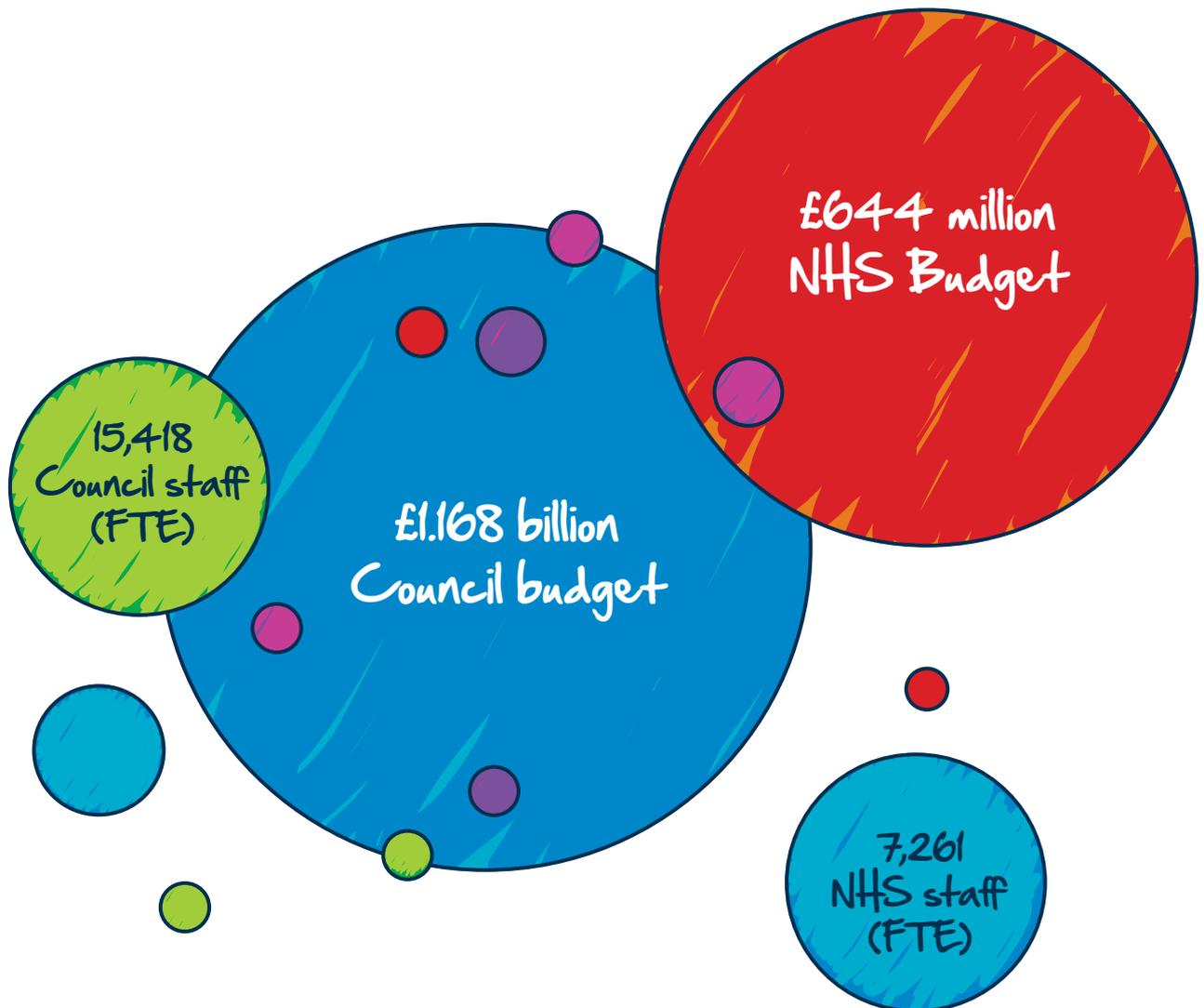
## Public sector resources in Fife

The overall Fife Council budget for 2012/13 was £1.251b, dropping to £1.131b in 2013/14 and stabilising at £1.168b in 2014/15. The Commission acknowledges that the Council is required to achieve substantial savings over the next few years, and that some of those savings targets will have impacts on other service providers too, but also recognises that the local authority's resources are still large. In particular, there are a large number of people employed by Fife Council whose time, energy and enthusiasm can be harnessed to support meaningful change, including almost 6,000 education and children's services staff, 2,000 people working

with adults and older people, and 1,800 working in communities. Other partners notably the NHS in Fife, have additional large resources to apply. Its workforce presently totals 7,261 FTEs and it had revenue of £644 million in 2014/15. Staff and financial resources can be configured to have a significant impact through those levers of change. Over the 15-year timetable of our recommendations, the Council alone will have spent upwards of £15 billion and 230,000 years of FTE staff time.

Viewed at this scale, the challenge of affecting the life chances of 75,000 people currently living in poverty in Fife does not appear insurmountable.

## Public sector resources in Fife





# A FAIRER FIFE IS AN AMBITIOUS FIFE

**A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are inspiring and effective leaders on improving fairness over the next 15 years.**

By 2030, the Commission wants Fife to be in the top five Scottish local authority areas for the fairness measures that we have set out. The Commission believes that Fife Council and its partners must continue to provide inspiring and effective leadership on improving fairness over the next 15 years. At present, the focus of Fife's performance measurement goals is often to be around or above the Scottish average. The Commission believes that given the economic and social make-up of Fife, that while such aims are commendable, they are not aspirational enough.

Such an ambition clearly contains a strong element of risk for those who will be held accountable for it. That is why it must be a shared commitment, involving all those in Fife who can impact on fairness. It will be a challenge to develop a cross-party agreement on ambition and fairness. Without such a commitment, the appetite for risk and the level of ambition is reduced.

The Commission do not want to limit the ambition of individual department or services and should a service want to become the best in Scotland, we would applaud that. We have chosen the overall ambition of 'top five' because we think it is very stretching across the whole range of services and will focus minds on the scale of action required. In addition to the percentages, we wanted to give an indication of the real people who would be affected by meeting these ambitions. They range from the number of school leavers who could be in positive destinations and whose life chances would be permanently altered, to the large number who would benefit from being more engaged in their local communities.

Time and time again, we were told that the statistics were interesting, but that we needed to tell 'real stories' about the impact of poverty in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

(Getting By: A year in the life of 30 working families, 2015)

We are aware that some economic and fiscal projections suggest that inequalities will continue to grow during this timeframe. However, a target to simply maintain inequality at its current level, while challenging in itself, is not nearly ambitious enough. The conclusions and policy options that follow are based on the need to 'go further, faster' to not only keep up with external factors influencing fairness, but to get ahead of these.

In pages 18 and 19 we outline the Commission's fairness ambitions for Fife Council and the Fife Partnership by 2030, the current performance of Fife, the Scottish average, the performance of the top five Scottish local authorities and the number of people positively affected by Fife reaching the top five.

The figures for those positively affected by Fife reaching the 'top five' in Scotland were derived from current annual benchmarking figures, they are set at the level that would currently put Fife into the top five and are based on annual figures. So for example, for Fife to have been in the top five for positive destinations of school leavers in Scotland 121 more young people would have had to have achieved positive destinations. The Commission is aware that these figures will change by 2030 but we wanted to give an indication of the scale and achievability of the challenge as it relates to the people of Fife.

Fairness Ambition by 2030		Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for least children in poverty	19%	18%	10%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities on the long-term unemployment rate	1%	1.1%	0.4%
	To be in the top five Scottish authorities for median Gross Weekly Pay	£515.70	£518.20	£571.00
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities with the lowest levels of fuel poverty	34%	36%	30%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for adults identifying themselves as internet users	82%	80%	83%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for voting turnout in Council elections	37.9%	39%	48.4%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for numbers of people involved in volunteering	24%	28%	35%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for school leavers going to positive destinations	92.4%	92.3%	95.7%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for the number of people of working age with qualifications	26.4%	26.8%	21.3%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at Level 5	16.8%	19.5%	23.4%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at Level 6	11.8%	12.6%	14.8%
	To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for premature mortality (<75 years) (rate per 1,000 population)	3.9 per 1,000 population	4.1 per 1,000 population	3.5 per 1,000 population
	To be in the top five health board areas for good mental health (GHQ 12 score of 4 or more)	15.3% with GHQ 12 score of 4 or more	15% with GHQ 12 score of 4 or more	12.1% with GHQ 12 score of 4 or more

## Number of people positively affected by reaching 'top five'



**5,777**

fewer children in poverty



**£55.30**

increase to median pay



**3,008**

more internet users



**35,494**

more people volunteering



**15,340**

more people with qualifications



**20**

more young people with 5+ awards at Level 6



**9,530**

people with a better mental health



**1,402**

fewer long-term unemployed



**6,488**

people taken out of fuel poverty



**29,918**

more voters in council elections



**121**

more school leavers in positive destinations



**57**

more young people with 5+ awards at Level 5



**128**

fewer deaths in the year

## Ways of Working

*'I think that the funding and resources being put into work around welfare reform needs to be much more long-term, not just six months' pieces of work.'*

**PUBLIC SECTOR WORKER**

To deliver a fairer Fife the Commission has identified four ways of working which can be transformational and which must be embedded across the approach to achieving greater fairness in Fife. It would be wrong to focus only on strategic priorities and Commission recommendations on policy. These ways of working are the 'how' through which a fairer Fife can be delivered.

### 1. Open and transparent about progress

There are a number of methods through which such accountability can be achieved. They include the establishment of an interactive, visual, public data platform to allow communities and citizens to track progress against the 15-year ambition and the development of a programme of regular public events in towns across Fife, discussing progress and inviting suggestions for further improvement or action.

### 2. Data driven and knowledge rich

Fife is extremely data rich. There is excellence on undertaking analysis and describing problems. But there is less status attached to drive resource allocation and action by using that data. Much more needs to be done to use the data that already exists to inform service planning and delivery.

Fife Partnership should consider amalgamating its data and analytics resources into a 'Fairer' knowledge hub. The Fairer Fife Knowledge Hub would be challenged not just to report on data,

but to apply it in practice, translating analysis into proactive policy development. We would like to see consideration of the Knowledge Hub becoming a mutual to create an innovative and proactive approach to using data in Fife. Taking some inspiration from the work of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, the Commission is of the view that the Hub should be founded on a partnership approach, but should maintain a distinctive, independent voice to inform policy and practice. It should be accessible to those setting policy and practice and be sufficiently resourced to support them. It should not rely on 'self-service' to data and evidence, but should actively engage with those who need its support. The Fairer Fife Knowledge Hub would build a strong understanding of households and areas of deprivation, an increasingly strengthened understanding of the impact of welfare benefit changes, alongside the role of the jobs market and housing in creating poverty, but would address weaknesses on longitudinal analysis, deepen our understanding of persistent and recurrent poverty and explore the impact of policy measures and programme interventions.

Universal Credit should offer scope for large-scale, rapid data on the links between programme inputs, employment rates, earnings and progression. The Commission would like to see early agreement in Scotland around modern and effective sharing of personal data to make the most of this and other wider potential. Data sharing should be based on a general principle of informed consent. It should be for a clear and beneficial purpose and individuals should have access to the data held about them. This work could be led by COSLA and the Scottish Government.

Data sharing between government departments, the NHS and local authorities could be used to target energy efficiency measures and fuel poverty grants, reducing mortality rates and hospital admissions amongst vulnerable groups. Better identification of families requiring more assistance and targeting of services and support would deliver better outcomes for those most in need.

### 3. Citizen focused

Fife should put the capabilities, voices and assets of citizens and communities at the centre of its approach to fairness. There is strong rhetoric and a broad understanding of the role that citizens, service users and communities themselves have to play alongside Fife Council's investment of localised budgets and services.

However, there is less evidence that Fife has moved far enough towards approaches which genuinely take an asset-based rather than a deficit perspective and that enough work is being done alongside communities to build their capabilities and resilience and listen to their views at the same time as improving the range and quality (as well as equitable access) of genuine opportunities available.

*'Focusing on an individual's strengths, redefining their own world view that they hold of their community and place in it, and connecting them with others in their community, can create the conditions for material positive change. What does this phrase mean when it is outside a report?'*

**THIRD SECTOR MANAGER**

### 4. Mega community response

Fairness is not simply an objective for one service, organisation or sector in Fife. An inclusive approach is essential and all organisations and people in Fife can work together towards progress. There is a need to develop a shared commitment to fairness and to promote methods of joint working and understanding to achieve the goals set out in this strategy.

#### What is a mega community?

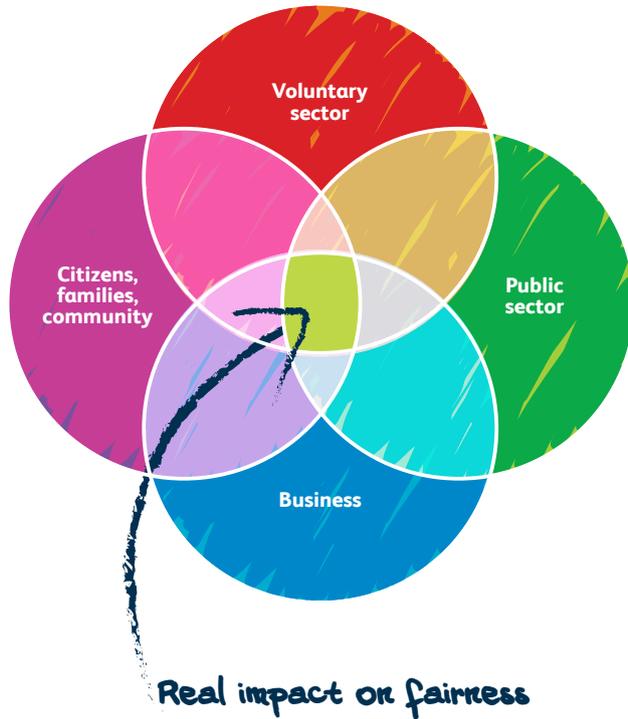
Today, issues that significantly affect global and national security, economic wellbeing, and the health and safety of citizens around the world have become key challenges to decision-makers in the public sector, private sector, and civil society. At first glance, these problems seem intractable. Such problems cannot be solved by government, business, or civil society alone. It takes a mega community of all three.

(Booz Allen, 2007)

Fife Council and the community planning partnership (Fife Partnership) have an important leadership and convening role, but change requires action from everyone living, employing, doing business and working in Fife. Business has a key role to play and should be invited on to the Fife Partnership.

The Commission considered making a recommendation that Fife Partnership commit to poverty-proof all their policies and programmes. The Commission considered whether this would help create a culture of fairness, raising awareness of issues across the Council and its partners. We concluded, however, that such a process would run the risk of becoming a 'box-ticking' exercise and potentially use up significant resources in further analysing the situation rather than coming up with solutions. Our approach is therefore to focus attention on the ambitious outcomes that we seek and ask Fife Partnership, the third sector and the business community to embrace the challenge of supporting a fairer Fife. Underpinning this should be a clear understanding that a fairer Fife benefits everyone.

## A Mega-communities approach to Fairer Fife



## Recommendations for an ambitious Fife

1. Fife Partnership should make a clear commitment to the fairness ambitions set out by the Commission.
2. The Third Sector Strategy Group in Fife should develop an agreed strategic approach to the community and voluntary sector's role in tackling inequality and promoting fairness.
3. Fife's business community and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are invited onto the Fife Partnership. Fife's business community (individually and collectively) should develop and invest in their role in tackling inequality and promoting fairness.
4. Fife Partnership should commit to reporting in a regular, accessible, and timely fashion on progress towards a Fairer Fife.
5. Fife Partnership should establish a Knowledge Hub to become a centre of excellence in translating data on fairness in Fife into practical action.



# A FAIRER FIFE IS A POVERTY-FREE FIFE

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are eradicating deep and persistent poverty for individuals and families.

	Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five	Estimated number of people affected by reaching 'top five'
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for least children in poverty by 2030 (Children in low income families local measure, 2012)	19%	18%	10%	5,777 fewer children in poverty
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities on the long-term unemployment rate by 2030 (NOMIS, Job Seekers Allowance (six months or more), 2015)	1%	1.1%	0.4%	1,402 fewer long-term unemployed

## Why this is important and progress to date

The Commission would like to see Fife move towards being poverty-free within 15 years. We define this as the eradication of deep and persistent poverty for individuals and families and a rate of 10% or less for child poverty. A poverty-free Fife would be one where no-one is allowed to experience systemic and enduring poverty.

*'Sanctions make you do things, but not actually help you find jobs.'*

**JOB SEEKER**

Those who participated in the testimony visits identified that changes to the UK welfare system are making lack of decent work a greater problem than it was. The Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee recently identified that changes to the benefits system had resulted directly in a loss of £103m per annum in Fife, equivalent to £440 per working age adult (exactly matching the Scotland wide figure) (Welfare

Reform Committee, 2015). The cumulative financial impacts on some benefit claimants will far exceed that average and will be severe.

The desire to work emerged strongly through the Commission's contact with people out of work. Work, when it is fair and sustainable, remains the best route out of poverty and as such we have focused our recommendations on improving access to work.

*'I often feel that people who are on benefits are kind of hit over the head with a stigma that they sit about doing nothing but now I can say I actually volunteer full time. My confidence has soared because of the support I have had.'*

**VOLUNTEER**

Fife helped 1,034 people back into work in 2013/14 through council funded/operated employability schemes (Local Government Benchmarking Framework). This is half the rate compared to the average across Scotland. The Commission believes that Fife's employability

schemes have room for significant improvement. Even in the short term there is a need to look again at the resource to support this activity because of the dividends it can pay in preventing crisis and refocusing claimants on work rather than avoiding sanctions. This should build on the £1 million annual spend that Fife Council has invested in 7 local community areas to help people navigate and manage welfare benefit cuts and reforms, as well as the significant amounts that have been invested in employability programmes and projects overseen by the Opportunities Fife Partnership. Putting into action the capabilities approach to improving fairness that the Commission advocates, the views of beneficiaries, or potential beneficiaries, of these schemes should be central to determining how they can be made more effective.

## Trust

Testimonials received by the Commission identified issues around a lack of trust between job centres and job seekers that runs both ways. In the view of the Commission this lack of trust works against good outcomes which rely on clear goal-setting and appropriate support to get into work. The Renfrewshire Poverty Commission suggested piloting a new form of conditionality which is future-focused and goal-oriented rather than retro-reporting on ineffective job-search tasks. A similar approach could benefit those in Fife. Approaches which support job-seekers to plan the steps they will take towards training and appropriate job search, aiming for a good match between skills, experience and jobs available, tend to fare better in terms of sustained employment than retrospective checks on the volume of job searches conducted (Behavioural Insights Team, 2012).

*'With so many target driven outcomes relating to getting people into employment a lot of the soft skills, work is not a priority so where does that leave the most vulnerable?'*

**COMMUNITY LEARNING WORKING**

The 'Making it Work' employability project targets particularly vulnerable people to help them secure and sustain employment. It supports lone parents at all five stages of the Fife Employability Pathway, and takes a holistic approach to overcoming barriers to employment, with each parent offered a bespoke service. Evidence in support of the project has been independently evaluated by Glasgow and Sheffield Hallam Universities and it has exceeded the job outcome rate in a shorter time frame.

*'We're not Jobcentre but we totally understand that they've got their Jobseeker's Agreement. So we'll do everything we can to help them meet that, but our goal is to help them find the work that they want and that would fit in with their family, and their goals and aims.'*

**'MAKING IT WORK' SUPPORT WORKER.**

Fife Council has recently taken a place-based approach to employability. This is important, but living in an area of economic disadvantage is only one of a range of potential risk factors for poverty. Others include health problems (physical or mental), substance abuse and addiction problems, homeless or at risk of homelessness, being a carer, lone parent households, looked after children and young people, including care leavers. More needs to be done to develop specific employability programmes led by appropriate specialist services for vulnerable groups that generic programmes cannot adequately cater for. This applies particularly to those with physical disabilities and those with mental health challenges, and more so as benefit changes mean that more people are found fit for work.

## Childcare

Access to childcare provision is critical issue which requires attention to support parents to access work. An analysis in 2014 by Citizens Advice Scotland illustrates the nature of the

issues that must be addressed. The inflation rate in childcare costs and the reduction in tax credit support resulted in bureaux clients being unable to pay for childcare fees, while a lack of flexibility in childcare provision combined with unpredictable working patterns meant that clients were either unable to take work or increase their hours or could not plan their use of childcare effectively. In Fife, spending per head for pre-school children was 4% lower than the Scottish average (£2,891 in 2013-14) (Local Government Benchmarking Framework). There is more work required in Fife to enable low income families to access affordable, flexible childcare which works in tandem with opportunities to access learning, training and employment.

## Partnership

A strengthened partnership with the DWP, with a shared commitment to reduce the number of inappropriate sanctions and ensure speedy access to hardship payments or Scottish Welfare Fund (Fife) would have significant value. There are good building blocks for this through the work that Fife has done with the DWP on improving communications with claimants, and also using the opportunity of the introduction of Universal Credit when DWP, Council and partners will formally come together to agree and deliver support services for those making first claims and requiring on-going support and alternative arrangements.

Volunteering and unpaid work is considered to be beneficial for both future job prospects and as a means of improving self-confidence and self-worth but the ability to volunteer can be perceived to be restricted by DWP policies. As a minimum, the rules on how much volunteering can be undertaken need to be communicated clearly.

*'Those furthest from work who may benefit most from the confidence building opportunities and social contact of volunteering are increasingly reluctant to volunteer.'*

**COMMUNITY WORKER**

The Commission were particularly interested to hear of developments on piloting a basic income with 300 households in Utrecht in the Netherlands. Recipients will receive a basic income, set to be €900 for an adult per month, and €1,300 for a couple or family, with no restrictions on how it must be spent (CapX, 2015). The University of Utrecht is conducting an evaluation of the model. The test will be to see the outcome on individual behaviour both economically and socially compared with standard welfare recipients, before debating the possibility of extending the policy to over 300,000 citizens in the region. This is a challenging proposal but one which the Commission believes is worth further investigation for Fife Council and its partners.



## Recommendations for a poverty-free Fife

1. Fife Partnership should strengthen the partnership with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to rapidly improve function of welfare system in Fife, critically to include greater trust between job seekers and job centres.
2. Fife Partnership should rebalance its employability programmes to primarily focus on those with physical or mental health challenges (with lead responsibility resting with NHS Fife/ the Health and Social Care Partnership) and those requiring basic adult-learning support (with lead responsibility resting with Fife Council).
3. Fife Partnership should rapidly develop social approaches and parent-led childcare in communities, with highest concentrations of low-income families based on need rather than ability to pay market rates, and designed to support parents attend learning and training and jobs.
4. Fife Partnership should consider further development of a localised approach to employability including devolution of the delivery of the Work Programme to Fife.
5. Fife Partnership should select a town in Fife to test and evaluate a highly innovative 'Basic Income' pilot, learning from leading practice around the world.



# A FAIRER FIFE IS A FAIR WORK FIFE

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are championing work as a route out of poverty and to progression and advancement.

	Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five	Positive affect by reaching 'top five'
To be in the top five Scottish authorities for median Gross Weekly Pay by 2030 (NOMIS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014)	£515.70	£518.20	£571.00	Median pay increased by £55.30

## Why is this important and progress to date

While the evidence of the importance of work in lifting people out of poverty is clear, work in itself is no longer a protection against poverty, with many now experiencing in-work poverty and others, for a range of reasons, unable to work. Low pay, insecure work (for example on temporary or zero-hours contracts) can present many problems in maintaining a standard of living that provides stability and security.

'Unsafe, low-paid and insecure work can have a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing.'

HEALTH MANAGER

Low pay and job insecurity also reduces the ability of residents to create other local economic opportunities – for example, by investing savings in credit unions or nearby microbusinesses – and are highly detrimental to an enterprise economy. There is a growing consensus that moving towards a living wage as the norm would substantially reduce poverty

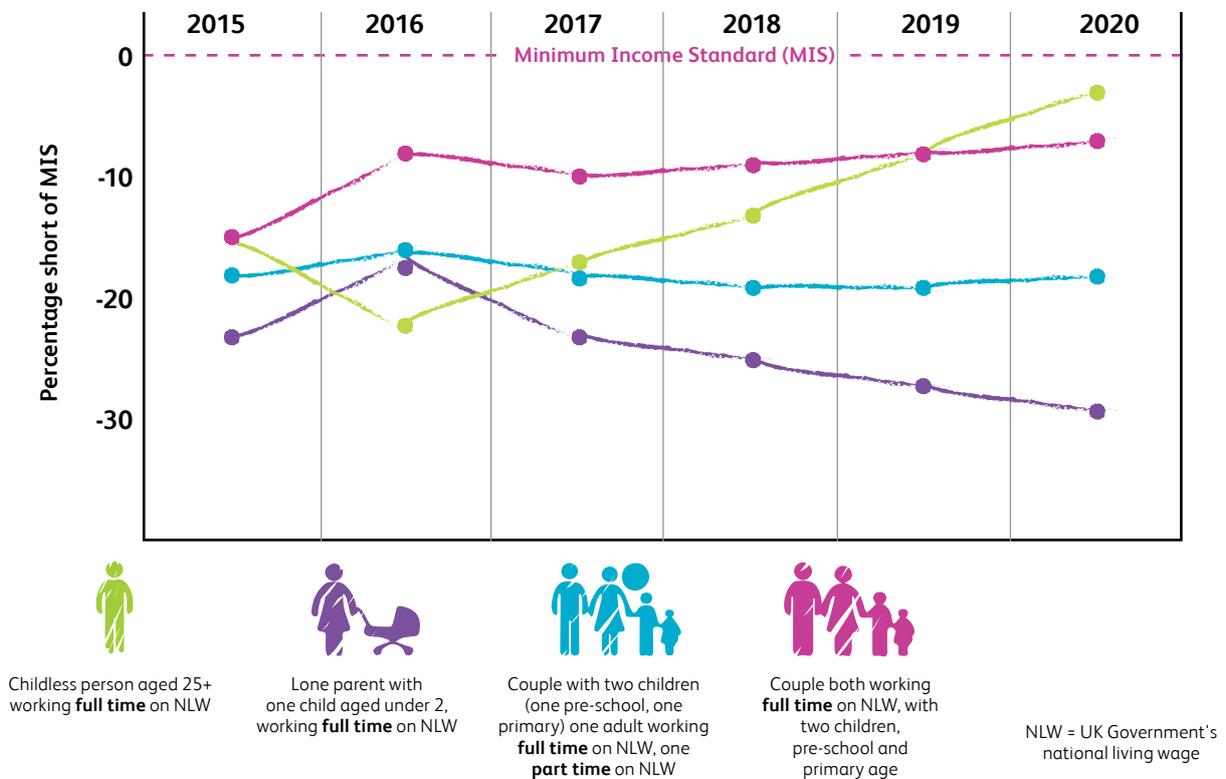
and other aspects of inequality. The real living wage is currently £7.85 an hour (as opposed to the UK Government's rather confusing announcement of a *national living wage* of £7.20 an hour for those over 25). Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that the UK Government's national living wage (really a minimum wage premium for those over 25) will fail to provide an adequate income, most severely affecting lone parents.

'The continual cycle of low-paid jobs is just as damaging as long-term, cross-generational unemployment.'

COMMUNITY LEARNING WORKER

The 'real living wage' calculation is based on the Minimum Income Standard for the United Kingdom, the product of research by the Centre for Research in Social Policy and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. For Scotland as a whole, 18.4% earned below the living wage in 2014, with women more likely than men to be paid below the living wage (22.4% of women compared to 13.9% of men) (Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2014).

## Will people earning the UK Government's national living wage be closer to affording the Minimum Income Standard in 2020?



Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (2015). *Will the 2015 summer budget improve living standards by 2020.*

The majority of people who live in Fife, work in Fife. According to evidence submitted by Fife Council, based on the 2011 census, just under a third of those in employment commute outwith Fife (27.5%) (2011 Census). Fife, therefore, has the opportunity to develop a living wage region which would benefit those who both live and work in Fife. At present, wages for jobs in Fife are lower than Scottish averages. The median hourly wage for jobs in Fife is £10.71, lower than the Scottish average of £11.68 and the median weekly pay is also below the Scottish average. In 2015, the TUC reported that North-East Fife is the worst constituency in Scotland for not paying the living wage, more than one in three employees (34.4%) receive less (The Courier, February 2015).

### A Living Wage region

The Fife Living Wage Group was set up to promote a Living Wage across Fife for the benefit of employers, employees and the community as a whole. The Commission believes that Fife is in a strong position to show leadership by becoming a 'Living Wage' region. All public and third-sector organisations in Fife should commit to becoming accredited Scottish Living Wage employers, followed by activity to support businesses to also make this commitment. This initiative could be advanced on a town-by-town or area-by-area basis, culminating in an authority-wide achievement. The town-by-town approach would be

manageable and would enable employers and local support agencies to learn lessons for the next town. Such an approach fits well with Fife’s decentralisation plan. Another approach would be sector-by-sector. Three sectors account for fully half of Scotland’s low-pay problem (as measured by Working Tax Credit claims): retail, health and social care, hotels and catering. Two of these are private sector, the other is predominantly about public sector commissioning, if not direct provision, so they will need different approaches.

The Living Wage is not a panacea, however. Poor working conditions, stress caused by job insecurity and lack of appropriate hours would all continue to be an issue for those in-work. All employers in Fife should be prepared to take a lead in tackling adverse work conditions, and promote work-based learning. The business sector should be supported to invest in future-proofed and transferable skills for its workers, uplifting productivity through workplace skills and learning partnerships. Businesses should also be engaged to increase investment in workplace conditions, alongside wraparound benefits like childcare provision and wellbeing services.

## Self-employment and new businesses

Business start-up activity in Fife has a highly significant role in offsetting a reduction in industrial jobs locally and it is important that Fife takes action to support this, fostering good jobs. Meanwhile, in line with trends across the UK and Scotland, the need to support sustainable, fair self-employment in Fife is likely to be increasingly critical over the next 15 years. Fife has an opportunity to take a leading role in supporting each of these vital areas of work.

Social enterprises, community development trusts and co-operatives are also particularly likely to be place-based and have some kind of commitment beyond the bottom line. This type of activity should also be further encouraged – for example, by long-term investment from local government and partners in a social entrepreneur development centre linked to Business Gateway.

Geography is important in delivering access to good work. Fife is a clear historical and physical regional entity, which sits connected to four cities more or less near to different boundaries: Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth and Stirling. Proximity and agglomeration, now seen as so important to growth and creativity, are not the same things. Fife needs to combine taking advantage of the City Deal and connect work opportunities to those out of work and on lowest working incomes while addressing local needs.

Replicating the principles of the City Deal with a Fife ‘Towns Deal’ could reflect the need evidenced through the Commission’s visits for opportunities and support to be provided at quite local geographies; and could be designed with the explicit requirement of achieving a balance between social, economic and environmental objectives. The central element of such a ‘deal’ should be a commitment to back and promote efforts to help Fife towns better network and attract high potential, job creating businesses into Fife, which can also help grow the wider economy via local procurement.



## Recommendations for a fair work Fife

1. Fife Partnership should set the ambition of becoming a living wage region.
2. Fife Partnership should commit to exploring a fairness in self-employment hub in Fife, with Business Gateway and the Fife Economic Partnership to help self-employed workers structure their work and enterprise arrangements to maximise their earnings and work security.
3. Fife Partnership should invest in and promote enhanced social enterprise development capacity for Fife to work in tandem with existing agencies such as Business Gateway.
4. Fife Partnership should refocus the geography of economic development activity from a ‘Fife-outwards’ perspective, to one that focuses on the assets within Fife, for example through a Fife ‘Towns Deal’ supporting towns to attract ‘good jobs’ to Fife.



# A FAIRER FIFE IS AN AFFORDABLE FIFE

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are tackling the cost of living crisis to ensure everyone has sufficient resources for a decent and fulfilling life.

Fairness Measure	Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five	Estimated number of people affected by reaching target
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities with the lowest levels of fuel poverty by 2030 (Scottish House Condition Survey, 2011-13)	34%	36%	30%	6,488 people taken out of fuel poverty

## Why is this important and progress to date

The combination of the cost of living rises at a time of economic recession has led to an affordability crisis across the UK. A cost of living report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for the UK as a whole found that over the past five years:

- Childcare costs have risen more than twice as fast as inflation at 37%
- Rent in social housing has gone up by 26%
- Food costs have increased by 24%
- Energy costs are 39% more
- Public transport is up by 30% (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012).

Fuel poverty is a major indicator of poverty and inequality, and the Commission has selected this as our headline indicator of affordability while recognising that it is not the full picture of the squeeze on household finances. A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income on all household fuel use. Fife has invested in meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for social housing (2015). The Commission received

evidence that the SHQS has now been delivered in all properties except those where the tenants did not want the work carried out or where it was technically unfeasible to improve. Fife Council also delivered these improvements to provide higher standards in home energy efficiency. The Commission also received evidence that fuel-poor households are represented across all main categories of housing need.

## Wealth inequality and housing

Accessibility and affordability are key housing challenges. A highly important housing issue in Fife, as in many other parts of Scotland and the UK, is the disparity in wealth between owners and renters. If house prices in Scotland had increased in line with general inflation since 1970, the average house price in 2012 would have been £78,000 – where as in reality it was £215,000 (Commission on Housing and Wellbeing, 2015).

Wealth inequality is much wider than income inequality across the OECD (OECD Statistics brief, June 2015) due to financial assets that are very unequally distributed and mainly accrue to top income and top wealth households. The top 10% have 25% of national

income but 50% of wealth. Increases in the price of shares and housing relative to consumer goods has been one of the main drivers of higher household wealth. In the United States, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom wealth inequality at the top of the distribution has grown markedly. Increasing dramatically the Fife housing supply will make a major contribution to reducing wealth inequality as well as reducing private sector rents.

## Affordable housing

The Commission heard no dominant preference for housing tenure – people want housing they can access and afford in a tenure mix. While there has been progress in social housing, there has been limited investment in the non-market sector resulting in an increasing number of those living in poverty being housed in the private rented sector. Fife Council needs to consider further how it can improve the quality of private rented housing and reduce the impact of rising rents and energy costs on people’s incomes. We were unable to discern a clear picture from the evidence submitted as to the aspirations for Fife’s housing system for the next decade. We would like to see more emphasis on developing an affordable housing sector, in line with the Scottish Government’s commitment to build 50,000 affordable homes over the next five years. The challenge is the availability of land and capital and Fife must do more to attract not-for-profit investment into the housing sector.

*‘Fuel poverty can affect mental health, and increases chances of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases in all age groups. Cold housing can negatively affect children’s educational attainment, emotional well-being and resilience.’*  
**NATIONAL THIRD SECTOR WORKER**

Living on low incomes and managing debt has become a way of life for many people. The Money Advice Service estimates that 69% of families living in the UK are over-indebted, with the Fife figure lower at 61% (Money Advice Service, 2013).

*There is a general consensus that the home is an important type - or domain - of wellbeing. While we recognise that the concept of a home can stretch beyond the ‘house’, we cannot emphasise enough the role of good housing in giving each individual a chance to experience the best standards of life.*  
 (Commission on Housing and Wellbeing, 2015)

Fife has a mixed picture in terms of housing availability and affordability. It straddles the strategic development plans for the city regions of Dundee and Edinburgh and its housing market areas tend to gravitate towards either of those two centres of influence. In North-East Fife, demands on local housing arising from university growth, retirement, golf tourism and inelastic housing supply result in the highest house prices in Fife. The average price of a house in St Andrews in 2012 was more than double the Fife average. The lowest prices are found in the villages of Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss.

## Land availability

Fife Council has committed to deliver 2,700 new affordable homes by May, 2017, of which 900 have been delivered to date since 2012. This programme is a collaboration between affordable housing providers, including Fife Council, Housing Associations, private developers and a number of Scottish Government initiatives, however, problems in availability of land have been identified in meeting the target.

The question of where the 2,700 homes should be built is also important. Fife is not a single housing market. In North-East Fife, where prices are highest, a large-scale mixed rental

development delivered on a not-for-profit basis with a mixed output of middle market and affordable low income housing could have a significant impact.

We received evidence that Fife has spent more on housing than all other local authorities in Scotland and the Commission welcomes this commitment to improving housing quality and affordability.

## Credit unions

*'If we want any shopping, we all chip in together and get the bus fare together.'*

**FOOD BANK CUSTOMER TALKING ABOUT HAVING TO GO OUT OF THE AREA TO ACCESS CHEAPER FOOD**

The Commission has found that some low-income households have found their own distinct ways to manage on low incomes – for example, family members sharing benefit payments across the month as their payment schedules fall, and the sharing of food between learning centre clients in Methil. Through this dialogue, it emerged that some did not know about credit union services and how to access them or other support that was available to help people with tight budgets. There was also a perception that support was not needed or at least was not needed until a crisis arose.

The Pimp My Purse programme offers help and assistance from credit unions, Money Advice and Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF), and over the last year it is estimated that 445 Fife families have been helped from falling further into poverty. Those involved report that it has strengthened collaborative, joint working and information sharing across the advice and rights sector while increasing people's knowledge and opportunities to manage and improve their financial situation. However, Fife's credit unions presently have a combined membership of less than 10,000 which is low compared to some areas in Scotland.

Advice and support services should be co-located wherever possible. This should learn from and build on the early work in establishing third-sector support hubs – for example, at Wemyssfield in Kirkcaldy – but the thinking needs to be ambitious and should consider how other important services can be connected, not least those offered by the DWP, the Council and the Health Service. This should form a new strategic intention to co-locate services in the places where people go every day or every week and could significantly improve access. For example, money/debt and welfare advice support should be delivered in primary care, libraries, housing offices and schools. The Commission is particularly keen to see some advice workers from Citizens Advice and Rights Fife located with Fife Council's Scottish Welfare Fund team to ensure that those applying for crisis grants and community care grants can immediately access advice to stem the need for later crisis interventions. Co-location is more efficient and effective in reaching the most vulnerable clients. Appointment referral is less effective, but is far than merely sign-posting people to a different service. Primary care is an especially promising setting, but libraries, housing offices and primary schools are also useful.

## Money Matters

The Commission heard evidence around income maximisation projects built around the needs of users, including a Money Matters scheme which involved training 60 NHS staff to provide holistic assessment and referral leading to an uptake in health start vouchers (for fresh fruit and vegetables). Rolling in money advice services to other services reduced the stigma of attending specific services.

The Commission recognises that there is an additional service in some Fife schools with highest free school meal entitlement to provide money management and wider advice to parents and carers, referral to specialist support services and financial support for

purchasing energy vouchers and goods. This includes easy access and support for free school meal applications and clothing grants. It is understood that this service is limited by reliance on short-term funding and should be made more secure and extended to other schools.

*'The transition from benefits to work can be a difficult process with a number of people having difficulty in managing their money.'*  
**THIRD SECTOR MANAGER**

*'I have been sanctioned, if it wasn't for the food bank I wouldn't be eating.'*  
**FOOD BANK USER**

*'I had to borrow money from somewhere I shouldn't have. I now pay a lot of my benefits to this debt just on interest.'*  
**BENEFIT RECIPIENT**

There has been a clear rising trend to access hardship funds and support in Fife most obviously through the demand for food banks, but also demand for crisis and community care grants, discretionary housing payments and – although less is known about its use – DWP's hardship awards. From the Commission's discussions with those in poverty, some appear to attach stigma to accessing hardship funds and more needs to be done to ensure that hardship provision is communicated and delivered appropriately to better reach those most in need.

Many of those giving personal testimonies referred to limited or unaffordable public transport options that can restrict movement. The transport system is seen as expensive and

time consuming, failing to meet the needs of young people, apprentices and people working irregular hours. With those limitations comes the narrowing of opportunities and choices – access to jobs, education and training, support services, cultural and leisure and social networks. The Commission has not seen evidence to indicate that strategic transportation policy is geared to support job seekers or those on lowest incomes or that transportation leads are integral to partnership discussions on increasing opportunities and tackling inequalities.

*'Limited transport prevents accessing employment opportunities which are often shift work at unusual times. Lack of transport increases social isolation and can prevent social support. There is a need to focus on helping communities and individuals to resolve the transport issue.'*  
**COMMUNITY WORKER**

## Dignity and respect

The Commission believes all providers should meet the highest standards of service in delivering hardship funds such as crisis and community care grants, discretionary housing payments, DWP hardship awards and, as a last resort, food banks. They should take a strong person-centred approach that puts dignity and respect at the heart of service delivery and take action to identify and change any practice that could contribute to excluding those in need.

The Commission suggests that some of the insights from behavioural science applied in both the private sector and increasingly by UK Government and its agencies could be used here. Fife should also make links with the behavioural science team in Scottish Government. The Commission wishes to see innovative mechanisms to reduce the harm from sanctions; no-one should face hardship as a result of a sanction.



## Recommendations for an affordable Fife

1. Fife Partnership should pilot a 'Living Rent' programme in partnership with the Scottish Government, where average rent-setting is linked more closely to local median wages.
2. Fife Partnership should host accessible, inclusive cross-party summits on availability of land in each of Fife's five Scottish Parliament constituency areas to identify barriers to meeting its affordable housing targets and identifying innovative solutions to improve housing supply.
3. Fife Partnership should design advice and support services for those living on low incomes for maximum usage by being based in places and services that people already use.
4. Fife Partnership should continue to develop a business case and plans for a social enterprise lending organisation (Community Developed Finance Initiative) to offer borrowing and money advice to low income, high-risk groups who would otherwise use higher cost alternatives.
5. Fife Partnership should implement a harm-reduction policy for benefits sanctions, ensuring people have the information and support needed to avoid sanctions, challenge sanction decisions and apply for DWP Hardship Payments if they are sanctioned.
6. Fife Partnership should introduce income maximisation checks at key points through statutory service provision – health facilities and services, and education services.
7. Employers in Fife should take a lead in considering how they can support credit union membership on behalf of their employees, either through establishing work-based initiatives or making links to existing credit unions.
8. Fife Partnership should carry out a cost-benefit analysis for the introduction of free travel cards – targeted at low income families – with particular consideration for cards for those seeking work and recently moving into work (extension of scheme to support people attending food banks).



# A FAIRER FIFE IS A CONNECTED FIFE

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are driving the universal availability and access to the opportunities and benefits offered by digital technology.

Fairness Measure	Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five	Estimated number of people affected by reaching target
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for adults identifying themselves as internet users by 2030 (Scottish Household Survey, 2013)	82%	80%	83%	3,008 more internet users

## Why this is important and progress to date

*'I can't really work a computer. I was left at a table and was told to look through newspapers. This hasn't helped me to look for jobs online.'*

**JOB SEEKER**

People's ability to access and make use of digital technology already has a significant impact on fairness in our society – and the importance of digital in all aspects of our life is set to increase rapidly over the next ten years. Digital has a major impact on many social and economic issues highly relevant to fairness. Access to technology can help to support better employment outcomes, improved levels of educational attainment, faster and easier access to public services, cheaper goods and products, new opportunities for communication and engagement and enhanced democratic and civic participation.

However, access to these opportunities is not universal. In Fife, over a fifth of households don't have internet access while just under a fifth of adults are not internet users (Scottish Household Survey, 2015). While these figures are broadly in line with Scottish averages, we know that those

Computer literacy is a fundamental skill for the majority of jobs and not just restricted to those positions commonly labelled 'information intensive'. Iceland and the Nordic countries have the highest level of workers using internet connected computers.

(OECD, 2013)

who are most likely to experience poverty and disadvantage are currently least likely to benefit from the possibilities that digital might offer. For example:

- Households with incomes of over £30,001 are almost twice as likely to have access to internet or broadband as households with incomes of £10,000 or less.
- The least deprived households are almost 50% more likely to have internet or broadband access than the most deprived households.
- Those with a long-standing health problem or disability are almost a third less likely to use the internet than those with no such problem or disability.
- Of 9,000 JSA claimants in Fife, 4,000 lack sufficient digital skills to demonstrate online job seeking and applications.

These disparities in access and use mean that new digital technologies are currently compounding rather than reducing problems of unfairness. This pattern applies across Fife, Scotland and the UK.

Fife is already taking action in a number of areas to help address these problems. The Fife Digital Participation Strategy Group co-ordinates activities to further digital inclusion across different Fife agencies and has a shared Action Plan. Fife is investing in its broadband infrastructure to significantly extend the availability of superfast broadband technology to 98% of premises by 2017. Internet access via hardware and free wi-fi is available from an increasing number of public buildings. A variety of initiatives and programmes are in place to support the development of digital skills at a local level – including the Digital Fife community group programme and dedicated programmes for specific groups of citizens, including those who are unemployed.

## Technology supporting fairness

However, given the significant and growing importance of technology in supporting fairness, the Commission believes that more can, and should, be done. Fife should set ambitious targets in this area and should ensure sufficient resources are available to help achieve these. A significant number of Fife residents rely on labour markets elsewhere; many travel across the Forth bridges every day to work in Edinburgh. To retain that workforce in Fife would have benefits for local economies and have positive social benefits for families and communities. This could be facilitated through the creation of digital business hubs to support employees of non-Fife based public and private sector business to work in Fife and these could locate in areas that would benefit from their presence.

## Reducing the cost of broadband

Fife partners have worked well together to develop access and support to use computers in local communities for job search and benefit claim purposes. Online access and know-how is increasingly important to access opportunities but there is evidence to suggest that there is a telling gap between those on lower incomes and those not. More should be done to develop work on this issue and to extend access opportunities beyond those places. For example, housing associations in other local authority areas have worked with broadband providers to negotiate discounted contracts for social housing tenants.



## Recommendations for a connected Fife

1. Fife Partnership should establish a network of Digital Business Hubs across Fife to support employees of non-Fife based organisations to work and locate locally.
2. Fife Partnership should develop plans in collaboration with Housing Associations for non-commercial tariff for digital broadband to be made available to all social housing tenants.
3. Fife Partnership should extend the availability of free, public Wi-Fi across community and public buildings throughout Fife.
4. Fife Partnership should continue the deployment of superfast broadband technology to ensure availability for all households and businesses across Fife.
5. Fife Partnership should invest in digital champion and volunteer approaches, building on successful models already developed in Fife, to support many more people to help their friends and family develop basic digital skills.



# A FAIRER FIFE IS AN EMPOWERED FIFE

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are engaging and offering local control as the key to improving local public services and delivering better outcomes for citizens.

Fairness Measure	Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five	Estimated number of people affected by reaching target
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for voting turnout in Council elections by 2030 (Local Elections Turnout, 2012)	37.9%	39%	48.4%	29,918 more voters
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for numbers of people involved in volunteering by 2030 (Scottish Household Survey, 2013)	24%	28%	34%	35,494 more volunteers

## Why this is important and progress to date

The Commission believes that engagement and control is ultimately the key to improving local public services. Trust in government and helping citizens and communities feel more satisfied with the services that they receive is vital. Greater engagement and allows citizens more choice and influence and enables communities to make informed contributions to future public services, allowing them to play a more active role in improving their own wellbeing.

Levels of civic engagement (voting and volunteering) are lower in Fife than the Scottish average:

- For local elections, the most recent figures are from 2012 with 38% voting; the gap in turn out levels between the least deprived and most deprived was 13.6% (Local Elections Turnout, 2012).
- Volunteering in Fife is lower than in Scotland, with one in four adults in Fife involved in volunteering, and only one in eight in Fife's

most deprived areas (Scottish Household Survey, 2013). If Fife was in the top five Scottish local authorities for volunteering that would bring an additional one million hours of volunteer time a year (based on half hourly volunteering per week).

## Stigma

In seeking to engage people positively in community activities, it is particularly important to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect. However, stigma was a consistent theme through the Commission visits – many of those experiencing poverty suffer from its consequences, can be reluctant to access services they consider for the 'desperate', but also applying stigma to groups and individuals they consider less deserving. We received evidence from people with experience of poverty who felt de-humanised and stigmatised by their experiences of engaging with public services. A wide-spread cultural change is required across Fife Council and its partners to ensure that no one is treated without dignity, regardless of their personal or neighbourhood circumstances.

The next system, however, will need genuine participation starting in the community and workplace... one in which co-operation, solidarity and long-term shared interest acquire real meaning in everyday life.

(Gar Alperovitz, 2015)

## Support for frontline staff

The Commission would like all those coming into contact with people experiencing poverty to have an understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality, to enable all to act with respect and empathy. This should build on the experience of welfare reform awareness raising training to 800 front line workers in 2013/2014. It should be bespoke to Fife raising awareness of specialist advice and support services, and should be backed up by high-quality, easy-read material and incorporate full training on the use of the Fife online referral tool. Such a programme should go further than anti-stigma training, to incorporate awareness and know-how of what can make the biggest difference in helping people escape poverty. It should include the voices of people with experience of poverty and be offered across council services (including education, social work, housing, trading standards and so on) and to partners such as the third sector and local businesses.

*'I feel depressed having to look for jobs online and having no money. People assume you are a scrounger and your dignity is scraped away bit by bit.'*

**JOB SEEKER**

*'In this current climate with short term work, zero-hour contracts etc., I feel that anyone can find themselves living in poverty. I think that it is important to be mindful of this and treat them respectfully.'*

**PUBLIC SECTOR WORKER**

*'Successful places are those where the local communities are included and involved in the design and investment decisions.'*

**NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP MANAGER**

In terms of community engagement, evidence submitted by the Council indicated that while there is significant activity around 'place', there may be more scope to make this more integrated and in particular to focus on reducing poverty and inequality. For example, there are 86 community councils operating in Fife, but 19 areas where Community Councils are provided for and not established, including areas of multiple deprivation. Fife Council is currently pursuing an integration agenda to give much greater emphasis to 'Local Community Planning'.

## Very local services

Some of the personal testimonies that the Commissioners heard indicated limited awareness of services and help, or highlighted that some services were 'not for them' because of the stigma that they associated with them. Very positively, many of the local services – for example job clubs, learning centres, family centres – were seen to be a lifeline and not just fulfilling the purpose they had but creating important networks with people with shared experiences and issues and as points for information and referral. These have social, wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence benefits. There is a concern that valued local services are vulnerable to austerity cuts.

*'Many of the SIMD [most deprived] communities have the poorest equipped community facilities – they may have a well-equipped school but accessing this as a community facility is usually difficult and is one of the costliest facilities to utilise.'*

**THIRD SECTOR MANAGER**

Challenges remain in shaping places in such a way that it reduces inequality. Improved access to work, and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in the most deprived areas will be important, but equally the access to community resources such as affordable credit and to physical assets like safe meeting places without charge or at an affordable rate have the potential to have a significant impact. The co-location of these different types of services can improve their effectiveness in reaching and supporting people and should be supported.

*'There is a need to take action and work with the most disadvantaged communities to empower them ensuring that they have all the support they need to take a full and active part in the democratic process - including how public services are planned and delivered.'*

**NATIONAL CHARITY MANAGER**

The extensive community engagement undertaken through the Lochgelly Scotland Charrette (Fife Council, 2015) and on the regeneration of the Gallatown area of Kirkcaldy has led to residents taking ownership of local issues in these communities. In Gallatown, the capacity of residents was then built upon to allow the community to take part in participatory budgeting of £18,000 for creative projects (Gallatown Community, 2015). This commitment to co-production is often dependent upon the skills and enthusiasm of key public sector workers such as Area Managers. To develop a consistent offer of support to communities across the region, a framework enabling participatory budgeting should be developed as Fife Council policy.

Fife would benefit from a commitment and a measureable target for an increased proportion of public sector expenditure to be devolved to local level rather than managed centrally. This could be done in a way that incorporates an increasing proportion going to areas of greater need. This is already a direction that Fife Council has moved in, but its scale, local governance and the resource

allocated to support good investment decisions and their implementation need to be looked at again. Building on this, participatory budgeting should become a norm rather than done on an isolated basis and Fife should increase the practice of participatory budgeting using the opportunity of increasing funding devolved to Fife areas. This should be a springboard to greater co-production to agree and address local priorities and to break down barriers between services and citizens to make best use of assets.

## Low levels of volunteering

The Commission was struck by the low levels of volunteering in areas of multiple deprivation in Fife. Support for communities running their own local facilities, such as the West Wemyss Community Cafés and the community café at Levenmouth Foodbank through the Volunteer Action Fund, and the Shared Care childcare facility run by local parents, has scope for further extension across Fife and targeted at areas of multiple deprivation. It is clear to the Commission that more local and community action is both a necessity in times of reducing public finances and an opportunity for individuals, families and communities to organise more effectively. The relationship between the public sector and the third sector in Fife is too often transactional, whether based on grants or commissioned services. Reporting requirements from the public sector are often disproportionate and top-down. This undermines the role that the sector can play in transformational, assets based change. The Commission did not see evidence of a long-term strategy, developed by the community and voluntary sector in Fife, which could rise to these challenges and opportunities.



## Recommendations for an empowered Fife

1. Fife Partnership should rapidly implement poverty-training and workforce development for Fife Council staff and those in partner organisations.
2. Fife Partnership should invest in a strong local pilot for devolution by identifying a local area to receive significant public expenditure to be devolved to locality level and use participatory budgeting to guide spending.



# A FAIRER FIFE IS A SKILLED FIFE

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are protecting and promoting the life chances of young people to escape a generational poverty cycle.

Fairness Measure	Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five	Estimated number of people affected by reaching top five
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for school leavers going to positive destinations by 2030 (Local Government Benchmarking Framework, 2013/14)	92.4%	92.3%	95.7%	121 more school leavers in positive destinations
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for the number of people of working age with qualifications by 2030 (2011 Census)	26.4%	26.8%	21.3%	15,340 more people with qualifications
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at Level 5 by 2030 (Local Government Benchmarking Framework, 2012/13)	16.8%	19.5%	23.4%	57 more young people with 5+ awards at Level 5
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at Level 6 by 2030 (Local Government Benchmarking Framework, 2013/14)	11.8%	12.6%	14.8%	20 more young people with 5+ awards at Level 6

## Why is this important and progress to date

Young people aged 16 to 30 are the only group who experienced an overall increase in poverty between 2002/03 and 2012/13 (Department for Work and Pensions). The Commission believes that protecting and promoting their life chances is essential if those currently moving into mid-life are to escape a generational poverty cycle.

The importance of social background in shaping attainment is one of the most well charted relationships in educational and social research.

(OECD, 2013)

Lack of qualifications is a significant barrier to employment. The UK jobs market continues to develop an hour-glass shape, with the growth of well-paid jobs and poorly-paid jobs at either end and the continued decline of mid-ranking jobs. Although the proportion of working-age people with no qualifications continues to fall, mobility for those with few or no qualifications is severely limited. Fife data shows that having no qualifications is negatively correlated with employment in professional and managerial occupations. Fife has a proportionately smaller number of its working-age population with no qualifications compared to the Scottish average, more with NVQ1 and NVQ2 but less than NVQ3.

The smartest and quickest route to a variety of occupations for the majority of young people in the successful countries - not a default for failing students - is a vocational programme that integrates work and learning.

(Nancy Hoffman, 2011)

At Fife's biggest employer, Fife Council, almost all posts require some form of qualification (Fife Council Payroll). In Fife, 26% people of working age have no qualifications, rising to 38% in the most deprived areas (2011 Census). This gap in attainment means that those growing up in the most deprived areas are at risk of missing a key route out of poverty.

In Fife, 92.4% of schoolchildren go on to positive destinations after they leave school, almost exactly matching the Scottish average of 92.3% (Local Government Benchmarking Framework), while 85% of young people (aged 16 to 19) in Fife are actively participating in education or employment, compared to 87.5% for Scotland.

The top five authorities have positive destinations of at least 95.7% (3.4% above Fife, or equivalent of 121 young people). However, children in the most deprived areas are far less likely to go on to a positive outcome, such as work or further education, and are less likely to achieve good results in exams:

- 16.8% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD) in 2012/13 compared to a Scotland figure of 19.5% – this means that Fife ranks 18 out of 26 (as a comparator Glasgow City ranks 10/26) (Local Government Benchmarking Framework).
- More recent figures for 2013/14 are available for % of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 (SIMD), which again ranks Fife below the Scottish average with 11.8% compared to 12.6% Scotland-wide. This shows Fife at 15 out of 26 local authorities on this indicator, again below Glasgow at nine out of 26. (Local Government Benchmarking Framework)

Young people in the least deprived areas in Fife are more than three times as likely to attain five or more passes by the end of fourth year than those in the most deprived areas in Fife.

## Attainment at school

The Commission considered that there was scope to more fully recognise the need to improve overall attainment, particularly at the point of school-leaving, while continuing to close the gap between children from the most and least deprived households as well as areas. The data indicates that the number of children with improved attainment required to take Fife into the top five is small, but we know that the life chances for these children will improve dramatically. There are a range of actions that Fife can undertake to reduce the educational attainment gap in its schools, learning from best practice both within Fife, across Scotland and internationally.

The Commission is very supportive of Fife's review of what is required to get the best leaders and practitioners into the 'hardest shifts' as part of a framework for closing attainment gaps.

*'Overall, I didn't enjoy school, I was too different. I enrolled in a Princes Trust course. I came away feeling better and with a lot more qualifications than I did from school. So it just shows that a different environment can really make a big difference.'*

**YOUNG PERSON**

However, while this is important, we are keen to stress that two-thirds of children living in poverty don't live in poor neighbourhoods. This means that far more emphasis needs to be placed on improving attainment across all Fife schools and on targeting those at risk of poor educational outcomes – in particular, looked-after children. The Commission heard evidence

from young people who reported that school wasn't for them; however, improvement in attainment will only come if school works for the few as well as the many. Flexibility should be brought to the school curriculum so that its design, planning and teaching can reflect the needs and suit the few and also that alternative or addition provision options are considered. It is essential to ensure that the curriculum offers relevant opportunities for all, including wider achievement and the development of employability skills, as well as a range of attainment. The Commission understands that Fife's schools have taken the opportunity provided by the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence to improve opportunities for our young people by developing increasing links with local colleges and employers. Lochgelly High School's employability programme is an example of good practice in this area. The development of the new Levenmouth campus develops that further – a new single site to deliver education and training facilities to the area. The Commission also understands that Fife Council is exploring an option to invest in 'Children's University' provision particularly thinking about its relevance to many of Fife's looked-after-children.

## Parental and carer involvement

The involvement of parents and carers in their children's education is recognised as an important part of the Scottish education system. Parent and carer involvement is consistently associated with pupils' success at school but the evidence about how to increase involvement to improve attainment is mixed and much less conclusive. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged families and developing effective parental involvement to improve their children's attainment is challenging. The costs of different approaches vary enormously, from running parent workshops (about £80 per session) and improving communications to be welcoming to parents (Education Endowment Foundation). Schools can often provide some simple, practical ways that help all parents to support their children (e.g. by using simple,

effective techniques when listening to their children reading at home, and by ensuring that students have an environment where they can work at home).

Parents and carers experiencing disadvantage (whether related to health, income, education and so on) often strive to give as much help to their children, but may lack the skills and confidence required to help. Some parents may lack literacy skills, other have time barriers due to shift working. Attainment for children looked after at home is particularly low across Scotland and should be a priority concern for Fife. One option would be to invest in a specialist community or home/school liaison capacity to support parental involvement for secondary school children experiencing the highest level of disadvantage in Fife.

## School costs

Children need to be ready to learn and low income can impact on that readiness. All children should be appropriately clothed and have been adequately fed. School breakfast clubs are more prevalent than in the past, but are not always available and affordable. 'Eat, sleep and play', 'breakfast cafés', and 'holiday care with food' have been introduced in seven primary schools in Fife, and teachers have noted an improvement in children's learning. We would like to see Fife learn from Glasgow's recent Cost of the School Day project, funded by Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, Glasgow Centre for Population Health and Glasgow City Council Education Services. The project worked with eight Glasgow schools with varying levels of deprivation, and 339 children and young people (P5-S6) as well as 111 school staff to find out where problems lie for children from low-income households, how their participation and experiences are affected by school costs and which current and potential policies and practices could help to prevent these problems arising. Examples of changes made by schools included removing the need for more expensive badged uniform, improving communications with parents about financial support and starting homework clubs (Child Poverty Action Group, 2015).

We encourage the use of the Educational Endowment Foundation’s Teaching and Learning Toolkit, which shows the cost-benefit analysis of a number of interventions (Education Endowment Foundation, 2015). For example, the toolkit shows that the introduction of peer tutoring approaches appears to have a positive impact on learning, with an average of approximately five additional months’ progress, while the direct costs of running peer tutoring in schools are very low, as few additional materials are required (£10-20 per pupil per year).

The Commission does not want to provide a checklist of educational activities that schools might include when tackling inequalities in attainment. It is critical that schools themselves are empowered to set fairness as a priority; are given the appropriate responsibility and ownership to deliver the goal; and are provided with high quality support and sufficient resources to enable them to do things differently and to make rapid, significant progress towards the 15-year ambition.

## Fife College and the University of St Andrews

But improving skills does not stop at school-leaving age. Successful cities and regions have refashioned their relationships with their higher education establishments to reshape further local relationships or growth. Fife needs to revisit current arrangements with Further and Higher education establishments that might shape better jobs and incomes. The Commission believes that Fife would benefit from St Andrews University becoming a 'civic' university, for example by investing in mentoring programmes to increase the number of local undergraduates, enhanced bursary allowances and offering a wide range of work experience opportunities.

Fife College should be encouraged and supported to build on its outstanding international legacy of Adam Smith and Andrew Carnegie to forge international links and enhance the reputation of the college and the confidence and experience of its students.



## Recommendations for a skilled Fife

1. Fife Partnership should require all schools in Fife to develop and deliver a plan for significantly reducing the educational attainment gap in their school based on what is proven to work and with dedicated financial and in-kind support.
2. Fife Partnership should be inspired by the Glasgow Cost of the School Day project and invest in a local programme to reduce financial barriers affecting participation and experiences at school for children from low income households.
3. Fife Partnership should commit to establish an apprenticeship for every £1 million of public expenditure. This should be augmented by the development of an apprenticeship scheme for public bodies to sponsor apprenticeships in SMEs.
4. Fife Partnership should work with the business community to provide more support for skills development, focussing on those at particular risk of labour market marginalisation – including women, lone parents, people with disabilities and some ethnic minority groups.
5. Fife Partnership should consider further methods to refresh links with the University of St Andrews, particularly on big data, innovation in digital civic engagement and the use of science.



# A FAIRER FIFE IS A HEALTHIER FIFE

A Fairer Fife will be where the public, private and voluntary sectors are strengthening the understanding of what works in reducing health inequalities and scaling up and sustaining proven activities.

	Fife	Scotland	Scotland top five	Estimated number of people affected by reaching top five
To be in the top five Scottish local authorities for premature mortality (<75 years) (rate per 1,000 population) (NHS Fife submission to Commission, 2015)	3.9 per 1,000 population	4.1 per 1,000 population	3.5 per 1,000 population	128 fewer deaths in the year
To be in the top five health board areas for good mental health (GHQ 12 score of 4 or more) (NHS Fife submission to Commission, 2015)	15.3% with GHQ 12 score of 4 or more	15% with GHQ 12 score of 4 or more	12.1% with GHQ 12 score of 4 or more	9,530 fewer people with a GHQ-12 score of 4 or more

## Why is this important and progress to date

Many of the issues discussed in this report (affordability, skills, employment, empowerment and so on) are also identified as key determinants of population health and health inequalities. NHS Health Scotland defines health inequalities as: *‘the unfair differences in the health of the population that occur across social classes or population groups. They are the result of social circumstances and are not inevitable’* (NHS Health Scotland, 2015).

The Commission asked specifically for evidence on ‘being well’ to explore the relationship between poverty, inequality and being well in Fife. Poverty and relative disadvantage are both important for health – with people in each social group faring better in health terms than those less advantaged than them. Health and money worries were a key issue for many of the people we spoke to, leading to stress and anxiety and impacting on health-related behaviours such as nutrition. People who are out of work for a long-time described experiencing high levels of social isolation and poor mental health.

Improving overall health and reducing the gap in health inequalities is already one of the long-term outcomes in Fife’s Community Plan. Health inequalities have been a feature of Scottish society for a number of years and these exist in Fife. However, there is evidence of reductions in inequalities: the gap in life expectancy for the most recent year data is available has closed since 2010-2012 by 3.7 years for men and 2.6 years for women. There are large inequalities seen in relation to incidents of coronary heart disease (first hospital admissions among under 75s) (CHD). Though progress has been made in recent years, the rate of CHD in the most deprived areas of Fife is still twice that in the least deprived areas.

Good health and wellbeing enables us to engage fully with our community, to achieve our own goals or to get and keep a job - poor health and wellbeing increases demands on individuals, families, communities, services and support. Reducing inequalities in health is everyone’s business and in everyone’s interest.

(Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Fairer health for Fife: Fife’s health inequalities strategy 2015-20)

Fife benefits from the Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance which has responsibility for interpreting the evidence, developing and implementing a health and wellbeing strategy on behalf of Fife Partnership. The 2015-2020 plan is the fourth such plan and has streamlined the process to identify six outcomes to be achieved. These are:

- Vulnerable pregnant women, children, young people and families have reduced risk of poor health outcomes.
- People experiencing difficult life circumstances have better skills, strengths, knowledge, support and opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Older people have increased opportunities and support to improve their health and wellbeing and to engage in their local communities.
- Communities have increased skills and resources to develop local initiatives which create supportive social networks, increase participation in community activity and improve health and wellbeing.
- Neighbourhoods have better, safe, accessible outdoor and community spaces, which are used more by communities to enhance their health and wellbeing.
- Services and support are delivered differently, in flexible ways, to meet the health and wellbeing needs of key groups.

## Psychological health

The health inequalities funding programme of the Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance has provided £1.4 million per year for six years on a range of health inequalities activities, including community food work, supported volunteering, working with looked after children and one-off grants to community projects. While this approach is to be commended, there appeared to be little tailored to men of working age. The Commission would

welcome further work on the psychological health of the working age population, particularly for those living alone and most at risk of poverty.

The landscape for health improvement in Fife is changing with the establishment of the Health and Social Care Partnership and its Integrated Joint Board. These changes provide significant opportunities for Fife, which need to be grasped to step up efforts to reduce health inequalities. The Commission is greatly encouraged by the draft strategic plan (2016 – 2019) for Health and Social Care integration, seeing many of its own aspirations for Fife mirrored by it – a focus on prevention, being inclusive as a way of working, empowering communities and working locally with alignment to Fife’s seven localised community planning arrangements. The Commission also welcomes the emphasis in the strategy on tackling health inequalities, as one of its four strategic aims. Fife Partnership is required to demonstrate how it is contributing to reducing health inequalities, and has an opportunity to evidence that contribution through providing leadership in responding to the recommendations in this report.

## The Third Sector

The third sector has a particularly important role to play in supporting good health, both in delivering services and in working with the Integrated Partnership and Community Planning Partners to deliver a more strategic approach to equality. Fife Society for the Blind was highlighted in a recent Voluntary Health Scotland report on reducing health inequalities for its work in supporting people affected by slight loss to maintain their independence, sustain physical and mental wellbeing and prevent social exclusion (Voluntary Health Scotland, 2015). The report concluded that the voluntary health sector as a whole provides significant impacts on health inequalities by mitigating the negative effects of health inequalities. This is ‘downstream’ work but it is essential to improving people’s lived experience. The sector takes a holistic, person

centred, joined up, responsive approach which creates significant opportunities in responding to the needs of our most vulnerable people and communities.

Recognising the central role of skills and good work in supporting a good quality of life and

reducing poverty, NHS Fife should place an increased emphasis on addressing the links between health and work. Approaches which sustain people in work when they are facing health problems, and 'health first' styles of employability support are two features that should be considered.



## Recommendations for a healthier Fife

1. Fife Partnership should continue to support the joined up approach provided by the Fife Health and Wellbeing Alliance, strengthening the understanding of what works in reducing health inequalities and scaling up and sustaining proven activities. The knowledge hub should provide a forum for the sharing of learning and good practice, and the use of health inequalities impact assessment.
2. Fife Partnership should invest further in the local voluntary health sector to support their work on reducing health inequalities and in co-producing community-based services.
3. Fife Partnership should consider establishing a pilot project on reducing stress and supporting resilience for those of working age who are living alone.
4. Fife Partnership should develop a clear focus on health and employment, to increase employability capacity and sustain employment for people with health problems.
5. Fife NHS Board should contribute to a reduction in inequalities over and above the obvious provision of public health services and integration agenda (e.g. as an employer, a procurer of goods and services and strong partner).
6. Fife Partnership should maximise the potential impact of its collective (and skilled) workforce to carry out simple interventions (e.g. income maximisation) when interacting with citizens and not only focus on the issue at hand, but seek to understand household circumstances.

# NEXT STEPS

The issues discussed in this report, and our recommendations, reflect the breadth of action and scale of ambition that will be needed to ensure that Fife is a place of opportunity, offering a good quality of life for all.

The members of the Commission greatly appreciated the openness and aspiration of the Fife Partnership and the many organisations and individuals who have offered advice and support for our work. There is no doubt that Fife has hugely capable, knowledgeable and committed people working in all sectors. We now call on them all to take active consideration of this report as a springboard for future plans, priorities and investment.

We would make the following concluding observations.

## Using personal and collective data to drive change.

This will require our proposed Fife Knowledge Hub to go beyond amalgamating data and making these available, to incorporating wider intelligence about context, policy and practice. Expertise in integrating these different types of data and using them to inform system change will be an essential part of this new way of working. Actively attending to learning from change processes is a critical feature. In that respect, explicit consideration should be given to the value that partners place on the delivery of outcomes for individual families. This is not an easy or straightforward issue and will require considerable thought to both protect privacy while driving for greater fairness.

## Moving from isolated good examples to great mainstream practice

There are many examples of high-quality initiatives within Fife and considerable scope to build on these to extend the scale and sustainability of their approaches.

Consideration will also need to be given to the relationships between the different areas of activity highlighted in this report. While we do recommend strengthening action on specific issues such as skills and health, we call on partners to focus also on the connections between the different domains to ensure that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The flow of public money is a powerful indicator of system reform, and should be used as an indicator of success in this regard.

## Demonstrating clear commitment to inclusive policy making and delivery.

We have highlighted the need to attend to workforce development to support this shift and to ensure the provision of community-level development and support. The sharing of accountability with those who benefit from the investments should be another key feature – as demonstrated for example through innovation in governance structures and reporting mechanisms.

## Fairness is all our business

Finally, we trust that you will not forget to tell the story of change and what it means for individuals and their families. This comes back to our views around the role of ‘mega-communities’ and using data to improve real lives. Top down imposed change will no longer be effective. Fife Council and the community planning partnership (Fife Partnership) have an important leadership and convening role, but change requires action from everyone living, employing, doing business and working in Fife. A story of change will create widespread interest and capture the imagination.

# APPENDIX 1: RESPONSES TO CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Name	Organisation
Stephanie Gardiner	Fife Council
David Reid	
Joanna Secker Walker	
Anonymous	NHS Fife
Liz Easton	Kirkcaldy YMCA
Marc Forrester	Plusone Mentoring Programme
Suzy Goodsir	Greener Kirkcaldy
Fay Logan/Jill Little	Adult Basic Education
Alen Armstrong	CLEAR Buckhaven
Kevin Sayer	Fife Council
Phil Prentice	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Michelle Sweeny	Fife Cultural Trust
JP Easton	Glenrothes CLD
Norma Philpott	Citizens Advice and Rights Fife
Aileen Aitken	Fife Council
Rhona Cunningham	Fife Gingerbread
Zahida Ramzan	Fife Council (Equalities Unit)
Elaine Lynch, Iris Sauer-Derricutt	Fife Council, CLD
Mhairi Lochhead	Fife Carers Centre
Katie Provan (Healthy Working Lives Team)	NHS Fife
Andrew Magowan	Inspiring Scotland
Paul Wallace	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Caryn Nicolson	Frontline Fife Homelessness Services
Laura MacKean	Fife Rights Forum
Scottish Welfare Fund	Fife Council
Laura Falconer	Barnardo's
David Hosey	Fife College
Louise Maclean	Fife Council
Belinda Morgan	Health Inequalities Team, NHS Community Services
Sheena Watson	Fife Council – Community Learning and Development
Norma Graham	Fife Rural Partnership
Ninian Stuart	Centre for Stewardship
Nina Munday	Fife Centre for Equalities

## APPENDIX 2: PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

The Commission undertook seven visits to collect personal testimonies. Those visits were hosted by the following organisations who provided access to and supported their clients to give those testimonies:

- Adult Basic Information Group, Methil
- CLEAR Community Action, Buckhaven
- Community Kitchen, Lochgelly
- Cottage Family Centre, Kirkcaldy
- Job Club, Glenrothes
- Soul Searching - A Hootenanny, Inverkeithing
- Woodlands Nursery Centre and Family Unit, Leven

# APPENDIX 3: EVIDENCE GIVING TO COMMISSION MEETINGS

The following gave verbal evidence to the Commission at its meetings:

Dr William Penrice, Fife Council

Neil Hamlet, NHS Fife

Paul Vaughan, Fife Council

Belinda Morgan, NHS Fife

Robin Presswood, Fife Council

Jo-Anne Valentine, NHS Fife

Lucinda McAllister, Fife Council

Morag Millar, Fife Council

Adam Dunkerley, Fife Council

George Sneddon, Fife Council

Pegs Bailey, Fife Voluntary Action

Sandra Montador-Stewart, Fife Council

John Oates, BRAG

Shelagh McLean, Fife Council

John Penman, Fi-Fab

Dr Craig Munro, Fife Council

John Mills, Fife Council

Carrie Lindsay, Fife Council

Dave Paterson, Fife Council

Dougie Dunlop, Fife Council

Danny Cepok, Fife Council

Derek Brown, Fife Council

Mark McCall, Fife Council

Martin Thom, Fife Council

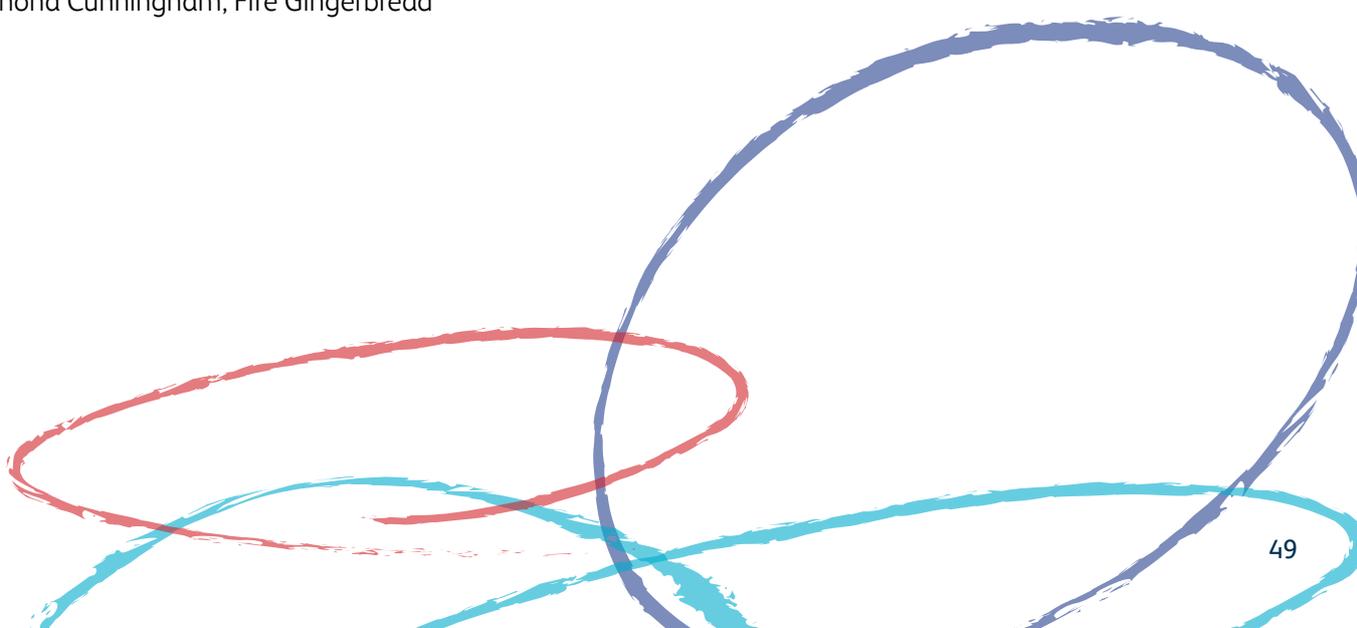
Dr Edward Coyle, NHS Fife

Stuart Booker, Fife Council

Vivienne Brown, Fife Council

Kenny Murphy, Fife Voluntary Action.

Rhona Cunningham, Fife Gingerbread



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# Fairness Matters

Fife is situated between the Firth of Tay and the Firth of Forth and is Scotland's third largest local authority area by population. Fife is a unitary authority, with a resident population of just under 367,000 largely living in towns throughout the region.

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